

THE HEALTHCARE ISSUE

When drug pricing communications go wrong

Standing out in a digital healthcare landscape

Communications essentials for healthcare M&A

The right way to launch a medical breakthrough

Communicating the value of next generation therapies

Taking control of the pharma conversation

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When the spin machine fails

he spin coming out of the White House and among President Trump's defenders in the wake of the Ukraine scandal reveals a desperate grasp for straws in their attempts to reframe the narrative as public developments—and the prospect of impeachment—grow more troubling each day. The wheels are coming off Trump's misinformation machine.

We all know the story by now. An unnamed whistleblower—a C.I.A. officer, according to the New York Times—filed a complaint in August alleging that Trump had pressed Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate acts of corruption by 2020 prospective rival Joe Biden and his son, Hunter—who was on the board of a Ukrainian energy company—allegedly intimating that forthcoming U.S. military aid to Ukraine may be predicated on Zelensky's support.

The Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community found the staffer's complaint credible, which the White House had initially attempted to prevent from being forwarded to Congress. Trump later admitted to the phone call with Zelensky, and the White House released a rough transcript of the conversation, wherein Trump asked the Ukrainian President for "a favor" to work with Attorney General William Barr and personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani regarding Biden's Ukraine activities.

As it turns out, using the office of President to put pressure on a foreign power to dig up dirt on a political rival isn't a "good thing," and the subsequent formal impeachment inquiry launched by Nancy Pelosi et al. in September has escalated at an astonishingly fast pace. The House has since targeted Trump's inner circle with subpoenas to testify before Congress, itself met by a stonewalling effort from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, to which the House responded by claiming such an act may be considered further evidence of obstruction of justice. What a mess.

As the House's inquiry that threatens his presidency heats up, the commander-in-chief has spent little time explaining his actions—he admitted to them, after all—and has instead resorted to the predictable tantrums and attacks that've become routine, old hat since 2016. "Fake News!" Trump said his July talk with Zelensky was "perfect" and referred to the House's impeachment probe as "bullshit" before advising Democrats to "get a better candidate." He doubled down on his initial call to investigate the Bidens for being "corrupt," claiming, without evidence, that the former Ukraine prosecutor general had previously investigated Hunter Biden before publicly calling on China to pick up the Biden investigation. He also attacked the credibility of the heretofore unidentified whistleblower at the center of the Ukraine probe (or a "spy" and a "fraud," as Trump called him), swearing to uncover the whistleblower's identity, a claim that rankled even GOP lawmakers (there's a federal law designed to protect the anonymity of federal employees who report on wrongdoing or illegal activities occurring within the government.) The usual deflection tactics were thrown in for good measure: random jabs at Hillary Clinton, threats to sue Robert Mueller (?!?). He's now suggesting House Intel Chairman Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) is guilty of "treason," and suggested that his impeachment would result in a civil war. The strategy is embarrassingly obvious: throw everything at the wall and see what sticks.

Trump's allies in the conservative media haven't done much better keeping a lid on the Ukraine scandal, resorting to a desperate defense strategy that relies on multiple parts disinformation and deflection. Fox News host Jesse Watters said Congress is going after Trump only for exposing "Biden family corruption." Tucker Carlson, also focusing on the Biden's foreign business interests, suggested a double standard in the rules as they involve Democrats' political profiteering. Giuliani baselessly claimed Hunter Biden received \$3M in laundered money from the Ukraine. Newt Gingrich, aping Trump's penchant for histrionics, called the impeachment inquiry a "coup d'état." Conservative site The Federalist (falsely) reported that whistleblower complaints must be heard firsthand in order to be valid. Several conservative outlets are now claiming the whistleblower met with Schiff before filing his complaint (he didn't). Fox News on Oct. 3 even promised a "bombshell" report regarding documents the network claimed proved the former Ukraine prosecutor general was forced to dial back his investigation into the aforementioned Biden-connected energy company. What Fox failed to divulge in the segment was that those "documents" were—wait for it—written and supplied by Rudy Giuliani.

It's not merely that Trump and his defenders are struggling to get on the same page in responding to these developments—they're struggling to find a page, any page at all. Trump's ability to dominate the media cycle has always been his strong suit; he's been remarkably successful at contouring reality in an attempt to convince his supporters to believe what he wants them to believe, and perhaps his greatest legacy—if you could call it that—will be the effect the Trump era has had on the value of objective truth in modern society. But unlike the Mueller investigation, where there was always a consistent claim of innocence from the Trump camp, the President's own admissions have set this chess board in such a way that deflection, conspiracy theories and more clumsy attempts at reinterpreting reality are the only means by which they have to spin this scandal as another "witch hunt" as opposed to a bona fide Constitutional crisis. •

— Jon Gingerich



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Dozens of nations rely on social media disinformation

Political governments or parties across 70 countries used social media disinformation to shape domestic public opinion in 2018, according to an Oxford University study. More than a half-dozen nations used social media to engage in foreign influence activities.

By Kevin McCauley

olitical parties or governments in 70 countries launched disinformation campaigns to shape domestic public attitudes in 2018, according to a Sept. report published by Oxford University.

Their cyber-troops rely on "political bots" to amplify hate speech or other forms on manipulated content; engage in illegal harvesting of data or micro-targeting and deploy an array of "trolls" to bully or harass dissidents and journalists online.

Oxford researchers found that authoritarian governments in 26 nations relied on social media as a tool of information control to suppress human rights, discredit political opponents and drown out dissenting opin-

They also found highly sophisticated foreign influence operations in seven countries: China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela

The researchers noted that China, which has traditionally manipulated public opinion at home via domestic platforms like WeChat, Weibo and QQ, has stepped up foreign influence activity.

The Chinese government this year employed global social media to paint Hong Kong's democracy advocates as violent radicals with little support at home.

"The growing sophistication and use of global social networking technologies demonstrates how China is also turning to these technologies as a tool of geopolitical power and influence, reported Oxford.

Facebook is the number-one platform for cyber troop activity due to its market size as well as its links to close family members and friends, amount of political news/information and ability to form groups.

Cyber troops also use the video and image-sharing platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, as well as WhatsApp.

Oxford notes that disinformation, distrust, polarization and the decline in democracy existed prior to the development of the Internet and social media.

The researchers believe strong democracy requires access to high-quality information and ability for citizens to come together to debate, discuss, deliberate, empathize and make concessions.

They ask: Are social media platforms really creating a space for public deliberation and democracy, or are they amplifying disinformation, inciting violence and lowering levels of trust in media and democratic institutions? O

Fake news unlikely to deter social media use

Americans recognize that "fake news" is a problem, but few seem willing to change their social media habits, perhaps because most remain confident in their ability to spot fake news. By Jon Gingerich

ost Americans agree that "fake news" is a problem that negatively ■ impacts their opinions of social media networks, but few are willing to change their social media habits in light of the phenomenon, according to a recent survey released by business news site The Manifest.

The survey, which sought to gauge social media users' ability to identify fake news as well as how the fake news phenomenon influences their social media habits, found that virtually all respondents agree that fake news is a problem, regardless of where they fall on the political spectrum: 94 percent of conservatives, 94 percent of moderates and 92 percent of liberals think fake news on social media is an issue, according to the survey.

Amazingly, almost all respondents (97 percent) expressed confidence in their ability to spot fake news, and most reported regularly encountering news on social media platforms they thought was fake: More than half said they've seen fake news on Facebook (70 percent) and Twitter (54 percent) in the past month, while others reported encountering fake news on YouTube (47 percent), Reddit (43 percent) and Instagram (40 percent).

Altogether, more than half (53 percent) of respondents said fake news negatively impacts their opinions of social media.

Puzzlingly, however—and perhaps due to their presumptions that they can spot fake news so easily—the survey discovered fake news doesn't appear to deter most Americans from using social networks, no matter how regularly they encounter it. More than half of Facebook users (53 percent) said fake news doesn't impact their use of the platform, and a similar percentage said their use of YouTube (50 percent), Twitter and Pinterest (both 49 percent), Instagram (46 percent), Snapchat and Reddit (both 45 percent) and LinkedIn (37 percent) would not change in light of it.

Only one percent of people said that fake news was cause enough for them to cancel their Facebook accounts. O

Americans concerned by state of media

By Jon Gingerich

ost Americans are troubled by the current state of the media as well as ethics in the field of journalism today, according to a recent study released by tech PR firm Bospar.

According to the study, virtually all respondents polled (95 percent) said they're troubled by the current state of the media in the United States.

Asked to list the top reasons for their concerns, more than half (53 percent) cited the "fake news" phenomenon, followed by a penchant for reporting gossip (49 percent). Lying spokespeople (48 percent), favoring celebrity opinions (36 percent), left-wing

agendas (34 percent), the practice of "gotcha journalism" (33 percent) and rightwing agendas (32 percent) followed.

A majority of Americans also think journalism in the U.S. has gotten more unethical. Nearly half of respondents (43 percent) believe journalism is less ethical now than before, while more than a third (37 percent) think ethics in the field hasn't changed. Only one in five (20 percent) think journalists today are more ethical than they were

Perhaps, for this reason, more than twothirds of Americans polled (67 percent) said they also expect ethics in journalism to decline even further during the 2020 presidential campaign. O

Advancing trust in healthcare

The healthcare industry has witnessed historic innovations. Is consumer trust following suit?

By Susan Isenberg

ealthcare has advanced by leaps and bounds in recent years, from the emergence of more precise diagnostic tools, to the discoveries of life-saving treatments for rare diseases, to the use of artificial intelligence to empower clinical trials, patient records and robotics-assisted surgeries, among other remarkable innovations. But is trust in healthcare advancing as rapidly as the industry itself?

The Edelman Trust Barometer found healthcare was just barely trusted in 2019, with only 61 percent of Americans agreeing they trust the sector to do what is right. While this score represents an eight-point rebound in trust from 2018, in the U.S. healthcare ranks among the bottom three of all sectors of business studied in terms of trust, tying with fashion and with only financial services behind it.

Trust in healthcare also has concerning disparities across several important populations.

Though globally the industry is trusted by both the informed public (defined as those who are between 25-64 years of age, college educated, in the top 25 percent of household income per age group in each market and report significant media consumption and engagement in public policy and business news) and the mass population, this year marked a record high in inequality between trust levels across these two groups. There's a global ten-point trust gap between these two audiences, with 75 percent of the informed public reporting that they trust healthcare versus only 65 percent of the mass population reporting the same. This widening gap underscores the instability of trust. It also may be reflective of the mass population continuing to feel left behind in their ability to access healthcare innovations even as they recognize the advances being made. Given the environment today, and that the mass population is particularly less trusting, healthcare may continue to see increasing demands for change and regulation.

There's also a gap in how men and women trust healthcare across the general population, with the highest disparity of all markets studied in the U.S. Only 53 percent of American women said they trust healthcare, verses 69 percent of American men, a 16-point gap. Also concerning, this divide between women and men has continued to grow over the last few years. Given that

women are often the "chief medical officer" for their families and lead healthcare decisions across generations of family members, they are a critical group for restoring

One area where healthcare companies may have more room to build trust is around technological advances. The Edelman Trust Barometer shows that, globally, people feel generally positive about health tech, with 76 percent agreeing they trust health tech to make life better for "people like me."

People trust tech as much as they see their own benefits linked to it, though personal data can be the Achilles' heel. For healthcare companies to build on the trust halo around their technology, consumers must know their data is private and protected. How will patient data be leveraged to create efficiencies in the delivery of care and more personalized treatments? How will technology provide behavioral reinforcements that improve patient adherence and compliance needs? These questions will need to be clearly explained as health and tech continue to merge.

Telling a company's health tech story is one opportunity to build trust. Another avenue is to activate across multiple communications channels to ensure key audiences-particularly women and the mass population—are reached.

Globally, the Edelman Trust Barometer found that while media is still distrusted, media engagement actually rose this year; meaning more people are reporting consuming news weekly or more. Trust in both traditional media and search engines also rose. Traditional media remains an important part of the communications model, but it is important for health companies to recognize that this does not fulfill the need for organizations to also tell their own stories. In fact, trust in owned media—that's a company's own channels like a corporate website, blog, application, etc. saw an eight-point jump, one of the largest increases we have seen across the types of media studied.

Additionally, Edelman Trust Barometer data showed healthcare companies' content about medical conditions and their treatments is seen as credible by 68 percent globally, and this increased by four points since the 2018 Trust Barometer. This is a clear opportunity for health companies to leverage their owned media channels to reach consumers.

Finally, to earn and keep trust, healthcare companies must be transparent, particularly about pricing.

The Edelman Trust Barometer found that globally, being transparent around the cost of products and services was the most im-

portant factor for how healthcare companies can earn and keep trust. This should be no surprise as pricing is one of the top issues dominating global healthcare headlines. All healthcare companies must be prepared to discuss cost, particularly in



markets like the U.S., where there's been a call for government action.

The innovations healthcare companies provide to society are remarkable and much needed to prevent and treat disease and enhance overall human wellness. When speaking to these advancements, our healthcare stories need to match audience expectations so that the industry's remarkable breakthroughs are trusted.

Susan Isenberg is Global Chair at Edelman Health. O

Newspapers outperform TV, web outlets, radio on local level

Local newspapers significantly outperform competing news outlets in producing more original, local journalistic content, according to recent research.

The News Measures Research Project, a joint initiative comprised of students and post-grads from Duke, UNC Chapel Hill and Rutgers, conducted a study of local media outlets (radio stations, TV stations, newspapers and online-only publishers) in randomly-sampled communities across the U.S. and analyzed the stories of each medium to gauge their journalistic performance and determine what outlets are best meeting the informational needs of their communities.

The study discovered that while local papers accounted for only about a quarter of the local media outlets in the study's sample, these publications were responsible for producing almost 60 percent of the stories researchers gathered that were of a local nature. Moreover, local papers also produced nearly half (47 percent) of all original news items they found as well.

By contrast, only about 12 percent of local TV outlets' output consisted of original stories. Local radio produced about 32 percent of original stories and online-only outlets produced less than 10 percent.

The study also discovered that among the stories produced by local papers, more than half (53 percent) were original, compared to 48 percent for online-only outlets and 32 percent for both TV and radio sources. And more than a quarter (26 percent) of local newspaper stories were local in nature, compared with 25 percent for online-only outlets, nine percent for TV and eight percent for radio.

Fragmentation is no anomaly — it's business as usual

Communicators' ability to navigate the organized chaos that characterizes today's health ecosystem is crucial to patient outcomes and client success.

By Gil Bashe, Kristie Kuhl and Fern Lazar

harma brands once saw patent cliffs as their greatest challenge. They sought to establish as many "good years" in the market as possible to recoup years of drug development investment. Today, brand-building challenges start years before the Food and Drug Administration grants a company approval to market. No longer is the communicator's goal simply creating awareness and "see your doctor" moments during the lead-up to launch. Now, among their changing tasks are helping clients to define why their medication should be easy-to-access on formulary, or acting to shield the product from non-medical switches.

Historically, health public relations and investor relations pros tailored their communications to three main audiences: those most likely to benefit from a particular medication, physicians or investors. Communication must now include those who determine access: from payers to regulators, and everyone who influences both. Understanding how to navigate the health ecosystem, and working to build connections among decision makers, reduces the risk of falling victim to fragmentation among the myriad of players who determine access to care.

Fragmentation within the medical community has become more than just the "left hand not knowing what the right is doing." Now, it often appears as though the left hand is actively working against its right. In this climate, rising costs are the bi-partisan decision-maker's primary concern, but this focus misses the real—and necessary—expense of keeping people healthier, happier and out of the hospital.

Economist Dr. Alain C. Enthoven wrote more than a decade ago: "Our healthcare system is fragmented, with a misalignment of incentives, or lack of coordination, that spawns inefficient allocation of resources. Fragmentation adversely impacts quality, cost, and outcomes." Not much has changed since these words were penned.

Fragmentation rears its head at every level of care. Imagine a patient with prescription in hand going into a pharmacy, only to be told that their physician's medication recommendation isn't covered by their health insurance formulary. Imagine people adherent on a medication for a life-threatening condition told unexpectedly that, due to a non-medical switch decision, they're being shifted to another therapy. It happens every day. Fragmentation carries a cost. It results in diminished patient care. It can result in death.

Market approval is no longer bench-tobedside expressway

The frequent refrains of "requiring prior authorization," "fail first" or "step therapy"—which require the least expensive drug to be prescribed first, even if a physician believes a different therapy is in the best interest for their patient—result in kicking the proverbial can of cost toward someone else in the medical chain. Those extra calls to inform patients, lost time from work to see a physician about a new medication, or the time gap caused by obtaining the new medication —all increase costs in the end, negating the intended savings from a "less expensive" medication. The hassle factor can even result in a higher societal cost, such as loss of life.

Among the most high-profile lifesaving drugs that recently failed to secure market traction have been the cholesterol reducers called PCSK9 inhibitors. Financial analysts predicted blockbuster sales for PCSK9s, reaching \$6 billion annually. Companies saw these predictions as a signal that payer and provider were aboard. But insurers and pharmacy benefit managers balked, refusing to pay for these high-priced medicines. They required doctors and patients to jump through "prior authorization" hoops to secure access. Even a massive outcomes trial of almost 20,000 patients that showed PCSK9s could reduce deaths as much as 29 percent for people with the highest cholesterol level was not enough to make insurers open the gates. And, when their developers finally slashed prices for these cholesterol-lowering drugs, payers responded only lethargically.

Innovators, providers and patients face access challenges

The system creates all sorts of winding curves for patients along the path to care, and communicators need to be far more aware of the access land mines awaiting brands. For example, people taking medications for irregular heartbeat confront all-too-frequent unplanned treatment interruptions due to non-medical switching. The seemingly innocuous decision by payers to change their formularies carries real impacts: a five-fold increase in a patient having a stroke and a two-to-threefold increase in their hospitalization. These outcomes of non-medical switching increase both financial and human costs, but who tracks total cost of patient care when someone inside a formulary group makes a non-medical decision to change access to a particular drug? No

Organized chaos within the health system isn't part of any master plan. It's the result of inwardly focused economic structures centering around four decision-making health sectors: payers, policymakers, product innovators and providers. But the fifth sector, the one which everyone is focused on "helping"patients—doesn't have a reserved seat at the decision-making table. While their interests are often left outside the conference room, patients undoubtedly have the most skin in the life-preserving game.

one.

Years before becoming FDA Commissioner, Dr. Scott Gottlieb, then with the American Enterprise Institute, saw how a range of drug development poli-



Gil Bashe



Kristie Kuhl



Fern Lazar

cies between regulators and drug developers interfered with patient care. He argued that FDA caution is hazardous to public health, that the system needed to streamline and find common connection. While he made considerable progress during his tenure at the Agency, there's much more to be done to reduce fragmentation among health sectors.

Communicators who are savvy about how the ecosystem operates—from securing a seat at the table for patient advocacy to recognizing the importance of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Part D system, as well as acting on the need for more give and take in the commercial formulary

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Health matters to everyone... and impacting them can be a challenge. We put people at the center of our storytelling, creating narratives that ignite intellectual curiosity, evoke raw emotion and compel people to act.







2020 vision for integrated healthcare marketing

Why enhancing brand reputation and awareness are becoming more important than ever for today's healthcare companies. By Ryan Lilly

hen asked what the purpose of marketing is, most healthcare executives will say something like "to drive sales." While that's certainly correct, it's an increasingly simplistic, and even shortsighted, approach to marketing in the modern era of healthcare. Brand reputation is more important than ever. Meaningful engagement has significant value, even beyond a sale. Data derived from marketing initiatives can be deployed in meaningful ways and used to inform activities across programs. These are just a few examples of the impact of effective communications. Conversion-focused marketing will always have a place in healthcare, but the industry is at a major inflection point, which requires more nuanced and highly integrated marketing programs in order to reach all the right stakeholders, with the right messages, at the right time, across the right channels.

In December of 2018, key provider and payer organizations issued the "Transformation Progress Report," which tied nearly 50 percent of their business to value. That number is forecasted to grow as high as 75 percent by 2020 and will very likely reach 100 percent in the not too distant future. Put simply, this means that reimbursement will be tied to quality, outcomes and cost efficiency, as compared to competitors and or industry benchmarks. This is in complete opposition to the traditional fee-forservice models healthcare has relied on for decades, where a service is provided, and as long as it is covered by insurers, it will be reimbursed regardless of the outcome or necessity of it. While these changes have the most immediate and direct impact on payers, providers and patients, the ramifications are far reaching and will drive behavior and operational changes across the entire continuum of care.

As brands continue to adapt to new models, it's clear that marketing is less of a luxury and more of a necessity. In 2020, expect to see healthcare brands reexamining how they market to an increasingly complex and always evolving set of stakeholders, while also navigating shifting financial and regulatory models. The patient has a bigger voice than ever and is an increasingly discerning consumer of care. Even B2B brands that have traditionally not paid much attention to patients are starting to take notice and refocus messaging on how their product or service actually impacts the patient. Whether prioritizing patients, physicians or pharmacists, truly integrated marketing

and public relations programs that address priority stakeholders and decision makers with the right messages, at the right times across the right channels will be more important than ever for modern healthcare brands and marketing departments. The question for many has become: where to start?

Taking stock

The answer is at the beginning. Even if you're years into an established marketing program, 2020 constitutes an ideal moment in time to revisit core strategy, goals and efficacy. There's no one-size-fits-all approach to healthcare marketing, and even an established program must evolve over time. Earlier stage healthcare companies may be looking to increase brand awareness and will generally prioritize activities that bolster the top of their marketing funnel, such as PR (media, speaking, awards, etc.). On the other hand, more established brands may want to prioritize lead generation and sales-focused activities, such as email marketing or social advertising. While there will generally be a way to prioritize marketing activities, most organizations will benefit from a healthy mix of tactics. The key is finding the right balance and mapping each tactic or campaign back to higher level business objectives to ensure the right muscle and resources are put behind the right activities. To move the needle, you just need to know what the needle should be measuring.

Knowing your audience

Once you understand business goals, the next step is to understand your audiences. The channels and messages used to reach prospective investors will inherently look very different from the channels and messages used to reach prospective customers. Even if you know that customer-centric marketing activities will be a priority in 2020, who are your customers and what does their journey or path to purchase look like? Healthcare marketers should have an in depth understanding of their priority personas. A young visionary chief medical officer may respond well to multimedia content deployed through less traditional social media channels. On the other hand, an established, more risk-averse hospital CFO will likely want to see more traditional white papers or case studies deployed through email marketing or more familiar channels. Will a patient be more likely to respond to a patient testimonial or a physician? These are the questions that should

be asked early and often by healthcare marketing pros.

Understanding and prioritizing personas will be more important than ever for marketers moving forward. Not only will it inform your underlying brand strategy

and messaging, it will also advise more tactical decisions and specific campaigns. Building and segmenting a database is something that's never actually complete. Just like healthcare organizations focused on mining clinical and operational data for mean-



Ryan Lilly

ingful insights, healthcare marketers must continue to measure and analyze data related to customer behaviors and preferences in order to continuously sharpen their marketing strategy. What content performs best? What channel has the highest rate of engagement? Where are we losing people on the website and why? How can we reprioritize activities or reallocate resources based on the answers to these kinds of questions?

Creating conversations

While targeting decision makers directly using digital marketing and automation will continue to play a key role in many brands' marketing efforts moving forward, it's important not to overlook the value of top of the funnel activities such as PR. It's certainly not as easy to map a feature article in the Wall Street Journal directly to a conversion, however, there's inherent value in general brand awareness and validation that comes with things like earned media, speaking slots and awards. These things have value on their own and can go a long way toward getting people into the top of your funnel, but the marketing teams' job doesn't stop when the article publishes or the award is announced.

Putting it all together

This is where truly integrated marketing programs shine, as they ensure that every message or opportunity is multiplied and deployed across channels to have the greatest possible impact. Integrated PR and marketing teams will be able to "squeeze all the juice" out of every piece of coverage or award or speaking opportunity, by promoting on social, including in email campaigns, publishing on the website, arming sales,

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When drug pricing communications go wrong

Effective value communications in an era increasingly defined by an increased attention to price.

Bv Miriam Kalnicki

t starts with something that used to be routine: disclosing the list price of a new prescription medicine. But in today's environment, that simple action can trigger a cascade setting off a corporate crisis.

Disclosing a therapy's price has become a potential point of conflagration, because pharmaceutical manufacturers are soundly in the crosshairs of a public concerned about rising medical costs. Polling on the U.S. right and the left shows deep populist frustrations about mounting costs of care. The concerns are justified: healthcare spending has grown at greater than four percent for two consecutive years, outpacing the per capita growth of GDP. Last year, per-person spending on healthcare reached an all-time high of \$5,564. As a result, the cost of health insurance is rising as well, and salary growth is not keeping pace with the rate of insurance premium increases.

While the contribution of drug prices to healthcare costs has stayed relatively static in recent years, it's one of the most routine and direct costs that patients encounter, which may be why their concerns are placed on medicine companies instead of insurers.

Real risk to business

Regardless, the risk of issues is real. When drug pricing communications go wrong, it almost always follows a predictable cascade. The issues begin with a key stakeholder group, such as a patient or hospital feeling aggrieved and unheard by the company. Frustrated patients often bring their concerns to the press, where the issue escalates, often into national visibility. As the topic draws more attention, policymakers engage, particularly given the polling mandate by American constituents. Politicians ask pointed questions—often in public demand answers, and even convene Congressional hearings.

Once this cascade is triggered, it can be hard to reverse and damaging to business. Both the brand and the company name become linked to the public outrage over the perceived runaway cost of healthcare. As corporate reputation sinks, advocates withdraw support, investigations gain momentum toward litigation, and the stock price often suffers.

Many life science executives ask if there's a price point or range that won't draw risk. Our data shows that in this environment, no price threshold escapes scrutiny. Communications and stakeholder expectation

setting are key. Price increases on drugs that cost less than \$5,000 per month can generate as much or more national media attention as drugs launched at price points in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Last year, the cascade we describe above contributed to one rare disease company losing a whopping 29 percent of its market value. The therapy triggering the backlash had long been the subject of pricing speculation—even before it's approved. When the actual price was disclosed, reporters immediately called patients and influential physicians. The rare disease community thought the price was too high and voiced their objections in social and traditional media. They generated enough attention that Senator Bernie Sanders publicly criticized the CEO. Through the course of the negative attention, the stock price fell steadily from its post-launch high.

With the heightened environment, there's been no shortage of proposed reforms targeting pharmaceutical pricing. Some measures, such as adopting a form of international pricing referencing or putting price pressure on branded drugs by exempting those copays from deductibles, may be plausible. Others requiring drug advertising to consumers to list drug prices or enacting a single-payer, Medicare for All system are less likely in the near-term. What we can count on: continued debate on drug pricing through the 2020 election cycle!

An era of experimentation

As reforms are slow to take shape, companies and brands are developing different approaches to price disclosure. Earlier this year, members of the PhRMA trade association proactively committed to be more transparent about price information, with most participants hosting that information on brand.com. The best practice is to disclose the average out-of-pocket cost that patients are likely to pay, rather than the list price, which few people actually pay.

And yet, the conversation has already shifted from pricing to value. Three years ago, a handful of companies adopted "pricing pledges," announcing voluntary limits to their own price adjustments. The positive attention those announcements generated did not last. Why? Halting price increases essentially reads to patients as promising to abstain from a behavior they already disliked. A more resonant message: focus on proving and paying for the value

of a medicine based upon the outcomes it delivers, such as value-based contracting.

The new value communications playbook

As policy proposals evolve and media attention shifts, individual companies need a plan for value communications. Extensive planning goes into any pricing decision a pharmaceutical company makes. Just as much forethought should go into preparing a product's value communications to a range of interested audiences.

Preparation must start early. The first step

is a close examination of who the important stakeholders will bepatients and advocates, payers, analysts, KOLs and prescribers—and develop a thorough understanding of concerns and how they define value. Conducting research with primary



Miriam Kalnicki

influencers can reveal what their priorities are, who they influence, and where they are most likely to speak out. The insights uncovered in that process will indicate how we must communicate to address their pri-

Armed with these insights, your team is prepared to create value messaging customized to these audiences' priorities. The goal of the messaging is to communicate the value of the drug and the company's overall contributions to what the community needs.

Through 1:1 meetings with influential stakeholders, you can begin to lay the foundational messages for the value of the therapy and begin to set expectations on price.

Risk assessments can help develop an understanding of each of those parties and their concerns, as well as identify which voices are likely to seek attention and elevate their concerns. Developing scenario plans helps your team prepare for pushback from payers or third-party groups.

Finally, the plan should include post-approval access communications. Monitoring online forums and social media channels will indicate where patients may face access challenges and can be directed to financial assistance or other support services.

The outcome of all this is consistent communications that deliver a clear understanding of what the medicine will deliver to key stakeholders for the price, as opposed to a number alone. It can be done, and it has been done. One recent launch with a thera-

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Making the most at J.P. Morgan

Media outreach strategies that drive results at the J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference.

By Carrie Jones

he annual J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference—which will take place 13-16 January in San Francisco—has become a can't-miss moment for hundreds of companies and thousands of attendees every year. The proximity of the conference to the end of most companies' fiscal year makes it a powerful forcing function for closing out the previous 12 months and laying out expectations for the year ahead. It's also a magnet for a huge volume of news opportunities.

Reporters and their outlets consider the conference a one-stop shop for sourcing current and future news. The majority of them take publication-wide notes to build a reservoir of stories for the year ahead, doing so during official presentations and as many in-person briefings as their schedules can accommodate. Ask any journalist at the end of the conference and they'll tell you it feels like they just finished a marathon.

Even large companies benefitting from a steady drumbeat of media coverage strategically align major deals around the meeting's news cycle. In 2019, Lilly arranged for a surprise purchase of Loxo Oncology, grabbing scores of headlines and flummoxing industry-watchers who surmised the company might have saved millions of dollars by waiting just a few weeks. As a result of these clever maneuvers, reporters have an exceedingly high bar for breaking news at the conference.

For smaller companies—or those with longer-term news opportunities—there remain many reasons to build relationships, provide context for future news and even work their way into competitors' stories by being in the right place at the right time.

Having supported dozens of small and mid-sized companies over the course of several J.P. Morgan conferences, we've learned what it takes to succeed from a corporate communications perspective. Here's your primer for what works and what doesn't, based on our experience driving media results.

Strategies that work

Have your materials and logistics locked in before the first pitch goes out. In order to snap up space in reporters' schedules before the competition, you'll need to have your spokesperson bios, availability, location, and onsite contact numbers ready to go. This will ensure that when a reporter replies with interest in an interview, you can seal the deal quickly without waiting

days to reserve locations or get materials approved by legal.

Keep every communication succinct. And we mean brief. Reporters are swamped with interview requests, which means the most direct e-mails are the most useful. Our pitches are often just a couple of sentences that provide journalists with key reasons on why they should meet with a company, along with topics executives can address in current or future stories. Also, for public companies, don't forget to include your ticker symbol.

Provide the spokesperson you offered. It makes perfect sense to split up meetings across the C-suite to lighten the load on a busy CEO. However, if a reporter has been offered a briefing with the CEO, that's who they'll be expecting. Changing spokespeople at the last-minute feels like a bait and switch and is harmful to the relationship with the reporter over the long term. Our advice is to align tiers or types of media with specific executives ahead of time, and then stick to this arrangement from the first pitch to the actual interview. If a journalist misses an appointment or an unforeseen circumstance arises, such as a travel delay, then it's reasonable to offer an

When possible, have your executive in one location for interviews. Back-to-back briefings are truly a best-case scenario, but when it does happen, you'll want to have your executive's location locked in for the duration. If funds allow, booking a hotel suite on the same block as the conference venue is ideal, though you may need to book it a year in advance. If this isn't possible, make sure to leave plenty of buffer time between interviews for getting to new

Ask for cell numbers early. Trust me, you'll need them. Once the meeting has started, it can be very tough to track anyone down via e-mail, especially reporters who are constantly running to their next meeting. We often get cell numbers as we are confirming the interviews. That way, when-not if-someone gets lost, is running late, or you can't find each other, you'll have an immediate way to get in

Create surround sound with a strong social media presence. We counsel our clients to be deft in their use of social media during the conference to make sure they are visible beyond its walls, where attention spans are short. Twitter also can be an excellent way to keep track of reporters you care about to get a sense of what they're focusing on and following during the conference.

But don't do this

Don't delay in following up as soon as the agenda is released. Journalists often wait on the agenda before confirming any bookings. However, the window of opportunity to lock in those meetings once the agenda comes out is very small. We

recommend getting on reporters' radars and providing availability in advance of the agenda release and then following up the day the agenda is distributed to lock it in.

Don't ignore what reporters aren't telling you. Successful media relations is all about



Carrie Jones

balance and knowing when to say when. Push too hard, and you'll lose a relationship for life. But don't push hard enough, and you may just get lost in the shuffle. Avoid going around people, and make sure you're being helpful, not annoying.

Don't ignore the laws of physics. In regular life, a 15-minute walk is reasonable, but it's out of the question in the fast-paced J.P Morgan conference environment, especially when your competitors have onsite meeting rooms and are willing to meet in a lobby or corridor. In this case, proximity and convenience trump all other considerations; this is no time for excessive formality. The one exception? Be sure you have a quiet space available if you're doing a video interview.

Don't cave to FOMO. The J.P. Morgan conference is a big opportunity, which is why so many companies experience serious fear of missing out. But it's a huge investment of time and precious communications dollars-and it's not the only opportunity to get noticed. We always consider whether it's worth a full-court press around the conference, or whether the client's story might be better told before or afterwards.

With thousands of investors, startups, industry leaders, patient advocates, media and of course, executives and their communications teams all elbow-to-elbow, the frenetic pace of these jam-packed few days at the beginning of the year offer tremendous opportunities for companies

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Live by the 'future IPO' mindset

By preparing now, corporate communications professionals will be ready to take advantage of the many collaboration opportunities taking place amid the historic medical and financial innovations that are currently shaping the healthcare and life sciences industries. **By Terri Clevenger**

s the rock 'n roll generation begins settling into their senior years, the "Baby Boomer factor" is wielding its heavy influence on healthcare just as it has on other industries. Healthcare spending has grown substantially over the past few decades, and demand will likely remain strong as the number of Americans aged 65 and older will more than double by 2060. At the same time, technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, software-as-a-medical-device and other advances are transforming the healthcare industry and threatening the status quo through rich networks of connection, collaboration and interdependence.

In this environment, the industry is experiencing prolific and accelerating innovation. Smart thinkers are seeing incredible opportunity to collaborate differently with patients and regulators to improve accuracy in patient care, to create value, and to make the industry function more effectively and efficiently. They're building companies around their ideas, and there's a lot of money behind them. Just last year, nearly 15 percent of funds invested during the largest venture capital investment year in nearly 20 years went into life sciences companies. The number of life science IPOs nearly doubled compared to the previous year, including three companies whose values exceeded \$250 million. It's an exciting time, as more are in pursuit of an IPO in 2020.

Why is this important for the corporate communications professional? If you work in healthcare/life sciences, you're likely to encounter a company involved in the IPO process, either through a partner relationship or because your company or client company is going through the process. Many communications professionals haven't had first-hand experience with an IPO, and knowing how it all works may not seem all that relevant to the day-to-day work that

However, understanding the IPO timeline and process can be valuable in helping you create more effective communications strategies even when there's no talk of an IPO taking place any time soon. In fact, if you handle communications for a private company that hasn't yet made a public offering, it's important to operate from the assumption that it will happen in the future. This mindset will enable you to lay a solid communications foundation—and when

you need it, an IPO communications strategy-which will position you well for the future.

Develop a consistent narrative across audiences

Presumably you're already communicating with important audiences, which could include KOLs, healthcare providers, patient advocacy groups, hospital networks, or others, depending on your company's product or service. It's important to tell your story with the healthcare business media, as well, to ensure your position as a growing healthcare company is established and properly understood. Opportunities for private companies do exist, not only by leveraging milestone announcements, but also, by inserting the company into trend or innovation stories. And even if your ability to secure coverage is limited, initiating that dialogue with key business and financial reporters early on will benefit you later. Companies can also demonstrate leadership through submitted content, speakerships and recognition opportunities. It goes without saying that regardless of audience or speaker, the core messages being delivered about your company or product should be consistent and build the story you want people to understand about your brand.

Establish a professional profile

While earlier stage companies are understandably focused on developing their science, scaling the business and raising capital, it is important to remember that important constituencies are watching you. And you want to look your best. Develop a professional website and keep the content up to date. Create sharp looking materials that effectively convey your story and consider the value of video, as it's increasingly becoming the preferred mechanism for sto-

Create a habit of communicating. Once your company starts the IPO, the Securities and Exchange Commission imposes a "quiet period." Established in an effort to prevent "hyping" of stocks, companies in a quiet period are generally cautious in their communications and avoid proactive media outreach. However, continuation of the "normal course of business" communications is generally accepted, so if you have a track record of posting on a company blog, attending conferences or trade shows, running surveys, sending a newsletter, or

other typical avenues of communications, it's okay to continue with them. The quiet

period isn't the time to begin new communication habits, though, so the more you have in place well in advance of the IPO process, the better.

Set ground rules. Establish communications protocol from the outset. Ensure that all employees are aware



Terri Clevenger

of protocols for dealing with media requests and that those who are designated as spokespersons, as well as board members and scientific advisors, are versed in your company's messaging and have undergone regular media training. A few high-profile IPOs have made missteps in this area. Before entering the IPO process and quiet period, communicate clearly and specifically about changes to communications protocol and strategy. Take time to meet with each spokesperson and equip them with messages and resources they can use if they are asked any questions. They'll need to "stick to the script" and be more responsive and less proactive for this period of time.

Customize your planning. The IPO itself requires a special IPO communications strategy, including targeted messaging, materials development, training spokespeople and a prioritized media outreach for "Listing Day," the day your stock goes public all prepared in advance and timed to a tee. You will also need to prepare contingency plans, because the IPO process can be unpredictable. You will need to coordinate very closely with your investor relations team, whether that is an internal IRO or an external agency, and you will want to seriously consider partnering with an agency or expert who has deep experience in this

During the IPO process, all the foundational work you've done comes into play. Having established your story through media relationships that you've developed prior to the quiet period mitigates the possibility for misperceptions about what your company does, particularly if your company has a complex offering. Relationships you've established with third-party part-

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Standing out in today's digital healthcare landscape

Strategies for healthcare marketers to build awareness across channels.

By Dan Martin

oday's healthcare landscape is continually changing, shifting and striving to increase efficiencies, reduce costs and improve quality of care for patients. At the heart of this is data, analytics and overall digitization, a true convergence of healthcare and technology to drive innovation.

Industry statistics show that VCs poured a total of \$99.5 billion into all companies in over 5,536 deals in 2018. Specifically, within healthcare, there's no shortage of money flowing into the market. Investors continue to fund digital health at a steady clip. According to Rock Health, digital health companies raised a total of \$4.2 billion across 180 deals through the first half of 2019. If this pace holds steady, the sector is on track for an \$8.4 billion year in 2019, which would beat 2018's record-breaking annual funding total of \$8.1 billion. Within the life science sector, the pace is similar, making up 14.6 percent (approx. \$13.9 billion) of all venture deal flow in 2018, according to Venture Monitor.

What does this mean for brands and marketers? Competition is fierce, there are many players—both emerging and established-looking to capitalize on the momentum across the industry, differentiate themselves amongst a sea of competitors as well as non-traditional big brands entering the market and capturing mindshare (Google, Microsoft, Apple, Amazon and others), tell their stories and create the right awareness and visibility with key stakeholders to help them move the needle. And, there's tremendous pressure from the executive team and/or board of directors to increase the brand's valuation, secure funding or take the next step in its growth trajectory.

There are many ways in which to accomplish these goals and add value to the company's overall mission. However, two tried and true strategies can achieve sustainable results to give your brand —and the people driving it—a nice lift: thought leadership and influencer relations.

Using thought leadership effectively

Thought leadership has been around for a while, but the term has made a recent comeback. In fact, according to Forrester, thought leadership content has a greater impact on lead gen than all other forms of content marketing.

For the sake of this article, let's define thought leadership as a methodology that utilizes the talent, experience and passion

inside your company to consistently address the challenges and pain points of your target audience via multiple channels and formats. Simply put, it's the answers to "what keeps the decision makers at your customers and prospects up at night?" These answers will vary depending on whether you are a virtual care, population health or consumer directed healthcare provider, or a biotech, life sciences or biopharma services company—and that's the point; tailor your thought leadership program and pillars (key messages or story lines) to your industry and your ideal decision maker.

So, where should you begin?

Analyze and assess brand credibility

Consider your social media presence, how much earned media is gained, Share of Voice and how/if your brand is being recognized and mentioned in conjunction with top influencers and analysts. Not sure how your brand is measuring against its competitors? Think about a visibility assessment to help identify green space for thought leadership. Define your brand's purpose and intent as it relates to thought leadership before making any moves. Then, you'll have a clear roadmap to success.

Solidify brand messaging and positioning

Reputation and authority within your specific healthcare segment is based on a blended mixture from key stakeholders, advocates, employees, prospective talent, haters and yes, even competitors. That's why it's so important to solidify messaging and positioning from the start. Determine your brand's competitive differentiator, define and develop foundational brand language, test and assess positioning and messaging with your audiences and channels, personalize and segment thought leadership efforts to align with buyer personas and train your executive thought leadership team for success across earned, owned and shared

Now you're ready to build your thought leadership program and, subsequently, increase awareness by partnering with brand advocates. We all have knowledge, experience and a point of view. But ultimately, thought leaders need to inspire customers to act. You can break it down into four categories: Subject Matter Executives, Employee Advocacy, Voice of the Customer and Influencer Marketing.

It's important to note the integration point here between influencers and thought leadership. Amplify thought leadership content

by leveraging brand influencers and advocates and associate your brand with industry influencers to establish credibility and create content.

As with any marketing program, your de-

partment will be challenged with measuring the success of thought leadership efforts. Skip the vanity metrics and go right to the results that matter most. Rely Google Analytics and social media/ influencer marketing tools like Audiense that will share insights that



highlight which content is driving traffic, which content might need some SEO improvement, time on site and share of voice "SOV" compared to competitors. Other metrics that are more predictive of how thought leadership is aligned with top-line revenue goals include: how well your brand is received at industry events, ease of decision on selling products, increase in deal size, shorter sales cycle in comparison to your competitors, thought leadership driven leads and MQLs that result in sales.

Thought leadership in combination with content marketing will establish your brand with a solid reputation that will be defined as innovative, futuristic and trustworthy.

Key components of a successful influencer marketing strategy

According to Social Media Today influencer marketing budgets have nearly doubled in the last year. That's why starting, or enhancing your existing strategy, should be at the top of your marketing "to do" list.

But, where do you begin and what do you do? Here are a few key components to a successful program:

Set your goals. Remember that influencer marketing is all about how ideas move from one influencer type to the next. At the end of the campaign, what do you want influencers to say about you?

Creating SMART goals, KPIs or setting a predetermined ROI for your influencer campaign will help you determine how much to budget, whom to target and what to measure.

Discover your influencer network. Find influencers for whom your brand is a natural fit. Influencers aren't necessarily celebrities who have millions of followers. They're influential because they have some degree of expertise in a topic, validated by

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HEALTHCARE'S DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

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the number of relationships they have built in the space.

Engage with your influencers. Remember that influencer marketing is a person-to-person exercise. Engage with them and add value to their efforts before asking for something in return. They will be judging your credibility as much as you are assessing theirs, so keep that in mind as you establish contact.

Develop paid, earned, owned strategies

Select the right influencer for the right goal for each channel.

Earned influencer strategy. There's a great deal of synergy between PR and earned influencer efforts. Think of influencers as members of the media who use

INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE MARKETING

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etc. By doing this, you're able to borrow the validation that comes with earned media or exposure, and deploy it in a targeted way to your decision makers, regardless of whether they attended the presentation or happened to read the article. Doing this will again require keen understanding of your personas, integration across the marketing team and the ability to effectively repurpose and redeploy content across channels.

The year of value-based marketing

As healthcare brands look to 2020, they'll see significant change and challenges on the horizon, but also a moment to examine and re-examine their brand and overall strategy. It's important to think through the ways that the shifting regulatory and competitive landscape may impact a business and or its customers. Decision makers or influencers may have changed, or their perception of your product or service may have changed. Bands must ask and re-ask: how will that impact your communications with them?

Once you understand your priority personas, taking a truly integrated approach to reaching them is the difference between marketing that checks the boxes and marketing that delivers true value. Ensure that messages are being deployed strategically across channels, and that you're getting the most from every piece of content. Focus on continuous analysis and measurement to ensure visibility into behavior change and the impact of communications efforts across all marketing functions.

Based in Boston, Ryan Lilly leads the healthcare practice at Matter Communications. O

social as their broadcast channel.

Paid influencer strategy. When entering into a paid engagement, use sites such as Audiense to validate an influencer's reach or to develop your influencer network. Remember to be transparent!

Owned influencer strategy. There are several options here, each of them presenting their own unique opportunities: Employee advocates: Subject matter specialists who are passionate about topics relevant to your audience. Thought leadership: Pre-existing in your organization in the form of executives, managers, customer service reps, board members or salespeople. Align to specific content needs and support with a social strategy. Owned content channels: Use blogs, social media pages and websites to generate organic shares from influencers.

Measure the impact

Early and often, measure key analytics to determine what's working and what's

not, so you're able to effectively steer your strategy. How do your ideas move over time? Monitoring where each idea is on the trajectory of influence will help determine next steps and measure success.

By utilizing strategic thought leadership and influencer programs, healthcare marketers can set their brands and executives up for success, whether that be a financial event (M&A, IPO, next funding round), new partnerships, expanded national or global footprint, or more awareness and visibility to drive sales. When used effectively and in an integrated manner with PR and marketing initiatives, marketers can rest assured that they are increasing the reach and frequency of their messages with key decision makers for positive business impact.

Dan Martin is Senior Vice President of PAN Communications' Healthcare Practice. O

FRAGMENTATION IN HEALTHCARE

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system—must speak out. They must begin to outline how demonstrating and supporting brand value across the health ecosystem chain, years before a drug is even determined to be safe and effective, is crucial to patient outcomes as well as reducing overall system costs. Their work might well prevent life-enhancing and -saving medicines from ending up on the formulary cutting room floor.

Gil Bashe is a Managing Partner, Global Health, Finn Partners. Kristie Kuhl, JD, is a Managing Partner, Health, Finn Partners. Fern Lazar is a Managing Partner, Health, Finn Partners. O

DRUG PRICING COMMUNICATIONS

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py list price of more than \$400,000 received no negative press. All media coverage of the launch included contextual messaging about value. That coverage was the outcome of a cross-functional team working on value communications 15 months before the anticipated approval date. They communicated both their intentions to ensure patient access in advance of launch and delivered fair value for payers.

In the end, all that work had value of its

Miriam Kalnicki is Reputation & Risk Management Strategist at Syneos Health Communications. O

J.P. MORGAN CONFERENCE

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to tell their stories in a forum that can have a major impact on their bottom lines.

We've only just scratched the surface on what it takes to make the J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference a communications success. There's so much more to consider, and every situation is unique. It's an environment where experience and relationships matter as much as a smart plan and responsive team, areas where JPA Health delivers tremendous value for its

Carrie Jones is Principal at JPA Health. **O**

THE 'FUTURE IPO' MINDSET

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ners, such as patient advocacy organizations, may bear fruit if the media seek their perspective on your company.

Maintaining a "future IPO" mindset not only positions your company well for a potential stock offering, it also ensures a robust and disciplined communications strategy that will serve your company well for myriad situations, whether you're working to establish and amplify your voice, prepare for potential crises or undertake an IPO.

Terri Clevenger is Managing Director of Westwicke/ICR Healthcare Public Relations. O

Preparing for the next era in healthcare comms

Industry experts share insights on the trends expected to power the future of healthcare and the communications sector, along with tips for staying ahead of the curve.

By Kimberly Hobbs

recently had the opportunity to participate in a panel, "2020: 20 Things You Can Do to Prepare for The Next Era in Healthcare Communications," at the ExL Pharma Public Relations and Communications Summit.

The lively discussion featured insights from a diverse group of co-panelists, including: Mike Hudnall, Global Client Leader, Global Practice Lead, Health, WPP; Brad Saunders, Vice President, Strategic Partnerships, The Mighty; and Kathy Steinberg, Senior Consultant, PR Research, The Harris Poll. With backgrounds spanning across multi-channel marketing, digital health, advocacy relations and research analytics, there was fantastic dialogue based on our unique perspectives and understanding of the influential trends that will be powering the work we do in 2020 and beyond.

Trust is the North Star

Investing time and effort to build a foundation of trust among patients and patient communities has never been more essential to success. Today, consumers seek answers from a variety of sources-accurate or not—and, at times, trust these sources more than their healthcare providers.

"Marketers need to keep pace with the communities they're looking to reach," said Saunders. "People are hungry for advice, but don't know where to turn—trust is the North Star, but who and what we trust is changing."

So, with medical authority up for grabs, communications efforts must be part solid science and part personal experience. It's the melding of the two that creates the strongest trust as people look for a one-stop-shop for health information and people "like me" to learn from.

While establishing trust is a significant responsibility, Hudnall reminds us it's also an opportunity for brands to demonstrate their commitment to a larger purpose. "We're seeing a more proactive focus on a connection to society, reputation, behavior and culture," he said. "People today care about the behavior of the companies they do business with and, while many health companies are under fire, they do an enormous amount of good in the world. Let's tell that story."

Engagement vs. marketing

Panelists agreed that while traditional marketing efforts have focused on pushing information to audiences rather than engaging them, patients and healthcare providers now expect deeper, more personalized experiences. "We need to bring value in an authentic way by contributing to the community dialogue, being part of the conversation, not just talking at 'them," Saunders said. "Let community insights guide the way to actual conversations and learn from the feedback."

In addition, it's key to remember that barriers to better care aren't only medical treatment and access, but also cultural, environmental and health literacy. Communications efforts need to consider these realities when coming up with a strategy of who to reach and how.

From crowdsourced diagnoses to crowdfunding to pay for medical treatment and even "scientists" as young as high school age, Steinberg believes our targets are vast in demographics and psychographics, so we need to take a broader approach to who we hope to reach.

Balance personalization and privacy

To create personalized experiences for the growing demands of our consumer mindset audience, we must understand how to leverage emerging technologies, data and intelligence that are suddenly at our fingertips.

While this makes the practice of medicine more complex, Hudnall explained that it also presents opportunities for tailored experiences and precise, targeted relationships. "Companies are embracing the technology revolution, with the goals of significantly transforming business operations, speeding the approval of and access to new medicines and automating processes and even new self-service platforms."

As communicators make the most of these new skills—including wearable tech, telehealth and the use of "gamification" and virtual reality—Steinberg recommends proceeding with caution and bracing for the inevitable "tech-lash."

"Despite improving adherence and outcomes in healthcare, there is backlash due to privacy concerns," she said. "Communicators need to understand the importance of transparency and security when talking about tech integration in health."

Keep people at the center

People living with a health condition do not want to be defined by it. They want to be seen as people, not just as patients, and want companies and providers to understand how their condition affects the other parts of their life—the whole of their life.

As the commercialization of medical care continues and medical visits over-index on labs and functional scores, research shows that people want to discuss how their condition is affecting their job, their relationships, their full life.

In the future, Saunders predicts that harnessing the power of storytelling and the value of online community will be vital to

helping navigate health issues, and that the ability to tap into shared, emotional experiences will be as effective, if not more effective, than information coming from the "experts."

Patients aren't the only group that wants to be treated like people. Healthcare providers



Kimberly Hobbs

are overworked, stressed and burnt out. To capture their attention, be a partner. Don't give them something else to add to their day; instead, show them how something else can simplify their day, improve patient satisfaction scores and get them home in time for dinner with family.

So, while health systems and technology may evolve and transform across the globe, people's beliefs and behaviors don't shift so quickly or dramatically. A holistic approach to healthcare—one that keeps people at the center of every message and balances personalized, authentic experiences with the desire for transparency and privacy—will always be one of the most powerful assets for communicators to create positive change for those we work to serve.

Kimberly Hobbs is Executive Vice President, Director, Advocacy & Patient Engagement, GCI Health. O

PR news brief

Cotton group farms sustainability work to H+K

Hill+Knowlton Strategies edged out a dozen shops to win the sustainability pitch of Cotton Council International, non-profit that promotes US cotton fiber and manufactured products around the globe.

Launched in November 2018 at the Sourcing USA Summit in Scottsdale, AZ, the US Trust Protocol is designed as an integrated data collection, measurement and verification procedure to document US production practices and their environmental impact. The Protocol is slated to launch in the 2020 growing year.

Sam Lythgoe, H&K's Global Chief Business Development Officer, leads the effort, which includes helping CCI identify and prioritize potential partners and developing a campaign to create awareness, adoption and advocacy of the Protocol.





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The power of microinfluencers in healthcare

Tips and opportunities for healthcare marketers debating a collaboration with patient influencers.

By Kate Callan

ith the growth of social media, savvy marketers began seeing the value of leveraging celebrities and prominent bloggers to reach new audiences because of their influence and reach. Over the past year, worldwide spending on influencer campaigns has grown to be a \$6.3 billion business. While influencer marketing began with celebrity and top-tier influencers touting follower counts in the millions, as social algorithms changed, engagement rates declined and follower count was no longer a primary indicator of success. Enter the "microinfluencer."

Who are microinfluencers?

Microinfluencers are everyday people with a focused, yet highly engaged social following of less than 100,000. They tend to be more relatable and reflective of their peer group, so their followers trust and seek out their advice and opinions. Because they have a tighter audience, we often see microinfluencers in the health space treating their followers as a community. They spend time responding to comments and offering general support to their network.

Microinfluencers' role in healthcare

The average consumer engages with healthcare brands or campaign channels, but not as much as with their own patient community. In a 2019 WEGO Health survey of more than 400 patients, 93 percent said they would ask their physicians about health information shared by a trusted influencer. More than 87 percent said they're likely to speak to their doctor about treatment after hearing about it from a trusted patient influencer.

In healthcare, microinfluencers are often patients living with a specific condition whose followers consist of other patients, support network and healthcare providers. These patients serve as advocates not only for themselves but for those who follow them and seek their advice on many different topics related to their particular experience.

Working with patient influencers allows healthcare companies to connect directly with their target audiences with more authenticity than they are able to on owned channels because their message is informed and delivered by the patients themselves. With greater authority in certain subjects, microinfluencers are intrinsically more genuine and their recommendations tend to be more trusted and valued by their audiences.

Collaborating with patient influencers

There are many opportunities to collabo-

rate with microinfluencers in healthcare in both an organic and paid capacity. While some relationship building and information sharing is typically unpaid, it's important to remember they should be compensated for their work just like any other spokesperson or influencer when providing companies with valuable insights and content. And when working on paid collaborations, don't forget to follow the Federal Trade Commission's Endorsement Guidance regarding proper disclosures and transparency.

A few examples of how health and wellness companies can collaborate with patient influencers include:

- Sharing news or events they might be interested in, similar to how we approach earned media outreach. This is often a nice first touch to introduce ourselves and the types of content we provide.
- Inviting patients to meet and greets and get-to-know-you events to introduce clients and stakeholders to potential patient influencers. We often include a mix of company and third-party speakers, but the primary focus is on the patients themselves versus a one-way presentation from the company.
- Advisory boards are great opportunities to test draft concepts, messaging and materials to ensure they hit the mark and inspire action. These closed sessions include confidentiality agreements and compensation for the insights patients provide.
- Once an initial relationship is established, these influencers may be contracted to serve as ongoing consultants on an annual basis across a variety of initiatives, providing many opportunities to test your work and ensure it's effective in its message.
- Given their prominence in patient communities, we often work with influencers to host digital events like Twitter chats and Facebook Lives on their pages or brand or campaign channels.
- Sponsored content is traditionally thought of as a consumer influencer tactic, but we've also seen great success working with patient influencers to develop blog and social posts for their pages that can also be reposted on company channels. When collaborating on sponsored content, we develop a brief to outline objectives, key messages and guardrails, but the content itself is developed by the influencer to ensure authenticity and relevance for their audiences.

Making the decision to engage with patient influencers

The notion that people trust other people more than they do companies or brands isn't going to change. While taking the time to identify the right influencer partner is crucial, the process doesn't end there.

A high-level view of influencer engagement process includes four key steps:

Discovery: Identification (reach and relevance), social listening and discussion assessment to vet.

Engagement: lored outreach based on program objective (earned/paid, etc.). Program brief review.



Kate Callan

Collaboration: Content delivery and client review process; go live with content or events.

Measurement: Based on campaign objectives, key performance indicators.

What's most important to remember about engaging with patient influencers is to approach the relationship with empathy as they are often sharing very personal aspects of their lives. At Evoke KYNE, we view these engagements as true collaborations, ensuring we're aligned on mutual objectives and success factors, and that the influencer, our client and our target audience see value in what we're developing and sharing. In an age where word of mouth is more powerful than anything a company or brand can say, the question all of us working in healthcare communications must begin to ask ourselves is not if we should partner with microinfluencers to achieve our goals, but rather how we should begin to collaborate.

Kate Callan is Senior Vice President of Social Strategy at Evoke KYNE. •

PR news brief

Turner aces pitch for Wisconsin travel PR

The Wisconsin Dept. of Tourism has selected Denver-based Turner following a competitive pitch to handle the PR component of its integrated marketing communications push.

The state issued a \$12 million marcomm RFP in June, which generated 27 bids from 17 agencies in nine states.

Ad agency Hiebing and website developer Simpleview join Turner on Team Wisconsin, replacing incumbents Laughlin Constable and Ascedia.

Turner's contract runs for three years with the option of two one-year extensions.

Columbus, Ohio-based Fahlgren Mortine owns

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What digital communicators can learn from Gen Z

The expectations of the first truly digital native generation reflect best practices in digital customer experience design.

By Dan Burgess

ommunicators in pharmaceuticals and healthcare only recently got a I handle on Millennials, and already we find ourselves sprinting to understand Generation Z. As well we should. Comprising one-quarter of the US population today, these Americans born after 1995 are expected to represent 40 percent of all consumers in 2020. Fortunately, we already know what Gen Z wants from digital communications, because we were the ones who shaped their expectations of digital in the first place.

Much is made of the unique socioeconomic characteristics of Gen Z. It's the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in history, has the highest rates of high school graduation and college attendance, and is least likely to live in rural America. What's truly differentiating and of paramount importance for communicators is Gen Z's relationship to technology. Gen Z is the first generation to have been born into an environment constantly conditioning them with smartphone alerts and behavioral modification algorithms, a virtual Skinner box.

Paradoxically-and thankfully-this always-on experience seems to have left Gen Zers unimpressed with glitzy veneers and unmoved by tactics that motivated previous generations. Gen Zers are after truth and authenticity, and it remains to be seen whether their alarmingly high rates of depression and anxiety are the result of constant connection or the frustrating realization that genuineness too often can be in short supply. To beat a dead horse, for Gen Zers, content truly is king, and they're set on separating the real stuff from the fluff.

What is good digital to Gen Z?

Pharma and health communicators have learned to adapt to meet the needs and expectations of our audiences as media technologies have evolved to deliver our messages. We've followed the advances in communications for each generation: television for the Baby Boomers, computers for Generation X, the Internet for Millennials. In contrast, Gen Zers were born into a relatively mature space for all these technologies and were given it all in a handheld device before they were out of elementary school. Little wonder that they have an average attention span of eight seconds; they must continually evaluate and decide whether the newest piece of digital information coming at them is worth their time or can be dismissed.

Good digital communications to Gen Z is what it's learned from Google and Apple and Amazon and Netflix: namely, digital experiences that are timely, trustworthy, transparent and tolerant. What Gen Z values in digital is the result of the best efforts of user experience designers and digital customer experience architects over the last 40 years, and especially over the last decade, with the coming of the iPhone. Whereas previous generations respond more positively to user-centered design, Gen Z expects it.

Timely. Digital customer experiences must deliver valuable information on demand. There should be no unreasonable delays or other unnecessary "seams" that disrupt the flow of content or bungle the transitions between discovering, learning, assessing and doing. Gen Zers expect to move between mobile and the real world without missing a beat or losing their personal information or previously expressed preferences. Access to health information should be intuitive and uncomplicated, whether via a search engine or inside a branded and owned experience. Booking an appointment should be efficient and reliable, and health interventions should be accompanied by reasonable reminders and useful tips that fit naturally into the patient's everyday life.

Trustworthy. The "no filter" generation understands how content can be manipulated and pursues authenticity. Although Gen Zers may lack the cynicism of their Gen X parents, they see merit in questioning what seems stable. Gen Zers witnessed their parents lose 40 percent of their net worth during the Great Recession of December 2007 to June 2009, and they want both the real price of goods and services and an honest value comparison to help them in their purchasing decisions. They value credibility, not celebrity, in testimonials and in their social media influencers, and to be taken seriously, those informed advocates both should look like society at large.

Transparent. Gen Zers are suspicious of the underlying motivations of communications professionals and expect to be able to engage openly and easily in twoway conversations with company service representatives via social media, chatbots, live chat or voice. Gen Zers do accept the role of campaigns and brand messaging in catching their attention, but they expect communications to reflect what brands offer and that the expressed values of companies are manifest in substantive action, not greenwashing. For pharma and healthcare, what appeals to Gen Z is an emphasis on condition-related content, a focus on legitimate patient stories and the amplification of corporate social responsibility efforts that genuinely fit the business.

Tolerant. Generation Z embraces its diversity and respects the range of opinions and identities in the human experience. Gen Zers expect to be part of that pluralistic conversation and are native creators of content that expresses their opinions. They want to engage with



Dan Burgess

you on digital channels, including social, and to amplify your content without being forced to adhere to guidelines that serve only the brand. They understand that digital can deliver personalized experiences and expect digital healthcare communications that anticipate their needs and interests without being too intrusive or creepy. They see that one-size-fits-all too often is interesting to none.

We believe that being Fluent in Human is central to engaging with Gen Z and the continually increasing digital audience. Digital communicators can design user-centric programs that reflect the preferences of the intended audiences, but only by understanding what motivates them and what leads them to tune out can we build the compelling stories and personal connections they want. Only through human-centric engagement strategies can we together create meaningful change.

Dan Burgess is Director of Digital Engagement at Health Unlimited.

PR news brief

W20 lands AIDS 2020 conference

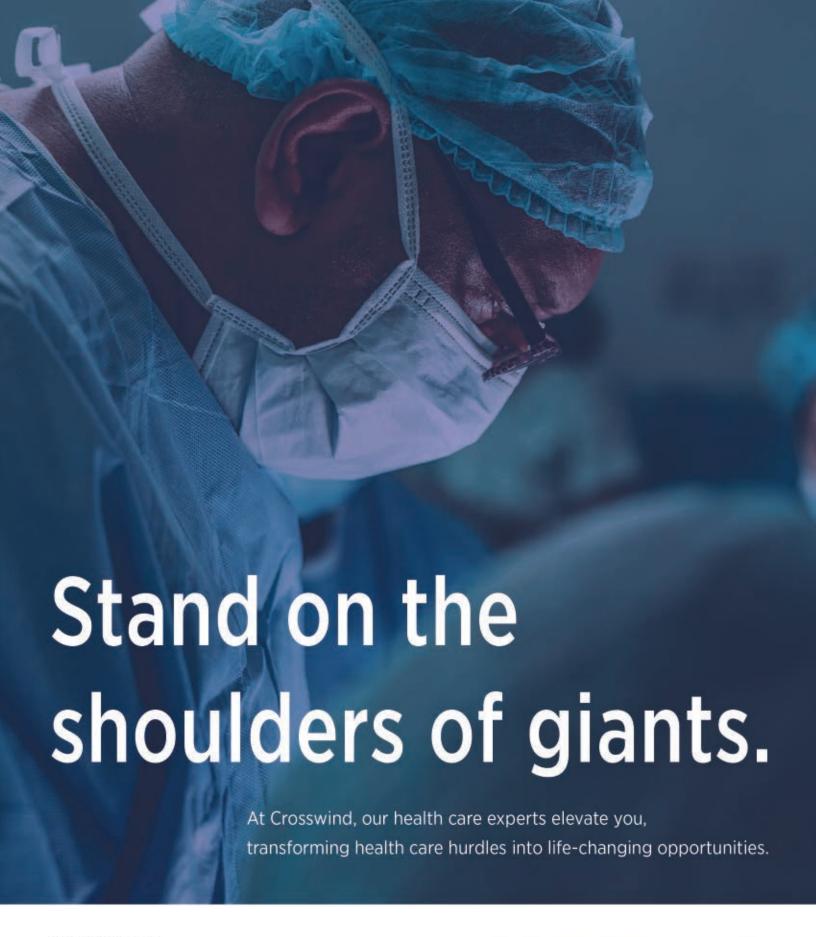
W20 will promote the International AIDS Society's AIDS 2020 conference slated for the PR firm's home city of San Francisco and neighboring Oakland.

The July 2020 event will mark the return of the IAS conference to the Bay Area after a 30-year hiatus and be the first time two cities co-host the world's largest gathering of medical experts and activists on HIV and

Themed "Resilience," the program will include more than 20 pre-conferences, satellite sessions, a global village and exhibition area.

In providing regional communications support for AIDS 2020, W20 will apply its analytics savvy to media relations, content strategy and social media.

It also will create an image-based PR campaign to celebrate resilience of people who embody the strength of the HIV community.



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The complexity of being a healthcare communicator

The cross-over effects of the PESO model and best practices for a multichannel approach to drive business results.

By Carrie Young

dmit it: if you're a healthcare communicator, you know that media planning has never been more confounding. Blame it on social media. Everyone is everywhere, all of the time. And everything is interconnected.

Social media's quicksilver qualities make the venerable PESO model-thank you, Gini Dietrich—feel static and siloed, just when we need to be fluid. That means being everywhere our stakeholders are and creating consistent customer experience on every platform and channel.

Don't toss the PESO model just yet, though. In fact, it's our thinking that needs stretching.

Enlightened communicators understand that each channel in the model—paid, earned, shared and owned—has multiple merits and cross-over effects. And each channel can be a hybrid. Think: paid influencers or search engine marketing.

The media streams are all interconnected from our stakeholders' points of view. And our campaigns and messages should be too.

Take social media. Once simply shared media, social media now includes branded YouTube videos, online-only news media and paid ads, effectively placing it into every section of the PESO model. Creating only a shared-media strategy is impossible. Healthcare communicators must apply a multichannel approach—or miss connecting fully with their audiences.

But let's back up. Why is this happening? What landscape changes are creating the need for a multichannel approach?

An evolving landscape

When we think of the media, outlets like CNN, Fox News, Modern Healthcare and the New York Times often come to mind. With the digital influx, though, new outlets are popping up and gaining audiences every day.

This trend is shaking up the communication landscape. First, increased competition has driven the need for new revenue streams. We're seeing media companies lean more heavily into sponsored content, especially as ad blockers become main-

Second, more digital-first outlets mean more opportunities for fake news. Most Americans—86 percent—feel online news websites have reported fake news in the U.S. In response, the days of a single source of news authority are gone. Instead, we're seeking out multiple experts, platforms and

outlets to try to discern fact from fiction.

Digital domination has impacted every quadrant of the PESO model.

Paid: Now that digital is king, paid media is no longer synonymous with print, TV and radio ads. According to eMarketer, digital media buys this year will officially surpass traditional media ad spending.

At the same time, paid search spending accounts for 39 percent of advertisers' total budgets. The digital revolution of paid media will likely continue in the form of voice search. By 2020, it's predicted that 50 percent of all online searches will be voice searches, and by 2025, voice is expected to be a \$40 billion channel.

Earned: More media outlets, more posts, more chances for your earned content to be missed. As the landscape shifts, earned media should also be amplified through paid social and shared on owned channels to build brand loyalty that leads to advocacy.

Shared: This is the most obvious shift in communication. Social media is where the consumers are and where all brands want to be. With so many users and brands vying for attention, employing a purely organic social strategy means you're not guaranteed access to your audience. It's free to sign up but not free to play.

Owned: As digital dominates, organizations need to create relevant content and experiences designed to change based on real-time behavioral analytics. Owned properties like blogs, apps, landing pages, podcasts and video can't simply be intuitive, they must be built and designed to deliver a personal experience for every stakeholder.

The multichannel approach

To resonate with their audiences, healthcare organizations need to develop content and engage in conversations that provide shared value, and that isn't happening via a single tactic anymore. Instead, a multichannel approach that considers how paid, earned, shared and owned channels all work hand-in-hand is the key to success.

There's no perfect multichannel marketing strategy template, but there are some best practices and tips:

Put your audience at the center of your strategy. Regardless of the tactic, good strategy keeps key stakeholders top of mind with every communication. Clearly define your audience before you're able to figure out what "right channel, right time" means

Remember, digital has changed the con-

tent game. When creating content, think digital, or more specifically, mobile-first. Invest in short-form video and light motion graphics as part of your content strategy.

Prioritize paid. Creating owned content? Pay to amplify it. Posting an earned media piece? Put dollars behind it. Search engine marketing and paid social media should be

two of your top priori-

Test and optimize. Today's media changes daily and the beauty of digital is you can test, learn and adjust in real

A multichannel marketing approach takes resources, both human



Carrie Young

and financial. Healthcare communicators have to navigate through their organization's silos in order to merge and align marketing, communications, brand, HR and even IT, all with the goal of delivering timely, relevant, audience-appropriate content.

Carrie Young is a Vice President in Padilla's Health Practice. O

PR news brief

Hotwire launches Chicago office

US and UK-based tech PR specialist Hotwire has launched a new pop-up office in Chicago.

Hotwire's Windy City digs, which is officially open, is located in The National building in the heart of the Loop. The new outpost will allow the New York-headquartered agency to support its roster of regional clients, strengthen its portfolio of consumer and tech companies and attract area top talent.

Hotwire currently maintains a growing base of Midwest clients, including project44, named one of Chicago's five hottest tech startups, as well as inRiver and Calabrio.

"Chicago has been top of our list for possible expansion cities for some time," Heather Kernahan, President of Hotwire North America and Australia, told O'Dwyer's. "It is recognized as a top city for innovation brands, consumer leaders and as a tech hub. Global companies are coming to Chicago to connect with customers, influencers and industry leaders. There's also a lot of communications and marketing talent based in Chicago who want to work with a progressive global agency like Hotwire. We're proud to now be part of the Chicago business community."

Leading the agency's Chicago team will be Senior Director of Media Strategy Sharon Kane, Director Austin Weedfall and Account Manager Tammy Olson.

Hotwire said the pop-up model allows the agency to attract talent who want to work with global companies without a need to relocate. Hotwire currently operates additional pop-up offices in Minneapolis and Mexico City and plans to continue to expand across North America with additional forthcoming locations.

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Taking control of the pharma conversation

It's time for our pharmaceutical leaders to get real on social media.

By Eileen O'Brien

n recent years, my mantra was "social media is free like a puppy is free" to convey the resources required to do social media right. This was to cover the basics: content strategy, paid promotion, community management and measurement.

I've spent the past 10 years of my career focused on biopharma social media and I can assure you that, in 2019, the basics are no longer enough; we need to take advantage of the power of social media to have authentic conversations with our stakeholders. Social media is where audiences are spending a significant amount of time and offers a great medium to tell stories.

In this year's Gallup survey on industry reputation, pharmaceutical companies sank to the very bottom with only nine percent of Americans holding a "very positive" view of the industry, and 18 percent having a "somewhat positive" view. One way to help reverse that trend is to start using social media to humanize pharma and take control of the conversation.

True, authentic interaction on social media takes the following:

Preparation

Companies need systems in place to monitor the conversation and be able to nimbly respond. The best example of this was Sanofi's response to Roseanne Barr's assertion that its medication for insomnia was the reason she posted a racist tweet. There were two critical pieces to the success of Sanofi's post: One, the speed at which the company responded, and second, the relatable tone. (Please note that I was not involved in this response.) Sanofi clearly had a process in place to get the right decision makers quickly aligned on a plan of action.

As demonstrated by this example, a detailed monitoring, engagement and issues protocol is essential to do social media well.



Resources

Analytics, including the use of AI and machine learning, can help us automate pulling the data, but we still need to layer on human intelligence for social media engagement. It's basic customer service to respond to questions via social media even when the question or comment is critical. However, it's important to keep in mind that social media isn't necessarily the place to be having nuanced conversations about a personal medical condition. Those conversations should be taken offline in many

Taking a stand and having a perspective can be risky. However, as recent current events around gun control have shown, consumers increasingly want to know where companies stand on issues. Millennials, in particular, care about purpose-driven brands. Earlier this year, PureTech Health's CEO Daphne Zohar responded to Senator Elizabeth Warren's criticism of the pharma industry, reminding her that pharma companies are made up of people. Zohar received significant engagement from stakeholders on Twitter. The majority agreed with Zohar's point and did not agree with Senator Warren's generalization of the industry. Biopharma companies need to stand behind their products and practices.



Expectation setting

Understand that there will be trolls dedicated to disparaging others-and detractors. It's important to evaluate the influence of the person commenting, and the number of followers doesn't always give the full picture. We like to say to our clients, "Don't feed the trolls or let them distract you but monitor them." People looking for a constructive conversation should be engaged and know that they are being heard. We use data and experience to address these sometimes complex situations. While we aren't going to please everyone, it's important to get our perspective into the conversation.

Empowered employees

It's easy for people to "hate" big pharma companies, but it's harder to hate a person. Especially if that person is your neighbor who is on LinkedIn sharing the positive impact her pharma company is having in your local community. Biopharma



Eileen O'Brien

CEOs have started to utilize social media, and our analytics show that they typically receive neutral to positive comments. It's during times of business challenges that consumers and investors are quick to share their frustrations. While it's great to see members of the C-site use social media. most, if they engage at all, are responding to media, policy and public figures and not to the average person.

However, it's not only the C-suite who should be using social media to share the life-changing work of biopharma companies. Most companies have clearly defined social media policies that empower their employees to share on social media (excluding brand mentions). We have started to see employees in various roles up-level their social media channels in order to interact with stakeholders, including patient and physician influencers. Many are starting to use social media to build authentic relationships around a shared interest in healthcare and elevate the science.

In conclusion, relevant, authentic engagement can be done! We have been able to collaborate with forward-thinking biopharma clients and create processes using guardrails to do nearly real-time, unique engagement. While social media isn't easy, it can positively impact a company's business. However, it's simply not enough to push out content on social media. We must be willing to engage in real conversation.

Eileen O'Brien is Managing Director of Social Media at W2O Group. •



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The right way to launch a medical breakthrough

Tips for educating the media on medical innovations.

Bv Frank Tortorici

hen introducing a medical innovation to the media, it's vital to get your ducks in a row on several important matters relating to potential coverage.

It goes without saying that you should prepare a thorough media list of medical and science reporters of major print and broadcast media in order to increase your chances of your client's breakthrough getting the attention it ranks in the correct media vehicles.

Make sure you describe the medical innovation with the seriousness it deserves, while at the same time keeping your verbiage conversational so that the non-medical experts among your audience pay attention and can understand the changes your client is bringing to the table, such as a significant technological advance of a medical test or device.

It's the PR person's responsibility, in such a new product introduction, to go beyond medical trades. Another important area of vital coverage is the business/finance media who keep track of scientific developments that have the potential to transform product categories and/or bring forth a healthy

Marketing Maven last year worked with Sandstone Diagnostics, a medical device company focused on a data-driven approach to men's reproductive health, to introduce the Trak Volume Cup, the first FDA-cleared device allowing men to measure semen volume and diagnose hypospermia, or low semen volume, at home.

We had to explain, in layman's terms, the importance of the product. According to the World Health Organization, men who regularly produce less than 1.5 milliliters of semen may be at risk for infertility, as low volume can inhibit the ability of sperm to reach the female reproductive tract. Low semen volume can also be associated with reduced sexual function and pleasure, low testosterone and an increased risk of other urological conditions and chronic diseases.

The Trak Volume Cup is the first at-home testing product that accurately measures semen volume. It's the only FDA-cleared device that integrates volume measurement directly into the collection cup itself.

But the key message to convey to medical and business writers was that low semen volume is an important but often overlooked health and fertility yardstick. This innovative device further improved the semen testing experience and allowed consumers to measure and track an additional parameter for their reproductive health and chances of conception.

With such medical breakthroughs, the product's communications representatives' qualifications come into play. An experienced PR executive who has a history working with both medical and financial reporters has the best shot to effectively get the word out to the masses. Though contrary to how search executives usually handle the hunt for a PR position, the individual whose career has featured a blend of disciplines is often the best choice.

We're also very fortunate to have the current responsibility of representing a new medical product that has the potential to radically alter the state of genetic testing throughout the world. Breaking a disruptive technology into a market brings with it many challenges, including convincing skeptical consumers and journalists that your new device is all that it says it is and functions the way it's supposed to.

This new revolutionary technology is from IV therapy company REVIV. REVIV is launching the first accurate at-home test that uses genetics to determine how to best address individual wellness via IV therapies and supplements.

Working with a global array of leading physicians, REVIV has developed the protocol for testing all parts of a person's chromosomes, which enables the company to provide the most accurate recommendations on how to keep each individual tester healthy and happy for as long as their DNA makes that possible. REVIV will provide each consumer with a map to follow that will enable them to look and feel their very best. Each tester's map will include ways to keep their skin revitalized and healthy, foods to eat that will help individual body composition and lead to longevity and a complete analysis on how to treat every part of a person's body for optimal health.

REVIV aims to become the first wellness brand to offer a lifestyle one-stop shop that will educate each user as to what works best for their body type and to suggest therapies and supplements that will enable every consumer to become the healthiest person they can be.

In both examples I've described, it's of the utmost importance to convince the public of the veracity of each of these products' claims. PR people know that the best way to reach the public is via the third-party endorsements of journalists covering the appropriate market sector.

A great way to spread the word to the right reporters is by developing and staging an event—whether it be a lunch, breakfast or press conference—that allows journalists to ask tough medical and financial ques-

In the case of Trak, we planned a breakfast that had all the right reporters from the medical community as well as senior writers from media, such as Business Insider and Huffington Post, who were able to distill the information easily digestible



Frank Tortorici

sound bites to the general public.

In such events, it's vital to include physicians who are affiliated with the product you're introducing and who can describe the scientific details associated with the new technology you're promoting. Such doctors lend credence to the viability of your medical innovation and will be able to answer questions from the most knowledgeable of media members present.

For the long run of your account, it's also important to pay careful attention at your press event and take copious notes of what findings—both medical and financial—are being challenged and/or easily accepted and make sure both are continuously addressed in all your communications materials for the product moving forward.

Frank Tortorici is Senior Strategist of Media Relations at Marketing Maven and leads the healthcare and professional services PR from its NY office. •

PR news brief

Ruder Finn gobbles up SPI Group

Ruder Finn has acquired SPI Group, the Jersey-based shop that ranked No. 17 in O'Dwyer's 2018 healthcare rankings with fees of \$5 million.

Launched in 1997, SPI provides internal communications services to clients such as Bayer, Novo Nordisk, Merck, Regeneron, Pfizer and Novartis.

RF CEO Kathy Bloomgarden considers employees the driving force behind productivity, growth and innovation in today's fast-paced corporate world.

"Companies must no longer view their workforce as 'employees' but instead treat them as highly valuable customers," said Bloomgarden. "SPI Group uses digital solutions to create experiences that not only engage and activate employees but build an authentic, transparent and highly motivated community."

Steve Goodman launched SPI in 1997. The firm's 30-members bolsters RF healthcare unit to about 250 staffers.



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Let's start using the right tools

Many healthcare providers are struggling to effectively utilize new technologies that were intended to streamline operations and make their lives—and the lives of their patients—easier. Here's why the communications sector is uniquely poised to provide healthcare clients with the tools that allow them to accomplish their goals in a smarter, more strategic fashion.

By David Jarrard and Reed Smith

e're a consumer-driven society. It's a fact of life that comes with pros and cons for today's PR agency. Today, agencies have a significant opportunity to build trust and grow their business by managing—and catering to-the right consumer expectations and behaviors, while recalibrating thinking on behaviors that aren't helpful.

Consumers today don't delineate between industries. They've been given convenience in their transportation (Uber, Lyft), purchasing (Amazon) and travel (Hotels.com). As a result, they've come to expect convenience in other aspects of life. For example, as a firm exclusively devoted to healthcare, we see healthcare providers struggling to implement what—to other industries—are relatively basic features: online scheduling, easy-pay methods, etc. Meanwhile, consumers aren't comparing one hospital or doctor with another, they're comparing their doctor with GrubHub. When those comparisons reveal gaps, frustration grows.

To combat this problem, consumer-facing businesses have been buying up any and all tools to plug the gaps. Which has turned into its own problem. We just keep buying things instead of understanding what the need is. We've bought off the promise of a technology vendor. Too often, that promise is to alleviate our need to be smart about

a subject or to hire more people. In other words, we're asking technology to make our lives easier, to take some of the responsibility off us, to solve our needs instead of those of our customers.

The result? We've reached a strange place where we look up and all we've really accomplished is acquire a lot of technology. We haven't solved the real problems, and we don't have tools that fit together.

Take the venerable customer relationship management system or software. It was introduced to help manage long sales cycles and repetitive transactions. Very quickly, the CRM was mythologized as a silver bullet. Marketing got excited because now there was a streamlined, "easy" way to show ROI. And while most of that is true—and good the assumption that a strong CRM will make it all easy isn't. CRMs don't alleviate the need for more employees, they necessitate more. Someone has to know how to use it, and it doesn't hurt to have a data scientist or two on staff to really figure out what it all means. That's not inherently bad, it's just not what we perceived the promise to be.

Enough of the bad news. The intentions were good, the consequences not quite what we expected. So, how do we get back to where we were originally headed: Convenience for customers and streamlined operations for our agencies.

It starts with a very simple question: "Do we need all of this?

Let's return to defining our objectives and setting our goals. Instead of looking to plug gaps and duct tape together solutions, let's focus first on the big picture of what we're trying to accomplish and work back from there to the technology we need. The next

step is to consider interoperability. Do the tools we have—or are considering-work together? Do we really need 47 logins or can we cut down on the number of disparate systems?

We then have to do the same thing for our clients. As a good steward of our clients' dollars, we need to be smarter about their technology, what it does, what it doesn't do and what promises are real. It's easy to look for short-term fixes, but those are, tautologically, not going to last. Our



David Jarrard



Reed Smith

clients need smart advice that allows them to accomplish their goals in a strategic fash-

One option here is to create a different model where the agency maintains the relationship with the technology vendor. We can serve as a buffer between the tyranny of our clients' urgent need to plug gaps and the many point-solutions out there. Intermediaries aren't very popular in today's convenience-driven consumer world—see mattresses, home security and investing platforms—but sometimes having one is the right thing to do. In this case, our agencies can take care of the due diligence and contextualize the information for our clients. We could possibly even manage the tools for them, and thereby protect them from themselves. Because convenience isn't having more things, it's having the right things.

David Jarrard is Founding Partner and CEO at Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock. Reed Smith is Vice President of Digital Strategy at Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock. O

Big biz challenges Congress to challenge **Trump on tariffs** By Kevin McCauley

he National Foreign Council in September urged Congress to stand up to president Trump by conducting oversight to ensure that his tariff policy serves the overall national interest.

The group, which represents manufacturers, automotive, retail and agricultural trade groups, has established the Tariff Reform Coalition to pressure Congress to assert its role in managing U.S. trade policy.

TRC pledges to work with lawmakers to craft legislation "that will restore the longstanding balance between Congress and the Executive Branch in devising a U.S. trade policy that helps US businesses flourish in the global economy."

In a letter to the Republican and Democratic leaders of the Senate finance and House ways and means committees, the Coalition says it's critical to weigh the downside of the Administration's tariff actions on American manufacturers, farmers and ranchers, exporters and consumers.

Those levies "have had significant collateral effects on domestic prices and have led to extensive retaliation against our exports."

Found in 1914, the NFC includes the American Chemistry Council, Grocery Manufacturers of America, National Retail Federation, Assn. Of Global Automakers and Truck & Engine Manufacturers Assn. and Assn. of Equipment Manufacturers. O

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Communicating the value of next generation therapies

Making the case for value, especially in an environment as complex as healthcare, is imperative. But in an era of personalized medicine and historic innovation, justifying and communicating the value of health innovation comes with especially high stakes.

By Robert Schooling

ommunicating the value of one's products to a variety of stakeholders—patients, payers, providers, policymakers, etc.—is nothing new. Biopharmaceutical companies have been doing this for decades through a variety of channels.

However, the obligation to communicate more openly and explicitly has grown substantially. Recent advances in medicine have led us to a new generation of therapies that have the potential to be curative. These treatments often fall into the category of cell and gene therapies and are revolutionary because they address not just the symptoms of the disease, but correct the underlying genetic basis of disease or the body's ability to fight it at a cellular level. These new generation medicines also challenge traditional thinking around medicines because many of them may be effective after only a single administration, as opposed to the familiar model of ongoing therapy.

While the science is amazing, the price tag for these new medicines is such that many commentators have wondered if growing numbers of these therapies will create an unsustainable financial burden for the health care system. Part of addressing that critique is being willing to fully engage in the discussion around price and value.

For many companies, it may feel like they face two equally undesirable choices: engage in a fraught public conversation that is front and center in the political dialogue or leave it to others to define the value of their products.

While there are many nuances in the content and timing of communication, the fundamental choice about whether or not to communicate is no longer optional, particularly for this new generation of products.

There is no benefit in shying away from the discussion; companies need to lean in and make their case, which will be a benefit to them, but equally a benefit to informing the larger societal discussion. Ducking the discussion only furthers mistaken conclusions and puts at risk the substantial progress that is being made.

In thinking about communicating around value, companies need to address three complementary areas:

The value. The value of therapies can be expressed as the benefit to patients but also benefits to the system (offsets, etc.) and, more broadly, society. Some of the societal benefits may be economic, but we shouldn't neglect recognizing the non-economic factors that may be equally or more meaningful to patients and families. Wherever possible, it's important to quantify these benefits and understand how the various stakeholders benefit. It's likewise important to actually engage with those stakeholders and have meaningful conversations about how these therapies can work within their structures.

The price. The price and the value are not the same. In fact, in many cases the value will exceed the price. The price of therapies needs to be based on understandable metrics that can be clearly communicated to payers and policymakers. That doesn't mean that there should be a single metric or approach to govern pricing—that's a flawed idea—but companies should be prepared to describe how they arrived at their price.

The system. There are a number of important systemic questions to address about how to measure and pay for value that accrues from a single administration. However, we should acknowledge that the health care system already pays large amounts for singular events, like heart

transplants, that may have less long-term benefit than some of these therapies. What has been less tested is the idea of paying for medicines on a singular rather than ongoing basis. Companies need to be engaged in this discussion, informing



Robert Schooling

it, and working closely with payers and policymakers to develop solutions. Part of leadership in this area is helping lead the policy dialogue.

Of course, these communications need to be sequenced thoughtfully in the lead up to your product launch. Communicating either too early or too late may create headaches by sending unintended signals or failing to adequately prepare your stake-

Despite the challenges, we should acknowledge that these are great "problems" to have. Increasingly, it appears that more and more serious genetic diseases may be in reach of a cure. Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the National Institutes of Health, speaking about gene therapy with "60 Minutes," said: "Here's another dream. There are 7,000 genetic diseases for which we know the precise DNA misspelling. Couldn't this same strategy, this same set of principles work for lots of those, maybe someday all of them?"

Most of us know someone whose life has been altered by a rare disease and understand that this kind of progress is cause for celebration.

The companies developing these potentially curative therapies are making a tremendous contribution to society—they can enhance that contribution by taking leadership in discussing the questions of value, price, and system reform.

Robert Schooling is the Founder and President of Reservoir Communications Group. He was formerly Chief Advocacy and Alliance Development Officer for WellPoint, Inc. (now Anthem, Inc.), and President, Americas for APCO Worldwide. O

Influencer Marketing Assn. launches

By Steve Barnes

he Influencer Marketing Association, which includes PR firms such as 360PR+ and Hunter, as well as a wide range of other companies, has launched as the official trade organization committed to protecting the authenticity and ethics of influencer marketing.

The organization says that in addition to driving growth in influencer marketing, its mission is to advocate on behalf of influencers, marketers and consumers. It intends to provide members with up-to-date influencer marketing tools and resources on best practices, measurement standards and

trends from the evolving industry.

"We believe in the value of integrating the human element and leading-edge technology while operating under a set of ethical standards to help brands achieve marketing objectives," said IMA Executive Director Kristy Sammis. "We hope to be a resource for brands and agencies looking for authentic, credible, objective influencer marketing strategies."

Other firms and companies to have signed on to join IMA are Weber Shandwick, Best Buy, Everywhere Agency, Blissful Media Group and Unilever. O



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New opportunities with payor communications

Three questions to ask when initiating payor communications for life sciences companies.

By Victoria Aguiar

n June 2018, the guidance for "Drug and Device Manufacturer Communications With Payors, Formulary Committees, and Similar Entities-Questions and Answers" and "Medical Product Communications that Are Consistent with the FDA-Required Labeling-Questions and Answers" were released, changing the world as we knew it for the life sciences industry. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration opened the door to a new audience that had previously been off limits. Historically, pharmaceutical and device manufacturers erred on the conservative side when it came to communications with payors and similar organizations. This allowed for payers to make financial decisions for covered populations without being fully informed and pushed many life sciences companies to build their health economic information profiles in the dark.

While the availability of this guidance represents great news for pharma and device manufacturers, many of these organization are still cautious given the associated risk and potential for the chance that regulators view your communication as grossly inaccurate and/or lacking much-needed context. As communication consultants, it's our call to duty to help guide our clients as they gear up for this new venture. But, before we get ahead of ourselves and begin brainstorming our best and biggest ideas, there are three questions to ask yourself and your client:

Do I truly understand the definition of healthcare economic information?

To make appropriate decisions, payors closely examine information such as effectiveness, safety, and cost-effectiveness of approved or cleared medical products when deciding on product selection, formulary management, and/or coverage and reimbursement decisions on a population basis.

Given the new guidance, life sciences companies can now provide any information that "conveys the economic consequences related to the clinical outcomes of treating a disease (or specific aspect of a disease) or of preventing or diagnosing a disease." It could also include a comparative analysis to another drug, to another healthcare intervention, or to no intervention.

Today, recipients of this information can encompass technology assessment committees, pharmacy benefit managers, as well as individuals who wear many hats like a physician who also sits on a value analysis committee. Importantly, the FDA further clarified that value-based contracts are exempted from FDA reporting requirements. So, life sciences companies can use the submission of HCEI to encourage contracting discussions.

Further, the FDA guidance goes on to highlight some of the topics that would be acceptable to include in a communication with payors including adherence or compliance information, lengths of hospitals stays, dosing, duration of treatment and clinical outcome assessments, among other topics. You can package this up in the form of a budget impact model, evidence dossier, journal publication reprint, or even a payer brochure or overview presentation. Just ensure the information is not misleading or untruthful.

Has your client considered partnering with a payor on your communication ef-

Collaboration is at its best when you put great minds together to address challenges that are difficult to solve individually. Given this new territory for life sciences companies, it would be beneficial to tap into the expertise and insights that payers themselves maintain. Because communication between the two have been non-existent for so long, there's likely a trove of information that can be enlightening for all parties. For example, AstraZeneca recently partnered with the Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC) on educational toolkits to improve outcomes for cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular, and respiratory disease patients. The collaboration proved to be useful in providing a population healthcare management toolkit that brought clarity to managing these conditions and out-of-thebox support for many case managers.

How is your client communicating changes to the company's standard operating procedures?

While a bit boring, SOPs are critical to day-to-day activities. When mapping out a process flow and potential areas for concern, you'll need to consider how adding a new audience, like payors, affects the purpose of business processes. This process will be laborious, but once completed it will be the internal communications team's role to manage this change and communicate it effectively.

Remember that asking your organization to change is a large request, so over-communicating should not be a deterrent. The communications materials should focus on the mission and reveal the opportunity that payors offer and where they fit in your

prioritization of key stakeholders. The people selected to communicate the news should be excited and the information must relay content that employees care the most about.

It's exciting to now have a new audience to tap into, new collaboration opportunities to con-



Victoria Aguiar

sider and new strategies to put into place, though payor communications may be at first uncomfortable becoming informed. And taking your client through hat education journey, will help you both create smart and impactful programs.

Victoria Aguiar is a Senior Vice President at Bliss Integrated Communication within the Healthcare Practice. She specializes with*in the life sciences industry helping advocacy* groups, biopharma, medical device, diagnostics, IT and research companies, think critically about marketing and communication initiatives that can help achieve business goals. O

PR news brief

Edelman crafts PR for BitMex crypto-platform

Edelman has been signed by HDR Global Trading Ltd. to help and protect its BitMex brand by developing a long-term communications strategy including government and regulatory affairs in the US, according to its agreement with the Republic of Seychelles-based operation.

HDR claims BitMex is the world's largest cryptocurrency derivatives trading platform.

Residents of the US, Quebec, Cuba, Crimea, Iran, Syria, North Korea and Sudan are prohibited from doing business with BitMex, according to its website.

The US Commodity Futures Trading Commission is probing whether Americans are holding positions or trading in the BitMex platform, according to

Edelman's offices in New York and Hong Kong are working the BitMex account.

Staffers manage reactive and proactive communications; review social content, owned assets, internal/media communications; create factsheets, FAQ and boilerplate; develop a scenario plan to manage for immediate issues ahead of strategy development; and audit communications channels from a corporate reputation standpoint, according to the firm's "statement of work" for HDR.

Edelman's contract is for one-year through August 2020. The firm bills HDR \$20,000 per-month.



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The power of executive expertise

How to increase your agency's internal expertise by drawing on outside talent.

By Thomas Graham

love being at the helm of a medium-sized, independent agency. Those who live in this domain know there's also a lot to the independent agency that clients find appealing: agility, personal attention from the executive tier on down, specializations and cost efficiencies are some common ones we get in client feedback.

We also face many of the same challenges as any business. We carefully balance resources between client service and new business development, and regardless of how they add to our cachet, shudder at relying too heavily on one or two large clients.

There's also another challenge, and I believe it hits us independents more squarely than the large behemoths: executive exper-

I'm not just talking experience. It's common for PR agencies—of all sizes—to hire young and inexperienced staff and groom them, hopefully balancing that strategy by adding more experienced staff. However, meeting the salary expectations of reputed executives with decades of experience, leveraged by impressively degreed credentials and years of toiling in the industry thicket, can be out of reach for many independents.

I started Crosswind 10 years ago with previous agency startup experience, so I was prepared. Among my first tasks was to seek the help of someone with impeccable credentials for realizing my agency vision.

Top Gun Goff

Thomas Jesse Goff's media experience is impressive, but his biggest attention grabber may be his role in the 1986 Hollywood hit "Top Gun." He held reporting and editing positions at top tier publications such as New York magazine, Esquire and Fortune, but it's our memories of Maverick, Iceman and Goose that resonate.

Primarily, though, it was and is Tom's depth of expertise in specific industries that interested me, as I believed—and still do that they would always be important to the business of PR: aerospace and defense, energy and healthcare.

Tom was a crisis communications counselor for senior-most management at Kaiser Permanente, work which led to its award-winning "Thrive" advertising and PR campaign. He counseled leaders at the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine and provided critical messaging for the Royal Thai Government during and following two grave events: a tsunami and the global spread of H5N1 "bird flu" virus that decimated Thailand's tourism economy.

Goff brings this experience repertory with agency acumen: I met him when we both worked at Edelman. He also has a law degree. Although not a practicing lawyer, he can steer us toward asking questions that have on occasion prevented us from getting mired in complexities.

I quickly learned that this advisory strategy works, and began to hone my radar for similar superstars stepping away from fulltime careers. Some were forming consultancies; others were looking at semi-retirement or even full retirement. With all there exist mutual benefits, beyond the compensation arrangement.

Compensation is individualized—but always less than an executive full-time salary—and has thus far consistently been a favorable exchange rate for us.

Our clients now have access to the renown experts while still paying the fees they would expect to pay for a medium-sized independent agency.

Putting expertise to work in healthcare

Crosswind has several staff who feel passionately about our healthcare work, including (and especially) me. I was particularly invigorated by our agency's work during the Ebola outbreak in 2014. Our team provided rapid response Tier One media support for Dr. Brett Giroir, then-CEO of the Texas A&M Health Science Center and a previous Director at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. Former Texas Governor Rick Perry appointed Dr. Giroir to lead the Texas Task Force on Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response.

We stayed in touch with Dr. Giroir after our engagement ended, and wouldn't you know he ended up as the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Health at the Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Giroir has been quoted as saying "Crosswind has the best media strategists" in the business. Not a bad endorsement!

Similarly, we continue our relationship with Dr. Vanila Singh. Dr. Singh also became an appointee at HHS, working with Dr. Giroir as the Chief Medical Officer to his office. She also served as Chair of the CARA-legislated Inter-Agency Pain Management Task Force, leading its efforts in developing a final report on acute and chronic pain management released earlier

Dr. Singh recently left government work to teach as an associate professor of anesthesiology perioperative and pain medicine at Stanford University Medical Center. We're currently working with Dr. Singh to raise awareness of the issues she's passionate about, which continues to add layers to our own expertise and credibility.

It's smart to keep your channels open and

Other benefits of outside advisors

In addition to unparalleled and affordable expertise, here are a few more ways your independent agency can benefit from outside advisors:

Stand out from the crowd. In a pack of

like-minded mid-sized independents clamoring for business, access to upper-level experience resonates with prospects. Your in-house agency work experience is always important, but in a hyper-competitive setting that added level can be



Thomas Graham

like standing on the shoulders of giants.

Demonstrating expertise during the **bidding process.** A point of frustration in the RFP or bidding process is that those prospects tend to look for solutions to very specific projects. We know we can do it—and can provide related examples—but these processes are rarely geared toward opportunities to communicate just how good we can be. Having known experts with impressive credentials loudly fills some of that void.

Keeps the larger agencies out of the conversation. As I mentioned earlier, the medium-sized, independent agencies tend to specialize. Outside advisors add both breadth and depth to that expertise level. You can lead into your business pitch with your expert resources and that often thwarts the question of "why shouldn't I hire a larger agency with more capital, staff, resources, offices, etc.?"

Unparalleled mentoring. You can still hire those promising neophytes, and now they will have access to very beguiling resources. That helps with recruiting, retention and in building up a stellar staff.

Go through your contacts, review your industry pubs with a new eye, and don't be afraid to reach out. You may be surprised at how many well-established folks would eagerly jump into such an advisory role.

Thomas Graham is CEO of Crosswind Media & Public Relations, headquartered in Austin, TX with additional offices in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles. O



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Navigating an ever-changing healthcare market

The healthcare industry has grown significantly in recent years, with marketing agencies expanding their healthcare and wellness practices in response. But what's often getting lost along the way is the targeted approach that's needed to tell clients' stories and meet their objectives.

By Jacolyn Gleason

he term "healthcare," as it relates to public relations, has become a vastly open definition, with the recent growth of the wellness industry, specifically with the global wellness market, estimated to reach \$4.75 trillion this year.

With this growth, we're witnessing new brands emerging that formerly didn't identify with wellness. Likewise, we're also seeing a shift in brands that solely resonated as B2B brands who are now seeking representation to establish them in the consumer wellness market.

This has also caused a shift in the overall "healthcare" practices at PR firms, becoming broader health and wellness groups to adapt to their new and prospective client

For example, with the explosion of the cannabis industry stemming from the 2018 Farm Bill, cannabis brands began seeking firms to develop strategic campaigns that supported consumer growth, specifically wellness-focused campaigns.

5W Public Relations expanded its wellness practice to support this emerging industry need and saw an unprecedented 42 percent growth year-over-year of its Cannabis and CBD Practice.

Whether it's physical wellness, mental wellness, parenting safety and wellness and emerging wellness brands among many others, there will always be challenges we face and strategies we develop to overcome them and achieve client goals and objec-

The cannabis industry for instance, CBD specifically, is unregulated by the FDA which inhibits brands from making claims. This also inhibits public relations firms representing these brands from using this type of language. But how do you support a CBD brand that wants to emerge into the wellness industry without explaining its product benefits?

This is where media and influencers have become a crucial figure in helping to establish unregulated brands like CBD companies or dietary supplement brands. Not only are they educating consumers on CBD and supplements in general, but they're providing their own perspective and first-person experience with the products; making claims about the products that the brands themselves cannot.

Another industry within the health and

wellness category whose strategic media relations campaigns can be challenging to navigate, are mental health and addiction. While it's necessary to draw consumer attention to health issues and conditions, we

must tread a fine line of leveraging these stories and topics without being inappropriate or ignorant to the issue at hand.

To do this, publicists should research and pitch the best possible contacts to help tell the story. We must have a very targeted approach



Jacolyn Gleason

to our media outreach and ensure we're tapping into editors, writers, producers, etc. and giving them the story very specific to their work and what their readers are looking for.

While this sounds like a simple approach to media relations, the targeted approach has gotten lost over the years and it's imperative in a category like this.

Parenting safety is a category that seems to be a stretch within the wellness industry, however, these campaigns are focused on educating parents about their children's wellness and safety. From anti-bullying apps to early-education financial wellness and even car seat safety, most parents don't realize that safety impacts their children from infancy through their teenage years and beyond.

Education is key with these types of campaigns to ensure parents are aware of how to protect their children and keep them safe in all aspects of life.

At the heart of it all, we're storytellers and our clients task us with painting them in the best possible light. The growth of the wellness industry is only increasing, so whether we have an easy story to tell or have to connect the dots for media, it's our job to make sure we overcome any challenges and adjust to the ever-changing industry. This way, we can truly become an extension of our clients' teams and maximize the impact our strategic campaigns have on their bottom line.

Jacolyn Gleason is Vice President of Wellness at 5W Public Relations. O

Bayer probe clears FH of wrong-doing on Monsanto's PR By Kevin McCauley

ayer in September released a report by law firm Sidley Austin that cleared FleshmanHillard of illegal behavior connected with its work on behalf of the German company's Monsanto unit, maker of Roundup herbicide.

The Omnicom unit in 2016 and 2017 compiled lists of European politicians, journalists, scientists and other influencers who had expressed health concerns about the weed killer.

France's media raised concerns that creation of the such dossiers may have violated ethical principles and legal regulation.

S&A's concluded: "There is no question that the stakeholder lists created were detailed, methodical, and designed to strongly advocate Monsanto's positions to stakeholders and to the public. But we did not

find evidence to support the French media's allegations regarding the illegality of the stakeholder lists."

The law firm rejected the notion the dossiers resulted from illegal surveillance, determining the content came from press articles or social media accounts. It said the lists didn't track the hobbies, leisure activities or personal interests of those tracked.

With the release of the report, Bayer has completed its probe into Monsanto's PR activities.

"We are happy that the independent investigation concluded with no findings of illegal behavior, which provides a strong foundation for our outreach and stakeholder engagement going forward," Matthias Berninger, Bayer's Head of PA and Sustainability, said in a statement. O



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Communications essentials for healthcare M&A

Leveraging communications to gain stakeholder buy-in and ensure deal success.

By John Capodanno

he pharma industry rang in 2019 with a bang, as Bristol-Myers Squibb announced plans to acquire oncology powerhouse Celgene for \$74 billion.

Days later, Lilly made a move to revive its pipeline through an \$8 billion deal to acquire Loxo Oncology.

The smaller deals continued into the summer, culminating in two potentially transformative deals: AbbVie's \$63 billion bid for Allergan and Pfizer's plan to combine its off-patent unit Upjohn with Mylan in a deal valued at \$20 billion.

What's driving this surge in deals? The pressure is on pharmaceutical and biotech companies from all sides: investors expect growth and returns, while payors, regulators and legislators are demanding a decrease in cost and the broader public is clamoring for new, affordable therapies that can improve and save lives.

At the same time, many pharmaceutical companies are facing significant patent cliffs in upcoming years.

By placing bets on acquisitions and other collaborations, pharmaceutical companies are hoping to deliver value to stakeholders and ensure their long-term success.

Upwards of 15 percent of deals are terminated, but those that make it to close must recast the definition of success, working diligently and deliberately to deliver on the promises of the deal. This involves assessing the impact of the deal on every stakeholder group-investors, employees, legislators, regulators, payors, patients and physicians—and leveraging communications to ensure the benefits, potential challenges and value are well understood.

Key communications considerations for company leadership that will help improve the likelihood of a successful deal leading up to and after close include:

Establish a vision for the combined organization. Beyond the due diligence that happens behind the scenes leading up to and during the deal process, the acquiring company must be able to articulate the value proposition for the combined organization while highlighting the unique strengths of each entity and accurately communicating the benefit of merging the two from the outset.

This "best of both" mindset will allow investors, among others, to understand and accept the rationale for the deal.

Integrate the cultures while embracing the history and values of each company. In the current landscape, deals have taken on many different shapes. In some instances, we're seeing large pharmaceutical companies combine—as in the case of Pfizer/ Upjohn and Mylan—while in the case of the Loxo Oncology acquisition, a small biotech was taken over by a global pharma player.

The values of companies with longstanding histories be different than those of a start-up organization. But it's in the best interest of the acquiring company's leadership team to embrace and champion the values from both to help ensure that employees remain engaged and invested in the company's near- and longer-term success.

The goal is to minimize near-term attrition while positioning the company as an employer of choice moving forward.

Communicate consistently to ensure business continuity. While the transaction and integration process can take months, it's of the utmost importance to establish an open line of communication with key stakeholders for the duration of the transac-



John Capodanno

tion to avoid uncertainty and ensure business continuity.

And while it may not be possible to answer every question, companies must have a mechanism in place to gather feedback particularly from employees. Information should be easily accessible for all stakeholders—on the company intranet, through an integration management office, on a deal microsite, etc.

Deals don't happen in a vacuumhealthcare is a tightly woven, interrelated industry. In the lead-up to what will undoubtedly be a hotly-contested presidential election in the U.S., we can expect that pharmaceutical and biotech companies will be a target for virtually every candidate and that drug pricing will stay in the spotlight. Stakeholders must have a good understanding of the rationale for a deal-particularly the investment community—but it's also important for the transaction to be put in the proper context, given the current price-sensitive environment. That means demonstrating a commitment to delivering value while lowering costs.

If the first nine months of 2019 were any indication, we can expect to see additional deals over the next few months and into 2020. Consolidation across the healthcare industry shows no sign of slowing, so it's incumbent upon organizations to embed communications as they plan for and execute transactions.

John Capodanno is a Senior Managing Director in the Strategic Communications segment at FTI Consulting. He's a leader in the Life Sciences and Healthcare Group in the U.S. The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and not necessarily the views of FTI Consulting, Inc., its management, its subsidiaries, its affiliates or its other professionals. O

Ad/PR execs go public on gun control

By Kevin McCauley

PP's Mark Read, Omnicom's John Wren and Edelman's Richard Edelman are the ad/PR firm CEOs among the 145 corporate leaders to sign a letter urging the Senate to pass gun control measures.

Noting that 100 Americans are shot and killed every day with many more wounded, the letter urged the Republican-controlled Senate to "stand with the American people and take action on gun safety by passing a bill to require background checks on all gun sales and a strong Red Flag law that would allow courts to issue life-saving extreme risk protection orders."

The Democratic-controlled House has already approved a measure to update background checks.

The signees believe they have the responsibility and obligation to advocate for common-sense gun measures to ensure the safety of their employees, customers and communities in which they operate.

"Doing nothing about America's gun violence crisis is simply unacceptable and it is time to stand with the American public on gun safety," they noted.

Interpublic's Michael Roth, Havas Group's Yannick Bollore and Publicis Groupe's Arthur Sadoun also signed the letter. •

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Power in numbers: fighting cancer the way it fights us

How the public and private sector are setting their differences aside and combining resources to focus on the shared goal of making a difference in cancer control and reducing the global cancer burden.

By Melissa Gomez

t's been almost 10 years since the World Economic Forum identified non-communicable diseases as a global risk to economic development, and since the first UN high-level meeting on NCDs took place in which a political health declaration was made. Additionally, it's been almost five years since the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals were set, where government officials made a bold commitment to reduce, by 2030, premature deaths from NCDs by one third.

In retrospect, have we made real progress? I believe we have, but the progress is too slow, as seven in 10 people worldwide die from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic lung diseases. According to the World Health Organization, this includes 15 million people dying from an NCD between the ages of 30 and 69 years, which is considered "premature," having a considerable impact on productivity and economic growth across the world. Nevertheless, only two percent of international health funding to low- and middle-income countries has been dedicated to preventing NCDs, according to a report by Bloomberg Philanthropies.

How can we accelerate progress?

According to the World Health Organization, three of the challenges impeding progress include insufficient technical and operational capacity, insufficient financing to scale up responses and lack of accountability. Various multilateral organizations have advised that to approach the NCDs burden effectively, governments, civil society and the private sector at global, regional and national levels must collaborate for the prevention and control of NCDs, though governments must lead the way by establishing national policies and plans with specific targets and indicators. I personally agree with this recommended approach, as we won't be able to tackle such a big health issue by working in silos. Most importantly, things need to move from declarations, policies and multisectoral panel discussions to actual joint actions.

Cancer, for example, is the second leading cause of death globally, with WHO estimating that it accounted for 9.6 million deaths in 2018. By 2025, there will be an estimated 19.3 million new cancer cases and 11.4 million cancer deaths, according to the Cancer Atlas project. When analyzing the fight against cancer, there are some cases of how the collective us has contributed to progress. It seems we have learned something good from our enemy after all: the power is in the numbers.

According to the World Cancer Research Fund International, being overweight or obese increases the risk of 12 common cancers, five more than the evidence showed 10 years ago. The organization's recommendations to reduce the risk of cancer include being physically active and maintaining a healthy diet by eating daily wholegrains, fiber, vegetables and fruits. I came across a public-private partnership that's proven to be effective and, although its main objective was not aimed at preventing cancer per se, is definitely contributing to cancer control efforts by addressing childhood obesity. For the past 10 years, the Mondelez International Foundation has been partnering with private and public organizations across the world supporting the delivery and evaluation of school-based healthy lifestyle programs, focusing mainly on fostering healthy dietary and physical activity behaviors. Program reports commissioned by partner organizations between 2014 and 2016, as well as a subsequent study published in Food and Nutrition Bulletin in 2018, concluded the programs are having a positive impact on nutrition and physical activity knowledge and behavior change. Specifically, there was a 12 percent increase in understanding what good nutrition is, including knowing the number of fruits and vegetables to eat daily; a six percent increase in physical activity to at least 30 minutes daily; and an 11 percent increase in eating more fruits, vegetables and other fresh foods, as part of the gardening programs. This PPP also shows that impact takes time and joint commitment. These types of initiatives should be able to withstand leadership changes of all sorts, from government, companies and NGOs, as it's not about idealisms or individual recognition but rather, about solving a problem for the benefit of society as a whole.

Another effective PPP for cancer control is focused on cervical cancer prevention and early diagnosis. Cervical cancer is the fourth most diagnosed cancer in women, with an estimated 570,000 new cases in 2018, according to the WHO. It's one of the few types of cancer that can be prevented by having regular screenings, receiving the human papillomavirus vaccine and the early treatment of

pre-cancerous lesions. The Partnership to End AIDS and Cervical Cancer was announced in 2018 as a PPP to prevent cervical cancer progression and mortality among HIV-positive women in eight sub-Saharan African countries. The found-



Melissa Gomez

ing members of the PPP included the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the George W. Bush Institute and the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Earlier this year, Merck joined the partnership and its contribution will include provision of HPV vaccines. Since the its inception, more than 500,000 women have been screened for cervical cancer, nearly 32,000 women have been treated for pre-cervical cancer lesions and over 147,000 girls have been vaccinated against HPV.

While City Cancer Challenge is not a PPP, it's a foundation that leverages the power of locally-driven PPPs to deliver quality and equitable cancer care in cities across the world. In 2015, 400 million people lacked access to essential health services, according to the WHO. City Cancer Challenge engages city stakeholders in the design, planning and implementation of cancer care solutions to close major gaps-from diagnosis to treatment to palliative care. While cities take the lead in developing cancer treatment solutions, they work closely with City Cancer Challenge's multisectoral community of local and global partners, which include various private sector companies such as Roche, who provide technical assistance through each phase of the initiative. By taking a health systems approach, cities reduce inequities in access to quality cancer care and improve the health and wellbeing of their citizens. In 2018, City Cancer Challenge engaged more than 50 partners,

Continued on next page

Connecting specialists with audiences, each other

How a strategic integrated communications campaign can provide success to healthcare clients and life-changing information to the public. By Michael Queroz

Ith as many as 15 new genetic tests coming on the market each day, and more than 26 million people purchasing an at-home genetic test, public interest in personalized medicine and genetic testing has never been stronger. But if you purchase and take a test—or if your doctor orders one—where do you turn if you get confusing or concerning results?

It's a question addressed frequently by the National Society of Genetic Counselors and its members who receive increasing inquiries as public interest in genetics grows. Our agency, Public Communications Inc., works with NSGC to build existing and create new connections between the public and genetic counselors. What began as a public relations campaign targeting only media has evolved into an integrated communications program that includes digital strategies that connect the professionals with one another and with the public. The program also includes generating interest in the profession of genetic counseling.

The public is getting the message about the profession's critical role in health and wellness. In 2019, genetic counseling was again named a top job by CareerCast. High-profile media continue to reach out to our communications team for expert interviews. Even NSGC's social media reach, which PCI manages, is growing at rates that surpass industry averages.

Certainly, the growth of the genetics industry accounts for some of this, but a strategic integrated communications campaign highlights and clarifies for consumers the highly-specialized skills and training of genetic counselors, and creates a path to their services. Often primary care providers, oncologists and other medical experts fill the genetic counselor's role, but without the specialized training in genetics and

counseling. As healthcare communicators, PCI's team successfully positions genetic counselors as the go-to experts by staying in tune with trends in the changing healthcare landscape while knowing when to use traditional PR strategies to achieve a goal.

Media relations still does the job

Six years ago, when Angelina Jolie announced her personal decision to have a double mastectomy in order to lower her high risk of developing breast cancer because of a common gene mutation, PCI acted quickly to secure NSGC as a part of the story. Before this, many people were unaware of the important role genetics counselors have in helping people understand what their genetics can mean to their health. Having the key messages, trained spokespersons and media contacts already in place, meant the team could activate quickly. Media included the insightful genetic counselor's voice in stories and the public benefited from that knowledge.

The fast-action strategy resulted in placements in several national media, including a cover story in Time. Today, some of the most influential healthcare media still talks about the "Angelina Jolie effect," and reporters better understand and rely on NSGC and its members for expertise in cancer risk and treatments.

Straightforward media relations work continues to prove beneficial for this consumer-focused healthcare client who want to communicate their value. Genetic counselors can benefit a large audience of consumers who make healthcare decisions. To maximize reach, PCI uses public data on family healthcare decision makers and NS-GC's digital analytics to home in on a target audience of women in specific age ranges. Two successful New York City media tours and other media campaigns targeted outlets reaching those audiences with measurable results for NSGC.

Beat Doctor Google

Communicating the value of genetic counselors and their work is continually infused in NSGC's owned and shared

digital channels. With 80 percent of Internet users searching online for healthcare information, it is important that genetic counselors and their expertise are easy for the public to find and to understand. NSGC's owned channels include a content-rich consum-



Michael Queroz

er website, blogs and podcasts. Content ideas for the blog and podcast are identified through Google data or common member anecdotes and use SEO best practices to improve the website's search ranking. Both lend credibility to the genetic counseling experts and humanize them through easy-to-understand blogs about complicated genetics information from a friendly

NSGC's social media channels are a powerful tool to reach the public and activate the Society's members to share content with their online audiences. This strategy also extends the shelf life of media placements by sharing the third-party endorsements of the profession on social media.

The healthcare landscape is competitive and constantly changing. Communication is the critical connector for healthcare specialists that need to reach diverse audiences with information that's understandable and

Michael Queroz is Digital Director at Public Communications Inc. O

POWER IN NUMBERS

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817 healthcare professionals and 147 health facilities, directly impacting more than 600 patients and reaching nearly 32.7 million people in seven countries around the world.

What can we learn from these examples?

My takeaway is that it's not impossible to effectively manage conflicts of interests

between the public and private sectors and focus on the common goal of addressing the burden of NCDs to make a difference in cancer control. By joining forces, we can hold each other accountable; and by combining resources, both financial and technical, the impact can be greater and we can accelerate change. After all, just like the disease, our strength is in the numbers. If we can all unite and act with certainty to reduce the global cancer burden, our ef-

forts would be much more effective, and we would be able to change the disease projections. Let's set our differences aside and focus on the common goal: to live long and productive lives. Start by listening to a stakeholder with a different point of view. Debate ideas. Begin implementing pilot programs and then scale them up. Give them continuity. Don't give up.

Melissa is Vice President and Health Sector Lead at Edelman Miami. O

O'Dwyer's guide to HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATIONS



(From left): Erin Wabol, Partner and Chief Marketing Officer; and Beth Friedman, Agency Ten22 President and Founder.

5W PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Ronn D. Torossian, President & CFO

Since 2003, New York Citybased 5W Public Relations (5W) has worked with world-class and emerging brands, corporations, consumer companies, technology companies of all shapes and sizes, healthcare interests, regional businesses, non-profits, and high profile individuals to help them achieve their strategic public relations and marketing objectives across a broad range of interests.

5W practice areas include consumer brands, food & beverage, health & wellness, travel & hospitality, technology, beauty, entertainment, nonprofit, corporate communications and reputation management, public affairs, crisis communications, and digital Resourceful, innovastrategy. tive, and nimble, 5W works hard, thinks big, and delivers successful, game-changing results.

5W's team of over 160 knowl-

edgeable, tenacious, and passionate professionals understand how to leverage any story, and direct the conversation to the client's best advantage. Furthermore, 5W develops and executes novel and fresh ways for clients to connect with their target audiences in memorable ways. As a result of this meticulous approach, the teams measurably increase the positive results of their communication efforts. 5Ws diverse roster of client experience includes Sparkling ICE, Medifast, Walgreens/Duane Reade, Digita-10cean, KRUPS, Anheuser-Busch, Camp Bow Wow, L'Oreal, AEROSOLES, Jane Iredale, T-Fal, GoHealth, Zeta Interactive, and other publicly traded companies, consumer brands, technology companies, start-ups and personalities.

5W's programs lead to award winning recognition, including PR Agency of the Year, PR Executive of the Year, Product Launch of the Year, Business to Business Program of the Year and Digital/Social Media Campaign of the Year, among others.

AGENCY TEN22

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About Us: Agency Ten22 is an award-winning, full-service, healthcare IT public relations, content management and digital marketing services firm. Ten22's proven techniques deliver compelling messages, maximize exposure and strengthen market share for healthcare IT and service vendors. Founded in 2005, Agency Ten22 is the most respected media relations agency for small to medium-sized healthcare companies.

Expertise: Our team has over 30+ years of healthcare marketing and public relations experience and has worked for healthcare organizations in the past. At Ten22, we have expertise in population health, health information management, payers, hospitals, revenue cycle management, information security, patient experience, telemedicine and more. We build integrated plans to exceed client goals and we adapt quickly to the ever-changing healthcare landscape. From content strategy to media relations and digital marketing, Agency Ten22 is a boutique health IT firm with a customized, hands-on approach. Visit www. ten22pr.com.

ALLIDURA

A Syneos Health Company

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Jessica Birardi, Lead, Allidura

Who we are: On the shelf or at the pharmacy counter, today's consumers are demanding more. They are socially savvy, and health-, safety- and environmentally-minded. They expect brands to be the same, and that's where Allidura can help. Through our niche focus on health with diverse backgrounds in consumer, pharma and sustainability, we work with some of the world's largest brands and guide them through an ever-changing landscape.

Expertise: Allidura takes an integrated approach to communi-

cations with capabilities spanning public relations, digital and social media, marketing and branding, graphic design and multimedia, and research and analytics. Our meaningful insights and creative know-how have been tapped by a full range of consumer product and nutritional supplement brands, over-the-counter and beauty products, and food and beverage com-

Allidura Consumer is part of Syneos Health Communications, the only healthcare communications network on the frontlines of healthcare. Our advertising, public relations, medical communications, digital, data science, research and market access specialists have the ability to tap the expertise of clinical and commercial colleagues worldwide to infuse programs with deep therapeutic and analytic insights. We work in scalable, collaborative teams that partner across disciplines and geographies to deliver integrated communications strategies that accelerate brand performance.

BIOSECTOR 2

A Syneos Health Company

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Who we are: Biosector 2 (B2) is a global healthcare communications agency that partners with visionary clients to deliver groundbreaking programs and improve the health of people's lives. B2's experience as an agency spans virtually every category in the industry and drives strategic solutions for their clients.

Expertise: B2 builds brands and grows markets for companies driving innovation across a variety of disease states, and our main goal is to create measurable behavior change for our clients' most important stakeholders. Our capabilities to deliver against this goal go beyond traditional public relations, incorporating issues management, digital & social media, corporate branding, research & analytics, advocacy, patient relations and more. Our dynamic, insightful approach

allows us to solve today's problems while uncovering tomorrow's opportunities.

Biosector 2 is part of Syneos Health Communications, the only healthcare communications network that is part of a company on the frontlines of healthcare. Our advertising, public relations, medical communications, digital, data science, research and market access specialists have the ability to tap the expertise of clinical and commercial colleagues worldwide to infuse programs with deep therapeutic and analytic insights. We work in scalable, collaborative teams that partner across disciplines and geographies to deliver integrated communications strategies that accelerate brand performance.

BLISS INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION

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Michael Roth. Partner & Healthcare Practice Leader Vicky Aquiar, Senior Vice President Alexis Odesser. Senior Vice President Liz DeForest, Vice President

The Bliss Healthcare Practice represents a mix of Fortune 500. established industry players and true disruptors that span the national and global healthcare industry — from healthcare services, health insurance, life sciences, medical and platform technology companies to industry consortia, patient advocates, health educators, third party administrators, and consumer health organizations. Bliss offers end-to-end communications and marketing solutions that help our clients connect with stakeholders and influencers in the healthcare supply chain, and deliver compelling stories about the science, strategy or technology behind their company or product.

Bliss understands that every client has its own DNA - a unique culture and approach to working with its core constituencies and delivering critical messages in its own way. Bliss works directly with C-suite, marketing, medical and communications executives to gain alignment on their aspirations, identify solutions that create measurable behavior change for critical stakeholders and deliver tangible results. Our clients trust Bliss as a long-term partner to set a strategic communications path and execute new, creative ways to address their business challenges.

Bliss Integrated Communication is truly "integrated." Not just in name. What sets Bliss apart from other agencies and consultancies? They are both horizontally and vertically integrated and excel at creating the best thought leadership campaigns, with deep understanding of highly regulated subject matter like Medicare, Medicaid, drug and device recalls and warning letters, clinical trial monitoring and information sharing. Bliss's creative, proprietary approaches to strategic communications allows them to problem solve for our clients, while discovering unique and untapped opportunities. Capabilities include: Drug, diagnostic and medical device launches, corporate communications and C-suite thought leadership, brand and visual identity, clinical trial recruitment/support, content marketing, crisis and issues management, internal communications, data publication support, digital/social media strategy, disease awareness campaigns, measurement/CRM support, media relations and publicity, medical meeting support, online community management (including social), SEO/SEM strategy, stakeholder and influencer mapping, website launches and website maintenance.

BUCHANAN PUBLIC RELATIONS LLC

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Founded in 1998, Buchanan Public Relations LLC is an award-winning, dog-friendly, national communications agency based in Philadelphia. We specialize in media relations, digital, and crisis communications, with expertise in a variety of categories including healthcare, life sciences,

financial services, professional services, not-for-profit, real estate and consumer goods.

With excellence and integrity as guiding principles, we help brands find and share stories that matter. Our storytelling tools include graphics and video, in addition to writing. We pride ourselves on solid, long-term relationships with our clients.

Our client experience in the healthcare space includes hospitals and healthcare systems, pharmaceutical and scientific testing and trial companies, legal healthcare representation, mental health and addiction centers, medical marijuana institutions, healthcare apps and business productivity tools, medical licensing and testing boards, and insurance companies.

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

CERRELL ASSOCIATES

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Hal Dash, CEO, Principal Steve Bullock, CFO, Principal

In an ever-changing sociopolitical climate impacting all sectors of the healthcare industry, Cerrell Associates has delivered award-winning communications results for some of the nation's largest healthcare providers, as well as clients in pharma and biotech. As a one-stop shop, our clients have access to a diverse team of strategists with experience navigating the complexities of the industry.

Whether it's policy advocacy, community relations or thought leadership, Cerrell has designed and deployed strategies that have a lasting impact. And our healthcare experts know industry trends and developments to ensure we are telling the stories that matter.

With more than 30 years of experience in the healthcare industry, we understand there is no "one size fits all" approach. We work with our clients to develop local, regional or national programs with the ultimate goal of improving the health of our communities.

Expertise includes mergers and acquisitions, campaigns, labor issues, crisis communications and issues management, and positive public relations.

CG LIFE

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Erik Clausen, Managing Partner Steve Johnson, Managing Partner

CG Life is an award-winning and integrated marketing and communications agency focused on life science and healthcare. Since 2003, they've helped organizations think through some of the toughest communication challenges imaginable and tell their stories in unique and compelling ways. CG Life's team of experts does this by creating smart strategies that integrate inspirational creative, insightful content, clever communications and digital platforms. The agency's public relations, brand strategy, market intelligence, creative, content marketing, digital marketing and paid advertising services elevate brands, create lasting relationships and drive results.

CHAMBERLAIN **HEALTHCARE PR**

A Syneos Health Company

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Jeanine O'Kane. President. US Public Relations Group, Syneos Health jeanine.okane@syneoshealth.com

Who we are: Chamberlain Healthcare Public Relations (CHPR) is a dynamic group of savvy and forward-thinking professionals who champion creativity and deliver powerful and impactful communications solutions for our clients. For more than 25 years, CHPR has partnered with a range of clients across the globe committed to improving health and well-being, ranging from large pharmaceutical companies to small biotechs

Expertise: CHPR simplifies the complex in order to shift behaviors and mindsets. We thoughtfully uncover insights and bring a

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CHAMBERLAIN HEALTHCARE

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fresh perspective that allows our clients to seize opportunities and overcome challenges. Our team provides clients with strategic programs—including public relations, digital & social strategy, issues management, research & analytics, and more-designed to break through marketplace noise to reach and inspire stakeholders. Ultimately, our approach delivers results that meet and exceed client objectives and expectations.

CHPR is part of Syneos Health Communications, a communications company on the frontlines of healthcare with a clear view into the everyday complexities of life and health. Our advertising, public relations, medical communications, digital, data science, research and market access specialists have the ability to tap the expertise of clinical and commercial colleagues worldwide to infuse programs with deep therapeutic and analytic insights. We work in scalable, collaborative teams that partner across disciplines and geographies to deliver integrated communications strategies that accelerate brand performance.

CHANDLER CHICCO AGENCY

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Andrea Dagger, Managing Director, CCA NY Lisa Waters, Managing Director,

Who we are: Chandler Chicco Agency (CCA) is a global team of healthcare communications specialists dedicated to helping clients solve their most complex challenges. Integrating an unmatched breadth of resources that enables a comprehensive, 360-degree approach. CCA serves clients that span the spectrum of healthcare from large pharmaceutical companies focused on treatments for major disease areas to emerging specialty companies researching cures for rare diseases; from biotech to



Crosby's healthcare practice leadership: Joel Machak, Executive Creative Director; Denise Aube, Executive VP & Healthcare Practice Leader; and Raymond Crosby, President & CEO.

devices and diagnostics; as well as healthcare technology, hospitals, non-profits and academic centers.

Expertise: CCA sets the standard in delivering best-in-class communications in a collaborative, flexible environment where creativity reigns and clients come first. For more than 20 years, we have achieved this by bringing the right people to the table — innovators, healthcare professionals, thought leaders, advocates, patients, and loved ones and then building alliances, communities, and champions motivated to act.

CCA is part of Syneos Health Communications, the only healthcare communications network on the frontlines of healthcare. Our advertising, public relations, medical communications, digital, data science, research, and market access specialists have the ability to tap the expertise of clinical and commercial colleagues worldwide to infuse programs with deep therapeutic and analytic insights. We work in scalable, collaborative teams that partner across disciplines and geographies to deliver integrated communications strategies that accelerate brand performance.

CROSBY

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Raymond Crosby, President &

Denise Aube, Executive Vice President, Healthcare Practice

Joel Machak, Executive Creative Director

For more than 40 years, Crosby has helped healthcare clients Inspire Actions That MatterTM actions that positively impact people's lives and make a real difference for individuals, families, and communities.

Crosby's Healthcare Practice serves hospitals and health systems, health plans, physician groups, technology and service providers, seniors housing, health advocacy groups and federal government agencies.

Services include marketing research and planning, brand development, integrated communications programs, public relations, social media, community and multicultural outreach, digital marketing, content marketing, PSAs, and behavior-change campaigns.

Clients include Kaiser Permanente, Shriners Hospitals for Children. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRO). Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), OneSource, Military Qlarant, Sagepoint Senior Living, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAM-HSA), U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, and Veterans Health Administration.

Crosby ranks among the top

health communications agencies in the country and is a member of the PR Council and American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As). The firm has offices in Maryland's state capital of Annapolis and in Washington, D.C. To see case studies and capabilities, visit www.crosbymarketing.com.

CROSSWIND MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Thomas Graham, President & Karen Johnson, Vice President Thomas Goff, Senior Advisor

Crosswind Healthcare Capabilities: Crosswind Media and Public Relations helped Texas win the largest research contract in the state's history, has introduced one of the world's newest biotech brands to Texas and the world, and is helping other companies, startups, care providers and public agencies bring some of the world's most complex biotechnologies to global markets.

Some highlights: Defense against bioterrorism: When the second-largest university system in Texas decided to form a team and go after a new Federal biodefense, pandemic response, and influenza center, it turned to Crosswind. The bid received feature coverage in top-tier global media. The Texas team was awarded that prestigious grant, making Texas, almost overnight, one of the nation's major hubs of vaccine production and bioterrorism preparedness.

A biotech boom: Crosswind was engaged to represent a Fortune Global 500 company from Japan that was entering the biopharmaceutical market by acquiring a Texas-based start-up aligned with this new federal bio-defense center. Global media covered the acquisition. Crosswind was then asked to take on communications work across the new owner's entire bio-pharmaceutical division.

Hacking medicine: When the world's top-ranked university decided to bring its biotech-centric "Hacking Medicine" workshop to the South by Southwest, the event leaders in Boston immediately contacted Crosswind in Austin. They needed a communications partner that understood a mission

to use advanced digital strategies in solving worldwide health problems. Crosswind led an influencer and media-outreach campaign that resulted in extensive coverage and standing-room-only attendance.

Connect with us and see what we can do for you.

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Susan Isenberg, Health Chief

Edelman is a global communications firm that partners with businesses and organizations to evolve, promote and protect their brands and reputations. Our 6,000 people in more than 60 offices deliver communications strategies that give our clients the confidence to lead and act with certainty, earning the trust of their stakeholders. Since our founding in 1952, we have remained an independent, family-run business. Edelman owns specialty companies Edelman Intelligence (research) and United Entertainment Group (entertainment, sports, lifestyle). For more information please visit: www.edelman.com

EVOKE KYNE

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The Evoke KYNE Team.

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Evoke KYNE is an award-winning, health communications and public relations agency. We are part of Evoke — a leading marketing, media and communications agency bound by a common purpose, Health More HumanTM. We work with some of the world's leading biotech and pharmaceutical companies, non-profits and foundations, offering a robust set of services including disease-state educational programming, data and brand communications, cross-sector partnerships, patient advocacy relations, influencer engagement, internal communications, and reputation and responsibility programming.

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

FINN PARTNERS

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Partner/Singapore

Finn Partners offers a bold vision and expertise that delivers creative communication solutions for payer, provider, patient advocacy,

Named "Healthcare Agency of the Year" and one of the top five global health agencies by The Holmes Report, we leverage our collaborative spirit to advance client goals — to improve health and wellbeing. With 750+ PR professionals across 19 offices and three continents, we offer health-sector depth in brand support, corporate thought-leadership, sustainability, public affairs, market research, and digital, social and traditional media.

The agency is best known for

health policy and product-innovation clients.

FINN now includes Lazar Partners, one of the nation's leading Health PR/IR agencies offering communication services including clinical trial recruitment, investor relations, media relations, patient advocacy and scientific editorial support. The combined agency now includes one of the industry's largest independent health groups with more than \$31M in fees.

its work in changing the lives of people with pressing health challenges — from introducing new medicines and technologies that

Lazar Partners has joined the global FINN Partners community, creating one of the largest health integrated communications practices in the world. Pictured (L to R) is Gil Bashe, Managing Partner, leading FINN's global health practice; Kristie Kuhl, Managing Partner, FINN Health; Peter Finn, Founding Partner, FINN Partners, and Fern Lazar, CEO, Lazar Partners.

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FINN PARTNERS

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improve and extend life, to rallying patient communities around access to care, to raising awareness of global public health challenges, to building health product brands that transform people's lives.

Finn Partners' more than 150 clients include health some of the boldest innovators and game-changers across the health ecosystem, including several toppharmaceutical companies, some of the nation's largest hospitals and payer systems, and many of the world's boldest companies in artificial intelligence, health/technology and medical devices. From medical innovations to breakthrough health/tech to services that improve care, all our clients focus on the most important part of the health system — patients.

FLEISHMAN-**HILLARD**

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Anne de Schweinitz, Global Managing Director, Healthcare

Whether the imperative is to maintain or grow a business, or to defend it in the face of an ever-shifting policy environment and intense competition, clients from across the healthcare spectrum turn to FleishmanHillard for deep industry expertise, powerful insights and effective strategies that deliver real results.

FleishmanHillard's 300+ healthcare specialists work alongside experts in reputation and brand marketing, earned and paid media. digital and social, public affairs, issues and crisis, and change management, forming seamless teams that deliver the diverse communications counsel and bold creative approaches that today's healthcare organizations need to succeed. Our team is stacked with scientific, regulatory and behavioral change experts, including PhDs and credentialed health professionals, who form the technical backbone of our global healthcare practice.

Using data-driven insights and deep knowledge of today's most effective communications chan-FleishmanHillard works across a broad range of therapeutic categories and the full care contin-

uum, from public education and prevention to acute care and chronic disease management, supporting our clients to educate, influence and drive action with health professionals, patients and consumers, health systems, payers, and policy makers at home and around the world.

Please contact Anne de Schweinitz, Global Managing Director, Healthcare: anne.deschweinitz@fleishman.com.

FTI CONSULTING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

88 Pine Street. 32nd Floor New York, NY 10005 212/850-5600 www.fticommunications.com

Mark McCall, Global Segment Leader

As a leading global communications consultancy with more than 30 years of experience advising management teams and boards of directors, FTI Strategic Communications has an extensive track record of helping clients engage with their key stakeholders in order to protect their freedom to operate and advance their business inter-

Our financial communications professionals provide an unparalleled combination of deep sector expertise, local market knowledge, and broad capabilities in M&A communications, restructuring and financial issues, investor relations, corporate governance, proxy fights and shareholder activism, corporate reputation, digital and social media, and employee engagement. We counsel public and private companies on a wide range of scenarios, including transformative and bolt-on acquisitions, friendly and hostile takeovers, initial public offerings, capital raises, and activism defense. We approach each situation with a focus on foundational message development along with disciplined and nimble scenario-based planning that draws on our prior experience, but is unique to the situation at hand, to anticipate various contingencies and potential outcomes, while ensuring coordinated and consistent communications.

FTI Strategic Communications' approach to financial communications is grounded in the understanding that every stakeholder including investors, analysts, regulatory agencies, elected officials, journalists, employees, partners, vendors and NGOs-must be considered. To that end, our integrated suite of services in financial communications, corporate reputation and public affairs in all the major markets around the world provide a holistic solution for clients that is unmatched in the industry.

GCI HEALTH

200 Fifth Ave., 7th Floor New York, NY 10010 212/798-9950 wendy.lund@gcihealth.com www.gcihealth.com

Wendy Lund, CEO

GCI Health is an award-winning integrated communications agency designed for and inspired by the ever-changing face of healthcare. We are known for our deep, far-reaching knowledge of the healthcare environment, unrelenting client service, unrivaled talent, forward-thinking capabilities and a passion to drive transformation in healthcare delivery through communications. With a deep focus on multichannel marketing, we help clients breakthrough with powerful stories that build brands and engage customers — all while using the channels that are best suited to reach and resonate with various target audiences. Our approach is rooted in looking at all stakeholders as people and what motivates, influences and resonates with them in their daily lives. For more information, visit https:// gcihealth.com/.

GREENOUGH BRAND STORYTELLERS

Watertown, MA 617/275-6500 www.areenough.biz info@greenough.biz Twitter: @GreenoughPR Facebook: Greenough LinkedIn: Greenough

Phil Greenough, Founder and CFO Scott Bauman, EVP and General Manager

Greenough Brand Storytellers builds storytelling platforms for clients across health care, from hospitals and health systems to companies that are disrupting medicine with new health information technology (HIT), medical devices, diagnostics and therapeutics. Our unique brand journalism approach is predicated on in-depth and constant interaction with health system leaders, physicians, technology experts, regulators, policy makers and, of course, patients.

Whether our client is a hospital looking to establish a new specialty, an HIT provider addressing medication adherence or a medical robotics company building brand awareness among consumers, we focus on authentic, highly relatable stories that move audiences. We also know that context makes stories more powerful, and we've made it our business to track the evolving stories shaping healthcare today, from policy-making inside Washington to how those policies impact patients across rural America. Each day, we strategically deliver these stories to audiences and influencers across earned, owned and paid media.

HEALTH UNLIMITED

111 Fifth Ave. New York, NY 10003 212/886-2200 Fax: 212/886-2288 www.healthunlimited.com

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

Health Unlimited is a global health consultancy and communications agency built by specialist agencies with a legacy of advancing landmark developments in challenging, hard to treat health conditions. For more than 25 years we have been driving results for companies and organizations invested in solving the world's most complex and challenging health issues.

We offer full-service communications for pharmaceutical, health & wellness, medical, biotechnology, diagnostics and devices, strategic marketing, media strategy, corporate counsel, issues management, product marketing, patient/ consumer education and professional/advocacy relations.

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

HUNTER

41 Madison Ave, 5th Floor New York, NY 10010 212/679-6600 www.hunterpr.com smormar@hunterpr.com

Grace Leong, CEO Jonathan Lyon, Partner Donetta Allen, Partner Gigi Russo, Partner Erin Hanson, Partner

HUNTER is an award-winning consumer marketing communications firm with primary offices in New York and London and a footprint across North America. Beginning with research-driven insights, Hunter executes strategic, integrated programs that build brand equity, increase engagement and drive business results for OTC products and healthcare services.

Today's health brands have to find bold, breakthrough ways to earn consumer attention. Enter HUNTER: Health & Beauty, where helping consumers look and feel their best is all in a day's work. Our practice identifies unique insights to spark creative health campaigns that garner stand-alone media headlines for our brands and seamlessly integrate into consumer lifestyles, earning their attention and loyalty, while helping them look and feel great from the inside out. To do so, Hunter employs a powerful blend of marketing solutions including strategic planning, social and digital media, talent and influencer engagement, media relations, experiential, multicultural. and content creation and distribution for all platforms and channels.

In partnership with some of the world's most respected consumer health companies and retailers including Johnson & Johnson, Church & Dwight, and The Vitamin Shoppe, Hunter's work has covered the medicine cabinet from oral care, allergy, sanitary protection, pain and pregnancy, to digestive health, vitamins, supplements, weight-loss and heart health.

ICR

761 Main Avenue Norwalk, CT 06851 203/682-8200 Terri.Clevenger@icrinc.com www.icrinc.com/healthcare

Following its acquisition of Westwicke Partners, ICR has established itself as one of the leading providers of integrated Public Relations and Investor Relations services for healthcare companies. Oper-



To raise awareness of LACTAID® as the 100% real milk solution that allows people with sensitivities or lactose intolerance to enjoy dairy without discomfort, appeal to the Millennial mom and make milk a staple in her household again, HUNTER partnered LACTAID® with Sesame Street and celebrity spokesperson Sutton Foster. She and the Cookie Monster were featured in digital video content produced by Hunter and supported with paid media that resulted in best-in-class performance on Google.

ating under the Westwicke brand, ICR's healthcare practice works with more than 100 clients across life sciences, medical device/diagnostics, services and healthcare IT. With complementary services in digital branding, capital markets advisory, IPO advisory, and crisis communication and corporate governance advisory, ICR/Westwicke offers a full suite of strategic communications and advisory services for startups and mature public companies alike. Whether the emphasis is on corporate, scientific and marketing communications, preparing for an IPO or raising additional capital, we understand that every client is different, and so too, is their story. With a clear understanding of the many complex dynamics and influencers within the healthcare ecosystem, Westwicke takes a hands-on approach to understand both the science and the sentiment behind your business, ensuring that your message goes beyond simple clarity to resonate and make a lasting impression with the audiences that matter most.

JARRARD PHILLIPS **CATE & HANCOCK**

The Horse Barn at Maryland Farms 219 Ward Circle, Suite 3 Brentwood, TN 37027 615/254-0575 Fax: 615/843-8431 www.jarrardinc.com

Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock, Inc. is a top-10 strategic communications consulting firm devoted to helping the nation's health systems and health services companies navigate confidently through change, challenge and opportunity. With offices in Nashville and Chicago, Jarrard Inc. has guided leaders at more than 500 healthcare organizations across the country through high-stakes moments, including leading communications and political strategy for more than \$60 billion in announced M&A. Our team of former journalists, political operatives and healthcare executives works alongside every client to build a custom strategy that delivers measurable results in the areas of M&A, issues and crisis management, strategic positioning opportunities and systemic change management. For more information, visit jarrardinc.com or follow us @JarrardInc

JPA HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS

1101 Connecticut Ave., NW Suite 600 Washington, DC 20036 202/591-4000 carrie@jpa.com www.jpa.com @JPÄHealthComm www.facebook.com/JPAHealth

Carrie Jones, Principal Michael O'Brien, Stephen Piotrowski and Diane Wass, Managing Directors

JPA Health Communications is an independent agency offering PR, marketing and patient advocacy services. Our exclusive focus on health means that our life science, nonprofit and federal clients can count on a team with experience and perspective to deliver results. Our approach incorporates a proprietary tool that enables us to understand how conversations take place within the health sector. JPA's GretelTM, brings together news media, organizations and individual influencers to show precisely how they intersect, revealing insights for reaching and engaging audiences. Importantly, at JPA, we share our clients' commitment to improving and protecting lives. This ideology inspires our work. We invite you to learn more by contacting one of our offices: Washington, DC; Boston; and London.

LANDIS COMMUNICATIONS

1388 Sutter St., #901 San Francisco, CA 94109 415/561-0888 info@landispr.com www.landispr.com

Named America's #1 Healthcare PR Agency (Ragan's Ace Awards)

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LANDIS COMMUNICATIONS

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and called "the Bay Area's consumer/B2B PR and marketing communications experts," San Francisco-based Landis Communications Inc. (LCI) is celebrating nearly 30 years in business. LCI is a Bulldog Award winner for social media and media relations and has been named the #1 Social Media Agency in the U.S. by TopPRAgencies.com. LCI is a full-service public relations, digital/social media and marketing communications agency that specializes in healthcare, consumer, consumer technology and B2B programs. LCI's Promised Results® return-on-investment program provides tangible metrics addressing clients' identified goals. Healthcare clients include: Sutter Health/CPMC, Frontier Medicines (biopharma). On Lok Senior Health Services, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford, University of California at San Francisco, PRC, Global Alzheimer's Platform Foundation, Brain Health Registry, Merck, Johnson & Johnson, Planned Parenthood, Crestwood Behavioral Health and more. LCI is the San Francisco member of the Public Relations Global Network, with 50 affiliate agencies worldwide.

LAVOIEHEALTH-**SCIENCE**

One Thompson Square, Suite 503 Boston, MA 02129 617/374-8800 dlavoie@lavoiehealthscience.com www.lavoiehealthscience.com

Donna L. LaVoie, President & Douglas Russell, SVP and General Manager Sharon Correia, EVP and Chief Strategy Officer
Sharon Choe, SVP, Investor Relations and Business Development Paul Sagan, AVP, Investor Relations & Corporate Communications Lisa DeScenza, AVP, Integrated Communications

LaVoieHealthScience provides integrated communications including public and investor relations as well as marketing and digital communications to build recognition, sales, and value for health science innovations. Our team of specialized thinkers design and execute strategic communications programs that make our clients' technologies,

products and services known, understandable, and approachable. We help emerging companies arrive, development stage companies emerge, and commercial companies grow. Our vision is to apply industry-tested counsel and pragmatic execution through our highly experienced and trained professionals. The agency has received over 30 awards in recognition of the work it has done for emerging and established industry leaders in life sciences, pharmaceuticals, health, and government. We bring 18 years of case studies and over 300 proven strategies to our clients. We are focused on building trust and longterm relationships based on the quality of the work that we deliver. Many of our client relationships are a decade or more long. Clients are public and privately-held health and science innovators in cell and gene therapy, ophthalmology, CNS, inflammation, oncology, microbiome, Alzheimer's, rare diseases, drug delivery, accelerators, and industry organizations/service providers.

LAZAR PARTNERS

A Finn Partners Company

420 Lexington Ave. New York, NY 10170 212/867-1762 flazar@lazarpartners.com www.lazarpartners.com

Fern Lazar, CEO Chantal Beaudry, Managing Director David Carey, Managing Director Thomas Vickery, Managing Director

At Lazar Partners, we don't just deliver your message; we catalyze the connections that drive business results and enhance your reputation. Our clients count on us to deliver proactive strategic recommendations as well as flawless execution. For the last 18 years, private and public companies have benefited from our proven approaches to strengthening relationships with healthcare professionals, patients, third-party organizations, the financial community, the media and business partners. Our commitment to clients is to forge trusting connections that build brand equity, increase goodwill and grow shareholder value. Companies with great reputations sometimes face challenging situations that can harm brand equity. We stand with you to manage and overcome crisis situations.

Lazar Partners is now part of Finn Partners, among the world's integrated marketing leading communications agencies. FINN complements Lazar's focus in life science and brings to our clients its award-winning creative, digital, research and social media strength. Together, the combined team offers clients expertise across the corporate and brand lifecycle.

LOVELL COMMUNICATIONS

3212 West End Ave., Suite 500 Nashville, TN 37203 www.lovell.com Twitter: LovellComm Facebook: LovellCommunications Lovell blog: Lovell.com/our-outlook

Rosemary Plorin, President and CEO Rebecca Kirkham, Senior Vice

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

Lovell Communications protects health care brand reputations and supports providers and the companies that serve them with award-winning communication strategy and stakeholder engage-

For more than 30 years, Lovell Communications has served as strategic counsel and trusted partner to health care providers and suppliers across the country.

Publicly traded companies, notfor-profit systems, early-stage and mature companies draw upon our vast communications expertise to support them through phases—or just moments—when it's crucial to persuade audiences or influence decision makers.

We help organizations optimize opportunities, manage challenges and navigate changes and crises of all size. Our in-depth, results-oriented communications strategies focus on business-to-business marketing, consumer engagement, internal communication programs and stakeholder persuasion campaigns.

We specialize in:

- Transaction Support
- Crisis Communications
- Thought Leadership
- Internal and External Communications

Our firm-and the talented individuals who make it remarkable -has been recognized with hundreds of national, regional and local awards.

MATTER

197 Portland Street 3rd Floor Boston, MA 02114 978/499-9250 info@matternow.com https://www.matternow.com



Lovell Communications' strategic public relations work has received hundreds of national, regional and local awards over the past three decades.

Matter is a Brand Elevation Agency unifying public relations, social media, creative services, and search and digital marketing into strategic, content-rich communications campaigns that inspire action and build value. Founded in 2003, with six offices spanning North America, Matter works with the world's most innovative companies across healthcare, high-technology, consumer technology and consumer markets.

With more than 180 professionals across offices in Boston and Newburyport, MA, Providence, RI, Pittsburgh, PA, Boulder, CO, and Portland, OR, Matter is one of the fastest-growing public relations, social media, creative and digital marketing firms in the country. Matter has won 12 "Agency of the Year" accolades in the past three years and has been recognized as a best place to work.

MCCABE MESSAGE PARTNERS

1825 Connecticut Ave, NW Suite 300 Washington, DC 20009 202/868-4800 www.MessagePartnersPR.com

Patrick McCabe, President Mike Warner, Senior Vice President Becky Watt Knight, Senior Vice President Paul Skowronek, Senior Vice President Amy Martin Vogt, Vice President Jennifer Chu, MPH, Vice President Bethany Hardy, Vice President

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

Clients include a who's who of national and regional health philanthropies, government agencies, academic institutions, clinician organizations, industry associations, patient organizations, and corporations. Individually and together, team members have won the biggest awards in the PR business. McCabe Message Partners offers the expertise and professionalism of a large agency with the warmth and passion of a small business.

MCS **HEALTHCARE PUBLIC RELATIONS**

110 Allen Road, Suite 303 Basking Ridge, NJ 07920 908/234-9900 elioth@mcspr.com www.mcspr.com

Joe Boyd, CEO Eliot Harrison, President Chad Hyett, Exec. VP Jennifer Silvent, Sr. VP Karen Dombek, VP Laura de Zutter, VP

For more than three decades, MCS has remained a constant fixture in an ever-changing media marketplace by adapting and innovating as rapidly as the science itself. As an independent specialty shop solely focused on healthcare, we think of ourselves as a swift boat among battleships: small but sturdy; nimble and reliable; and best-suited for operations that are difficult, demanding and unique.

Together, we turn strategy and creativity to action, resulting in solutions that specifically, comprehensively and robustly address your current needs.

We are experts in all facets of communications, including digital; social media; and paid, owned and earned channels. As your partners, we will bring new integrated ideas and real solutions to the table, and feel empowered to raise our hand when we have an idea on how to improve your business.

We take measurement seriously. We evaluate impact and proactively answer the questions, "so what?" and "what now?"

We are a highly collaborative bunch that believes in the pollination of ideas across all brand communications. We welcome the opportunity to partner with your creative agencies, co-marketers and cross-functional colleagues to deliver results more efficiently and with a holistic vision of the brand's

MERRITT GROUP

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Alisa Valudes Whyte, CEO, Senior Partner Thomas Rice, EVP, Partner John Conrad, EVP, Partner Jayson Schkloven, EVP, Partner Shahed Ahmed, SVP, Partner

Merritt Group is an award-winwomen-owned agency specializing in Public Relations, Content, Performance Marketing and Creative. We live at the intersection of market expertise and technical proficiency to help our clients reach their goals and dominate their markets. With offices in D.C. and San Francisco, our team of 50+ professionals works hand-in-hand with clients ranging from Fortune 500 industry leaders to early-stage health technology startups to deliver measurable, high-impact campaigns that reach, influence and activate decision-makers.

Our healthcare expertise spans health IT and life science innovators, providers, insurance networks, not-for-profits, academic institutions and advocacy groups. For more than 10 years, we have worked with leading and emerging brands including GoHealth Networks, Avizia, MedGenome, Innovation Health, Amazing Charts, Heritage Provider Network, MAX-IMUS and more. We sit at the intersection of healthcare and IT and understand the significant impact technologies such as big data, analytics, AI, IoT, and cybersecurity bring to the healthcare industry.

MERRYMAN COMMUNICATIONS

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Betsy Merryman, President and Managing Partner Ashley Cadle, Account Director Joni Ramirez, Account Director

Communications Merryman works closely with healthcare clients ranging from start-ups to Fortune 500 companies as a strategic partner in integrated marketing, communications, public relations and digital marketing. We are a full-service agency, and we offer a wide range of capabilities and special expertise to ensure we have all a client's needs covered. The Merryman Communications team has worked across virtually all healthcare industry categories and therapeutic areas, including medical devices and diagnostics, biotech and pharmaceuticals, health IT, health plans, hospitals and physician groups/IPAs and nonprofits. We're based in Los Angeles and have team members around the country. We're all seasoned veterans of global advertising and PR agencies, so we offer "big agency" know-how but with a boutique, specialty agency touch. Our virtual model helps your budgets go further, and you can rely on us to help vou flourish.

PADILLA

1101 West River Parkway Suite 400 (Headquarters) Minneapolis, MN 55415 612/455-1700 PadillaCo.com

Fred Lake. Senior Vice President/ Health Lead

Padilla is an independently operated, globally resourced public relations and communication company with offices across the United States. The agency builds, grows and protects brands and reputations worldwide by creating purposeful connections with the people who matter most through public relations, advertising, digital and social marketing, investor relations and brand strategy. Padilla includes the brand consultancy of Joe Smith, the food and nutrition experts at FoodMinds, and the research authorities at SMS Research Advisors.

Health clients include 3M, Be The Match, Blood Centers of America, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Hackensack Meridian Health. Hennepin Healthcare, Mayo Clinic, Medtronic. Sanofi Pasteur and others.

Padilla's Health team consists of seasoned health and science strategists spanning the health care ecosystem, specializing in:

- · Pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies.
- · Device makers, vaccine manu-
 - Hospital and health systems.
- · Insurers, payor groups.
- · Nonprofits, government.

Padilla is an AVENIR GLOBAL company and is a founding member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, a partnership of 132 independently owned partner offices in 115 cities on six continents. Connect with purpose at PadillaCo. com

PAN **COMMUNICATIONS**

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Philip A. Nardone, President & CEO Mark Nardone, Executive Vice President Elizabeth Famiglietti, Executive Vice President, Human Resources Darlene Doyle, Executive Vice President, Client Relations Gary Torpey, Executive Vice President, Finance Lisa Astor, Senior Vice President & Managing Director, North America Gene Carozza, Dan Martin, Nikki Festa O'Brien, Meg Kessler, Senior Vice Presidents Gareth Thomas, Managing

PAN Communications is a leading integrated marketing and PR agency servicing B2B tech and healthcare brands. With office locations in Boston. San Francisco. New York, Orlando and London, PAN supports customer growth journeys and helps B2B brands effectively scale by moving ideas that create compelling stories, drive intent and influence markets across all forms of media.

Director, UK

PAN's acquisition of UK-based Capella PR in July 2019 has allowed the firm to expand its international presence, while continuing to offer the agility and personalized service of a mid-sized agency. With a staff of 150+ strong, PAN strives to help today's modern marketers by integrating a combination of services to better engage with target audiences and move markets for brands such as SAP, AppDirect, 8x8, Radial, MediaMath, Actian, Cogito and Maestro Health.

Connected Content—Creative Storytelling—Results that Matter! Clients Include: 8x8, Acquia, App Annie, Bazaarvoice, Citrix, CloudBees, Everbridge, GetWell-Health, GreatCall, Health Dialog, Maestro Health, MediaMath, Nice, Outsystems, Phononic, Quanterix, Quorom Software, Radial, SAP, Sift, Toast and WhiteOps.

PORTER NOVELLI

195 Broadway, 17th Floor New York, NY 10007 212/601-8000 Maura.Bergen@Porternovelli.com

Maura Bergen, Executive Vice

President, U.S. Health Lead

Porter Novelli is a global public relations agency born from the idea that the art of communication can advance society. Over 45 years ago, we opened our doorsand people's eyes and minds—for brands driven to make a positive impact. Today, we are a global agency with the entrepreneurial spirit of boutique specialists. We continue to build that bridge between purpose and business imperatives, and believe that a healthy bottom line can also make a remarkable impact.

We are passionate people, driven by purpose and grounded in health. We believe in the power of collaboration and connection in shaping the future. Our integrated process and bold approach drive impact across policy, public health, advocacy, and products.

Our health practice comprises over 200 experts in more than 30 cities worldwide. We are the agency that launched the first Anti-Tobacco campaign. We have been working on the HIV/AIDS crisis for decades. We are experts in aging and its effect on society. We work across the entire health ecosystem for patients. We share knowledge across borders, apply the best worldwide talent to client problems and manage business seamlessly across geographies. Our extensive knowledge about developed and developing markets allows us to create programs that are globally relevant and locally sensitive.

For more information, contact Maura Bergen, Executive Vice President, U.S. Health Lead: Maura. Bergen@Porternovelli.com.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS INC.

Partner in The Worldcom Public Relations Group

One E. Wacker Drive. 24th Floor Chicago, IL 60601 312/558-1770 lets_talk@pcipr.com www.pcipr.com

Jill Allread, APR, CEO Craig Pugh, President Pamela Oettel, COO/CFO

Team members at Public Communications Inc. are passionate about healthcare. We create communication solutions for national and international healthcare clients in every sector. Healthcare communications is at the core of

our national, independent agency, which boasts nearly five decades of healthcare experience.

consistently delivers PCI award-winning programs and campaigns for clients ranging from advocacy organizations and medical and allied health associations to *Fortune* 100 corporations; device manufacturers, biotechs and hospital suppliers; hospitals and health systems; retail; accrediting agencies; payers and consultants. PCI also knows healthcare audiences first-hand. We understand what makes them tick, how to reach them, and know the words that will resonate and prompt engagement.

Healthcare represents more than half of PCI's business. Our clients include more than 25 medical and dental associations, start-ups looking for visibility and university health systems. We launch products and manage lifecycle communications; run consumer awareness and screening programs on a turnkey basis; develop professional relations campaigns designed to draw referrals; and develop digital media strategies, campaigns and platforms including efficient online newsrooms and content-rich websites.

More than a third of our healthcare clients have stayed with us 10 vears or more with some exceeding 20-year partnerships. Our success grows from truly listening to, and talking with, our clients. We then create solutions and deliver quality service and results that meet or exceed our clients' goals.

RACEPOINT GLOBAL

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Larry Weber, Chairman & CEO RJ Bardsley, Chief Strategist, Global Technology Practice & EVP Dan Carter, Managing Director &

Racepoint Global is an independent communications agency specializing in technology, healthcare and innovation. Whether an enterprise brand or emerging category disruptor, companies partner with Racepoint for its strategic, earnedfirst approach to building brands and reputation. The agency helps clients define their authentic brand

story and builds channel agnostic communications strategies that are meaningful to the audiences most important to their businesses—to own the conversations and coverage that matters. Racepoint is headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, with 8 additional offices across the U.S., U.K. and Asia. More info: http://www.racepointglobal.com

Clients include: A-LIGN, ACD/ Labs, Case Farms, Consumer Technology Association, CorTechs Labs, Current by GE, DailyPay, Dassault Systèmes, E Ink, Huawei, Lattice Semiconductor, MediaTek, NantHealth, NeuroBo Pharmaceuticals, New Balance, NormaTec, Orion Labs, Panasonic, Progress Software, Project Management Institute (PMI), Qlik, RISC-V, Semtech, Sermo, SiOnyx, SpotOn, Southland Industries and Tineco.

THE REIS GROUP

1300 19th St., N.W., Suite 600 Washington, D.C. 20036 202/868-4000 www.TheReisGroup.com

Sharon Reis, Principal Tamara Moore, Senior Vice President Lauren Musiol. Senior Vice President Beth Casteel, Senior Counselor Peter Pearl, Senior Counselor

The Reis Group is a Washington-DC based public relations agency focused on health and social causes. We are passionate about our clients' issues and believe in the power of communications to transform lives.

Working closely and collaboratively with our clients as a cohesive team, we develop tailored campaigns that produce measurable and meaningful results-every time. Representing leading foundations, associations, research institutes, health systems, corporations, and universities, we offer clients a team of talented, experienced communications experts who provide a depth of knowledge, and proven successes in health, healthcare, and science communications.

Our services include: media relations, thought leadership, issues management, science promotion, social media, web sites, message testing, clinical trial recruitment, market research, stakeholder engagement, and advocacy promotion

Our goal is to provide every client with the skills and capabilities of a highly specialized agency,

along with the commitment and dedication of a small business.

Partial client list includes:

American Gastroenterological Association, Banner Alzheimer's Institute, Blue Shield of California Foundation, Digestive Disease Week, 10.27 Healing Partnership, Health Care Cost Institute, Nemours Children's Health System, National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America, and the Society of Interventional Radiology.

ROSICA COMMUNICATIONS

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Chris Rosica, President

Rosica Communications is an integrated PR and digital marketing agency specializing in thought leadership, corporate and brand positioning/messaging, marcom strategy, and content and influencer marketing. Our marcom and PR capabilities include earned media, social media management, crisis communications, issues management, corporate communications, cause marketing, direct marketing, and media training.

Founded in 1980, the firm serves a diverse healthcare clientele including healthcare delivery, insurance, medical device, B2B healthcare, medtech, nonprofits, industry trade associations, and animal health.

Rosica's social media services include strategy, social management, branding, content development/optimization, and follower acquisition. Our online marketing team is a Google Agency Partner specializing in SEO, online reputation/reviews management, SEM (PPC plus social and display ads), website development, WordPress security, and cyber security training and awareness.

As a "thinking partner" focused on achieving our clients' objectives. Rosica creates and executes thought leadership programs with clearly defined KPIs/metrics.

We craft compelling, authentic stories and messaging then effectively disseminate our client-partners' good news while supporting their sales and communications goals.

Our process includes:

· Strategically identifying our

clients' business and marketing goals/objectives

- Identifying target audiences, influencers and key opinion lead-
- · Honing the positioning, story and key messages, tailoring messages to each audience
- Training KOLs to deliver memorable messages
- · Developing measurable, integrated and creative PR, social media and internal/external communications programs
- Proactively communicating with clients
- · Aggressively securing results, evaluating against pre-determined strategic objectives and metrics
- Repurposing and leveraging content and PR coverage to augment SEO, sales activities, online reputation, tradeshow/conference marketing, analyst relations and direct marketing

Healthcare clients include: BeneCard PBF, Easterseals NJ, ENT and Allergy Associates, Exergen, Health Monitor Network, National Vision Administrators, NJ Sharing Network, PALM Health, and Transplant Games of America.

Please visit www.rosica.com for case studies and additional information.

SARD VERBINNEN & CO

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George Sard, Chairman & Co-CEO Paul Verbinnen, Co-CEO

Sard Verbinnen & Co (SVC) is a leading strategic corporate and financial communications firm recognized for its work in M&A, corporate positioning and profile raising, shareholder activism, restructurings, corporate governance, public affairs, executive changes, crisis communications, special situations, litigation support, IPOs and cybersecurity.

With more than 200 employees across its eight offices in New York, Chicago, Boston, Washington D.C., San Francisco, Los Angeles, London, Houston, and Hong Kong, SVC's highly experienced senior professionals are uniquely positioned to provide high quality, objective advice and execution support to clients across a broad range of industries. SVC professionals draw on deep experience in finance, law, media, public affairs,

corporate governance, and investor relations.

Founded in 1992, SVC's services and capabilities include media relations, investor relations, market intelligence, perception studies, brand awareness, creative digital content production, video production, social media and online communications, customer and partner communications, emplovee communications and issue advocacy.

STANDING PARTNERSHIP

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Melissa Lackey, CEO and President, Healthcare Practice Leader

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Today, healthcare companies face many pressures: to deliver great patient outcomes at reduced cost and maintain profitability in an uncertain political environment. The need to engage effectively with all stakeholders and carry out marketing strategies that drive business growth has never been higher.

Standing Partnership understands today's healthcare challenges and has a proven track record of nearly 30 years helping national and regional healthcare organizations — from hospital systems and provider groups to health plans, healthcare IT companies and foundations — meet their goals.

We provide an integrated approach that helps organizations tell their story in a way that is consistent and compelling to build public will, educate their various audiences and grow their business. We simplify the complexity of communicating about issues such as privacy, data, insurance, trust, measurement and legislation with important stakeholders. As a trusted partner, our services span strategic counsel to implementation support.

W20

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

W2O is a healthcare-focused

marketing communications firm built on marketing science. W2O incorporates Insight Integration, a strategic approach based on unearthing transformative insights from data/analytics and integrating them—across all marcom disciplines—to arrive at a precise solution for clients' business needs. W2O applies proprietary analytics models, methodologies and approaches in a digital world to design precise communications and marketing strategies to deliver sustained business results. The firm employs nearly 800 people in 15 offices across the United States and in Europe.

WEBER **SHANDWICK**

909 Third Ave. New York, NY 10022 212/445-8000 www.webershandwick.com

Laura Schoen, President, Global Healthcare Practice

Weber Shandwick's fully integrated, 360-degree approach makes us uniquely qualified to help clients navigate the ever-evolving healthcare marketing landscape. With wide-ranging experience and expertise working with healthcare companies, associations, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, overthe-counter medications, hiotechnology, insurance and health maintenance organizations, health systems and hospitals, and consumer health product, it's fair to say that we understand the healthcare sector like no one else.

Our team of 800+ is well versed in regulations and restrictions related to healthcare specific content in the U.S. and across the globe. Weber Shandwick is the nation's first communications and marketing services firm fully certified in promotional regulatory compliance using the training and testing standards of The Center for Communications Compliance (CCC).

Weber Shandwick's Element Scientific Communications practice is our "GPS System," helping our team and clients stay grounded in scientific data and supporting each claim with the strongest evidence backed by relevant studies. Supporting clients with data publications and regulatory milestones are just a few of the core capabilities we offer all of our medical device, pharmaceutical, and biotech clients. It's just one of our many differentiating strengths as an agency. O

PEOPLE IN PR People in PR

Amazon's Benson succeeds Schweitzer at CBS

BS has hired Mike Benson, who has been head of mar-

keting at Amazon Studios since 2014, as president & chief marketing officer.

He will take the reins George Schfrom weitzer, who has been with the network since 1972, at the end of 2019-2020 season.



Mike Benson

Schweitzer is becoming Chairman, CBS Marketing, transitioning to a role as Special Advisor to the company in spring 2020.

Benson previously served as Chief Creative Officer at Time Warner from 2011 to 2014 and has also been Executive Vice President, Marketing at Disney ABC Television Group.

He will oversee all brand marketing activities for CBS, including advertising, promotion, creative, experiential marketing and events across the company's entertainment, news and sports operations. O

Former Condé Nast CCO Blanchard heads to Charter

ormer Condé Nast Chief Communications Officer Cameron Blanchard has joined Charter Communications as Senior Vice President, Communications.

Condé Blanchard oversaw internal and external communications, and led development and execution of the company's communications plan. She was previously SVP of Corporate Communications NBCUniversal, where she led communica-



Cameron Blanchard

tions and media relations for all corporate functions and oversaw internal messaging to 30,000 NBCUniversal employees worldwide.

In her new position, Blanchard will serve as Charter's chief media relations spokesperson and strategist, as well as managing the day-to-day media relations function enterprise-wide. She will also oversee strategic external communications.

Charter offers its services to consumers and businesses under the branding of Spec-

Hotwire ups Riddell to corp. comms. SVP

otwire has promoted Lindsay Riddell to the role of Senior Vice President, Corporate and Executive Communica-



Lindsav Riddell

Riddell joined the global tech PR specialist in 2016 and served as Senior Director of

client services before being named VP of Corporate and Executive Communications the following year, where she oversaw the agency's executive thought leadership and speaker/presentation training programs.

Prior to joining Hotwire, she was as Director of Marketing for Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco. She was previously a reporter at publications including the San Francisco Business Times, Silicon Valley/San Jose Business Journal and Chattanooga Times Free Press. O

Patrón, Grey Goose **CMO** joins cannabis company

ee Applbaum, formarketing chief for spirits giant Bacardi Limited, has joined global cannabis company Surterra Wellness, where he's been named Chief Marketing Officer.



Lee Applbaum

Applbaum joins Surterra from Bacardi, where he served as the Global Chief Marketing Officer for both the Patrón Tequila and Grey Goose Vodka brands. Prior to that he was CMO for Target Australia, and before that, served as EVP and CMO at RadioShack and CMO at David's Bridal.

As CMO, Applbaum will lead Surterra's global marketing teams and direct product innovation, integrated brand marketing, retail brand and sales management initia-

Surterra's portfolio includes the Coral Reefer, Florida's Finest and Surterra Wellness brand. It is one of the fastest-growing medical cannabis companies in the U.S. •

Brunswick taps UK treasury vet

uncan McCourt, who worked in the UK Treasury as Chief of Staff to chancellor Phillip Hammond until July, is joining Brunswick Group as a Partner in London.

He'll counsel clients on financial matters, healthcare and developments on the Brexit front.

McCourt also was special advisor to Hammond, where he served as Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.



Duncan McCourt

Earlier, he worked at Credit Suisse, JP-MorganChase and consulted at the World Bank in Washington. **O**

O'Grady reports for service at Crosby

eg O'Grady, who helped launch the Defense Dept.'s spouse education & career program as associate director in the office of family policy, has joined Crosby Marketing Communications as Executive VP/Military and Veterans Practice Leader.

At the DOD, she partnered with employers such as Bank of America, Comcast, 3M and Amazon, that have hired more than 134,000 military spouses.

The former West Point cadet will help CMC clients communicate to active duty personnel, veterans, military spouses and their families. She also will support the firm's work for the DOD, Dept. of Veterans Affairs and DAV (non-profit for disabled American veterans).

During her tenure with the U.S. Army, O'Grady worked with Army Family Advocacy, Army Education, the Army Career and Alumni Program, and was the first training officer for the Army's Wounded Warrior Program, AW2.



Meg O'Grady

O'Grady joins CMB from Kaplan Higher Education, where she was VP-Military and Public Sector Solutions, and earlier was VP-Veteran Business Strategy & Engagement at First Data Corp. **O**

O'DWYER'S RANKINGS TOP HEALTHCARE & MEDICAL PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2018)		t Fees (2018)
1. W20 Group, San Francisco, CA	\$168,171,000	39. Lambert , Grand Rapids, MI	\$1,325,000
2. Edelman, New York, NY	154,202,000	40. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	1,238,933
3. Spectrum, Washington, DC	32,900,000	41. Gregory FCA ,Ardmore, PA	1,100,000
4. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	25,087,900	42. L.C. Williams & Associates, Chicago, IL	1,029,935
5. Health Unlimited, New York, NY	24,267,133	43. Standing Partnership , St. Louis, MO	1,025,535
6. Finn Partners, New York, NY	21,182,000	44. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	880,519
7. Crosby, Annapolis, MD	19,204,310	45. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	875,000
8. Zeno Group, New York, NY	12,300,659	46. Havas Formula , New York, NY	825,596
9. Evoke PR & Influence, Philadelphia, PA	12,000,000	47. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	645,075
10. Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock, Brentwood, TN	11,591,239	48. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	633,845
11. IMRE, LLC, Baltimore, MD	11,450,000	49. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	606,030
12. KYNE, New York, NY	10,405,888	50. Landis Communications , San Francisco, CA	555,000
13. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	9,630,245	51. Bellmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	545,376
14. JPA Health Communications, Washington, DC	9,264,490	52. Buchanan Public Relations , Bryn Mawr, PA	501,240
15. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	9,000,000	53. French I West I Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	495,445
16. Sam Brown Inc., Wayne, PA	5,621,644	54. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	484,000
17. SPI Group LLC, The, Fairfield, NJ	4,956,674	55. Raffetto Herman Strategic Comms. , Seattle, WA	475,969
18. Lazar Partners, New York, NY	4,878,125	56. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	474,000
19. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	4,500,000	57. North 6th Agency, Inc., New York, NY	423,000
20. Citizen Relations, Los Angeles, CA	4,235,437	58. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	413,108
21. MCS Healthcare Public Relations, Bedminster, N.	4,194,507	59. Singer Associates, Inc. , San Francisco, CA	362,529
22. MWWPR, New York, NY	3,168,922	60. Merritt Group , McLean, VA	335,057
23. Lovell Communications, Nashville, TN	2,976,067	61. Maccabee Minneapolis, MN	273,633
24. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	2,900,420	62. IW Group, Inc. , West Hollywood, CA	240,000
25. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	2,876,163	63. Perry Communications Group, Inc. . Sacramento, CA	238,058
26. Hunter PR, New York, NY	2,600,000	64. Judge Public Relations, LLC, Tampa, FL	221,747
27. PAN Communications, Boston, MA	2,586,184	65. Belfort Group, Boston, MA	195,395
28. Bliss Integrated Communication, New York, NY	2,494,000	66. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	190,500
29. LaVoie Health Science, Boston, MA	2,489,984	67. Fish Consulting . Fort Lauderdale, FL	143,000
30. Matter Communications, Newburyport, MA	2,483,498	68. BLAZE , Santa Monica, CA	125,500
31. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	2,329,335	69. Weiss PR, Inc., Baltimore, MD	117,564
32. 720 Strategies, Washington, DC	2,328,195	70. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	113,894
33. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	1,947,790	71. Kohnstamm Communications, Inc., St. Paul, MN	110,932
34. Racepoint Global , Boston, MA	1,907,544	72. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	100,000
35. Beehive Strategic Communication , St. Paul, MN	1,675,677	73. Hollywood Agency, Hingham, MA	90,000
36. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	1,579,425	74. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	52,000
37. Tunheim , Minneapolis, MN	1,516,094	75. SPM Communications , Dallas, TX	18,441
38. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	1,483,874		

Losing their religion

By Fraser Seitel

hat's them in the corner. That's them in the spotlight, losing their religion." Front man Michael Stipe may've been crooning about himself in the REM



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.

classic, but he could've just as well been lamenting the fate of three heretofore bastions of American society, each of whom threw away an integral piece of their foundational values over the past month.

The three organizations—NBC's "Saturday Live," the NFL's New England Patriots and The New York Times—have all recently suf-

fered public relations setbacks that belie a deeper loss of traditional standing.

Saturday Night Live's loss of courage

For four decades, "Saturday Night Live" has occupied a sacred place in the Peacock Network's plumage.

SNL feared nothing and no one, no matter how wealthy or powerful. Over the years, the show has skewered presidents and princes, CEOs, celebrities and anyone else whose preening, pretentiousness or pomposity deserved to be taken down.

But this month, when faced with a PR dilemma that tested its tradition of courage, SNL folded like a cheap, politically-correct

Almost immediately after SNL announced that three rising young comics had been hired for coveted spots in its 45th season, the Twitter backlash began.

One of the three new SNL hires, Shane Gillis, was accused of using racist and homophobic slurs on his podcast. Sure enough, Gillis, a 32-year-old Pennsylvania-based stand up who'd knocked around the nation's comedy clubs for a decade, had, indeed, made fun of Chinese and gay people on an obscure podcast that almost nobody listened to. His comedy act, on the other hand, was virtually free of any such

In an earlier, more compassionate/more courageous day, SNL executive producer Lorne Michaels, who's made a career of pushing the limits of comedic boundaries and consistently rejecting political correctness, might've given the young man a pass with a stern warning to avoid such slip ups in the future. But not today.

Michaels immediately caved to the PC crowd, fired Gillis on the spot and effectively ended a hard-working young man's hopes of attaining stardom.

New England Patriots' loss of morality

The New England Patriots are the best team in the National Football League and also the most unethical. They are led by Bill Belichick, arguably the best coach in NFL history and inarguably, the most loathsome.

Blessed with the ability of the league's best quarterback, Tom Brady, the Patriots have essentially cheated their way to NFL superiority. The team has been enmeshed in countless scandals, from illegally videotaping competitors' signals to regularly falsifying injury reports to purposely deflating footballs.

Perhaps most egregious, Belichick and his team have made a living on hiring—and lavishly rewarding—some of the league's best but most traitorous players, after they've worn out their welcomes elsewhere.

True to form, this month the Pats signed the league's leading but most infantile receiver, Antonio Brown, after he'd embarrassed not only his prior team, the Oakland Raiders, but also the entire league.

The Raiders had agreed to sign the troubled star to a \$50 million contract, after he refused to play for his former team, the Pittsburgh Steelers. Brown's response to the Raiders' largesse was to scuttle the deal from the beginning of training camp, by refusing to give up his unapproved helmet, burning his feet in a cryotherapy machine and threatening to bust a move on the team's general manager. So, the Raiders, correctly, got rid of the serial troublemaker before the season even started.

Whereupon, of course, the Patriots rewarded Brown with a \$15 million contract on the same day he was cut loose by the Raiders. In Belichickian terms, to paraphrase William Henry Vanderbilt, "The right thing be damned." Two weeks and a couple of sexual assault charges later, Brown proved too much even for the ethically-challenged Patriots to handle.

In September, Antonio Brown was released by the New England Patriots, whom nonetheless reinforced itself as the most immoral organization in professional sports.

New York Times' loss of fairness

By this time, there can be no question that The New York Times—rightly or wrongly

but certainly not "objectively" - openly despises all things Donald Trump. The proof is there to see every day in the paper, not only in the hysterical rantings of Trump-hating op ed writers but in the daily news pages as well.

While Times Executive Editor Dean Bacquet steadfastly denies the paper's anti-Trump news bias, several weeks ago a Sunday column in the "Review" section left little doubt that the Great Gray Lady's traditional sense of "fairness" has been forsaken.

The story was written by two veteran Times' reporters, excerpting their forthcoming book on the sexual harassment allegations surrounding Brett Kavanaugh, Trump's most recent appointee to the Supreme Court. Specifically, the reporters revealed a "new, never-before reported" allegation by a former Yale classmate that Kavanaugh had exposed himself to her at a drunken dorm party.

Predictably, anti-Kavanaugh politicians, advocates and media seized on the revelation and demanded that Kavanaugh, like Trump, be impeached.

Which might well have happened had it not also been revealed-after a week's worth of anti-Kavanaugh venom—that the two reporters had failed to include in their column that the Kavanaugh classmate declined to be interviewed for their book and that her friends say she does not recall the incident.

Then, on Sunday Sept. 20, the Times ran a one paragraph "Editors' Note," sheepishly acknowledging that the missing information should've been included in the original column. So much for fairness at The New York Times. O

Media news brief

Vox Media acquires New York Magazine

Vox Media is acquiring New York Media, which publishes New York magazine and its allied digital platforms, to form what they say will be "the leading independent modern media company.

Vox Media chairman and CEO Jim Bankoff will lead the combined company, while current New York Media CEO Pamela Wasserstein will take the role of President, Vox Media, overseeing the existing New York Media brands as well as strategic initiatives that will include the company's commerce and consumer businesses.

Current New York Media Editor-in-Chief David Haskell will continue to lead the New York Media brands, which include websites The Cut, The Strategist, Grub Street, Intelligencer and Vulture in addition to the magazine. Vox Media Publisher Melissa Bell will remain in charge of the Vox Media brands, which include Eater, Recode, The Verge and Vox. "Nothing changes editorially for any of our brands," Bankoff

Business travel expenses

By Richard Goldstein

usiness travel expenses could someday become a thing of the past, considering meetings can now be conducted by Skype and other web-based conference options. However, travel is still



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

an important way public relations agencies conduct business.

Tax rules for business travel

Generally, for federal tax purposes, a PR agency may deduct all ordinary and necessary expenses paid or incurred in carrying on its business. This includes travel expenses that aren't deemed "lavish or

extravagant" or that are for personal purposes.

For employees, business travel expenses funded by employers are typically considered working-condition fringe benefits and, therefore, aren't included in the employee's gross income. This exclusion generally applies to property or services provided to an employee so that employee can perform his or her job.

Under the Internal Revenue Code, an advance or reimbursement for travel expenses to an employee under an "accountable plan" is deductible by the employer PR agency and not subject to FICA and income tax withholding. In general, an advance or reimbursement is treated as made under an accountable plan if an employee receives the advance or reimbursement for a deductible business expense paid or incurred while performing services for his or her employer. The employee also must account for the expense to the employer within a reasonable period and in an adequate manner and return any excess reimbursements or allowances within a reasonable period of

By contrast, an advance or reimbursement made under a "non-accountable plan" isn't considered a working condition fringe benefit and is treated as compensation. Thus, the amount is fully taxable to the employee, and is subject to FICA and income tax withholding by the employer.

What's a reasonable period of time?

A reasonable period of time depends on

the facts and circumstances, but there are two safe harbor methods:

- Advance payments made within 30 days of when an expense is paid or incurred.
- Substantiation provided within 60 days after expenses are paid or incurred; or
- · Return of the excess amounts within 120 days after the expenses are paid or in-

Under a so-called periodic statement method, the employer must:

- Give each employee periodic statements no less than quarterly that set forth the amounts paid under the reimbursement arrangement in excess of the substantiated amount: and
- Request that the employee either substantiate or return the excess amounts within 120 days of the statement date. An expense substantiated or amounts returned within that period satisfies the reasonable period requirement.

Status is crucial

Although business transportation—going from one place to another without an overnight stay—is deductible, attaining "business travel status" fully opens the door to substantial tax benefits. Under business travel status, the entire cost of lodging and incidental expenses, and 50 percent of meal expenses, is generally deductible by the employer that pays the bill. What's more, those amounts don't equate to any taxable income for employees who, as mentioned, are reimbursed under an accountable plan.

So, how does a business trip qualify for travel status? It must involve overnight travel, an employee traveling away from his or her tax home (see subsequent discussion) and a temporary trip undertaken solely or primarily—for ordinary and necessary business expenses.

Overnight travel doesn't mean an employee must be away from dusk till dawn. Any trip that's long enough to require sleep or rest to enable employee to continue working is considered "overnight."

The concept of a tax home

One aspect of business travel taxability that many companies struggle with is the concept of a tax home. The IRS allows deductions for meals and lodging on business trips because these expenses are duplicative of costs normally incurred at the employee's home and require them to spend more money while traveling. Consequently, a taxpayer can't claim deductions for meals and lodging unless he or she has a tax home for tax purposes and travels away from it overnight.

Further, under IRS final regulations, there's an exception under the local, no lavish lodging expenses incurred while not away from home overnight on business if all the facts and circumstances so indicate. One factor specified under the regulations is whether the employee incurs the expense because of a bona fide employment condition or requirement.

Tax cuts and the Jobs Act

By now, most employers and employees have filed their 2018 tax return. For employees, most have realized that previously miscellaneous itemized deductions are no longer available. Therefore, if an employee incurs a business expense that's considered reimbursed as compensation or not reimbursed at all, under changes under the TCJA, these expenses incurred will no longer be tax deductible.

Conclusion

There are a lot more to these rules than what I've written. It's therefore important to consult a tax professional who can review your specific facts and help you stay on top of the latest developments. You may want to consult your attorney to help you draft an accountable plan that will meet the requirements of the tax law. O

PR news brief

Next Fifteen acquires **Health Unlimited**

Next Fifteen Communications Group has acquired the US division of Health Unlimited.

Health Unlimited, along with its specialist consultancy Corkery Group, will be rebranded as M Booth Health and operate as a separate agency reporting to M Booth CEO Dale Bornstein. M Booth was acquired by Next 15 in 2009.

Timothy Bird, Health Unlimited Global CEO, and his U.S.-based management team will continue to lead

He called the deal a major milestone for both firms "We will continue our work at the forefront with clients in health and medicine with access to M Booth's creative, digital and analytics expertise to advance progress," Bird told *O'Dwyer's*. "Bringing together M Booth's strengths with our expertise in health-focused strategic communications will allow us to shape new offerings to better help clients and make both of our agencies even stronger."

Health Unlimited comes in at #5 on O'Dwyer's list of top healthcare firms, reporting 2018 net fees of \$24.3 million. For the year ending March 31, the agency reported adjusted before-tax profit of \$5.2 million and net assets of \$17 million. It is to be acquired debt-free.

"The acquisition is a major milestone for Next 15 as it adds another specialist business to the portfolio and greatly expands our international footprint in the healthcare sector. We see significant complementary opportunities for both businesses," said Tim Dyson, CEO of Next 15.

Facebook launches cryptocurrency lobbying blitz

acebook has doubled down in its recent lobbying battle on Capitol Hill, with the recent hire of two additional D.C.-based lobbying firms in response to the increased Congressional and regulatory pushback the social media network has received due to its forthcoming cryptocurrency offering, Libra.

The social media giant in September hired D.C. lobbying firm Hollier & Associates on matters pertaining to blockchain policy, as well as data privacy and cyber security issues, according to lobbying registration documents filed with Congress in September.

Managing the Facebook account will be Hollier President Will Hollier, formerly Chief of Staff and Legislative Director to Senator and Senate Banking Committee Chairman Mike Crapo (R-Idaho).

Facebook also recently retained public policy and communications consulting firm The Williams Group to handle "cryptocurrency regulation" issues, according to September lobbying disclosure documents. WG Founder Michael Williams handles that account. Williams previously served as Staff Director of Legislative Affairs during the Clinton Administration.

Facebook formally unveiled the details of its cryptocurrency venture in June, which could potentially bring the world's "unbanked" billions into the digital economy by allowing anyone to securely buy, sell or send money to others via the social network. The proposed digital currency, which has yet to meet regulatory approvals, is set to launch sometime next year.

The announcement of Facebook's forays into digital assets has raised concerns. Congress in July drafted the "Keep Big Tech Out of Finance Act," which would prohibit "large platform utilities" such as Facebook from operating as a financial institution.

Facebook's September lobbying retainers follow the company's August pact with D.C.-based cryptocurrency, blockchain and financial services specialists FS Vector. O

Direct Impact hires Obama alum Myers

am Myers, who held communications posts in the Depts. of Education and Commerce during the Obama administration, has joined Direct Impact as President. DI is the grassroots arm of WPP's BCW.

At the DOE, Myers served as White House liaison and supported the program to promote healthy eating in schools and America's College Promise. For Commerce, he served as Director of Enterprise Services Change Management and Communications.

Myers also did campaign work for Clinton/Gore 1996, Gore/ Lieberman 2000, Kerry/Edwards 2004, Obama for America 2012 and Hillary for America 2016.

Since exiting the Obama White House, he worked at Brooklyn's Huge as Senior VP for partnerships and development and the D.C. outpost of The Outcast Agency as Senior VP. •

Isakowitz gets Google D.C. post

ark Isakowitz, Chief of Staff to Ohio Republican Senator Rob Portman has joined Google as VP-Government Affairs and Public Policy in Washington.

He replaces former Staten Island/Brooklyn Republican Con-



gresswoman Susan Molinari.

Google advertising and search procedures are under intense scrutiny in DC. President Trump also has accused the company of being biased against conservative media outlets.

Isakowitz served as Portman's COS for five years and earlier was President of Fierce Isakowitz & Blalock lobbying firm. O

Edelman names McLear to top U.S. public affairs post

aron McLear has been named U.S. Chair, Public Affairs at Edelman. He was Managing Director, Public Affairs and Crisis for the agency's Western region.

Before joining Edelman, he was Director of Central Communications at Uber. He has also served as an adviser to Neel Kashkari's 2014 California gubernatorial campaign and Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign. McLear previously was Press Secretary for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and for the Republican National Committee.



Aaron McLear

He is a key advisor on Edelman's partnership with the Gun Safety Alliance and has been the force behind the firm's commitment to gun safety, including its new research on Leadership and Anti-Gun Violence. O

Cuomo press aide Collins moves to MTA

ew York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority has hired Abbey Collins, former Press Secretary to Empire State Governor Andrew Cuomo, as Chief Communications Officer.

Collins joins the MTA from Kivvit, where she was a Director, advising Fortune 500 companies, start-ups, not-for-profits and governments on strategic and crisis communications as well as creating public affairs campaigns.

She handled press for Cuomo's successful 2018 re-election campaign, and had served his administration since 2015 as first Deputy Press Secretary, leading communications efforts for such infrastructure projects as the opening of the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, the unveiling of the new Kosciuszko Bridge and the groundbreaking for Moynihan Station and Penn Station's West End Concourse.

Other positions Collins has held include Press Secretary for New York state Senator Jeff Klein and director at public affairs and political communications firm Mercury. O

Japan hires Hale to keep tabs on U.S. elections

apan has hired Hale Strategies to monitor and gather political intelligence about the US 2020 elections.

The eight-month contract calls for Marcia Hale to aggregate and analyze publicly available information and documents. She will then brief Japan's embassy's staff about the content of the material and provide insights into political trends and developments.

Hale formed her Washington shop after a ten-year stint as President/Chair of Building America's Future, a bipartisan infrastructure coalition founded by former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell and New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg.

Earlier, she handled public affairs for Monsanto, served as Managing Director at McKenna Long & Aldridge and worked as Director of Intergovernmental Affairs in Bill Clinton's White House.

Hale reports to Yoshitaka Kitamura, Japan's Counselor for Congressional Affairs. O

Sanctioned Russian bank taps Trump-tied Sweeney

ormer upstate NY Republican Congressman John Sweeney, who has close ties to President Trump, has signed a \$750,000 one-year contract to represent Russia's Vnesheconombank, the state-controlled investment bank.

His job is to meet and lobby U.S. officials to persuade them not to slap any new sanctions on VEB. Sweeney hired Georgetown Strategies for \$25,000 per-month to backstop his VEB effort.

President Obama sanctioned VEB in 2014 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its annexation of Crimea.

The Treasury Dept. in 2018 listed VEB Chair Igor Shuvalov, a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, and the members of the bank's supervisory board as affiliated with Russia's government, but did not impose sanctions.

Sweeney served three terms in Congress and was defeated in 2006 by now Empire State Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. He worked for Trump during the NY State Republican primary and then became deputy counsel of the campaign.

Following Trump's victory, Sweeney was named to the executive committee of the transition team and part of the four-member "Tiger Team" that vetted candidates for jobs in the Administration. •

Ex-Graham aide speaks for Qatar

atar's Washington embassy has hired Neale Creek to improve bilateral relations with the U.S. and develop investment and business opportunities.

NC Co-Founder Andrew King spearheads the one-year effort, which is worth \$50,000 per-month. He spent two decades working for South Carolina Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, exiting as Deputy Chief of Staff in 2015. King joined Glover Park Group in 2017 as Managing Director and left in August.

Graham, a close ally of President Trump, is a strong booster of Qa-

The Qatar Investment Authority plans to spend billions in South Carolina in support of Barzan Holdings, which is controlled by the Arab state's defense department. Charleston is home to a major Boe-

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.

Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP, Washington, D.C., registered Sep. 23, 2019 for Republic of Honduras, Honduras, C.A., regarding U.S. securities and banking law in connection with financing in the international market and related due diligence.

Capitol Financial Strategies, LLC, Washington, D.C., registered Sep. 10, 2019 for Embassy of Hungary, Washington, D.C., regarding promotion and lead generation of foreign direct investment into Hungary.

Clarence Charles Cutsforth, Middletown, NJ, registered Sep. 10, 2019 for Principality of Sealand, Leigh-on-sea, Essex, regarding issues related to the principal's sovereignty and assisting in carrying out assignments for the principal's executives. Located on the military fortress of Roughs Tower in the North Sea, Sealand is the smallest country in the world.

Latham & Watkins LLP, Washington, D.C., registered Sep. 6, 2019 for Ministry of Justice, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan, regarding the principal's criminal justice system.

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.

Cassidy & Associates, Inc., Washington, D.C., registered Sep. 24, 2019 for Violet Energy, Inc., Portland, OR, regarding issues related to government procurement of solar energy.

BL Partners Group, LLC, Arlington, VA, registered Sep. 23, 2019 for Fox Corporation, Washington, D.C., regarding Satellite TV Extension and Localism Act Reauthorization, retransmission content, online privacy, spectrum-related issues, media ownership issues, 1st amendment issues and sports betting.

American Defense International, Inc., Washington, D.C., registered Sep. 17, 2019 for Yippy Inc., Miami, FL, regarding issues pertaining to a secure web-based search engine that guarantees data security.

Crestview Strategy US LLC, Washington, D.C., registered Sep. 19, 2019 for Canadian American Business Council, Washington, D.C., regarding U.S./Canada trade policy and ratification of the USMCA free trade agreement.

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530 7th Ave. #502, New York, NY 10018 212/924-9600

letstalk@jpublicrelations.com www.jpublicrelations.com

Employees: 65. Founded: 2005.

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

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

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



Jamie Sigler O'Grady & Sarah Evans, partners

Jamie Sigler O'Grady, Sarah Evans, partners

Locations

New York

530 7th Ave. #502, New York, NY 10018 212/924-9600

San Diego

2341 Fifth Ave., San Diego, CA 52101

619/255-7069

Los Angeles

429 Santa Monica Blvd., #280, Santa Monica, CA 90401

310/722-7066

14 Gray's Inn Rd., 3063, London, WC1X, 8HN, UK

(011) 44 (20) 3890 9838

Sampling of highlighted clients:

Adare Manor, Ireland

Adventures by Disney (project work)

Aulani, a Disney Spa & Resort (project world Chateau du Grand-Luce, France

Chewton Glen, UK Cliveden House, UK

Discover Baja California

Four Seasons Resort Lana'i

Golden Oak Development by Walt Disney World Resort Grace Hotels

Grand Hotel Tremezzo, Lake Como

Gurney's Resorts - Montauk & Newport Helena Bay, New Zealand

Hotel del Coronado

InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown InterContinental, Washington DC - The Wharf

Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts

Newport Beach & Company

Rancho La Puerta

Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa.

Regent Seven Seas Cruises (project world)

Relais & Châteaux

The Palms and The Shore Club, Turks & Caicos

The Private Suite at LAX

The Resort at Pedregal

The Ritz-Carlton Hotels (15 properties)

Vail Resorts Hospitality

Vail Mountain Resorts

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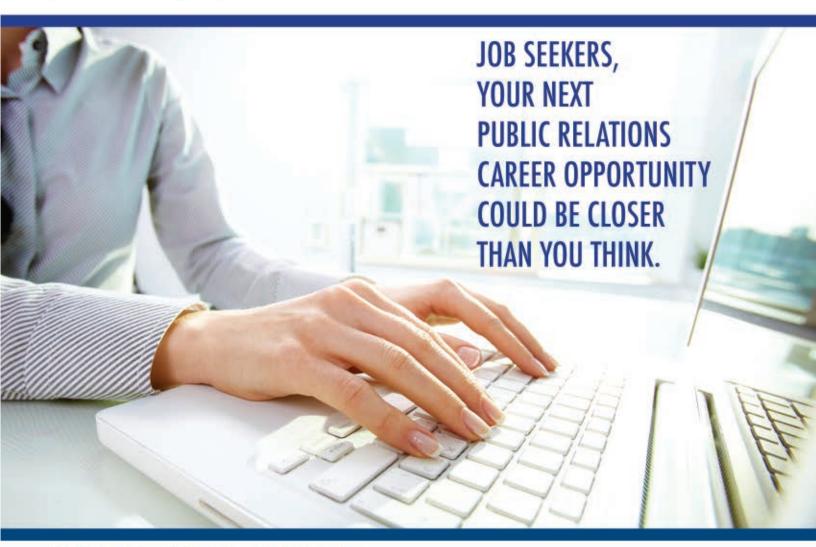
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