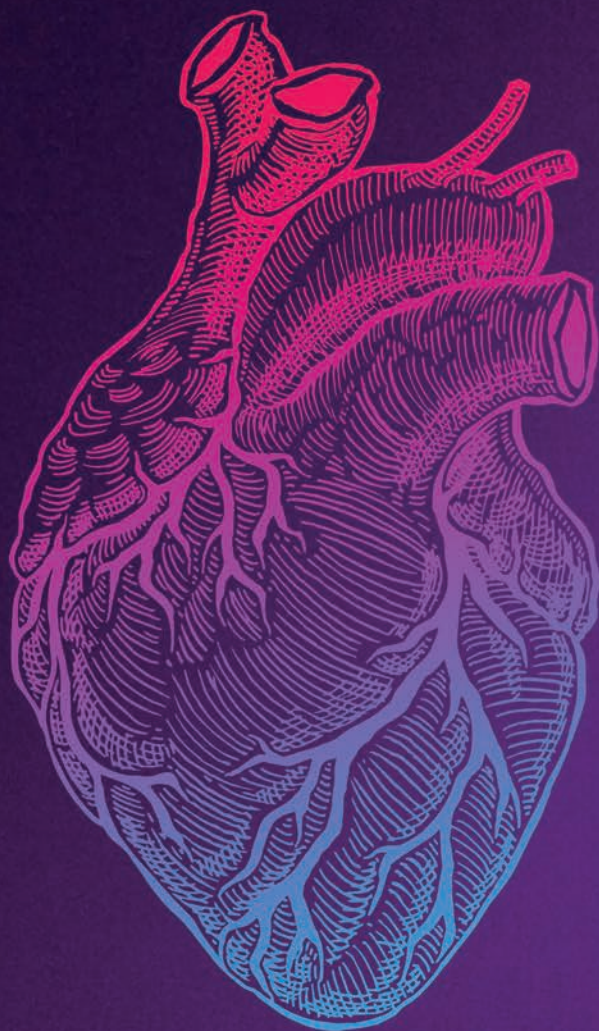


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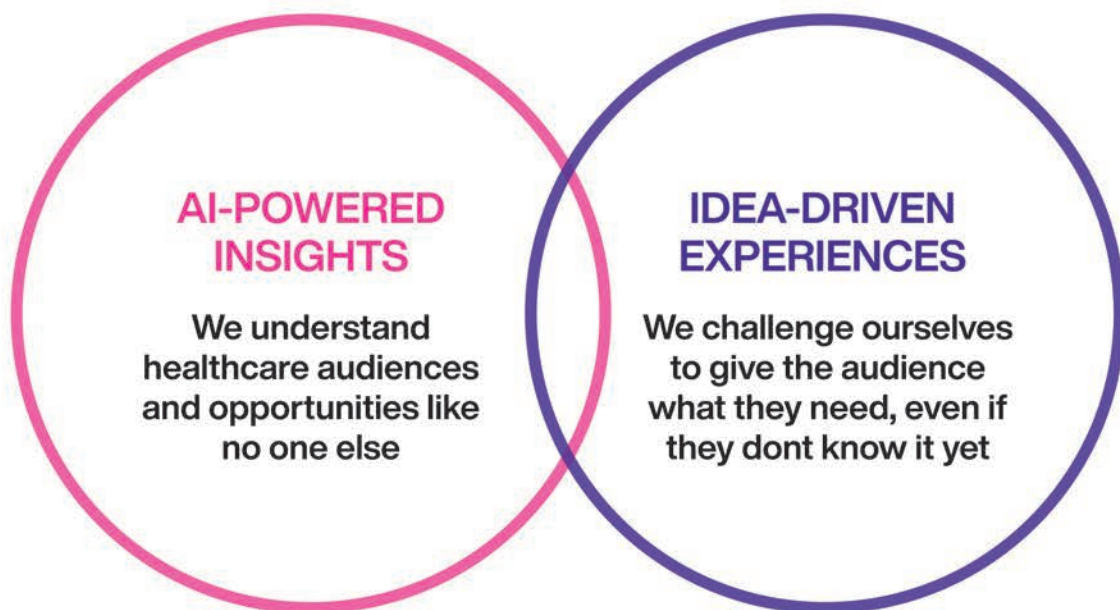
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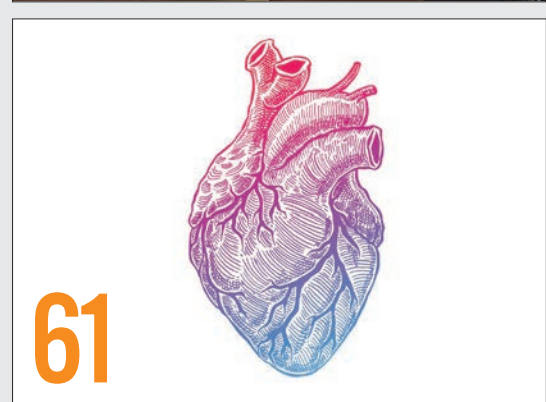
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Facebook plays role in U.S. mental health decline

The introduction of Facebook contributed to an increase of mental health troubles—particularly increased anxiety and depression—among adolescents and young adults in the United States, according to a recent study published in peer-reviewed academic journal *The American Economic Review*.

The study, which was authored by researchers at Bocconi University, Tel Aviv University and MIT, concludes “that social media has a negative impact on mental health and played a role in the increase in mental illness among adolescents and young adults over the past two decades,” with “unfavorable social comparisons” fostered by platforms like Facebook the leading culprit for increased symptoms of poor mental health among young people.

While it's not the first time that research has analyzed the impact of social media on mental health outcomes, the authors of this study claim their research provides “the most comprehensive causal evidence to date on the effects of social media on mental health.” They arrived at their conclusion through the use of a unique experiment: They retraced the initial rollout of Facebook—then called “TheFacebook”—that began in 2004 at Harvard, followed by Columbia, Stanford and Yale before becoming available to other universities, and then, the rest of the world in 2006.

Researchers then paired that rollout with medical-response data supplied during that time period by students at those campuses to the National College Health Assessment, a semi-annual survey of mental health and well-being data conducted at colleges across the country.

Collecting survey data on college students' mental health during Facebook's early expansion, researchers discovered that within the first five semesters of being exposed to the platform, college students' likelihood of being diagnosed with depression rose by 32 percent, the probability that a student would be in therapy for depression increased by around 50 percent and the odds that they were on anti-depressant medication grew by 33 percent.

They additionally found students who'd been introduced to Facebook were more likely to report that mental health had negatively affected their academic performance and that their mental health worsened with increased exposure to the platform. They calculate that the introduction of Facebook is responsible for a 24 percent increase in the prevalence of severe depression among college students over the last two decades.

The study's authors noted these findings should be interpreted with caution for several reasons, namely, that mental-health surveys often suffer from measurement error, that the data in the study are limited to college students, and that years of exposure to platforms like Facebook may actually teach users ways to mitigate the negative effects these sites have on mental health. The study's authors also pointed out that Facebook's negative mental-health effects appear to be strongest among students who are most susceptible to mental illness.

Years of research have reinforced the idea that there's a causal link between social media and a decline in mental health among teenagers and young adults. A 2007 study published in *The Lancet*, widely considered the world's premier medical journal, found that the mental health of adolescents and young adults in the U.S. began declining as social media sites gained popularity in the mid-2000s.

The rise of teen depression and suicide in the last decade has also been widely documented. Between 2011 and 2018, rates of depression increased by more than 60 percent among U.S. adolescents, according to 2020 findings published in *Current Opinion in Psychology*. The Centers for Disease Control presented similar findings, showing that the suicide rate among Americans between the ages of 10 and 24 increased 57 percent between 2007 and 2017. Suicide is now the second leading cause of death for Americans 15–24 years of age, according to 2021 findings from the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. The number of teenagers who reported experiencing depression increased by 59 percent between 2007 and 2017, according to 2019 data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

It's worth mentioning that whatever horse Facebook has in this race may have already been put out to pasture. While there are currently about two billion daily, active Facebook users, the platform's regulars these days famously skew older, and teens, widely considered the tastemaker demographic regarding what apps and sites people are currently using online, largely left the site years ago. According to recent findings by the Pew Research Center, short-form video platform TikTok has surged in popularity among teens in recent years, with 67 percent claiming they use the site. Meanwhile, the share of teens who said they use Facebook now stands at only 32 percent, which is less than half the share (71 percent) that same demographic claimed to use the platform during a previous Pew survey in 2014.

The study, “Social Media and Mental Health,” was published in the Oct. edition of *The American Economic Review*. Published by the American Economic Association, *The American Economic Review* is considered one of the most respected scholarly journals in the field of economics. ○

—Jon Gingerich

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'Safety' takes precedence over free speech for teens

Most teens value a welcoming, safe online environment online as opposed to one where people speak their minds freely, according to a recent Pew Research Center survey.

By Jon Gingerich

The issue of “cancel culture,” and current debates around how tech companies should address opinions or content that might be considered offensive, have become divisive topics among bipartisan lawmakers, media outlets and consumers in recent years.

According to a recent survey released by the Pew Research Center, it appears that a majority of U.S. teens today value a digital ecosystem where people feel safe and welcome over one where people are able to speak freely.

Pew's survey found that nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of Americans ages 13 to 17 believe that offering a welcoming, safe Internet is more important than providing a forum where people are able to speak their minds. Only slightly more than a third (38 percent) prefer an online environment where people are able to say whatever they want.

By contrast, a separate Pew survey of U.S. adults (Americans 18 and older) finds these views to be somewhat more evenly divided. For example, more than half (57 percent) of Americans ages 18 to 29 think it's more im-

portant that people have the ability to speak their minds freely online. On the other hand, 58 percent of older Americans (those 65 and older) seem to agree with teens' views on the issue, preferring a welcoming, safe Internet over one where people can say whatever they want. Overall, half (50 percent) of U.S. adults value a welcoming, safe online environment, while 47 percent put an emphasis on providing a forum where freedom of speech is the guiding rule.

However, teens seem to agree with adults on the issue of online speech in some surprising ways. For example, a majority of teens polled (59 percent) said they think many people today take things that are said online too seriously. This is actually higher than the percentage of U.S. adults (54 percent) who said the same. Moreover, the age group who most believe that offensive content online is taken too seriously skews young, belonging to Americans between the ages of 18 to 29 (62 percent).

Partisanship appears to play a greater role than age in determining one's values of safety and free speech online, as opinions on the

issue contrast most starkly along partisan lines for respondents across all age groups.

Nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of teens who identify as Democrat or Democrat-leaning think it's paramount that people feel safe and welcome online, compared to only 49 percent of Republican or of Republican or GOP-leaning teens. Meanwhile, 72 percent of conservative-leaning teens think people take offense too quickly to things they see online, while only 49 percent of teens identifying as Democrat or Democrat-leaning teens agree.

The same pattern follows with adults. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of Democrat-identifying adults think people need to feel welcome and safe online, compared to only about a third (36 percent) of conservatives, and 67 percent of Republican-leaning adults think people take offense to things too easily, while only 43 percent of Democrat-leaning adults agree with this.

Pew's study was based on two surveys, one which polled 1,300 U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 between April and May 4 and another that polled 3,500 U.S. adults in March. ○

Agencies say it's getting harder to land new business

A recent study suggests that landing new business has gotten considerably more difficult for PR agencies over the past year.

By Steve Barnes

Obtaining new business has gotten considerably more difficult for agencies over the past year, according to the new edition of an annual study from lead generation/business development firm RSW/US.

While last year's study reflected an environment in the midst of a recovery from the lockdowns and uncertainty of 2020, this year, the momentum of that comeback has slowed down. In 2021, just 28 percent of respondents said that pulling in new business was harder than it had been the year before. This year, that number rose to 43 percent.

In addition, only 17 percent reported that snagging new business is easier in 2022 than it was in 2021—a significant drop from the 38 percent who made that claim in the previous year's survey.

The top hurdle cited was the difficulty agencies have in “breaking through” with clients. Even so, fewer respondents named

this as a factor in 2022 (55 percent) than did so last year (59 percent).

Coming in next was the lack of opportunities in the market. Almost four out of ten respondents (39 percent) said there were fewer opportunities out there in 2022 than there had been last year. That's a hefty jump from the 23 percent who said that in the 2021 survey.

The inability to find “the right person to drive the new business program” is also emerging as a major problem. While that was not mentioned at all last year, it was on the radar for 31 percent of respondents this year.

The study notes that not only are new business directors hard to come by, they also tend to have a relatively short tenure once they come to a firm (18 months). Agencies also seem to be less pleased with the results they are getting from their new business directors. In 2021, 60 percent of agencies said

their last new business hire was “very to somewhat successful.” That number slid to 41 percent this year.

When it comes to what does succeed at bringing in new business, getting additional work from existing clients tops the list, followed by referrals and networking. Ranking much further down are such techniques as phone calls, social media, paid online marketing and traditional mailings.

Emails also get a big thumbs down. More than three-quarters (76 percent) of respondents said that they receive more than six emails per day. However, almost nine out of ten (88 percent) said that fewer than 10 percent of the emails they receive are effective.

“What we hear anecdotally, and see in this report,” the study's authors say, “is how little agencies are using outbound tools.” But they add that outbound tools need not be ineffective. “With focused and strategic messaging to the right prospects, you can break through to your prospects.”

The RSW/US Agency New Business Report surveyed over 3,000 agency executives nationwide. ○

Congress debates PR's role in preventing climate action

The U.S. House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing in September focused on PR agencies' work for the U.S. energy sector and what impacts their messaging has had in the ongoing climate-change debate.

By Jon Gingerich

The U.S. House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations in September held a hearing titled "The Role of Public Relations Firms in Preventing Action on Climate Change."

The oversight hearing, which focused on how PR firms work to improve the images of oil, gas and coal companies and trade groups and what effects that work has on our current climate-change debate, included testimony from witnesses such as Climate One founder/CEO Christine Arena and Melissa Aronczyk, a Rutgers University associate professor whose work specializes in corporate political advocacy and branding.

Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Chair Katie Porter (D-Calif.) opened the session, claiming that oil and gas companies today are waging "information warfare" by hiring PR firms to support their position in the debate surrounding America's energy crisis, a practice she called "breathtaking in its shamelessness."

Porter said that energy companies have moved from discounting climate change to convincing Americans that big oil is part of the solution, effectively turning the climate crisis "into crass marketing opportunities."

"PR firms play a critical role in this effort," she said.

Climate One founder Arena, a former Edelman executive with two decades of experience in the PR world, stated that "the link between misleading communications and climate policy obstruction is well-documented," and claimed that disinformation surrounding the subject of climate action has become more detailed and more nuanced in recent years.

Likening PR's work for energy companies to the tactics used by big tobacco in the past, Arena detailed some of the recent strategies and techniques used by the PR industry "to mislead the public," and said that until now, the PR firms responsible for this work "have escaped scrutiny" and have "flatly denied responsibility."

"Like the tobacco industry, the fossil fuel industry has always relied on public relations to advocate for its interest, but what's new is the intensity of its pursuits," Arena said.

Speaking on the role of PR firms in preventing action on climate change, media studies scholar Aronczyk said a central finding of her research is that "the public

relations industry has, for several decades, been a major actor in the strategic planning and execution of campaigns for the fossil fuel industry to influence what we know and how we act on environmental issues."

The work PR companies perform for the fossil fuel industry is about more than mere messaging or marketing, Aronczyk said. While PR firms often say they're simply facilitating or amplifying their clients' messaging, in actuality, they're actively coming up with new ideas and information and targeting multiple stakeholders "to distort our understanding of climate change" while actively downplaying their role in this process.



Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Chair Katie Porter (D-Calif.) speaks at a Sept. Congressional hearing on PR agencies' role in preventing climate action.

The lone dissenting witness was Amy O. Cooke, CEO of free-market think tank the John Locke Foundation and an expert in energy policy. Cooke said factors like efficiency, cost and land use also need to be added to the energy conversation and said she trusts Americans to put good policy ahead of partisan ideology. Americans deserve access to the facts so they can decide for themselves, she said, and public policy groups like hers provide information so the public and lawmakers can make sound, informed public-policy decisions.

"I don't think anytime you hear another voice, even if you disagree with it, it's disinformation," Cooke said. "It's public debate. It's not disinformation just because you dis-

agree with it. It's another perspective that needs to be heard. That's how we come up with solutions."

Pushback on the witnesses from the subcommittee's conservative flank was considerable.

"It must be election season," said Rep. Blake Moore (R-Utah). Moore called it a "disservice to the American people" that committee hearings are now focused on going after energy companies and "public relations professionals doing their job" to score political points. Moore pointed to the hypocrisy of environmental groups that add "spin" to their side of the debate while suggesting energy companies aren't allowed to tell their side of the story on the energy issue, saying "you cannot have it both ways."

Rep. Jody Hice (R-Ga.) concurred, claiming that it's "incredibly hypocritical" that "one side has free speech" on the issue of climate change "but the other does not." Hice also detailed what he characterized as some of the "dark money" that often funds environmental groups in the U.S. today.

Rep. Matt Rosendale (R-Mont.) said environmental groups are often engaged in an attempt to silence the voice on one side of the climate-change debate, while simultaneously suppressing the technology created by energy companies that have given us the ability to utilize our resources in more environmentally sound ways.

Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-Colo.) said that "socialist" environmental groups "harass private companies" and threaten jobs that are vital to her state's economy. Boebert noted that if such an "anti-energy agenda" was passed into law, the residents of Colorado would be "rubbing their hands together to stay warm during the winter months."

A September study from London-based think tank Influence Map, which examined how oil and gas companies use marketing to improve their public image, found that while more than 60 percent of energy companies' advertisements contain green messaging of some kind, only about 12 percent of industry expenditures end up allocated toward climate solutions.

Researchers at Brown University similarly found in a study last year that most advertising for oil and gas companies contains misleading information or factual distortions, and cited PR and marketing as one of the greatest barriers to climate action. ○

Navigating healthcare's next frontier

Marketers' opportunity for more personalized storytelling with the evolution of Web3 and the rise of the Metaverse

By Dan Martin

The advent of the Internet 40 years ago and its ensuing innovation continue to revolutionize society as we know it. The Internet's inception impacted all aspects of our lives, both personally and professionally, cutting across all market segments. We're now at the next frontier as we stand on the cusp of moving further into a world built by Web3, which promises to further blend the physical and digital. This will require greater integration, more modern standards and protocols and capabilities that give people more control of their digital selves—their identity and representation, what they own and who has access to the data they create. Web3 could help enable the needed standardization, consistency and interoperability and serve as the foundation from which innovations, including the metaverse, can build.

In fact, artificial intelligence combined with augmented and virtual reality is setting the foundations for the metaverse across almost every industry, including healthcare. And, lately, we've been hearing more and more about how the metaverse can help address healthcare's most significant barriers and challenges.

Metaverse technology is touted as being a driver of disruption in healthcare, able to provide better surgical precision, open new channels or treatment, lower costs and improve patient outcomes. In fact, an August 2022 "Healthcare in the Metaverse" report from Market Research Future predicts that "by 2030 the healthcare metaverse market will grow by 48.3 percent CAGR and be worth \$5.37 billion," and 74 percent of those familiar with the metaverse believe it's the future, according to a Wunderman Thompson March 2022 report titled "Into the Metaverse and Beyond."

Yet, the metaverse is still in its earliest stages, and we're watching it take shape in real-time. While we can expect early adopters, many believe it will be years before these platforms may be broadly utilized and standard practice. Marketers' opportunity lies in helping define and educate key audiences about the metaverse, sharing why it could be relevant to care delivery and potentially enhancing traditional methods of the patient experience.

The biggest challenge marketers will face with the advent of Web3 enabling new virtual environments like the metaverse to take shape is how, when and where to reach audiences that are becoming more open

to—and comfortable with—these types of innovations entering healthcare. The key is educating people about its potential, demonstrating its value and using the core marketing tenets we've all come to understand but applied to these new realms in ways that aren't off-putting but build trust. The question remains: How far ahead of the pendulum are marketers willing to be to meet providers, payers and patients where they are in their care preferences? But, make no mistake, healthcare organizations—specializing in everything from digital therapeutics to virtual care/telehealth to pharma/biotech to diagnostics—need to start planning today to prepare for metaverse innovations like this in the foreseeable future.

Defining Web3 and the metaverse and understanding its possibilities for key healthcare constituents

So, what exactly is Web3 and the metaverse? It's effectively the next version of the Internet—one that will take advantage of artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality and ever-increasing connectivity (for example, 5G networks) to create online environments that are more immersive, experiential and interactive than what we have today.

Provider, payer or patient—tailoring your experiences to connected but different audiences. While the metaverse will impact everyone in healthcare, providers can anticipate opportunities in almost every aspect of their work. Additionally, they can expect top-down and bottom-up pressure to tap the benefits of Web3 from both payers and patients, respectively.

Providers may start interacting with the metaverse from the very earliest stages of their training. Virtual patients can be simulated in the cloud, allowing them to train on difficult cases they would only otherwise experience on a live patient. Doctors in training might find themselves in simulations, getting an up-close view of a surgeon's procedure enhanced with tactile haptic controls. Or they might experience interactive training modules that enhance learning key concepts where VR can take a learner within the human body and provide a 360° view of a patient's ailment.

With surgical procedures already making use of advanced tech like robotics, the metaverse is expected to be an effective tool to help perform complicated surgical procedures and enhance patient care. While adoption may be slow initially, since clinical

trials must be performed to ultimately evaluate the metaverse as practical, in nearly every facet of surgery, the metaverse provides many opportunities for the future:

- Surgeons will meet in a virtual operating theater to collaborate in surgery with assistance from other consultants and specialists.

- Surgeons will have a display of a patient's body vital signs, images, medical history and other types of relevant patient data.

- New integrated technology with the metaverse can perform provide rapid test results in real-time for better patient outcomes.



Dan Martin

Pharma/biotech and digital therapeutics with Web3. Web3 has the potential to fuel innovation and efficiency in data sharing in ways that will help pharma companies and other vendors improve their commercial insights and optimize their business. Using blockchain technology, Web3 could lead to the democratization of health data.

The metaverse is already showing signs of new opportunities in therapeutic applications. Digital therapeutics are seeing rapid adoption of this form of therapy, where VR and AR tech in the metaverse enables applications such as cognitive therapy, support groups, psychiatric evaluations, rehabilitation and—with the support of haptic sensors—even physical therapy.

Accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, expect digital therapeutics that bridge the gap between the physical and digital with real-world results. For example, nurses can meet patients in the metaverse aided with remote monitoring to help perform daily checkups and discussions.

Virtual care in the metaverse. Some aspects of Web3 became part of the patient experience during COVID-19. The adoption of telehealth was greatly expedited and now constitutes a sizeable percentage of patient visits. Providers, healthcare organizations and patients alike are realizing the benefits of virtual healthcare. The metaverse will take things a step further, as patients demand improved access and healthcare organizations look for ways to streamline healthcare delivery. *Forbes* recently identi-

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Patients are our North Star

Patient-centered marketing is essential to organizational success. It's also the right thing to do.

By Fern Lazar

We're all patients. During our lifetimes, we will confront uninvited illness. Why is it often so hard for health professionals and markets to keep the patient at the center of every interaction? Years ago, the health industry adopted a mass-market and standard of care "one-size-fits-all" approach that focused more on scientific and clinical experience than on understanding what patients want and need, emotionally and medically. Yet, as the health ecosystem evolves to become increasingly patient-centric, we communicators must do the same.

Digital created a new world order

The old model of health professionals obtaining patients through provider-to-provider and insurance referrals is becoming replaced quickly as better-informed patients and their advocacy communities play a more significant role in their health decisions.

The Internet and social media have transformed patients' ability to research health issues and communicate directly with one another, as well as with clinicians, researchers and organizations. Patients, who have "skin in the game," feel they know as much, if not more, about their condition than their care providers. Patients are also more aware of therapeutic clinical trial options due to the shift to decentralizing drug development—a process accelerated by the pandemic.

Social media empowers health consumers to find information about their health outside consulting a medical provider. It's no secret that people use "Doctor Google" to search for health information, while more than 75 percent of Americans use social media to research their health symptoms, according to findings published in 2019 in *Consumer Informatics and Digital Health*.

Patients in the driver's seat

A 2020 Deloitte Insights report projects that by 2040, consumers decide when, where and with whom they engage for health and wellness, rather than their providers or health plans. Industry and advocacy leaders must recognize that shift is central to all activities, including marketing. This will benefit all stakeholders in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and experience around care delivery.

One of the first steps is to develop an understanding of patient needs and wants. Analysis should elicit answers about each step in the patient journey: information

gaps, access challenges and issues of affordability, engagement and trust. Connecting with other members of the care team—especially nurses—also yields valuable insights that are a road map for patient engagement, education, communication, care management and future innovation.

Patients want their voices heard, and companies and provider groups that communicate with patients, rather than through intermediaries are often viewed as the most trusted connections. Forming patient advisory boards provide input for clinical trials, future product innovation, disease management programs and marketing strategies. A recent BCG study suggests that most companies take a fragmented approach to engaging with patients in different regions due to disparate regulatory frameworks and would benefit by creating patient-centric offerings customized locally or nationally.

But collaborating early and often with patient advocacy organizations is critical to securing partnerships with patients. Usually, drug developers wait until the product nears approval before welcoming the essential part of the care conversation—patients—into their ecosystem. These partnerships start before a product enters clinical trials to better understand the patient journey and hope. Ultimately, this part of the experience biopharma companies seeks to improve—life and lifestyle outcomes. Based on these insights, FINN client CymaBay Pharmaceuticals amended their clinical trial protocol for a rare disease drug trial to ease patient administrative burdens. Patient groups want a voice at the table, not sporadic interactions that hinge on a company's need.

Creating a dialogue with patients, their families and their initiatives deliver other benefits to your company, including the increased trust secured that translates into allies earned in times of crisis.

FINN Jerusalem client Belong.Life has created a HIPAA-compliant global social and professional patient engagement and treatment management platform that has become one of the world's largest communities for people with serious and chronic conditions to share experiences and the treatment journey. Biopharma companies serious about making those patient connections are tapping companies like Belong to build trusting connections with patients, customers and healthcare professionals to develop new medicines and hone communication plans.

Changing the paradigm from within

Beyond working with individual patient groups, companies can build coalitions that harness the passion of medical societies, faith-based organizations, policy think tanks, advocacy and professional organizations, research institutions and others in the industry to develop solutions that address urgent societal needs like health equity, literacy and access to care. Pharmaceutical and medical device companies can unite to pursue therapeutic drug delivery innovations that improve comfort and adherence and even work with payers to share information about diseases, treatment options and



Fern Lazar

resources through unbranded websites, white papers, patient forums and online information sessions. Collaboration is a new element to be pursued by the health ecosystem in the service of the people that seek to impact. The patient-care ecosystem can provide tangible, trustworthy information for patients about recognizing and addressing drug side effects, finding ergonomic solutions for everyday living and connecting with other people with their conditions.

Maintaining an informative, engaging social media presence

It's vital to meet health consumers where they live. These days, it's increasingly online. Providing reliable, educational content on social media is key to communicating regularly with this audience. Creating content that answers important questions and with intriguing headlines, photos and videos tailored for culturally, regionally, economically and demographically diverse communities is essential to maintaining a strong presence on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.

One way to ensure an enduring relationship with patients and their families is to communicate with them via real stories that reflect their realities and offer hopeful solutions. In addition to reinforcing that they're not alone in their disease journey, such content creates a more personal connection with your organization as a trusted collaborator within the health ecosystem.

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Why healthcare PR pros need to lead with identity

How we can do better in serving the healthcare needs of everyone.

By Kianta Key

The fault lines in healthcare equity in the United States grew to seismic cracks during the COVID-19 pandemic. The last two years have underscored just how critical identity is in calculating the impact of diseases on specific communities.

For instance, PBS found that inconsistent data reporting minimized the devastating impact of COVID-19 on Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. This fact was largely hidden because this community was lumped into the Asian category, the “Other” category or not included at all. As Stephanie Sy, a correspondent for PBS NewsHour, noted, “Grouping [Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders] in a broad category with Asians, a much larger population, hides their uniquely high rates.”

Instead of relying on old frameworks, healthcare communicators must embrace a new model that will keep up. If we ground our communications in identity, we’re better able to create intentional, multidimensional messaging to help bridge the gaps and form new pathways to nurture healthier communities.

Today’s tools and tactics fall short

Our broad tools for tracking disease state epidemiology do not reveal how specific communities fall through the cracks. If we do not know who is impacted by diseases, then we don’t know how our communications—especially our digital-first strategies—should be shaped. Because of that, people who might desperately need information and support continue to be overlooked.

Digital platforms are usually the first touchpoint for reaching people on critical health issues like preventative testing, clinical trials or vaccine access. That’s why it’s essential to integrate identity—beyond traditional modes of gender and race—into our strategies. Central to the idea of identity is the concept of intersectionality. First introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a Black feminist legal scholar, intersectionality describes our overlapping and intersecting social identities—gender, race, social class, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, age and disability status. As poet, essayist and writer Audre Lorde posited, “There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not lead single-issue lives.”

We all have overlapping social identities that impact how we experience the world. These identities also influence how we ap-

proach our health and experience and talk about and seek out information on specific diseases. Everyone’s entry point into the doctor’s office will not be the same. The future of effective digital health communications lies in embedding intersectionality and centering identity into our processes so that lived experiences, cultural nuances, language, etc., are pulled through in the narrative. When we move identity from the margins to the center, we are more likely to speak to people authentically and to reach their hearts—which is key to influencing behaviors.

More companies are expanding their communications strategies to connect with diverse communities. However, the current tools and methods to build these campaigns lack the framework to ensure cultural relevance, particularly around deeply personal healthcare behaviors. Social listening and audience measurement tools—limited to one-dimensional markers like age or gender—do not adequately capture the realities of our intersectional lives.

We can imagine that a Gen Z woman with eczema would talk about her healthcare journey differently than a Baby Boomer woman. Likewise, we can surmise that Black gay men might use different digital platforms to discuss sexual health compared to Black lesbians. But what are we doing about that? Missing these critical distinctions in the data means we miss communicating effectively with these important groups.

Insights are found at the intersection

To fill this void and give healthcare communications practitioners an approach to embedding identity into their digital communications, I worked with my colleagues to help develop a new model grounded in identity: Identity Experience. IX represents an evolution of the communications models we all learned about—pre-TikTok—and the path to inserting intersectionality into our tactics.

The purpose of IX is to give our industry a roadmap that:

- Aggregates disease state epidemiology, intersectional data and digital media behavior.
- Considers how the data influence intended messaging for a key audience.
- Shapes the narrative that will reach key audiences along their healthcare journeys.

We also know that while data are the cornerstone of our strategies, messaging is the

framework for how the home is built. At GCI Health, we have developed a model that ensures, among other things, we acknowledge the bias, historical drivers and language that impact a person’s healthcare journey. This framework ensures that sub-narratives are pulled through based on key cultural insights for each audience and that we are creating digital campaigns that are fully dimensional and effective.

Leveraging identity for authentic narratives

To integrate identity into our communications strategies, it’s essential to:

Examine disease state epidemiology to identify the most impacted communities.

For example, with the outbreak of monkeypox, the statistics signaled that the condition was impacting gay men but, more specifically, Black gay and queer men. Understanding this could ground digital communicators on what channels to use and which voices to leverage to discuss vaccine access. Additionally, in-person activations like vaccination drives could target where Black gay and queer men live, work and socialize. Starting with the most marginalized groups opens the floor to scale across other groups versus trickle-down approaches.

Remove our assumptions and dig deeper. No one group is monolithic, and when we assume a broad brush will paint the picture, that’s when we need to course correct. There are nearly 170 million women in the U.S. To assume that they all think, feel and act the same regarding healthcare or to lean on a white-straight-Christian-cisgender model will not yield the message resonance that we are after.

Put analog communications back into the mix. Social media listening tools have changed the game for understanding and measuring what audiences are talking about across platforms. But what is often missing is the “who,” especially from an intersectional lens. Yes, women might talk about contraception more on social media, but what generation do they fall into? What is their religion? What’s their country of origin? Do they have access to a gynecologist to discuss birth control? While we can lean on social media listening tools to understand the breadth of healthcare topics, we



Kianta Key

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LEADING WITH IDENTITY

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must re-engage with qualitative methods like focus groups, surveys and interviews to understand a topic's depth.

Develop a channel mix—organic and paid—that makes sense for each audience and touchpoint. Touchpoints that layer in unique disease journeys can achieve messaging reach, relevance and resonance. For example, to reach specific communities around mental health, we might lean on Facebook for white Baby Boomers, but a Meta platform like WhatsApp is more effective for reaching second-generation Mexican Americans. So, flip the adage “If you build it, they will come” to “If we go to them, they will engage.” Beyond social media platforms, there are an array of digital platforms that are led by marginalized

communities ripe for sponsored content from healthcare. For example, the Black Effect podcast is a collection of Black voices covering various topics, from finances to sports, all under the iHeartPodcasts umbrella. A sponsored podcast with Charlamagne tha God focused on colon cancer screenings might reach millions of people, particularly Black men who are over the age of 45.

Incorporate visuals and audio that support compelling storytelling. From the details of reflecting secular identities to picking up the lilt in scripted conversations, representative creative rounds out how we bring data and cultural nuances to life, leading to greater segmentation. A non-healthcare brand that does this well is Disney, especially in their recent representation of Hispanic/Latino stories in “Coco” and “Encanto.” While there are similarities across Latino communities, their tradi-

tions, physical characteristics and world views vary. Coco is a distinct story centered on a Mexican boy while Encanto follows a Colombian teenager. Getting the cultural notes right helped create depth for each community. This sort of identity centralization is not about excluding others. It is about elevating those universal experiences that everyone can feel.

As health communicators, we have an opportunity and responsibility to contribute to improved health outcomes for everyone. We can do that by creating better narratives that are influenced by who people are versus what we want them to do. If we continue to focus on our targets' actions rather than their layered identities, we may not fill these craters or get treatments and interventions for those who will benefit the most.

Kianta Key is Senior Vice President, Digital, at GCI Health. ○

HEALTHCARE'S NEXT FRONTIER

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fied three areas that appear to be frontrunners (“Four Practical Ways Healthcare Will Join The Metaverse,” June 13, 2022):

- **Mental health:** Already, mental health apps are increasing on the Internet. Better personal presence and reliable social connections will combine with data and intelligence to make the metaverse a kinder, gentler place—with therapeutic results.

- **Physical therapy:** Longer life, chronic disease and the requirement to limit hospitalizations and other institutional remedies have been a great boon to physical therapy and rehabilitative medicine. If physical therapists chip away at obstacles related to cost and access in the metaverse, they will boost the effectiveness and efficiency of PT.

- **Weight loss:** Losing weight often requires more than a diet or a well-intentioned New Year's resolution. An integrated approach delivered in the metaverse, combining personal data, social reinforcement, positive psychology and a “sticky” regime of physical exertion, may potentially be just what the doctor orders and a solution that helps patients see results.

A message for today's marketer

Emerging research indicates that the Web3 and the metaverse will revolutionize healthcare delivery across every aspect and audience and that early adopters will gain an advantage in helping define how it is developed over the next decade. Healthcare marketers should take heed and consider how their current channel, content and overarching PR strategies should evolve to

stay relevant in anticipation of the innovations on the horizon.

As you begin to embark on this journey to the center of the metaverse, consider the following:

- Healthcare organizations and their mar/comm teams may need to engage audiences in these new digital environments not too far into the future. Understanding how product placements work inside this landscape, and how to build trust and awareness under new sets of protocols will be critical.

- Organizations can put a “toe in the water” and take a phased approach and focus on preparedness and familiarization with broader trends that stand to impact care.

Advertising, media ranked worst for layoffs

Some industries appear to handle layoffs in better ways than others. If the results from a survey by employer review site JobSage are any indication, the advertising and media sector could use some more compassion in the practice.

The survey, which sought to gauge which industries are the most compassionate during the layoff process by asking Americans who have been laid off to share their experiences, reported that respondents said the industry that ranks the worst at laying off employees is advertising and media (83 percent).

The hospitality industry and engineering industry were ranked the second- and third-worst regarding layoffs, at 79 percent and 74 percent respectively.

According to the survey, the industries where employees currently fear layoffs the most right now include technology (32 per-

This may include introducing your brand into an existing platform versus building your own virtual environment to start.

- Tap a strategic consulting partner to help understand the implications of this technology and its impact on your organization's mar/comm team.

- Prepare to build brand awareness to reach audiences in these new channels and across these new frontiers/environments.

- Develop a solid thought leadership initiative to solidify trust and business value through consistent messaging and tone in the metaverse.

Dan Martin is Executive VP of PAN Communications' Healthcare Practice. ○

cent), healthcare (26 percent), education (25 percent) and hospitality (25 percent).

Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of Americans who reported being laid off said their employer could've handled the layoff process in a better way. More than a third (35 percent) said they felt the layoff process was uncompassionate and they didn't feel cared for at all. Another third (32 percent) said they'd been laid off during an inconvenient time, such as before a holiday.

A majority of respondents (77 percent) think layoffs should always be communicated in person, as opposed to virtually, preferably in a one-on-one meeting (69 percent).

Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) said when they read about a layoff in the news, the perceived manner in which that company handled the layoffs affects their opinion of that company. ○

Using social norming to encourage healthy behaviors

How health communicators can combat health misinformation by encouraging positive behaviors and building trust and confidence

By Andy Owen

Changing behavior is difficult. It's something that health communicators face every day in situations that demand diplomacy. If our efforts are too forceful—or worse, disrespectful—we risk losing our audience. But if we aren't compelling, we risk losing the whole effort.

The stakes are high. A quick survey of the COVID aftermath shows that false narratives, both malicious and merely misinformed, are rampant—and even the most educated have trouble deciphering what to believe. The situation has become so fraught that, in 2021, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy released a report titled “Confronting Health Misinformation.”

We're often reminded that scare tactics are rarely successful in addressing misconceptions. Even if they were, negativity isn't ideal. What we need instead are ways to change behavior through trust and confidence. Enter social norming, which uses examples set by peers to encourage positive behaviors.

What is social norming?

The social norms approach is credited to researchers H.W. Perkins and A.D. Berkowitz, who developed it when studying the alcohol consumption habits of college students in the '80s. A tenant of the approach is that perceptions of norms are often drastically different than the actual norms.

By acknowledging this principle, health communicators can use demonstrations of positive normative behavior to correct misperceptions and show audiences that, in reality, most people have chosen the healthy path. Your grandmother might have called this phenomenon leading by example. You might call it keeping up with the Joneses. You respect—and maybe even envy—the Joneses, so you want to emulate their behaviors.

How does it work?

Social norming can be particularly effective in situations where unhealthy behaviors tend to be perpetuated by an audience's belief that those behaviors are common and therefore okay. This concept is called “false consensus,” which the American Psychological Association defines as “the tendency to assume that one's own opinions, beliefs, attributes or behaviors are more widely shared than is actually the case.” For health communicators, social norming involves illustrating situations where reality—i.e., a norm—runs firmly counter to an unhealthy false consensus.

Where is it used?

Perkins's and Berkowitz's research was focused on college students' justification of their own heavy drinking because they believed that all other college students drank heavily. By presenting students with the truth about their peers' actual drinking patterns, problem behaviors like bingeing could be put into context and more easily understood for what they are.

Colleges and other institutions use the social norms approach to limit risky drinking behaviors among a variety of audiences. The resulting campaigns often show how drinking less can help individuals achieve healthy milestones that are, in fact, normal for most people. These campaigns tend to use straightforward messaging and clear statistics to tackle the misperception that a group engages in heavy drinking. The simple act of demonstrating a proper serving size of alcohol is a time-honored technique. Comparing a 1.5 oz. shot of 80-proof vodka to a pint glass filled mostly with liquor is a powerful way to help a heavy drinker understand that their idealized, “glass is always full” behavior isn't actually normal or healthy.

Another place where the use of social norming has potential is in the current world of vaccine communications. The enormous amount of misinformation in post-COVID life can easily lead one to believe that most parents are hesitant to vaccinate their children. But, the truth is most parents *do* choose to vaccinate their children, and most children are up-to-date on vaccines. However, that doesn't mean all children have the vaccines they need, so communicators are being called upon to help—because even a slight drop in vaccination rates can help diseases spread more quickly.

In pointing out the false consensus that childhood vaccination isn't a priority for parents, we can also show our audiences that the opposite is true. With social norming, we demonstrate that most families are up to date with vaccines. In the process, we can encourage parents and healthcare providers with questions to look past rampant misinformation and seek trustworthy answers.

Where do social norming campaigns start?

Like any other communications activity, social norming requires a firm understanding of key audiences and easily understood messaging.

Research: Start by doing the research

needed to understand how your audience compares to the peers who represent the healthy ideal. The more data you can find to support both the misconceptions that are affecting your audience and the normative behaviors that you're encouraging, the easier it will be for you to refine your targeting and messaging.

Create: Once you understand the data, develop your content. Here, even more than in other situations, it's important for messaging to be succinct and crisp. Remember that you're using reality to encourage behavior change—and reality should be self-explanatory. Lengthy explanations will threaten your campaign's plausibility.

Deploy: Social media may be the perfect tool for advancing social norms. It doesn't take a sociologist to realize that all of us who share on social media are, in effect, engaged in norming our own preferences. And while the tendency of social media to promote outward comparisons can sometimes be harmful, there also are plenty of constructive ways to harness its power by remaining considerate of tone. A little bit of *healthy* virtue signaling rarely hurt anyone.

Of course, by creating sharable content, health communicators can take advantage of virality. Spreading information that encourages audiences to follow the lead set by peers they respect goes hand-in-hand with the idea of norming.

Reinforce: Old-school PR tactics have a place in social norming as well. Using expert, aspirational spokespeople for a campaign always helps to promote credibility. For a social norming campaign, it's ideal to find individuals who are widely known to demonstrate the normative qualities that you want to exemplify. These individuals should be a mix of both respected peers and respected experts. Having credible and likeable spokespeople will also make it that much easier to create content that's ripe to go viral.

When a social norming campaign is well executed, it connects directly with its audiences as it educates them. In doing so, it finds a balance between diplomacy and a compelling message that will help win the day. After all, keeping up with the Joneses is always easier when the Joneses are grounded in reality.

Andy Owen is a Vice President in the Health Practice at Hager Sharp. ○



Andy Owen



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Inclusivity: from good intentions to meaningful action

The importance of using inclusive language in an effort to make healthcare communications more relevant to diverse populations.

By Julia Louise Krahe

The use of inclusive language to communicate with and about people from diverse backgrounds and identities has never been more important. Thanks, in large part, to recent social justice movements, healthcare organizations are increasingly attuned to the effects of discrimination and systemic racism, and widespread efforts are being made to ensure people of all genders hear themselves reflected in health-related messages and materials. What's more, these considerations extend to a variety of subjects like sexual orientation, religion, ability level, age, and more. As a result, nearly everyone—from specialty care societies to healthcare journalists—is thinking about how to communicate inclusively.

This isn't only the right thing to do, it can also make a real difference in people's health. As the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists says, "valuing, respecting, and affirming an individual's identity contribute[s] to improved health outcomes." Experts further affirm the heightened importance of culturally competent care—including the use of inclusive language—in reducing health disparities.

While valuing inclusive communication is an important step, it's clear from Crosby's current work with payors, health systems, and federal agencies that implementation is often very complicated. While numerous inclusive language guides for health communication practitioners exist and generally rely on similar principles, a close review reveals that they often provide differing and sometimes conflicting guidance. For example, the Associated Press does not recommend capitalizing "white," but the CDC does. Anyone using the Census as a guide might restrict conversations around gender to "male, female, transgender or none of these," whereas the guide produced by the American Medical Association names at least a dozen different gender identities.

As terminology evolves, it's not always easy to know the right thing to say. We see this with the word "Latinx," which was added to the dictionary in 2018 as a gender-neutral term for people who are of Latin American descent and would otherwise be described with the gendered Latino or Latina. The term caught on in academic and social media circles, as well as with healthcare leaders like Dr. Anthony Fauci. Yet a 2020 poll by the Pew Research Center found that just three percent of U.S. Hispanics use the term, underscoring questions about whether

it resonates with the intended audience. In addition, the available guides don't generally offer suggestions for how to address historical texts, like research studies that report data based on outdated racial descriptors such as "Caucasian" and "Colored."

As a result, each organization is left to choose for itself what inclusive language standards it will use to meet its specific needs. Any group that does not have clear, comprehensive guidelines risks—at best—having well-intentioned communicators making disparate choices that undermine brand consistency. At worst, you could quickly find yourself in the middle of a high-profile controversy around your organization's values and practices.

The following tips can help any organization that is committed to using inclusive language move from intention to action, making smart choices along the way.

Choose your guide wisely

You can't expect consistent, inclusive communication if you don't offer clear guidance for people to follow. When considering how to provide that guidance, if you can use another organization's existing inclusive language resource, do it. Though these documents are generally built around similar principles, it's important to be attuned to variations in the specific guidance provided. When assessing each guide, first consider the source and how closely it aligns with your organization's mission and values. If you're primarily writing for the media, you might find that the Associated Press' guidelines fit your needs. Healthcare organizations may choose to examine the American Medical Association's guide first.

But don't stop there. You need to assess each guide based on your own organizational needs and values. Read the guidelines you're considering carefully and think about whether they address all of the circumstances that your colleagues and constituents commonly face. Put a critical eye on whether you have a nuanced reason to disagree with any specific elements. If everything lines up, use the ready-made resource and focus your attention on ensuring it's understood and implemented across your organization. But if there is no single guide that meets all of your organization's needs, it's worth the time to build off of an existing guide or create your own.

Build your own resource

To successfully develop an inclusive language guide that works for your organiza-

tion, think process before content. Start by orchestrating an approach that will not only help you effectively examine the relevant issues but also establish the buy-in necessary to see the resulting guidance widely adopted.

The first step is asking, "Who should be in the room?" Think about bringing together diverse voices that offer different lived experiences and represent various internal and external stakeholders. If you don't already have it, cultivate buy-in from senior-level champions. If those contributing to the process are genuinely excited to engage deeply in these complicated questions, you will be in the best position to create something of lasting value.

Julia Louise Krahe



Once you know who your contributors are, think about how decisions will be made. Consider your organization's role, goals, values, and audiences to help guide your approach. Whenever possible, do the research necessary to understand how each of your specific audiences wants to be addressed.

Next, you need to create a process for examining discrete issues and making decisions. With so much potential inclusive language content to be covered, a clear process will help prevent you from having meandering conversations that don't result in real decisions. It's also important to ensure that you create the space to dive deep into issues that are relevant to your organization while setting aside any that might be less so. Be sure that you're considering inclusion holistically, thinking about all of the aspects of identity that your organization regularly addresses in its communications.

As you work, recognize that in many cases there is no perfect option. While some decisions likely seem more clear-cut than others, there are instances where there are good arguments on both sides of an issue. Also, build in an understanding that things will change and you will need to revisit your guidance over time. Create a plan upfront to regularly review your organization's guide to ensure that it comports with the latest thinking and continues to offer the support your organization needs to live its values.

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Thought leadership is best medicine for health innovators

Why developing and executing a communications program built around thought leadership and content is critical for connecting with media, physicians, patients and investors.

By Tom Faust

Healthcare coverage in U.S. media—leaving aside the coverage of COVID-19, monkeypox and other pandemics—tends to fall into a few key areas: cost and insurance, delivery of care and scientific breakthroughs in health tech, pharma and biotech. For companies in this last group, the work to establish a sustained communications program can be a much different and more complicated proposition than it is for providers, academics and government officials.

On one hand, when significant progress is made, these companies are in the enviable position of being able to discuss the potential and positive real-world impact of their innovations. On the other, these organizations can be constrained by limitations on what they can say while waiting on regulatory approvals. Apart from sharing encouraging—but often non-definitive—clinical results, a lack of noteworthy news and narrow audience focus can make developing a communications program a challenge.

This is where developing and executing a broader communications strategy based on thought leadership and content is critical in staying front-of-mind with media, physicians, patients and investors. While less direct than the interview path, such a program can deliver outsize benefits and build your brand reputation when headline-grabbing news may be lacking.

The good news is that thought leadership campaigns can take on many forms and use multiple tactics and channels. Because such programs don't rely on news flow, they can also be more plannable and targeted, with stronger message control. Below are just a few of the approaches that can be taken when adopting a thought leadership-centric communications program.

Talk the science, not the solution

While a specific therapy, drug or treatment solution may be years in the making, it's common for the underlying science to have broader applications. By thinking about how your solutions fit into the broader clinical picture, how the scientific principles they illustrate can be applied to different medical conditions, or how the science might evolve, you can open up a wider field of thought leadership topics. We saw this in media coverage surrounding the COVID vaccines that focused on the decades of research into previous coronaviruses such as SARS and MERS that came together to

develop effective vaccines at record speed.

Build a community

As leaders in healthcare technology, companies can draw on a large palette of innovations, placing themselves at the center of a community of experts and organizations who are driving the future of healthcare. There can be great freedom in expanding your horizons beyond your specific solution to generate excitement about breakthroughs in different areas of study and how they might eventually converge. This can be executed through webinars, curated dialogues on your website that other health leaders can participate in or summits featuring executives, researchers and physicians who are seeing the impact firsthand and thinking about the future possibilities.

Leverage relationships

Thought leadership can also be an avenue for organizations to strengthen ties with business partners and influencers in the medical professional and patient communities. By co-authoring articles and involving outside experts in developing other joint content such as e-books and podcasts, companies can benefit from the “halo effect” of better-known brands and expand their reach by directly accessing the audiences of other leaders seeking to promote their own solutions.

Lead with data

Breaking through the cacophony of voices via media can be a challenge. Organizations can build a leadership position and establish themselves as authoritative experts who “own the issue” by grounding their opinion and perspective in data. While the data used and the research methodology employed must be sound, the bar is much lower in the media world than the scientific arena. Credible reports, surveys and opinion polls can all be viable sources of data that your subject matter experts can interpret and share insights on for a broad audience. A little bit of data can go a long way in getting and keeping the attention of readers.

Short and frequent beats long and rare

Corporate blogs are a common tool, but their potential isn't always realized. Too often, healthcare and life sciences organizations apply an academic frame of reference to the content they generate. Long-duration, deeply researched and somewhat impenetrable papers heavy on jargon, footnotes and obscure references are the norm.

Communicators must work with leadership and experts to break out of this mold and make better use of short-form content. The reality is that blog posts between 200 and 500 words are more likely to be read and shared than the best-written academic treatise. With a fraction of the effort it takes to create long-form content, organizations can share several meaningful posts that reinforce their expertise and drive engagement. These posts don't need to offer definitive answers. Raising questions, speculating—within reason—about possibilities and sharing honest reactions about the state of the industry can provide great content. These posts also offer an avenue for leaders and experts to develop their own, specific voices and increase their individual visibility.

A picture is worth a thousand words

In the same vein, visualization can pay huge dividends. A typical misstep many healthcare organizations make is to rely on words when images can do a much better job of telling the story. Using infographics, animations and short videos, organizations can connect with their key audiences more quickly and effectively than through detailed technical or clinical explanations. Graphics also have a much better chance to “go viral” through social media and reach a wider audience. Consider creating a visual library on your website where media can get images to enliven their reporting and help educate the public on what you do.

Be part of the conversation

The impact of social media grows daily, and healthcare organizations ignore it at their peril. But a strong social media program must extend past the corporate LinkedIn page to integrate the leadership of the company. It's important to remember that LinkedIn is a peer-to-peer network platform, and its strength lies in the networks of the individuals who make up an organization. Tapping into these networks can be a game changer for any communications program.

If you haven't yet taken steps to leverage LinkedIn, consider developing a thought



Tom Faust

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The unfinished business of healthcare

How communicators can respond to the historic paradigm shifts occurring in the healthcare landscape today.

By Bob Pearson

The healthcare industry is a deeply personal place to work. More than 95 percent of the world's population has health problems. An average of 1,905 people will die of heart disease in the U.S. every day. There are more than 7,000 rare diseases.

It's a list that can quickly become overwhelming and hard to comprehend. But what's not difficult to understand is what it means to each individual battling disease.

Our team has talked with people dying of disease, who remain optimistic regarding how medicine may impact the next generation. We've talked with countless family members whose only questions revolve around "what can we do?" And we've witnessed the frustration of these same people and their care circle who can't gain access in time for a treatment, either due to the pace of the approval process or a lack of reimbursement.

Today is what matters to anyone battling a disease or disorder. Tomorrows are what they—and really, what *we*—all desire to have. In healthcare, we serve as their agents of change. And this is why we're excited about the future of healthcare.

The capabilities of science are unlocking the personalization of medicine at an unprecedented rate, driven by rare diseases, the emergence of gene-based therapies, the continued impact of immunotherapy and our growing ability to edit genes via CRISPR. This is resulting in diagnostic and treatment solutions we couldn't have imagined a decade ago.

Technology is making it possible to manage future drug submissions in the cloud rather than pulling up with tractor trailers of boxes, while at home, we effortlessly get our genes sequenced with information delivered to us in a week or two. The cloud and related technologies are finally giving us opportunities to transform everything from drug development to how we learn about and protect our health. Our ability to collapse time to market is a game-changer.

The third driver—payment for treatment and services—needs to evolve with the same pace, so that we can benefit from scientific and technological advancement. If incentives are aligned with what we can deliver, we'll improve health outcomes. The nice thing about technological advances is they normally drive costs down, not up,

so we're hopeful this can also translate into healthcare as well.

Our mission is about making a difference for individuals fighting for their health and their families. Our goal is to improve compliance, expand the "office," accelerate drug development and build powerful narratives that make it more obvious as to why government, science and industry can move in lockstep.

So, what does that mean? Here are a few examples.

Imagine accelerating the development of treatments. New analytic models can analyze all the published literature for a particular therapeutic area for the past ten years in minutes with new insights in hours. Analytics can show us which investigators have been most effective in enrolling in clinical trials for that same time period.

This can tell us which investigators are best to enroll a trial and we can determine how to communicate the new characteristics of a treatment, so it aligns with the evolution of the category and reaches providers and payors at the earliest possible stage. Precision in trial design. Precision in who runs trials. Precision in the scientific narrative.

We can complete trials faster with better enrollment, leading to a faster time to market. Once on the market, we can accelerate access via improved evidence-based communication. We'll focus on both areas. Once a treatment is on the market, we have plenty of issues to deal with. Compliance is one.

It's estimated that between 33-69 percent of all medication-related hospital admissions in the U.S. are due to poor medication adherence, costing the U.S. about \$100 billion annually. Yet, we have the technology today that can teach patients, in real-time, how to use an asthma inhaler rather than waiting for that same patient to have a failure and end up in the hospital. Imagine your son or daughter trying to use an asthma inhaler at home. Wouldn't they prefer to learn via a video on their phone and talk with someone in real-time? It's how they do everything else, right?

Technology makes it easier to teach patients how to improve their health right in their home. We'll embrace technologies that align with how we use them every day for new uses to improve our health. Common sense.

We'll help with paradigm shifts. If we work in a hybrid world where it's normal to conduct our work in both an office and home with similar results, why can't healthcare do the same?

Many agree. The global telehealth market is estimated at \$89 billion in 2022 and is expected to grow to \$787 billion by 2028. This is a major growth market, but it will find its rightful place only if physicians and nurses are reimbursed properly and payors can see that a virtual visit can be as good or better than an office visit.

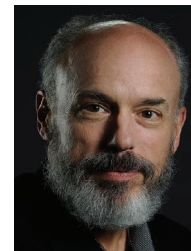
What's the real difference if our health can be improved?

It's easy to cast blame if new advances in science and technology aren't utilized, but that's not our orientation. We believe that building a convincing narrative matters. Understanding how the audience architecture interacts related to a disease matters. Knowing how technology works and being able to explain why it's important. Knowing how to build analytics models and use AI is now a mainstream need of agencies like ours today.

We see a world where the rapid growth of personalized treatments, as well as those for rare conditions, requires that our media models also become highly personalized and have the ability to adjust to smaller market sizes. We realize disease-based media modeling, which is highly customized to a community's needs represents the future of PESO media planning. After all, we live in a world that's more of a series of neighborhoods rather than one big place. We see a new style of creative brief that includes AI-driven insights that we didn't have last year or even last quarter.

It's our job to innovate in the world of communications to match up with the advances in science and technology. It's also our job to remember the conversations we've had with people battling disease and disorder and their families who are searching for solutions when we're working late at night or traveling on the weekend and embrace our unique ability to make a difference in the world via our actions.

We end with a simple and powerful story from our past. Many years ago, an accomplished business executive from Maryland called us while we were working in a phar-



Bob Pearson

— Continued on next page

Issue advocacy response critical challenge for c-suite

Social-issue advocacy has changed executives' approaches to communications more than any other factor in the last two years, according to a recent study.

By Jon Gingerich

The COVID-19 pandemic, an increasingly polarized political environment and ongoing geopolitical and economic uncertainty have kicked off a dramatic change in corporate culture, affecting employee engagement, leaders' managerial approaches and whether companies take public positions on social issues.

The result? According to a three-part research study conducted by Padilla, today's business leaders find themselves conflicted, presenting broad implications regarding the need for strategic communications counsel.

The study discovered that nearly half (42 percent) of respondents said that coping

with economic uncertainty accounts for the top challenge facing business leaders today. A third (33 percent) cited rising inflation, followed by public health incidents such as COVID-19 (32 percent), supporting employee well-being (29 percent) and attracting and retaining employees (27 percent).

When asked what single component in their role as leaders has increased most in importance during the last two years, a whopping 80 percent of business leaders cited social-issue advocacy, followed by empathy (76 percent), flexibility (73 percent), vulnerability (70 percent) and possessing a growth mindset (68 percent).

When it comes to what factors leaders consider when determining if and when it's appropriate for their company to take a stand on a high-profile social issue, nearly half (47 percent) said it depends on whether the issue in question will remain important for years to come, followed by whether the company is a credible authority on the topic at hand (42 percent) and whether the issue is timely and relevant (42 percent). More than a third (34 percent) said a determining factor is whether declining to respond will negatively affect the company's business and culture.

Business leaders believe that credibility remains the single most important communications quality (74 percent), followed by authenticity (73 percent), confidence (66 percent), ethics (65 percent) and transparency (63 percent). ○

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

— Continued from page 22

maceutical company. His wife had ALS and he wanted to learn more.

A few weeks later, he drove up, unannounced, to our office in Pennsylvania. We welcomed him and he entered our office to ask a series of questions. We were ready to answer many more when he abruptly stopped. What he said we will never forget:

"I came up here to judge if you care

about developing this drug and making a difference. I now have no question in my mind this is the case. Thank you for everything you are doing for my wife, our family and all the other families who suffer from this disease. Let me now let you get back to work. I wish you the best of luck."

He then shook our hands, walked out and returned to his home in Maryland, never to be heard from again. Yet, he will be remembered forever.

We did successfully launch this drug, which was the first drug ever approved for

ALS. We did it in full partnership with the ALS community and their families and although it was a struggle to gain approval, we never wavered. It's conversations like this and the trust that we know people place in all of us that motivates us even at the most frustrating moments.

We have unfinished business in health-care. Our answer is to form a new health-care team across The Bliss Group and The Next Practices Group, called NPG Health, which will launch later this year.

Bob Pearson is CEO of The Bliss Group. ○

PATIENTS ARE OUR NORTH STAR

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Focused marketing improves outcomes

Marketers should continue to adapt as the health industry shifts toward a more patient-empowered world. The evolution toward personalized and precision medi-

cine, combined with the search and connection power of the Internet, continues to push us all toward changes that will improve health and well-being. There are significant growing pains to moving from where we are to where we aspire to be. Communication is the link that unites the fragmented health ecosystem. Communicators are at the hub of almost

every interaction where discovery and development touch the professional and patient community. We can be the voices of fact-based empowerment, as well as catalysts for a health ecosystem that unites around patients.

Fern Lazar is Managing Partner and Global Health Practice Leader at Finn Partners. ○

INCLUSIVITY IN HEALTHCARE

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Throughout this effort, keep in mind that many of these issues are deeply emotional. It's important to establish a culture that en-

courages deep and open discussion, allows people to make and repair mistakes, and meets everyone where they are so that you can move forward together. With a clear process and set of expectations in place, you will be well down the path toward establish-

ing the shared inclusive language that best connects with your audience and communicates your organization's values.

Julia Louise Krahe is a lead strategist and Senior Vice President at Crosby Marketing Communications. ○

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

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leadership pilot program with a handful of your organization's most active users of the platform. By sharing content with their

broader social networks and amplifying it via your corporate account, you can extend the reach of your communications program.

These tactics are just the beginning when it comes to creating a robust, quality and sustainable thought leadership and content

program that can free your organization from waiting for the "big news" that might only break a few times a year.

Tom Faust is Managing Director at Stanton, a leading mid-size communications firm that works with organizations across the healthcare spectrum. ○

When *The New York Times* isn't possible

Three steps to an attainable, client-friendly media plan.

By Shani Lewis

You're in a kick-off meeting with a new client when they let you know: they need to be in *The New York Times*, *Forbes* and *The Wall Street Journal*. The client is a scrappy, life-science company with an intriguing product that still needs to be reviewed and approved by the FDA. It has advanced science with wonderful theories but nothing in the clinic. No patients. No data. No media experience. Just a faith and conviction in their work and the possibilities.

No one wants to be a "Debby Downer" and immediately respond that the likelihood of those outlets covering your client is nearly impossible at this moment. Instead, give your client a plan to show them the steps they need to take to one day be included in top national media.

The importance of trades

For companies working in health and science innovation, it's important to explain the value of trade publications in their field. Trade publications lay the foundation for a company's reputation. Unless you have a completely original story that resonates with a larger audience, can provide patient testimony, photos, video and clear data, it is unlikely you'll be able to break into top-tier markets.

This doesn't mean trade media is the bottom tier. These outlets have their fingers on the pulse of the most recent news in your industry. They have their eyes on top industry leaders and breakthrough science. Reporters from trade publications only work on your industry news and have a deep understanding of the technical areas. Therefore, trade publications can cover an industry in more detail than mainstream publications. And they often serve as a first "vetting" for national media. When they cover a story from a trade perspective, national media may be likely to pay attention.

Although trade outlets maintain a specialized focus, they offer a range of useful industry information. Trades publish content on various topics including: the latest industry news, case studies and research, educational surveys and statistics, special reports and opinion and feature articles on new developments and practices within a field.

Additionally, if any laws that affect the industry are passed or are currently under debate, a trade publication will usually discuss the implications for those in the

industry which can allow for clients to provide their own commentary on the issue.

Finally, many trades operate under "controlled circulation." This means the publishers of trade journals will send out free issues to qualified individuals or offices within an industry allowing more people to access the news to better reach niche audiences.

How to develop relationships with media

Now that you have piqued your client's interest in trade publications, next steps involve planning how to develop relationships with media. The approach is multifaceted.

Use social media. Something as simple as following a reporter's and outlet's social accounts is an easy step. But you cannot only follow them; you must also engage with their posts, highlight any relevant news on your client's social channels and read their articles. Part of our job as PR pros is to monitor pertinent news and flag it to clients. If a reporter has covered something like your client's work, then it's your responsibility to connect with that reporter. Let them know you read their piece and mention you have a client doing similar work, or maybe work that contradicts their story, and you'd love to set up an introductory call for the reporter to learn more about the client. Will a meeting like this result in media coverage? Not necessarily, but it's a great start. Now this reporter is familiar with your client and can come to your team for a quote or a reference for other articles.

Building a positive rapport with reporters keeps your client top of mind and eventually, outlets may make space to cover the news.

Opportunities with media

In the interim of awaiting organic earned media coverage, especially if a client does not have any upcoming press releases or news, clients should tap into bylines. A byline article is an article acknowledged in the publication to have been written by a subject-matter expert rather than a staff reporter. Byline articles are one of the most effective tools available for establishing credibility with a target audience because they showcase the client as a thought leader. Media outlets like bylines from subject-matter experts because it offers more content freeing up reporters' time from having to write and research new information.

Bylines are also appreciated by local media. As we know, local media today is not what it used to be and for health and science innovation companies it can be difficult to get media interested in covering them. There are few reporters who have a strong grasp on health and science topics; rarely are there any health and science reporters outside of national top-tier outlets. If you want coverage in a particular outlet, you need to make it easy for them to cover, otherwise, they'll end up ignoring the story.

However, it's important to remember that with a byline you cannot write whatever you want. There are specific guidelines to adhere to, such as word count and prohibiting promotional content. This allows a company leader or subject-matter expert to showcase their knowledge in the field as a thought leader.

For those who aren't as interested in bylines, a Q&A is a helpful format as well. In addition, podcasts are another great earned media platform opportunity. On a podcast, your client can promote their company while simultaneously presenting themselves as a thought leader. Listeners and the host get to hear your client's personality and a deep dive into the company's history. Finally, podcasts allow your client the opportunity to practice for traditional interviews. Many trade outlets have podcasts now, so participating in a podcast could offer more than one opportunity to be included in the outlet.

Whether or not a client is included in top-tier media, all these steps outlined above are beneficial to your client's reputation in the media and as well to their investors. Top media are more inclined to cover your clients if they see other value in the work they are doing. It may not start off with a huge front-cover feature, but it could be a mention or maybe something as simple as a meeting to have them learn more about your work. Media relations is a marathon that takes time and consistent effort for both PR pros and their clients.

Shani Lewis is an Assistant Vice President, Media Relations, at LaVoieHealthScience and has nine years of experience in PR working closely in healthcare, government and nonprofit sectors. ●



Shani Lewis



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Preparing for a biotech market comeback

Why it's important for biotech companies to establish a strong communications program before they go public.

By Mark Corbae

Last year, biotech IPOs hit a record level with more than 100 listings. Fast forward to this past August when *The Wall Street Journal* reported that the U.S. IPO market was on pace for its slowest year in two decades. Still, a rise in the XBI biotech index fund in July of this year may be an early predictor of the start of an IPO comeback. No matter the prevailing thoughts on the status of the healthcare and biotech markets for the remainder of 2022, for companies planning a public debut, whether it's in the near-term or over the next year, a strong communications program is business critical.

Investors, analysts, legislators, industry leaders, healthcare providers, patients and others involved in the healthcare arena want information—news, data, insights—from both emerging and more established biotech companies, even if IPO plans have been put on hold. It's not the time for companies to take a step back and suspend communicating with their audiences. In fact, it's more important than ever to share company leaders' priorities and plans, announce milestones and engage in the broader biotech community.

A company's communications tactics may be modified in the face of a shifting marketplace, but overall objectives should remain unchanged. Companies need to be proactive in their communications, remain visible, build on momentum created and continue a steady path in telling their corporate and management story. Pre-IPO communications paint more than a financial picture, they inform investors and other influencers the core values of a company, the priorities of its leadership and what drives its success. Which is to say, before a business becomes a publicly traded company, it needs to act—communicate—like a publicly traded company. Let's look at some of the ways it can.

Reputation management. Credibility and confidence are particularly important during difficult economic times. Investors, partners, employees and other stakeholders need to hear directly from management that the company is on course and continues to convey a compelling value proposition. Market changes may impact a company's planned path, but the ability to demonstrate that management and its team can adapt and move forward inspires confidence in the power to deliver on overall objectives. At the same time, it's critical to communi-

cate why this leadership team includes the right people, with targeted expertise, relevant backgrounds and the ability to express and act on the company's vision. In times of disruption, communicating honestly—with fact-based data and thoughtful insights—will help uphold a company's well-built reputation.

Thought leadership. Hand in hand with establishing a strong public perception is conveying the industry expertise of company management and chief science/medical officers. The opportunity to connect with key constituents on broader industry issues keeps the company relevant, top of mind and credible. Showcasing thought leadership through content, speaking opportunities, recognition platforms and other venues establishes executive presence and reinforces core messaging regardless of the audience.

Brand identity. A strong brand image helps weather industry and marketplace unpredictability and positions the company positively for the long term. Companies need to be visible, telling their corporate story and distinguishing themselves from the competition, or others will do it for them. Keeping that share of mind helps protect a strong brand identity.

Media relationship building. Telling a compelling story through the media allows a company to bring home all its core messages across its respective audiences (e.g., investors, healthcare providers, partners, patients, etc.). Companies that have delayed going public can benefit from the opportunity to build on past media successes, continuing momentum and leveraging relationships that may have formed with reporters or writers. Those companies planning an IPO need to take advantage of this key target for communications early on. The variety of both content—visuals, posts and articles—and media platforms—social media, websites, press releases and blogs—offer strong opportunities to inculcate core messaging among all audiences. Companies can also stay top of mind and highlight progress by announcing corporate milestones, executive hiring, partnerships and other pipeline news. Staying hidden and holding off on strategic communications can raise questions in stakeholders' minds about the company's viability and stability.

Issues management and crisis readiness. Being prepared for different scenarios—

both positive and negative—that may happen during the IPO process is important, particularly during volatile economic times. Having a strong communications foundation—core messaging, mission, vision, brand identity, targeted communications strategies—paves the way in times of crisis, and knowing how to respond to different scenarios ahead of time is a valuable risk management tool. It can also be helpful to communicate how the company has handled previous challenging times, demonstrating the ability to pivot, if needed, and remain on track and true to the overall mission.




Mark Corbae

Financial and partner communications. Many pre-IPO biotech companies have no revenue or profit yet, so milestones and ongoing events can serve as a means to keep Wall Street engaged. It's important to be transparent about current funding and how far it can take the company. Ongoing communication about the company's management, plans and progress can help with the company's valuation and expectations. In addition, a company's working relationship, especially with key public and private institutions, reflects on its potential in the industry, serving as concept validation of products and technology. Third-party support also provides objective endorsement of a company's mission, therapies, products or business model.

Internal communications. It's often said that employees are a company's greatest asset, and as such, it's important to remember to make them feel included in communications regarding the company's plans. They need to understand clearly the path the company is taking, what it means and how the company will get there. Clear communications across the board mean that consistent messaging is disseminated to all audiences, including employees.

Overall, whether companies are preparing to enter or revive their path to IPO, or if a public offering is on a more distant horizon, a strong communications program is important to establish—or continue—now. The areas of communication above are some of the ways companies can maximize their chances of success in the public markets and help ensure the corporate story they have established is clearly understood well before listing day.

Mark Corbae is a Managing Director at ICR Westwicke. 



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Pandemic pivots persist amidst economic uncertainty

Why proactive communications could make the difference between merely surviving or thriving during uncertain economic times.

By Ryan Lilly

Whether we end up in a full-on recession or are simply in the midst of a market correction, what lies ahead for our economy seems uncertain at best. While not nearly as severe as Q2 2020, we're feeling a similar reaction across the healthcare continuum, as organizations look to cut budgets and focus spending on activities and resources deemed mission critical.

We're seeing almost daily headlines regarding layoffs and/or earnings that are falling short of projections. Unfortunately, in these turbulent times, marketing budgets are often among the first casualties. Let me tell you why this is a particularly dangerous page out of an outdated playbook.

Let's be clear: I'm biased because I have the privilege of working with an amazing team and have seen strategic communications bolster brands through many tough times. That said, it's my view that public relations and marketing are mission-critical for any healthcare brand—in times of boom or bust. On the heels of the pandemic and arguably healthcare's greatest period of innovation, investment and advancement in recent memory, it's more essential than ever that brands refuse to abandon or devalue PR and marketing.

Now we know what's possible

One of Matter Health's venture capital clients summarized the pandemic in a particularly poignant way, stating that COVID brought 2030 to healthcare a decade ahead of schedule. Having spent the last twenty or so years supporting hundreds of brands across the continuum of care, I've often found it unbelievable to see things that we've discussed for decades become real, almost overnight. Money poured into the space to accelerate drug development, diagnostics, virtual care, breakthrough devices, AI and myriad other truly powerful, useful tools and services. We also saw regulatory red tape fall to the wayside as focus quickly shifted toward the public emergency and serving the greater good. It turns out that when push comes to shove—and despite what we may have seen historically—healthcare is capable of nimble evolution and improvement.

Competition and expectations have never been greater across the continuum of care than at this moment, and it's critical that your value propositions and differentiators are strategically and proactively communicated to your customers, prospects, in-

vestors and the broader market. Whether you're an established entity or a brand-new company looking to garner attention, now is not the time to hope your stakeholders will just find you and appreciate the full value of what you bring to the table.

Simply put, Pandora's box has been opened for healthcare and, at their own risk, organizations will fall back on "because we've always done it that way." The bar has been raised and expectations adjusted for virtually all stakeholders across the entire continuum of care, particularly for patients. When taking this all into consideration, it should be clear why now is not the time for your brand to "go quiet." Whether you're a patient looking for high-quality convenient care, a health system looking for a way to streamline operations or an employer who wants to support the mental health of your staff, your expectations aren't likely to be lowered due to economic turmoil. In fact, the opposite is more likely true.

More options require more active PR

Put yourself in the patient mindset and think about this in practical terms. Historically, your options were limited. You probably had a primary care provider, perhaps a specialist or two in the mix, and maybe one or two hospitals nearby. Today, you can add retail clinics, urgent care, virtual care and digital therapeutics into the mix of options for how and where you'll access care.

It's no longer enough for a provider to simply be in your town and on your health plan. We have options and want to know why we would choose one provider, care setting or care delivery model over the growing list of other options. This example focuses primarily on healthcare providers and patients, but similar scenarios can be easily outlined for pharmaceutical manufacturers, virtual care platforms, health IT and virtually every other sub-sector of medicine.

If you need further proof of the push to modernize healthcare and deliver experiences comparable to those in our consumer lives, look to the arms race amidst some of the largest tech and retail giants on the planet. Amazon, CVS, Walmart and Walgreens have invested hundreds of billions in the space in recent years. The push into healthcare was already on the roadmap for these giants, but the journey has undoubtedly been accelerated by the pandemic.

While these behemoths are clearly committed to healthcare transformation, each is going about it differently, mixing and

matching payer and provider services, care settings, diagnostics and even incorporating pharma services. In almost every scenario, technology and innovation are the enablers of these novel strategies. While not yet clear who will "win" the arms race, it's undeniable that these moves are placing massive pressure on "traditional" healthcare organizations to evolve or be left in the dark ages of healthcare.

Appetite for solutions in uncertain times

While it's an ideal moment to tell stories of disruption, established brands that address evergreen issues are also well positioned. Tightening purse strings can increase appetite for novel solutions and or focus on core competencies and functions proven to directly impact margins and the bottom line.

Whether you're an established brand with a proven solution or a brand-new category creator, you need a strategic plan to effectively communicate your value proposition and differentiators against the backdrop of economic uncertainty and the current climate of transformation. This plan should include carefully crafted messages to cut through the noise and address immediate and long-term challenges and opportunities. It should also focus on the ideal channels and content to reach and influence your specific decision-makers. Finally, your strategy should incorporate proof points and/or third-party validation to go beyond "we're awesome" messaging. Silence shouldn't be part of this plan.

No need to navigate alone

When it comes to PR and marketing in the current climate, going it alone would be better than not going at all, but this may be an ideal time to consider engaging a firm that has been through this and has seen brands thrive and fail in similar situations. Before you say I'm drinking my own Kool-Aid, consider that there are massive benefits to partnering with a team that's seen what works and what doesn't in a challenging economy, and is able to advise you based on both depth and breadth of experience with similar brands in your market.

While specific strategies will vary across healthcare verticals and organizations, proactive and thoughtful communications may very well be the difference between surviving and thriving in the weeks, months and years ahead.

Ryan Lilly is General Manager of Matter Health. ○



Ryan Lilly



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Who are you trying to influence?

The path to drug launch in today's fragmented health ecosystem is complex, but the right communications approach can overcome barriers to success.

By Tom Jones

Empathy and understanding are central to positive patient outcomes. Biopharma communications leaders know that helping patients find the support they need is central to success, for both patient health and business objectives. But when launching a new brand therapeutic, achieving these dual outcomes depends on how well we pass through the intersections in our fragmented health ecosystem.

At each intersection, a professional—whether a caregiver, advocate, nurse, prescriber, payer or pharmacist, helps guide a patient along their journey. Commercial teams must successfully align with all of these influencers.

But, possibly as a complication of the pandemic, patient relationships with these critical influencers have become fractured or lost. For example, many patients don't have consistent physician relationships. They "doctor-hop" or see so many clinicians that they don't have a go-to source for answers or perspective. This situation has left many patients without a trusted link to good information.

The American Health Information Management Association Foundation conducted a survey in 2021 uncovering widespread dissatisfaction among Americans regarding their health information. They found that three in four respondents don't leave their doctor's office on a positive note for reasons that include disappointment in the level of Q&A they have with their doctor, confusion about their health, and a need to do more research on their own. Nearly two in three Americans surveyed admit they are not highly confident in understanding the information they discuss with their doctor.

As a leader at an agency specializing in launching several biopharma brands yearly, I believe good communication is the expressway to care. With meticulous planning, effective communications cut through the confusion and help influencers in the care ecosystem better connect with patients. In my experience, the communications strategies most effective in teeing-up successful product launches include more innovative approaches to market insights, stakeholder engagement, and disciplined execution.

Innovative approaches to market insights

Patients are the reason we enter the field of health. Though many in the ecosystem have been talking about improving the "patient journey" in recent years, we must recognize the fundamental importance of pa-

tient preference and satisfaction. Through listening, we must determine how patients receiving care choose to live their everyday lives, what they want and what they need, and place those considerations on the same level with clinical outcomes.

To more accurately and efficiently develop creative communications content and channel strategies readily embraced and adopted by influencers, we must take the fullest advantage of real-world data on patient experience and satisfaction. When combined with digital tools, the deeper insights these data enable will more fully inform key stakeholders, influencers, and decision-makers and make it possible for them to better connect with patients around advances in care for their condition and the benefits of a new therapy.

Engage with stakeholders

For similar reasons, seeking early input on product attributes from payers and other stakeholders on the access side of the care continuum is essential to launch success. Ask, "what endpoints matter, and which would be required for preferred access and quick adoption?" "What are ideal therapy goals, and how does the current standard of care fail to meet those goals?" "How does our brand exceed the current standard of care in meeting the ideal therapy goals?" The answers to these questions will not only inform key message points and spokesperson narrative, they also will allow you to connect product messaging with overarching, strategic themes that meet the needs and interests of desired influencers in the ecosystem.

Payers also are key to patient experience. Communication is no longer linear from corporate commercial teams to influencers, and physicians are no longer the monolithic source of patient information they once were. In many current coverage realities, payers may be the first place patients go for information about a medication or to choose a clinician. For many, "ask your health plan" is the first advice given when there is a question about any coverage or cost issue.

Another critical stakeholder influencing patient experience and outcomes is the pharmacist—professionals who are both essential and underutilized. With strong relationships with payers, drug makers and providers, they're arguably one of the most connected constituents, but patients don't often understand them as a source of

information. For specialized medicines in particular, health systems are increasingly leveraging pharmacists' unique practice model to ensure optimal patient care, improve medication adherence, and enhance disease management.

Finally, advocacy organizations are becoming more engaged in helping people understand their medication options and shortcutting the process to access assistance programs, rebates, and other options to reduce out-of-pocket costs. The Association of Community Cancer Centers, for example, created this great resource for patients to assist them with access and reimbursement.

Disciplined execution

To execute product launches effectively, it's important to establish a cross-functional approach that balances communications consistency with channel flexibility. This requires collaboration among functions, adequate staffing and timely deployment of resources.

A baseline from which to build is to clearly articulate the customer value proposition and points of differentiation across customer types and segments (e.g., patient, caregiver, physician, payer, institutional buyer). Help set clear expectations about results that can be achieved.

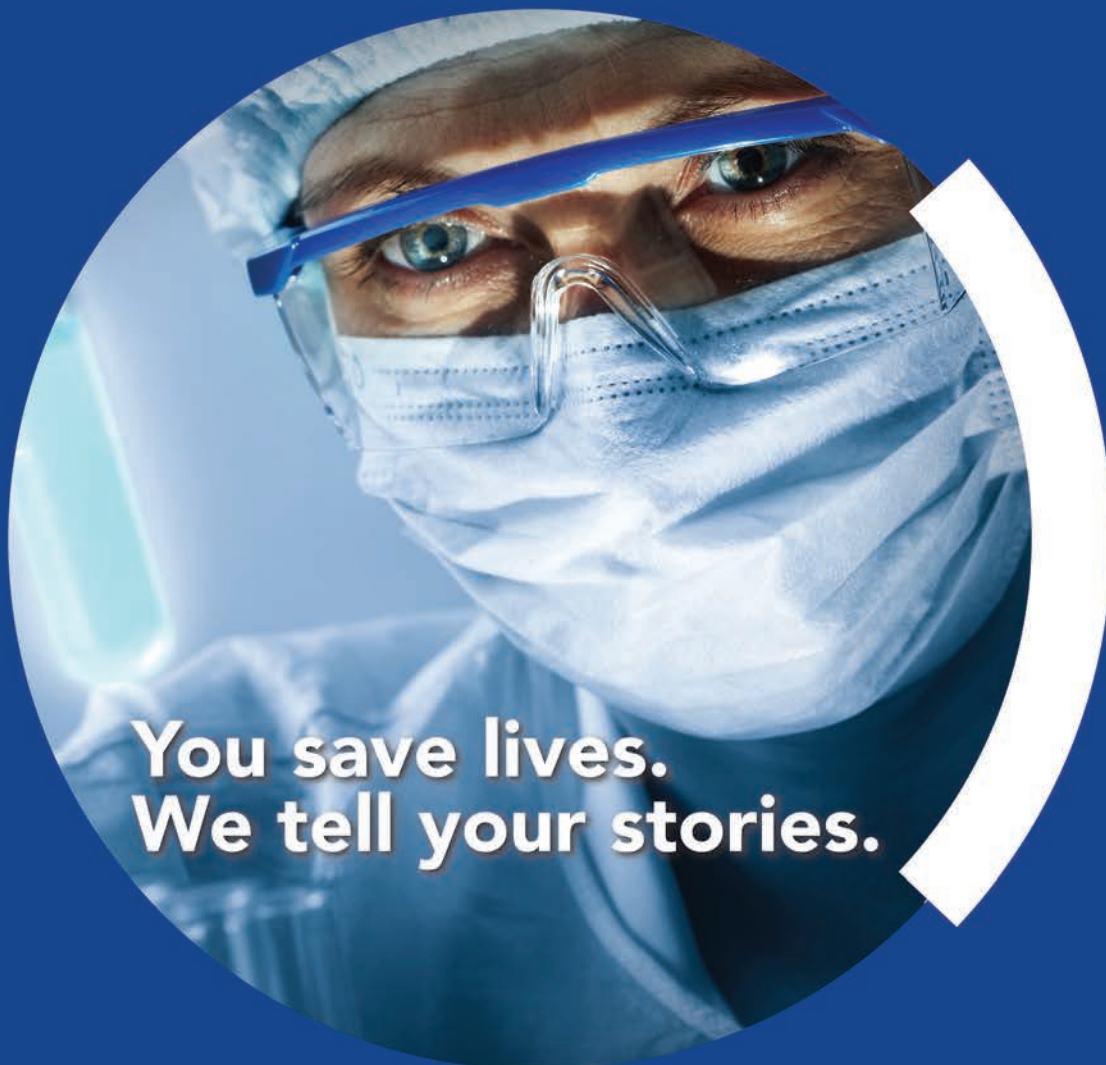
Finally, disciplined execution must tie back to—you guessed it—patient satisfaction. When it comes to launching preparation, involving patients in the campaign design phase and seeking their earlier feedback on therapeutic and care delivery needs is key to a successful campaign. This partnership ensures all components—educational materials, spokespeople and messaging—inspire other patients and their caregivers to engage and confront their diagnosis and help them work with their doctors to form a game plan.

The increasing diversity of product types and the market segments they serve calls for comprehensive disease area expertise, deep relationships with the clinician and patient community, a thorough understanding of the value drivers for key stakeholders—especially payers—and a skillful launch execution. Companies and communicators with these skills will be well-positioned to improve their overall launch performance.

Tom Jones, Managing Partner, Health and Pharma Sector Lead at FINN Partners. Many thanks to the colleagues who collaborated on this piece: Arielle Bernstein Pinsof, MPP, Nicole Cottrill, Todd Eury, John Bianchi, Ryan O'Grady Rubenstein, and Vance Thomas. ○



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Creating the communications workforce of the future

A changing workforce and a series of recent trends affecting how and where we work present both challenges and opportunities to the healthcare communications industry.

By Sharon M. Reis

A recent Gallup poll found employee engagement is falling and a new trend—doing the minimum to get by—permeates a good portion of the workforce. What are communications leaders doing to combat this “quiet quitting” trend and build the healthcare communications workforce of the future?

Just as the basic nature of how and where we work is changing, so are the skill sets required for the next generation of PR professionals. With such a tight market for hiring, many employers are rethinking their approach to filling staffing needs. We’re making an even more concerted effort to bring in early career colleagues from diverse backgrounds and industries. Having a degree in communications or journalism is no longer the typical entryway to the field. Our firm recently made three amazing hires: one with a master’s degree in public health, another with a political science background and a recent college graduate with a double major in English and marketing.

Offer a career roadmap

Our agency is learning that young people who are smart, curious and good writers are very trainable. We embrace the challenge of building new skill sets. We’ve created an onboarding process that spans not just a few weeks, but your first six months with the firm. We put a lot of time and effort into ensuring that new team members experience a thorough and positive onboarding process that flows naturally into a long-term professional development calendar. On day one, we start teaching and modeling for them what it means to work at an agency and become a well-rounded PR professional, in line with our firm’s established values and standards.

In fact, TRG’s senior team has put together a “career roadmap” and a robust professional development schedule to help our new teammates continually learn and grow. We’ve also outlined varied paths that build and foster everyone’s individual strengths. New arrivals define for themselves what success means to them for their career. It’s very personalized. The nurturing and growing of colleagues is built into the roles and responsibilities of mid- and senior-level team members and that’s how we’re thoughtfully and intentionally creating the next generation of healthcare PR professionals.

Grow communications skill sets

Are there any new skills needed to be successful? “The proliferation of new digital and social channels does require some new technical skills such as using software to do social media listening in public relations or big-data analysis in market research,” said Anya Karavanov, PhD, Senior Professorial Lecturer in the School of Communication at American University in Washington, D.C. “However, fundamentally, the essential skills remain the same—strategic thinking, ability to identify and leverage insight, excellent writing, ‘deep’ listening, flexibility and ability to think on your feet, as well as relationship building. These skills remain critical to being successful in the field.”

Our industry has fully embraced digital and social platforms. They’re an important tool in our communications toolbox, but they need to be part of a bigger strategic communications framework. Our clients need experience and engagement from our team as much as they need these specialized skills.

“What’s changing is that more people are entering the field with specialized skill sets: social media, ad buying, messaging and branding, and the like,” said Joseph LaMountain, agency veteran and former professor at Georgetown University. “What’s often in short supply are strategists, the big-picture thinkers who understand how all these things work together and who can create the overarching strategic vision for an engagement. We need specialists, of course, but their effectiveness will be limited by the quality of the strategists who are developing your outreach campaigns.”

While storytelling remains essential, how we deliver stories has changed. “We’re in an environment that is much more visual and screen-oriented than two years ago,” said Elise Castelli, Director, Communications and Public Relations at the Society of Interventional Radiology. “With the popularity of Zoom and TikTok accelerating rapidly during the pandemic, the demand for video across all platforms has increased. Luckily Zoom and other products make it easy to capture and edit videos in-house.”

Optimize the hybrid experience

Nearly as important as having the right skill set is creating a positive workplace culture, which can be even more challeng-

ing in a hybrid-work world. “My best insight into creating a successful hybrid work environment isn’t great news for managers: to do it right, it will take more work,” said Josh Wilson, Director of Strategic Communications at Children’s National Hospital in Washington. “If people are coming into an office and spending most of the day on Zoom, I’m certain folks aren’t happy. No one wants to make a commute, pay for parking and buy a Sweet Greens salad to do exactly what they could do from home.”

As the pandemic waned, at TRG we started coming into the office three days a week, and some of our team found it challenging. Disruptions seemed to regularly come up where people needed to work from home, whether it was COVID exposures, doctor’s appointments, child-care crises, train delays or something else. We talked about it, and we decided to adjust our time by choosing two days a week where everyone is in the office on the same days, and it seems to be working well.

Many of us are able to have a hybrid work environment that includes increased flexibility and, for me, far less time spent commuting. However, the increased flexibility is sometimes in direct conflict with our on-demand schedule. We’re frequently called to spring into action when a crisis arises, a new opportunity emerges or an unexpected client demand surfaces. The trend of some employees doing just the minimum to get by could do some big damage in healthcare PR. Our industry has thrived on people going above and beyond, especially during this pandemic, and we need to think creatively to maintain that effort and energy as we move forward.

Sharon M. Reis is Principal of The Reis Group, a Washington, D.C.-based Healthcare PR agency. A 25-year veteran of the public relations industry who has long been dedicated to representing top-tier clients in health and healthcare, is Reis named one of the top women in public relations, she has worked extensively with medical societies, foundations, and academic institutions on communications strategy and issues management. ○



Sharon M. Reis



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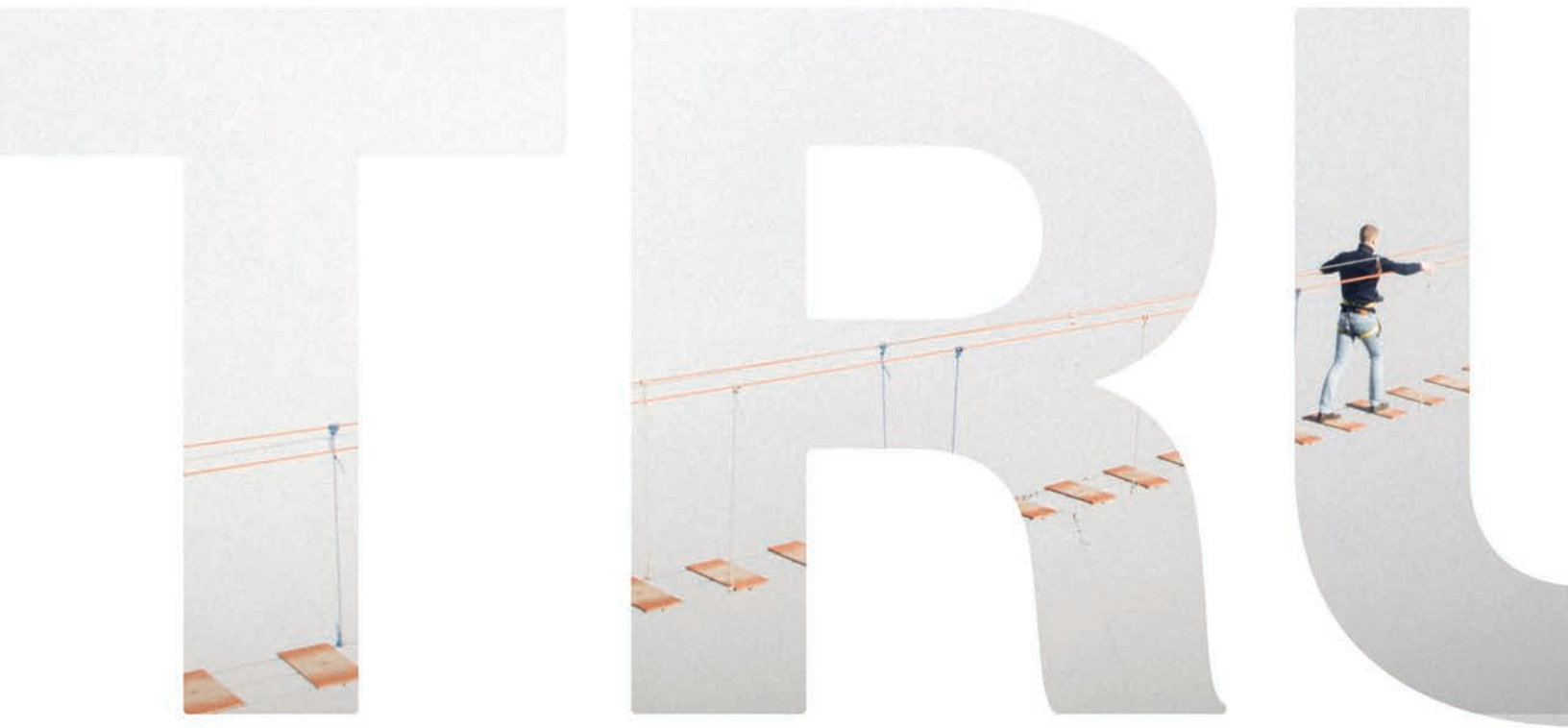
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Health is bigger than healthcare

The COVID-19 pandemic has uncovered biases in our health system and a lack of access to quality healthcare for millions of Americans. Here's why the communications industry plays a vital role in improving health equity and addressing these barriers.

By Karen Goldstein and Melissa Zuckerman

The White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health created quite the buzz in the JPA Health offices. The meeting was designed to spark discussion on the dire needs of millions of Americans experiencing food insecurity and related diseases, including heart disease, obesity and Type 2 diabetes. As the conference website aptly declared, "Lack of access to healthy, safe and affordable food and to safe outdoor spaces contributes to hunger, [related] diseases and health disparities."

This statement says it all and was the reason we were so excited. While many in the public health and healthcare sector will read that sentence and not blink twice, the national spotlight on the connection between non-health factors in a person's life—such as access to healthy, affordable food—and health outcomes is significant, as is the elevation of the disproportionate impact food insecurity has on underserved communities.

Due in large part to the racial and economic biases revealed in our health system during the COVID-19 pandemic, the movement to frame health in this macro way, beyond the traditional healthcare model, has finally become more mainstream. By bringing together the public and private sector to coordinate action to end hunger, to improve nutrition and physical activity and to address related disparities, the White House Conference demonstrates how the major players are increasing conversations and commitments on social, economic and other Drivers Of Health when addressing public health challenges.

DOH, commonly referred to as social determinants of health, recognize that the conditions in which people are born, grow, work and live influence a person's health. DOH often manifest themselves in things like lack of access to safe housing, nutritious food and transportation.

People frequently aren't able to follow through with their treatment for disease or even get to medical appointments, despite their desire to. How can we expect a person with diabetes to take their insulin if they don't have electricity to keep it refrigerated? Or what about the person in kidney failure dependent on safe, reliable transportation to get to their life-saving dialysis care three

days a week? For health-related communications, this context requires more holistic thinking about our audiences and what they are experiencing, as well as how we can best support their needs through our efforts.

One example of this approach is exemplified by The Physicians Foundation, an organization actively crafting solutions and policies to advance how we pay for and deliver care to improve health. Like the White House Conference, this changed from understanding to action earlier this year when the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services adopted the first-ever DOH measures in a federal quality or payment program. This milestone comes as a result of a proposal that the Physicians Foundation submitted to CMS last year on screening rate and screen positive rate measures.

The public relations industry is part of the solution. As PR professionals, we play a significant part in promoting education and awareness in this broader health context. It is even more critical for us to take an audience-centric, person-first approach. In the same way that public health professionals consider behavior change theories, public relations professionals must think about a person's universe—the systems, organizations and individuals with which they engage, as well as an individual's knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and barriers. To ensure equity, we have a responsibility to consider such factors as cultural appropriateness, digital access and language barriers, among many other elements.

One organization that exemplifies the power of audience-centric communications is Community Catalyst, whom we have been collaborating with to increase equitable access to COVID-19 and influenza vaccines. For this effort, Community Catalyst recognized that different communities would require different approaches because the beliefs and barriers for community members would be distinct from those of others. Guided by this insight, Community Catalyst implemented a strategy to support 90 community-based organizations across the country to engage community members with trust and cultural competency.

Within the communities, CBOs recruited and trained an assortment of individ-

uals to serve as influential messengers to share vaccine information. These local influencers—including barbers, drag queens, faith leaders, local television personalities and many others—were unique to each community and contributed to authenticity and building trust among distinct audiences.

Together, we created a vast communications toolkit with messaging and materials that addressed a range of barriers to vaccination—access barriers like transportation, singular concern barriers such as immigration status, faith- and culture-based barriers and high levels of misinformation and disinformation—that the CBOs and trusted messengers could have at their disposal.

Across the country, CBOs effectively increased accurate and relevant vaccination messages in the community and vaccination opportunities, helping improve the health and well-being of others.

Such success is a reminder that the U.S. can't effectively improve health outcomes or health equity without addressing DOH. General awareness and understanding of DOH is important, but it must be built upon with action. Whether increasing vaccine confidence or embarking on a long-term strategy to improve access to nutritional foods, the context of health is appropriately expanding to encompass social, economic and physical conditions. To truly improve health equity in our country, we all must work to incorporate DOH into our strategies to improve health outcomes. As a nation, we're trending in this direction. With this "health is bigger than healthcare" approach, we have reason to be hopeful that we are headed towards a more equitable and healthier future.

Karen Goldstein, MPH, is Senior Vice President at JPA Health. Melissa Zuckerman is Senior Vice President at JPA Health. ○



Karen Goldstein



Melissa Zuckerman

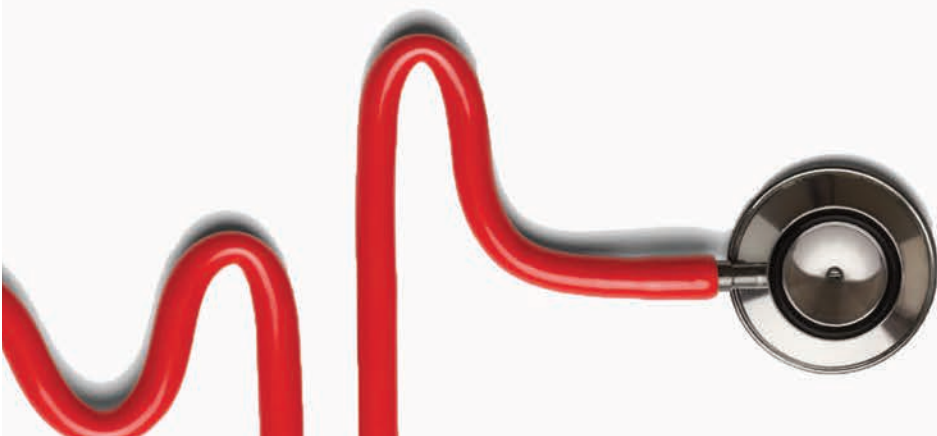


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Embracing mental health technology

When it comes to mental health, it's time communicators begin practicing what we publicly preach.

By Chani Garb

Do I post it or not? I sat frozen for 15 minutes, debating whether or not to share my excitement on LinkedIn regarding Telosity Ventures heavily investing in mental health technology. My fear? Inadvertently, by posting this, my struggles with mental health could potentially be alluded to and, as a result—exposed. This, to me, meant my successful marketing and communications consultancy career would automatically come to a screeching halt.

For the last decade, I've carefully curated a LinkedIn profile that ensured I always looked professional and poised. I also deliberately made sure never to expose anything personal about myself, especially the fact that I'm a proud Orthodox Lubavitch Chassidic Jew, as well as an accomplished businesswoman who struggles with mental health. Two unpopular subjects.

I don't doubt that many of my technology-loving communications colleagues can relate. We're thrilled to serve as the publicity machines behind driving the adoption of mental health technology innovation. Yet it's frightening to advocate for these solutions publicly as first-hand sufferers. I finally did press that button. It was liberating, not debilitating.

We all need a Jiminy Cricket in our lives. For me, right now, that's my new purpose-driven and tech-loving mentors, my bosses: Curtis Sparrer, Bospar co-Founder and Principal, and Lauren Essex, Bospar Senior Vice President. They continue to teach me that it's okay to be publicly bold and stand up for a purpose you genuinely believe in. I witness this daily by being part of the marketing team behind Bospar Stands Up human rights initiatives for women, LGBTQIA+ and minorities.

This program has triggered respect from the media, employees and the PR industry. It's also a catalyst for why over 145 technology companies continue to select us as their PR and marketing agency. Since we launched the program in 2021, we've increased revenue by \$7 million.

Communication and PR—let's all be honest—is one of the most anxiety-driven careers anyone can choose. Handling a technology client's crisis communications isn't a walk in the park. Add the fact that we're now in a downward economic direction and that our jobs are often on the chopping blocks due to tighter budgets. These and many other factors have played a vital role in the industry's Great Resignation and

Quiet Quitting among Millennials and Gen Zers.

I've always preferred to be a ghostwriter. Still, I felt I had to come out for the first time and encourage those with mental health issues not to run away from the communications industry and especially the technology arena, which provides a constant intellectual rush of innovations and desperately needs the next generation of publicists to take these to the next level.

I promise there are great companies out there that support mental health.

Here's how I got control of my mental health in recent years, and these steps allowed me to finally embrace this wonderful working space rather than see it as a constant anxiety-induced struggle. I hope they can provide some of you out there with a dose of guidance:

Step one: seek help immediately

Here's a shocker that Hollywood would never share with you: The Orthodox Jewish community is evolving at lightning speed. We're opening our schools and synagogues to the LGBTQIA+ community and taking a public stand against draconian, anti-abortion laws that jeopardize our religious beliefs.

Supporting mental health is no exception.

The Chassidic community, which sadly is often portrayed in public as an insular and unhappy environment, is leading the charge in making mental health services affordable for Orthodox Jews in the tri-state area, either in person or online. Personally, after trying several outside services, this works best for me.

If the religious route isn't to your taste, reach out to friends, family and colleagues or research the best solutions that fit your needs. From Lemonaid to Betterhelp to Talkspace, the health tech space offers many beautiful and affordable options to hopefully solve several struggles you're facing.

"COVID has accelerated telemedicine innovations, and this welcoming development is here to stay," explained my colleague Peter Kerr, a former *New York Times* health tech journalist and Pulitzer prize finalist. "It will continue to foster further growth in the health and mental tech spaces."

Once I got the proper help, my life became much more enjoyable, from selecting projects and clients I wanted to work with to meeting and marrying my incredible and lovable husband at 44. There's no shame in putting your mental health first!

Step two: don't enter a vertical you loath

Before COVID, I split my time between Israel, Europe and the U.S., flying around to work with my fintech and banking clients. When COVID hit, I couldn't fly and decided to follow a passion: to become an interim CEO of an ed-tech company. Their excellent one-to-one Chromebook lockdown solutions helped thousands of public and private-school teachers and students conduct remote classes flawlessly during the pandemic.

There are several communications opportunities in the verticals that speak to you. For example, here at Bospar, health and mental-health tech are a definite passion for many, and, in 2020, we hosted a pandemic-related town hall meeting with Dr. Fauci and our client, Healthline.

First, find your passions and the suitable communications space that brings out those passions.

Step three: work only for a mental health advocate employer

While it was thrilling running my tech marketing and PR firm for years, I decided to become an employee at Bospar because it's a big advocate of mental health support.

Go with your gut feeling; run away if you step into an interview and the management feels off. I promise there are other Bospars out there!

Final step: live with purpose

I lost many loved ones after COVID hit, including my mother-in-law. Like others, once the pandemic subsided, I couldn't jump back into a solely career-driven existence. I needed a higher purpose, and that was doing something I'd never done before. I took a year off to be a school shadow for a young Orthodox Jewish boy who had behavioral issues at the time. My passion is to help those in my community who suffer from mental health and behavioral disorders. This activism has been unbelievable in my road to mental health recovery.

This isn't only the first time I've written my story but also the first that I didn't ghostwrite an article. It's scary to put myself out there. Still, I hope that telling my story and encouraging others to seek help will lead to a new generation of tech-loving communications professionals who are happy and mentally healthy and live by purposeful example!

Chani Garb is Vice President of Marketing at Bospar. ○



Chani Garb

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The intersection of digitization, humanization and transformation

The U.S. medical industry is under tremendous pressure to change and evolve, requiring a fundamental shift in how we approach healthcare communications.

By Steve Halsey and Anne Green

Modern healthcare was already at a breaking point before the pandemic. Now, two-plus years since COVID-19 first made the news, the structural and social pressures on the healthcare system have only accelerated.

Consumers are no longer satisfied with the status quo and are demanding changes across every aspect of the healthcare delivery experience. They want to demystify and humanize it as well as ensure easier access and more affordable high-quality options.

Doctors, nurses and other frontline professionals are fighting the physical and mental burnout associated with years of continuously battling the pandemic—and the structural challenges associated with the healthcare workforce that preceded it. Meanwhile, healthcare administrators are facing a host of operational and business issues, ranging from the big picture, macro-economic and societal shifts impacting the delivery of care and their ability to operate without disruption, to the very direct and on-the-ground manifestation of these factors on their own workforce.

Yet it's not just the point of healthcare delivery that's stressed. From established pharma and medical device companies to small technology startups, payers to investors, educators and researchers and associations and charities, the entire system is under tremendous pressure to change and evolve. This is as technology's transformative impact continues to drive fundamental changes across the entire ecosystem from drug discovery, to clinical trials, to service delivery, to patient—and provider—experiences and expectations.

Big shifts, big opportunities

In 2021, G&S Business Communications fielded a consumer survey and identified significant opportunities for improving healthcare communications, particularly when it comes to engaging with patients. We found that while addressing the urgent, evolving challenges of the pandemic has fundamentally reshaped the American medical industry, three forward-looking communications trends rose to the top. These include:

Reducing healthcare disparities. The pandemic opened the door to virtual business-to-individual telehealth, which has the power to break down language and location barriers and open the door to wider and

faster access and more equitable healthcare services.

Skyrocketing healthcare mobile apps. From ordering prescriptions and making appointments to texting with providers, increased use of mobile healthcare apps appears—finally—to be here to stay.

Embracing digital business-to-individual communication. As communication with providers, health insurers and other key stakeholders became more digital, consumers confirmed they expect to be more reliant on digital communications in the future.

Among the most important findings of the research is the impact of the ongoing evolution toward using telehealth and other digital B2I communications to provide patients with the services they need, how and when they need it. While direct, human connection between patients and healthcare providers will always stand at the core of healthcare, digital B2I is rapidly catching up and, in some respects, surpassing in-person engagement in certain settings. Indispensable during the pandemic for safety reasons, consumers have now identified digital communication channels as the ones they're most likely to continue using long after the pandemic.

A tapestry of issues

While the healthcare space has always been challenging and, by its nature, a profoundly multi-stakeholder environment, it's now facing an even more complex and interdependent matrix of issues. The intensity of today's landscape and associated challenges require a commensurate shift in how we approach communications.

Savvy communicators must view these issues as a tapestry of inherently interrelated pressures. While it may seem more manageable to try to address them one at a time, the reality is that none exist in a vacuum. There's significant intersectionality among them.

Communicators must also work in lock-step with other key internal stakeholders throughout their organization, particularly when that organization is a hospital, health system or other provider-side entity, to ensure consistency, continuity, and accuracy in what is being operationalized as well as communicated.

Given the challenges of the current environment, we offer eight considerations for healthcare communicators:

Break silos: Seek to continuously break down internal silos and cross-discipline silos to ensure fully realized communications strategies across all stakeholders.

Set the context: Establishing context is especially important when communicating major shifts in healthcare delivery, as well as managing crisis communications around significant and dynamic challenges.

Prioritize preparedness: Apply a crisis communications mindset to all aspects of communications—including an emphasis on preparedness, an always-on structure, a seamless blend of human insight with a smart digital tech stack, and consistent engagement with other senior internal stakeholders.

Activate commtech: Dig into the fast-emerging areas of CommTech to activate critical digital tools and processes, including placing a priority on social listening tools and stakeholder engagement.

Live omnichannel: Recognize that we now live in a fully omnichannel world and it has implications for communications strategies and execution. Deepen your understanding of how your stakeholders are consuming information across a variety of mediums, platforms and devices. Then work to educate patients using all available channels: blog posts, online articles, TV appearances, radio interviews, mobile apps, tailored local campaigns that target different segments of patient populations, and more.

Lean into the benefits of B2I: Telehealth is the most cost-effective means of solving many healthcare disparities issues. Tell stories not just about its convenience, but also about how telehealth can help provide access to patients who have no other alternatives.

Feature your heroes: Doctors, PAs, nurses and medical research scientists still have a solid reputation among most of the American public, so leverage this positive view to build trust in critical healthcare innovations and offerings.



Steve Halsey



Anne Green

— Continued on next page

The 'Great Retirement': a thought leadership opportunity

The pandemic contributed to a record number of healthcare CEOs retiring in the past year. Here's how new and emerging leaders can seize the opportunity and emerge as industry thought leaders.

By Kim Blake

The "Great Resignation" that was ignited by the COVID-19 pandemic continues with a historic number of workers leaving their jobs. CEOs, and healthcare CEOs in particular, are among them. In 2021, 56 hospital CEOs announced their planned retirement, and a recent report shows that the trend has continued as 36 hospital CEOs and 10 pharmaceutical company CEOs left their jobs between January and April 2022. This has created a domino effect across the industry as organizations seek to replace departing leaders.

What does all this mean other than a booming business for outplacement firms? There's a gaping hole in terms of industry thought leadership as the usual suspects retire and make way for others to participate in media opportunities, speak at industry conferences, testify at congressional hearings and drive support for important issues and causes.

A golden opportunity for new and existing leaders? Yes! But organizations must look before they leap. At Padilla, we believe in three key tenets to introducing a new leader and formulating an effective thought leadership platform.

Cast a vision

True thought leadership challenges the status quo and paints a picture of where the world is headed. It addresses industry pain points—topics like health equity, staffing challenges and price transparency. It shouldn't necessarily feel comfortable or be easy because thought leadership requires having a compelling perspective that isn't currently "owned" and must be backed by action that demonstrates commitment and credibility.

Where do you even begin? We recommend starting with an audit to identify the "white space" that's the convergence of an organization's purpose, its stakeholders' beliefs and their point of view. Communications leaders can build trust with new CEOs by working with them during this process and helping translate their vision into a platform that articulates the problem, the solution and the role their organization plays in helping to drive that solution.

Everyone has a type—find your

A strong platform provides a critical foundation for thought leadership, but action is what drives interest and credibility among stakeholders. There's not one specific playbook for thought leadership, but at Padilla, we believe there are three distinct

types of thought leaders who all act in different ways.

The Sage: The Sage is typically a company with a long history that can put change into context. The Sage will often question its own status quo because it realizes that if it doesn't, someone else will. In healthcare, an example of a Sage is CVS Health, which last year announced that it was closing 900 pharmacies to reconceive its locations as sites for more comprehensive healthcare services.

The Convener: Conveners step forward and bring disparate groups together to solve a common problem, putting the cause before their own visibility. An example in healthcare is the More in Common Alliance, a collaboration between CommonSpirit Health and the Morehouse School of Medicine to help address the underlying causes of health inequities by increasing cultural competency and expanding representation in medicine.

The Disruptor: A Disruptor is often a new upstart that challenges the way that things are being done today. To be credible, they must back their words up with specific actions. An example is Tia, a women's healthcare platform that was created to help address the fragmented nature of women's care by creating a hybrid care model that blends OB/GYN, primary care, mental health and wellness services.

Move from the inside out

While many new CEOs are eager to seek thought leadership opportunities, it's important to focus first on garnering the confidence and faith of internal audiences who will ultimately drive success. The first two to four months on the job are about maintaining predictability and establishing trust. External communications may be neces-

sary to show progress and momentum, but new CEOs must remember that any disclosure made in the first few months is often seen as a signal of their priorities and direction.

Following several months "on the job," a new CEO can credibly go out with their vision as part of a comprehensive thought leadership strategy that helps build internal and external communities that are engaged and eager to contribute. We recommend starting with internal audiences to ensure engagement and buy-in at the outset, followed by industry influencers, and then more mainstream media and opportunities, if appropriate. One size doesn't fit all, and it's important to work with the new leader to align opportunities with their specific interests and platform.

Capitalizing on a unique time

Cultivating thought leadership is a time-intensive process and it requires a concerted, ongoing effort from both the executive and their communications team. The current environment creates a unique opportunity for greater results in an accelerated timeframe as the healthcare industry is hungry for new voices to fill gaps that were left by longtime leaders. Executives who step forward with new ways of thinking that inspire others to act will be rewarded with ongoing visibility opportunities that support stakeholder engagement and advance the reputation of their organization.

Kim Blake is a Vice President in Padilla's Health Sector. ○



Kim Blake

AN INTERSECTION IN HEALTHCARE

— Continued from page 40

Center comms on patients and your workforce: It's always critical to keep patients at the center of any communications strategy. They're the North Star. But a healthcare organization's workforce is equally vital to center at the heart of our work—and as core stakeholder for our communications and messaging.

It can be difficult to plan effective communications strategies when each day

seems to bring an urgent crisis with lives at stake. And everyone in the industry is continually and profoundly challenged—from essential front-line providers and support staff to researchers, managers, payers and individuals throughout the supply chain. Yet it's in this struggle, and at the intersection of the digitization, humanization and transformation of healthcare, that great storytelling and powerful communications can make a profound and lasting impact on people's lives.

Steve Halsey and Anne Green are Principals at GeS Business Communications. ○

The next generation of wellness

How brands can effectively and authentically connect and engage with Gen Z consumers.

By Lisa Wolleon

The most sought-after generation of consumers and the centerpiece of so many marketing efforts is officially no longer the “it” generation. Move over Millennials, because there’s a new kid in town: the savvy, social generation who values individuality that we all know as Gen Z.

Some may say there’s been a slow creep in their journey to the top, but they’ve been sharing their views, literally and figuratively, for quite some time. They’ve lambasted Millennials for their side parts and skinny jeans and even called them “cheugy.” They’ve personally caused me to take a few double takes as I noticed fashion flashes of my younger years suddenly slide back into trend. Why did I ever toss those claw clips?

Gen Z is a generation like no other. Despite having some members still in grade school, Gen Z already commands an impressive \$143 billion in purchasing power. Wielding significant sway over family purchases, their indirect influence is even larger. More than 93 percent of parents say their kids affect household spend, this mom of two included. And when it comes to what defines this generation, their habits and preferences can be mystifying for brands. Diversity is their norm. They’re our first digital natives. They’re pragmatic and financially minded. They’re driven by purpose. And when it comes to their approach to wellness, although wellness-conscious, their habits and preferences are different from those of previous generations.

The health and wellness industry once dominated by KOLs in white coats educating on the clinical science and benefits of a brand was necessary to gain credibility and consumer trust. Then we witnessed the natural era usher in, as brands looked to offer up more of a holistic view of wellness beyond primary care. And now we see the game-changing once again, as those white coats have taken their education in the form of entertainment to TikTok and other social platforms to reach the Gen Z consumer.

Let’s start with their approach to wellness and what wellness means to them. Gen Z doesn’t limit wellness to physical health; mental and social well-being get equal airtime and that’s really no surprise, considering this is a generation that has grown up with a global pandemic, global warming, political turmoil and a financial crisis. Gen Z in particular has played a large role in opening the dialogue around wellness, verbalizing their mental health struggles

and asking for help. They’ve been dubbed the “anxiety generation” and for them, it’s okay to say they’re not okay. They integrate health and wellness into their day-to-day life but, as digital natives, will heavily vet the brands they select into their routines.

So, what does this mean for brands who are either seeking to capture the hearts and minds of these zoomers or keep them engaged as so many brands fight for their attention? Grab your green smoothie and let’s jump in on how brands can effectively and authentically reach the beloved Gen Z consumer.

Lean into their peer-oriented nature

According to a Pew Research survey, 95 percent of Gen Z have access to a smartphone and specifically in the wellness sector, 71 percent of this generation discovers new health and wellness opportunities on social media. The message is clear. If you’re not where they are, you’re missing this consumer. But, be there authentically and with peers they trust. Partnering with like-minded influencers who speak, not mimic, their language is critical. Making sure the authentic Gen Z voice comes through loud and clear is what will resonate most with them and because they act as the liaison between the brand and the consumer, take time to find and vet relevant, brand-loyal, influencers.

Be mindful of their mindfulness

It’s no surprise that mental health continues to dominate headlines as society grapples with what health and wellness is supposed to look like in a post-pandemic era and for Gen Z, the struggle is real. In fact, 72 percent of Gen Z say managing stress and mental health is their most important health and wellness concern, with only 45 percent saying they would consider their mental health in a good state. Gen Z finds it

essential to have resources available to cope with these risen stress levels and brands that can show support to them are more likely to be a part of their consideration. They believe that mental health is a holistic state of well-being that grows from the inside out. Offering up products, services and partnerships to help them along their mindfulness journey will demonstrate just how well you understand their needs.

Get ready with ‘them’

Wellness is woven into the everyday lives of this generation. They have their morning routine that’s been posted on TikTok, know how much and how well they slept, did a workout on a digital platform and maybe even scheduled an online therapy appointment. To say they’re connected to their health and wellness is an understatement. They believe any brand can talk about wellness and all brands need to understand what wellness truly means to younger consumers to appeal to their ever-evolving ideas of self-care. They are a generation that is proactively working on their journey and demonstrating where you fit along the way is the missing puzzle piece.

So what, now what?

Gen Z is an incredibly savvy generation of consumers who bring a new level of expectation for the brands they buy. They’re stressed and under pressure but they’re paving their own paths and want brands to help them on their journey. They believe wellness is all-encompassing and inclusive, giving so many brands an opportunity to join in on the journey. They reward brands that speak their language but leave the rest behind. Don’t be the brand that’s left in the dust!

Lisa Wolleon is Executive Vice President, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Health, at Coyne PR. ○



Lisa Wolleon

Local TV producers hunger for health content

While local TV news is becoming an increasingly important source of health-related information, local stations are often lagging behind in their willingness to commit additional resources to producing health coverage.

According to a new study from D S Simon Media, almost nine out of 10 respondents (87.5 percent) said they had increased the amount of health coverage they’ve been producing since the beginning of the pandemic.

But almost 40 percent of the stations that

have bulked up their health coverage have done so without the benefit of extra resources. Overall, just slightly more than half (53.85 percent) said they have increased the amount they are allocating to health coverage.

The top method for generating health-related content is to interview a spokesperson on Zoom or via satellite, which was cited by 83.8 percent of respondents. Sending out a reporter and crew came in second at 72.31 percent, with taking a network or syndicated feed following at 56.92 percent. ○

A photograph of two women in a professional setting. One woman, with dark hair, is pointing her right index finger towards a large screen or wall. The other woman, with reddish-brown hair, is looking up at the same point. They appear to be in a collaborative meeting. The background is a blurred office environment with glass partitions.

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Earning patient trust through communications

Why it's important for healthcare organizations to be transparent when putting together a communications strategy.

By Anne Baker

Over the last two decades, tech advancements have rapidly transformed the consumer experience. The on-demand economy—where content is instantly available, goods are rapidly delivered to your door and digital user experiences are highly intuitive—has raised the stakes for every industry. It doesn't matter what kind of services you provide, consumers want it to be simple to navigate.

This is especially true in healthcare, as opportunities to use technology to better serve patients, improve the experience of healthcare providers and drive innovation are on the rise. But healthcare is a lot more complicated than “what to watch” recommendations. The well-being of human life is in the providers' hands. The stakes couldn't be higher.

So, the challenge for healthcare organizations is twofold: patients expect simple, intuitive experiences from their providers, but, perhaps even subconsciously, want to know that organizations approach their care with the seriousness it calls for. Healthcare organizations have to do both. They have to make it extremely simple but also build trust with their patients. After all, a patient initially might be attracted to a sleek provider with a user experience-forward web presence, but if that same provider appears cavalier with their information or their doctors are behaving inappropriately on social media platforms, they'd be turned off. We want our healthcare experiences to be cool, not but *too* cool.

Companies need to reassure patients that the tech they need to use to improve the patient experience is being used responsibly.

But it's not only tech transparency that earns organizations the confidence of their patients. Here are three other ways that healthcare organizations can focus on to earn patient trust from a communications perspective:

Diversify your content approach

Different audiences receive information differently. When putting together a healthcare communications strategy, organizations need to make sure they're clear on who exactly they're communicating with. While patient bases are diverse and organizations will never be able to cater to everyone at once, set up a plan to make your messaging accessible to the most people possible. Doing so means evaluating the formats, language, channels and voices of your communications to make sure you're

meeting patients where they are.

Diversifying your content approach can go a long way toward achieving this goal. Not only does this mean exploring formats beyond traditional patient handouts, landing pages or email campaigns, it also means testing new platforms and channels to reach a wider network of people. For example, your organization could do a live stream Q&A with providers, run a creative social media campaign or create infographics or animations—the sky's the limit. The only real caveat is to ensure that all communications adhere to patient privacy and other compliance guidelines.

Meet your patients where they are

Healthcare organizations tend to play it safe when it comes to their communications channels, but that needs to change.

Luckily, a growing number are paving the way by jumping on social media platforms like TikTok to expand their patient demographic and spread the word about their services in out-of-the-box ways. While TikTok and new platforms like BeReal might not immediately come to mind as effective channels for healthcare, they've been a game changer in bridging patient literacy gaps and helping organizations get in front of new audiences to make a difference in their lives. If people are spending most of their free time on these platforms, why not meet them where they are?

The format of how these platforms function has the added benefit of creating intimacy. Individual doctors and nurses have created strong followings, helping to demystify their professions and engage potential patients in a new way. That presents a real opportunity to educate patients and build a level of trust before they even walk through a provider's door.

U.S. PR sector grew 18% in 2021

The North American PR industry grew 17.7 percent in 2021, according to an annual industry survey by Gould+Partners.

The Gould+Partners' report, which focused on net revenue growth, found that North American PR agencies saw average net-revenues gains of 17.7 percent in 2021, a complete turnaround when compared to the meager 3.1 percent growth the sector yielded in COVID 2020.

Firms of all sizes surveyed in the study—from the largest PR shops to the smallest—

Lead with your values

There's no denying that, like the tech industry, politics is also becoming increasingly integrated into healthcare. Today's healthcare organizations are positioned in the crossfires of hot-button topics, like abortion and insurance coverage. The fact that healthcare companies have to answer to many different stakeholders, including employees, customers, patients and regulators, complicates how companies decide to respond.

Not only can politics directly affect the care that providers are able to deliver, it can also leave organizations wondering whether to speak up or stay quiet on these issues. When deciding how and when to weigh in on political conversations, use what matters to your audiences as a guide. Once again, you're not going to be able to match the values of everyone you reach, but you can lean into data—both solicited, like customer surveys; and unsolicited, like customer interactions data gleaned from patient call centers—to learn about your core audiences and their values.

Patients prefer to receive healthcare from organizations that operate by shared values, so taking stances—where legal—on political matters can help you build trust.

During the pandemic and beyond, as healthcare companies continue to navigate a complex and ever-evolving landscape, their communications programs need to be anchored to patient trust. By earning and maintaining this trust, organizations have more room to experiment and integrate with the new tech that's changing the industry and improving patient outcomes.

Anne Baker is an Executive Vice President and Assistant General Manager of Inkhouse California. ○



Anne Baker



Health care will change by the time you finish this headline.



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Where the CDC went wrong

Simple rules of crisis communications that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ignored, overlooked or didn't understand.

By Dr. David Lenihan

Since COVID arrived in the U.S. in early 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided puzzling and potentially dangerous guidance to Americans who have sought answers regarding how to best navigate the pandemic. These messaging challenges could have been avoided if the agency's communications team followed the most basic best practices of crisis management.

"The CDC [needed] to be more transparent in the reasoning for [its messaging] changes," said Timothy Coombs, a professor in the Department of Communication of Texas A&M University. "It is okay to shift policies because of situational demands, but if people do not know why there has been a shift, the messaging becomes contradictory and confusing."

Founded in 1946, the CDC's mission has been to provide "health information that protects our nation against expensive and dangerous health threats, and [to respond] when these arise." Throughout the 74 years prior to the onset of the pandemic, the CDC was a respected federal agency that represented America's most reliable, comprehensive and advanced thinking on infectious disease research and control.

But the CDC never faced a messaging challenge like the one that COVID created. Whereas in the past, distributing official press releases and conducting sedate media interviews about health-related topics were the primary endeavors of the agency's communications department, the mutating nature of the COVID virus created mayhem that the CDC's PR professionals could not keep pace with.

Areas of the CDC's pandemic messaging messiness included the following:

- Making recommendations of the optimal mask type(s) to use based on their varying efficacy in protecting against the different strains of COVID.
- Determining accurate guidelines for wearing masks on public transportation.
- Providing the appropriate isolation lengths that would be medically sufficient to allow COVID patients to recuperate and protect their families/co-workers.
- Explaining the contagiousness of the different strains of COVID.
- Detailing the effectiveness of current vaccine types against the morphing virus strains that were infecting the populace.
- Clarifying the lag time between initial

COVID infection and virus detectability by commercially available quick tests.

- Describing the effects of "long COVID" that were specific to the different virus strains

- Explaining how long different virus strains lived on surfaces.

... just to name a few.

I'm not a PR pro. I'm the President of a medical school and the co-founder of a medical education technology company. But with a few quick clicks, I was able to unearth four smart messaging suggestions. They would have been useful for the CDC's team to follow, and they would also have been valuable to millions of Americans who were desperate for clear advice to help them better understand COVID.

Be proactive. According to media intelligence firm Alva, "tell people what you're going to do about the problem, then do it." The CDC waffled and backtracked on endless COVID-related topics, and unfortunately did not demonstrate the confidence that this tip required.

Be honest, incite trust. "Stories that you present to the media ought to be verified and as precise as they can be, under the given circumstances," said Reputation Today. "Being trustworthy, upright, and straightforward can go a long way." This is PR 101 stuff and didn't seem to be integrated into the CDC's M.O.

Have one message. "If you're not saying the same thing to all people, you're going to get yourself in trouble," said Andy Liuzzi, Executive Vice President of Crisis and Risk Management at Edelman. Mixed, multiple and murky messaging has been a hallmark of the CDC's COVID announcements.

Turn off the fan. "When the you-know-what hits the fan, the first rule of crisis management is to turn off the fan," said Kim Miller of Ink Link Marketing. "Put yourself in the consumers' shoes and ask, 'How would I feel if this happened to me?'"

Along with this superb direction, the CDC would have benefitted by doing something that skilled doctors and executives do when they don't have the answer to a question: they simply say "I don't know."

- "In adopting new communication strategies, [medical] students were able to say 'I don't know' because they realized they are still learning and value honesty in the patient-provider relationship," explained the medical research article "It's Okay to Say 'I

Don't Know': Medical Students Use Transformative Thinking to Cope with Ambiguity and Uncertainty."

- "Your willingness to admit when you don't have all the answers, and your curiosity to find them, will ... enhance the view of your competence as a leader," said Gaurav Gupta of consulting firm Kotter International.

I have no doubt that, had the CDC followed the above guidance, more Americans would have been better informed about COVID as well as physically and mentally healthier.

I'm also realistic: I recognize that a flawless CDC communications strategy would not have prevented the proliferation of, and belief in, wildly inaccurate COVID and vaccine misinformation on social media and at kitchen tables.

Moving forward—because the pandemic is far from over—the CDC's leadership should factor the above messaging standards into their communications efforts. They must honestly present the most accurate available information in a clear and concise manner. They need to admit if/when they're wrong, and they need to emphasize that their guidelines will be updated based on the latest scientific findings and the evolving nature of COVID. They need to be brave in the face of scrutiny from the media and resistance from business leaders. Most importantly, they need to speak the truth to Americans, "regardless of the political consequences."

Dr. David Lenihan, Ph.D., J.D., FRSM is the CEO/Co-Founder of Tiber Health and the President of Ponce Health Sciences University. ○



Dr. David Lenihan

PR news brief

Havas rebrands /amo network

France's Havas Group has rebranded its /amo network of global strategic communications firms as H/Advisors.

Stéphane Fouks, Havas EVP, will serve as executive chairman of H/Advisors.

He is supported by co-CEOs Tom Johnson, who helms H/Advisors Abernathy, and Neil Bennett, H/Advisors Maitland chief.

The revamped network had over 1,400 staffers located in 35 cities in more than 20 countries.

They offer IR, M&A, restructuring, litigation, bankruptcy, reputation, policy, shareholder activism, private equity, alternative asset management, ESG, blockchain and crisis management services.



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Community diplomacy and public relations

PR practitioners' outreach and negotiation skills work well when building community coalitions for social change.

By Thomas Graham

One job of the public relations practitioner is to find ways to best tell the truth—often a truth well told for a client that has forgotten to report and celebrate the human stories behind its progress and success. We're all humans and connected through our stories, after all.

Oftentimes, the professional publicist turns out to also be the right choice to lead an entire disparate community of influencers to come together and move society forward.

Here in Texas, the first major assignment of that sort we undertook at Crosswind was to successfully organize and promote a 2012 effort to win a \$286 million federal grant for Texas A&M and the biotech industry surrounding the College Station campus. That victory was the largest federal healthcare grant in the state's history and acted as a platform event for the thriving multi-billion-dollar biotech center that now exists in College Station ten years later.

In 2015, Crosswind organized the Flood Aid TX concert, which mobilized hundreds of small businesses and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for desperate flood victims in our state, even elevating international awareness of the Texas tragedy.

This year, we're helping to organize and

support a new initiative of the Texas Advocacy Project to form a broad state-wide coalition to block and end the trafficking of children and adults into and across Texas. I serve on the board of TAP, a remarkably effective force already in ending dating and domestic violence in our state. The attorneys and social workers who provide free services to victims have seen first-hand the horrors and devastating impact of human trafficking which is often the background to brutal acts, mostly against women. A social worker and an attorney walk alongside the victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and now human trafficking to guide them on their journey from victim to survivor to empowerment and freedom.

The new Texas-wide coalition seeks to ignite a common effort across the state to root out and bring to justice those who are secretly profiting from what's essentially the transport and sale of women and children for sex, a shadowy world that also includes a remarkable number of commercial operations that depend on undocumented workers to advance their financial goals.

Usually, a PR agency's client is a single entity with a clear mission, and our job is to find ways to authenticate that mission, often hidden in the client's overlooked history,

and then broadcast those goals and credentials to key publics and influentials.

In the case of a coalition formation, we must often help a disparate group of agencies and activists define its common mission, then sell each entity on the declaration of intent, and finally take that commitment to media to market enduring and substantial social change.

Sometimes it's a bit like herding headstrong cats, but we've found at Crosswind that the diplomatic skills that go into organizing a public interest coalition work well in forming teams to achieve our agency's more conventional funded assignments.

We recently formed and led a rainbow cooperative of Texas PR and advertising agencies that won a significant State of Texas contract to communicate critical health information for young women who live in reduced circumstances. The winning cooperative we organized represents the complete rainbow of ethnic communities in Texas and has led to our own successful internal effort to recruit and further diversify Crosswind's own team of agency professionals.

Thomas Graham is President, CEO and Founder of Crosswind Media & Public Relations in Austin, Texas. ○



Thomas Graham

Employees trust employers most

Employees trust their employers more than the government or the media, according to the Edelman Trust Barometer.

By Steve Barnes

Employees trust their employers more than they do either the government or media, according to the newly released Edelman Trust Barometer.

"Trust in the Workplace" surveyed 7,000 employees across seven countries (US, UK, Brazil, Germany, Japan, India and China) and two-thirds (66 percent) of them said that they trust their employer. While that number represents a three-point dip from May 2022, that's a smaller drop than was experienced by NGOs (58 percent, down six percent), government (52 percent, down 11 percent) or media (51 percent, down eight percent).

Globally, employers emerged with a 21-point advantage over the Edelman Trust Index as a whole, with that advantage being higher for countries such as the UK (30 points) and UK (27 points) and lower for In-

dia (13 points) and China (four points).

Employers also come out on top when it comes to judging how believable a piece of information is. More than six in 10 respondents (63 percent) said that if they see a piece of information from their employer two or fewer times, they will be inclined to believe it. That number drops to 55 percent when the source of that information is the national government, and 54 percent when it is from media reports that cite named sources.

Survey respondents said that trust is a two-way street between employers and employees. For the 71 percent of those surveyed who said that they feel their CEO trusts them, 92 percent trust their employer in return. Only 46 percent of those who think their CEO does not trust them said the same.

Employers seem to be doing a bit better at keeping partisan politics out of the workplace than one might expect. Globally, over half (54 percent) said their workplace feels less politicized than last year, a jump of four percent. And the U.S. outscored all but India (69 percent) in that regard, with 65 percent saying that the presence of partisanship has dropped.

But even though partisanship may not be a desirable workplace attribute, survey respondents still voiced a strong preference for employers taking a stand on current issues. A majority of Democrats and Republicans said they would be more likely to work for a company if it were to publicly support addressing such issues as healthcare access, racial justice and climate change.

Co-workers turned out to be one of the most important sources of community for survey respondents, with 69 percent agreeing. That number was topped only by "my family and friends," which was listed by 82 percent. Lagging behind were "people who share my personal interests" (64 percent), "my neighbors" (59 percent) and "members of my political party (49 percent)." ○

Pan Am's Kriendler dies at 76

Jeff Kriendler, the public voice of Pan American World Airlines during its last turbulent ten years of existence, died Sept. 3 after suffering from several serious illnesses over the years. He was 76.

He joined Pan Am as a management trainee in 1968 and rose to the VP-Corporate Communications post in 1982.

While at the PR helm, Kriendler handled the sale of Pan Am's huge Pacific network in 1985, the Lockerbie, Scotland bombing of Flight 103 in 1988, and the ensuing bankruptcy and cessation of operations in 1991.

Kriendler was born in New York City to Florence and Bob Kriendler, one of the owners of the legendary "21 Club," where he met U.S. presidents, politicians, movie stars and gangsters.

After he suffered a mild stroke shortly after Pan Am's Chapter 11 filing, Kriendler moved to Miami, where he kept active as a member of the airline's historical foundation. ○



Jeff Kriendler

Lund takes WPP health and wellness post

WPP names Wendy Lund EVP, Chief Client Officer for Health and Wellness. Lund comes to the post from women's health company Organon, where she was Chief Communications Officer. She previously served for over a decade as CEO at WPP's healthcare communications agency, GCI Health. Earlier in her career, she was Vice President of Marketing at Planned Parenthood. In her new role, Lund will oversee WPP's efforts to support clients in the health and wellness sector, reporting to WPP chief client officer Lindsay Pattison. ○



Wendy Lund

Teneo hires Scott

David Scott, a veteran of National PR and FleishmanHillard, has joined Teneo as Managing Director in Toronto.

Prior to joining the PR firms to lead their corporate and financial practices, Scott served as Senior VP-PA at Scotiabank, responsible for communications for domestic banking, retail lending, wealth management, capital management and economics.

He also was a Senior Advisor to the President of York University and advisor to two Ontario cabinet members.

Scott, who has been running his own consultancy for the past five years, has served energy, financial services, higher education, professional services, governmental and natural resources clients. ○



David Scott

FH's Choi-Wiles drives to Audi

Whaewon Choi-Wiles, who was most recently General Manager, SVP and at FleishmanHillard, comes on board at Audi of America as Director of Corporate Communications.

Choi-Wiles had been at FH since 2010, serving in positions that also included Brand Practice leader and Interim Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer. She previously worked at St. Louis-based advertising firm Adamson.

At Audi of America, Choi-Wiles will lead communications efforts focused on shaping its brand reputation. She will lead brand storytelling, executive visibility, internal and corporate communications, reporting to Audi of America's SVP and CCO. Emilie Cotter. ○



Whaewon Choi-Wiles

Citadel's McEvily moves to Ventas

Molly McEvily, who was COO-global affairs at alternative investment giant Citadel, has joined Ventas as VP-Corporate Communications.

At Citadel, McEvily handled PR, internal



Molly McEvily

communications, reputation management, executive thought leadership, branding and philanthropic engagement.

McEvily joined Citadel, which has more than \$50 billion in assets under management, in 2011 as executive assistant to the office of the CEO.

Chicago-based Ventas is a real estate trust that owns 1,200 properties in the U.S., Canada and UK. ○

H+K Puts Terry in global health chair

Hill+Knowlton Strategies names Brenna Terry Global Chair of Healthcare.

Terry was most recently Senior Director of Enterprise Engagement and Communication at Janssen North America, which is part of Johnson & Johnson. She previously held the same post at J&J, and has also worked at Ogilvy, Syneos Health Communications and Porter Novelli.

In her new position, she will be responsible for the vision, strategy, client relationships and development of H+K's healthcare business. ○



Brenna Terry

Macy's hires A&F's Quintiliano for IR post

Macy's has recruited Pam Quintiliano as head of investor relations, effective September 12.

Quintiliano comes to Macy's from Abercrombie & Fitch, where she most recently served as Investor Relations Group Vice President.

She was previously Managing Director at corporate and investment bank SunTrust Robinson Humphrey.

At Macy's, Quintiliano will be responsible for communicating the company's strategy to all classes of investors to build and maintain strong relationships with the investment community.

Quintiliano will take over for Mike McGuire, who is retiring after a three-year stint at the retailer and 22 years at CVS Health, where he rose to Senior VP-IR. ○



Pam Quintiliano

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At Bliss, we know 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 cut to the heart of the matter. We gain alignment on their aspirations, identify solutions to 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 models to address their business challenges in this increasingly complex healthcare economy. Our team understands how the infrastructure of healthcare works. Improving the business



Bospar co-Founder and Principal Curtis Sparrer.

of health contributes to improving outcomes for patients and the efficiency for providers. We combine this expertise with decades of experience in launching new drugs, devices and diagnostics. The result we pursue is simple. Better health outcomes for all.

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PRNEWS named Bospar a 2023 "Elite Top 100 Agency" for Excellence in PR and marketing client services for global technology brands and "Best in Corporate Branding" for the second year in a row.

Fast Company honored us with their 2022 "World Changing Ideas" award.

Inc. named us one of America's Top Private Companies for 2021 and 2022.

PRovoke honored us with the SABRE Award for "Innovator of the Year" for 2021 and 2022.

Bospar is an agency of hard-driving professionals from tech PR and marketing with purpose and relentless joy for what we do. Our integrated team is comprised of former journalists, social and traditional media marketers and influencer, financial, SEO and public affairs experts. We're 100% virtual since before it was fashionable and distributed across the country to jump on news as it breaks.

As a team, we get smart on contact, build relationships and launch PR and marketing campaigns, grounded in strategy and infused with creativity.

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From L to R: Buchanan PR's John Reynolds, Partner; Anne Buchanan, President; Megan Yocum, Partner.



Rosie Ray, 81, is one of 12 Humana Game Changers honored at this year's National Senior Games, presented by Humana, a Coyne client. These medals represent Rosie's commitment to healthy aging and the encouragement, motivation and inspiration she provides to people of all ages.

(Jesus Aranguren/AP Images for Humana Inc.)

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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, education, 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

na 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.

Learn more about our Healthcare PR services: buchananpr.com/healthcare-public-relations/.

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There is nothing more precious in life than health. And there is perhaps nothing more personally rewarding than helping someone in need. Parents, caregivers, volunteers, medical professionals, researchers, advocates—they all share a common purpose: to help people. We embrace that purpose

and believe we can make a difference by connecting people in need to a treatment, service, or solution that in some way helps improve their life.

In partnership with our clients, we embrace the opportunity to change lives by guiding health journeys through information, insights and inspiration. Data tells you what's happening, stories tell you why it matters. Insights inform new conversations, frame new perspectives, and inspire people to think differently. Storytelling brings them to life through compelling narratives and inspirational tales of triumph that turn data and content into meaningful connections. That's why we get up in the morning.

Because when it comes to health, everything else comes second.

CROSBY

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Raymond Crosby, President & CEO
Denise Aube, Executive VP, Healthcare Practice Leader
Rob Schnapp, Executive Creative Director

For more than 40 years, Crosby has helped healthcare clients Inspire Actions That Matter™—actions that positively impact people's lives and contribute to the

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

CROSBY

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greater good—while building their brands and business.

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, experience design, public relations, social media, partner and community mobilization, digital marketing and web development, multicultural outreach, PSAs, and behavior-change campaigns.

Clients include the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Kaiser Permanente, OrganDonor.gov, Refuah-Health, Shriners Hospitals for Children, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

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

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Since 2008, Crosswind Media & Public Relations has helped healthcare leaders across the country stay at the forefront of conversations that matter. As a full-service communications and public relations agency, our experts bring decades of experience to brand enrichment, effective messaging and compelling public dialogue. We use our innovative approach in public relations, traditional and digital media, research, brand enrichment and marketing to develop fully integrated and multi-channel campaigns that make a difference. We



FINN Partners Jerusalem staff—in the heart of one of the world's great health innovation hubs—meet with client Theranica. Theranica, highlighted by *Fast Company* and *Time Magazine*, champions effective, safe, affordable therapies for idiopathic pain. It recently introduced its FDA-cleared migraine treatment device Nerivio® to adolescents and adults in the United States.

believe in fashioning purposeful and impactful conversations that build pathways to success for more people, more often.

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Edelman is a global communications firm that partners with businesses and organizations to evolve, promote and protect their brands and reputations. Our 6,000 people in more than 60 offices deliver communications strategies that give our clients the confidence to lead, act with certainty and earn the lasting trust of their stakeholders. We develop powerful ideas and tell magnetic stories that move at the speed of news, make an immediate impact, transform culture and spark movements.

Once considered the business of patients, physicians, pharmaceutical companies and hospitals, health

is now everyone's business. This is a responsibility and an opportunity that applies to individuals, organizations and societies alike. Health is beyond purely physical. It's everything from self-care to prevention, diagnosis to treatment, caregiving to cure. It must be inclusive and representative.

At Edelman Health, we believe trust makes the difference at every touchpoint—it brings science to life, drives health technology adoption, fuels the health of real people and is essential to fix the broken parts of our healthcare ecosystem. Our goal is to help our clients confidently rise to the challenges of our changing world. We counsel our clients to embrace the new demands of a wider set of stakeholders—and to act boldly to earn and keep their trust. For more information, visit www.edelman.com.

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FINN Partners champions innovation across the health ecosystem.

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O'Dwyer's is the #1 source for researching public relations firms and outside PR counsel. We've been connecting clients and PR firms for 50 years through our Directory of PR Firms.

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Continued from page 52

Our health clients include visionaries and game-changers from across the health industry, including top-20 pharmaceutical companies, the nation's largest hospitals and payer systems, and many of the world's boldest companies in artificial intelligence, digital health, health information technology and medical devices.

Ranked by *O'Dwyer's* among the leading health sector agencies and named "Healthcare Agency of the Year" by *PRovoke* and health-sector trade group *HIT-MC*, FINN delivers extraordinary service and value to every client every time through product communications, clinical-trial patient recruitment, digital marketing, investor relations, issues management, scientific publication support, thought-leadership strategy and traditional and social media.

Across the health industry, FINN is recognized for its work in transforming people's lives by addressing pressing health challenges. Whether introducing new medicines and technologies that improve and extend life, uniting patient communities through advocacy platforms, supporting breaking science or raising awareness of unmet health needs and how they can be better managed, FINN has become the leading partner in helping clients make a difference.

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Founded in 1997, French/West/Vaughan (FWV) is the Southeast's leading public relations, public affairs, advertising and digital media agency, a distinction it has held since 2001.

FWV's category acumen includes private and clinical practices, research labs, health IT companies, laboratory and medical device manufacturers, drug development firms, weight loss centers, medical schools and large pharmaceutical manufacturers. The agency specializes in helping its healthcare clients increase brand awareness among key decision makers for their

product lines and services through targeted media outreach, advocacy marketing campaigns, public affairs, special events, trade show support, emerging media applications and crisis communications.

FWV's healthcare and medical marketing experience includes work done on behalf of: A4 Health Systems, Aymacol, bioMérieux, Campbell University School of Osteopathic Medicine, Cardinal Health, Catalyst Clinical Research, CeNeRx, Foresight, GlaxoSmith-Kline, Isagenix, Istari Oncology, Locus Biosciences, MDeverywhere, Medcryption, New Hope Fertility Center, Nutramax Laboratories Consumer Care, Inc., O2 Fitness, Octapharma Plasma, One Medical, Pfizer, Proctor & Gamble (Prilosec), Quest Diagnostics, Southtech, Sterling Healthcare, Structure House, TFS Health-Science, The V Foundation for Cancer Research, University of North Carolina Institute for Pharmacogenomics and Individualized Therapy, WakeMed and Well-spring.

In addition to its diverse range of healthcare and medical marketing clients, FWV's passionate team of expert storytellers works with many of the world's leading companies and brands, including Wrangler, ABB, Proximo, Melitta, Volvo Trucks North America, Teen Cancer America and the N.C. Department of Transportation, just to name a few.

Among its partners and affiliates are: FWV Fetching, a pet and animal health PR and marketing agency; AMP3 PR, a fashion, beauty, luxury and lifestyle PR firm (New York City); CGPR, an active lifestyle, outdoor, ski, fashion, technology and travel PR and consumer brand marketing agency (Greater Boston) and Prix Productions, the company's longform content feature and documentary film division, with offices in Raleigh and L.A. FWV employs more than 130 public relations, public affairs, social media, advertising and digital marketing experts between its Raleigh, N.C., headquarters and offices around the country.

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Mark McCall, Global Segment Leader

C-suites, boards of directors, and business leaders from around the world come to FTI Strategic Communications with their most complex, business-critical issues that require diverse skill sets and integrated disciplines. As part of a global business advisory firm, we help these organizations manage change, mitigate risk and enhance their market position by combining decades of deep subject matter expertise with functional and disciplinary experience.

Our financial communications professionals serve as trusted advisors to management teams on a range of capital markets events as well as other stakeholder issues throughout the corporate life-cycle. We help clients navigate their most pressing challenges and opportunities around M&A, IPOs, restructuring, capital raising, corporate governance, ESG strategy, proxy fights, and shareholder activism. Our integrated capabilities in financial communications, corporate reputation and public affairs help clients protect and drive business value.

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Stephanie Moore, Managing Director, Client Service
Kate Threewitts, Managing Director, Human Resources

G&S Business Communications helps innovative companies change the world. Our Healthcare practice is powered by critical thinkers who have mastered the media landscape and are able to tell powerful stories that address specific issues in the industry. Our team meets each client at the intersection of business and communications. We have a

distinct focus on healthcare systems, non-profit, medical technology and healthcare organizational communications.

Our strategies help B2B clients meet their business goals, and our work produces meaningful results that move markets. Our commitment to measurement ensures that we are constantly learning and improving to make programs better.

Our mission is to inspire people to take action, and our vision is to fuel transformation, resulting in business growth for our clients.

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Kristin Cahill, CEO

GCI Health is a global integrated communications agency inspired by People. We ground our approach to communications in looking at all stakeholders—patients, caregivers, healthcare providers, policymakers, reporters and payers—as people with distinct perspectives that shape how they think and act. As a result, we craft compelling communications strategies and creative campaigns that resonate with people and deliver tangible results to our clients. Our culture is catalyzed by the belief that people should be as successful in their personal lives as they are in their professional ones. Follow us on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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Jennifer Wayman, MHS,
President & CEO

At Hager Sharp, we have dedicated nearly 50 years to creating strategic communications and social marketing initiatives for organizations that are committed to fighting for equity in education, improving the health of people and communities, and empowering vulnerable populations. We are a full-service, integrated marketing and communications firm with deep expertise in public health, disease prevention, health promotion, and behavior change strategies. As an employee-owned

small business, we have provided communications leadership across a wide range of health issues, including COVID-19, chronic and infectious diseases, cancer, vaccine promotion, genetic diseases, environmental health, women's health, food safety and nutrition, and substance abuse prevention. Hager Sharp's strategists, researchers, creative specialists, media experts, and public health professionals bring award-winning, research-driven, behavior-changing health communications services and social marketing campaigns to life. Our focus is, and always will be, working with mission-driven institutions, businesses, foundations, and nonprofits to create and execute ideas that make a difference.

HIGHWIRE PR

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Highwire is an inclusive strategic communications and digital marketing partner designed for category leaders and growth companies across technology and healthcare sectors. With offices in San Francisco, New York City, Boston and Chicago and a global network of partners, Highwire is driven, creative, and experienced in delivering transformative business impact for its clients. Highwire's fully integrated programs leverage a range of marketing and communications strategies, including digital and social media, influencer programs, and earned media activities that support clients, business and marketing goals.

Highwire Health operates at the intersection of health and technology. Drawing on its roots in Silicon Valley and deep expertise in healthcare, Highwire uniquely meets the moment for innovative health companies. The Highwire Health team helps clients advance healthcare in a highly regulated and dynamic landscape—from pre-clinical and product launch to advocacy and brand revitalization. Highwire Health clients include leaders in digital health, diagnostics, medical devices, primary care, behavioral health, remote care platforms and more.

HUNTER

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HUNTER is an award-winning consumer marketing communications firm ranked as a "Best Place to Work" and "Consumer Agency of the Year" with offices in New York, Los Angeles and London and partnerships that extend our reach globally. Beginning with research-driven insights, HUNTER executes strategic, integrated programs that build brand equity, increase engagement and drive measurable business results for OTC products and healthcare services. The 200+ person firm employs a powerful blend of marketing solutions including strategic planning, earned media relations, social and digital media, talent and influencer engagement, experiential marketing, multicultural outreach, and content creation and distribution across all platforms and channels to earn attention for some of the world's best known and most beloved brands.

Today more than ever, consumers' mindsets about overall wellness have shifted and they are focused on finding ways to prioritize their health. Our HUNTER: Health and Wellness team is on a mission to ensure that consumers find brands and products that help them live healthier, happier lives. By collaborating with experts, media properties, influential voices, and target-right partners, we ensure that brand messages get to the right audience in the places consumers are looking for wellness information.

In partnership with some of the most respected consumer health companies and retailers including Johnson & Johnson, Church & Dwight, Reckitt, New Chapter and Abbott Diagnostics, 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 WESTWICKE

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LISTERINE conducted a breakthrough study demonstrating that LISTERINE COOL MINT destroys 5 times more plaque above the gum line than floss. To communicate the new data, HUNTER launched a 360-marketing campaign to reach dentists, hygienists and consumers, through trade conference experiences, dental professional social and digital content, influencer engagement and media relations

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ICR Westwicke, the healthcare division of ICR, has established itself as one of the leading providers of integrated Public Relations, Investor Relations and related services for healthcare companies. ICR Westwicke's healthcare practice works with more than 150 clients across life sciences, medical device/diagnostics, services and healthcare IT. With complementary services in digital branding, capital markets advisory, IPO advisory, 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, patient education and advocacy, preparing for an IPO or raising additional capital, we understand that every client is different, and so too, is their story. With an innate understanding of the many complex dynamics and

influencers within the healthcare ecosystem and a clear lens on the financial impact of all communications, ICR 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.

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Continued on page 56



Marketing Maven CEO & President Lindsey Carnett.

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Inkhouse is an integrated PR agency for innovative thinkers, creators and leaders who believe in the power of stories to effect positive change. We're a culture and values-driven firm that believes what's good for our people is good for business and our clients, highlighted by PR industry-leading benefits like 20 weeks of paid family leave, pregnancy loss paid leave and every other Friday off for all members of our team. Founded in 2007, Inkhouse has grown organically to an agency of 140 people in seven major cities with remote employees across 11 states. Learn more at: www.inkhouse.com.

Client list: Acquia, Amplitude, AT&T Cybersecurity, Beamery, BioMed Realty, BlueVine Capital, Brightline, Brown Brothers Harriman & Co., Cambium Learning, Capella Space, Checkmarx, Cockroach Labs, Code42, Corvus Insurance, CropOne, Crunchbase, Databricks, Datto, Deep-

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Carrie Jones, Principal

JPA Health is a full-service, integrated agency, which works behind the scenes for many of the most innovative and rapidly growing health companies in the world. We have global reach with offices in Washington, Boston, New York City and London. JPA's exclusive focus on health means that clients can count on a team with the experience and perspective to deliver results that impress. Through our integrated model, we provide seamless public relations, creative marketing and patient advocacy services. Our diverse portfolio of clients includes innovative life science companies, revolutionary medtech companies and leading public health organizations. Clients benefit from our collaborative expertise as our specialists synchronize insights, ideas and incredible execution. Our approach incorporates a proprietary tool that enables us to understand how conversations take place within the health sector—JPA's Gretel® 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, and this ideology inspires our work every day.

LANDIS COMMUNICATIONS

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At Landis, "We believe in ideas that create change. We craft compelling stories. And, we communicate." Named America's #1 Healthcare PR Agency (Ragan's Ace Awards) and annually listed on *O'Dwyer's* list of top Bay Area agencies, San Francisco-based Landis Communications Inc. is celebrating more than 32 years in business.

We've served clients in patient services, health tech, biotech, disease state and hospital/healthcare systems including: Centre for Neuro Skills, Altas, Amgen, Sutter Health, Frontier Medicines, On Lok Senior Health Services, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford, University of California at San Francisco (UCSF), Global Alzheimer's Platform Foundation, Brain Health Registry, Merck, Johnson & Johnson, Planned Parenthood, Crestwood Behavioral Health and more. Landis has won PRSA SF's "Agency of the Year" and "Campaign of the Year" awards. We've also won two IABC Gold Quill awards, a national PRSA Silver Anvil award and numerous Bulldog Awards. We're especially proud to have been named a Top Bay Area Corporate Philanthropist by the *San Francisco Business Times* for 2022.

LGBT-owned and a certified member of the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, Landis is a full-service public relations, digital marketing, social media and marketing communications agency. Our PR specialties include: healthcare, pharmaceuticals, biopharma, clinical trials, technology, biotech, consumer, environmental, consumer technology, B2C and B2B programs. Landis' Promised Results® return-on-investment program provides tangible metrics addressing clients' identified goals. Headed by President Sean Dowdall, Landis also is the San Francisco member of the Public Relations Global Network, with over 50 affiliate agencies worldwide. For information: www.landispr.com.

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Founded in 2001, LaVoieHealth-Science transforms health and science innovations through strategy consulting, investor relations and corporate communications, as well as public relations, marketing, and digital services. We are recognized as a strategic communications agency for moving the needs bringing solid, creative solutions, and decades of specialized experience to our clients. We are ranked among the Top 30 independent healthcare communications agencies in the United States according to *O'Dwyer's* 2022 public relations firm rankings. We are certified in healthcare communications compliance and serve commercial and pre-commercial clients both domestically and globally. Through our alliance with Omnicom Public Relations Group, we bring our global clients a broader set of health and science teams offering over 2,000 health experts worldwide. We are committed to serving health and science clients offering domain experience in animal science, autoimmune diseases, CAR-T, cell and gene therapy, CNS, CRISPR, immuno-oncology, lysosomal diseases, medtech, medical devices, neurodegeneration, oncology, ophthalmology, precision medicines, rare diseases, and regenerative medicine. We have been in business for 21 years, have won over 60 public relations and investor relations awards, and have developed over 450 communications plans.

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Lindsey Carnett, CEO & President

With offices in Los Angeles and New York City, Marketing Maven's combination of PR, social media, influencer marketing and market research helps provide a competitive edge to their clients. Marketing Maven helps businesses grow their revenues by developing campaigns that engage a target audience, generate sales then utilize advanced metrics to measure ROI.

Named to the 2018 and 2017

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

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

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

MATTER COMMUNICATIONS

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Scott Signore, CEO & Principal
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Mandy Mladenoff, President

Matter is a Brand Elevation Agency unifying PR, creative services, digital marketing and strategy into content-rich communications campaigns that inspire action and build value. Founded in 2003, with seven offices spanning North America and nearly 300 employees, we work with the world's most innovative companies across high-technology, healthcare, consumer technology and consumer markets, from startups and nonprofits with focused needs to well-known corporations.

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

media to tell—and show—credible brand stories.

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

MERRITT GROUP

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

Merritt Group is an award-winning, woman-owned strategic communications agency with a dedicated focus on healthcare with locations in McLean, Virginia, San Francisco, California and North Texas. Merritt Group specializes in public relations, content creation, marketing, social media, demand and lead generation, analytics and measurement, and marketing infrastructure consulting.

Our philosophy starts with intrinsically understanding our healthcare clients' target audiences, which leads to the development of powerful messaging and creative PR programs that drives high impact awareness, engages audiences and accelerates sales around their innovations.

We help our healthcare clients achieve their goals and meet the needs of today's patients, providers, physicians, insurers and influencers across a complex healthcare continuum. Our team deeply understands the transformative world of healthcare. With a more consumer-driven healthcare marketplace and constant changes to the healthcare policy landscape, Merritt Group can be your sentinel to navigate how to market to your core audiences.

For more than 15 years, we have worked with leading and emerging healthcare brands including

RapidAI, Medisafe, Infermedica, GoHealth Urgent Care, Samsung Health, InnoCaption, Avizia, MedGenome, CardMedic, Emeritus Healthcare and more.

PADILLA

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Kim Blake, Vice President, Health

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

Health clients include 3M, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, CommonSpirit Health, Lupus Foundation of America, Mayo Clinic, Medtronic, Purdue, Sanofi, VBI Vaccines 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 manufacturers; hospital and health systems; insurers, payor groups; nonprofits and government.

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

PAN COMMUNICATIONS

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Nikki Festa O'Brien, EVP
Meg Kessler, EVP
Dan Martin, EVP, Healthcare
Gene Carozza, Senior VP, Technology & Head of Operations
Matthew Briggs, Senior VP, Healthcare
Emily Holt, Senior VP
Kari Hulley, Senior VP
Gareth Thomas, Managing Dir., UK

PAN Communications is a leading integrated marketing and PR agency servicing B2B tech and healthcare brands. With 27+ years of experience, PAN helps companies transform ideas into captivating stories that align to mid- and late-stage growth strategies through the firm's NXT Stage approach. Recognized as an Agency of the Year and Best Mid-sized Agency to Work For, PAN has office locations in Boston, San Francisco, New York, Orlando and London, as well as a growing virtual community. The agency is positioned to help brands emerge in new markets and scale globally, with experience driving integrated strategy across a variety of brands like Rapid 7, Citrix, Quickbase, OneStream, Radial, athenahealth and Smartly.io. PAN strives to help today's modern marketers by integrating a combination of services to better engage with target audiences and move markets.

Connected Content — Creative Storytelling — Results that Matter!

Clients include: Algolia, Amwell, athenahealth, Bitdefender, Booz Allen, Botify, Citrix, Clarify Health, Coda, Colibra, Enthought, HealthEdge, iCIMS, LeanTaaS, Quickbase, Menlo Security, NTT Data Services, Optimizely, Rapid7, Toshiba/Americas, UPS Capital, and Veeam.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS INC.

Founding Partner of
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Craig Pugh, APR, President
Pamela Oettel, COO/CFO

Public Communications Inc. (PCI) is team of experts passion-

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PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

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ate about healthcare and healthy communities. Sixty years after our founding, healthcare communication strategies that deliver client solutions and results remain at the core of our national, independent agency. We create communication solutions for national and international healthcare companies and associations in every sector. PCI continues to expand its environmental health expertise during increasing public interest and desire for fact-based information on climate change and its impact on human and animal health.

Our agency consistently delivers award-winning programs and campaigns for clients ranging from advocacy organizations and medical and allied health associations to *Fortune* 100 corporations; healthcare technology innovators and device makers; biotechs and hospital suppliers; hospitals and health systems; service providers; accrediting agencies; and consultants. PCI also knows healthcare and association audiences first-hand. We use research to understand what makes them tick, how to reach them, and how to prompt engagement.

Healthcare represents more than half of PCI's client work. Our clients include more than 20 medical and dental associations, start-ups looking for communications and marketing strategy and visibility, and university health systems. We launch products and manage life-cycle communications; run consumer awareness and screening programs on a turn-key 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.

Many of our healthcare clients have stayed with us 10 years 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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Also serving clients through staffers based in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Larry Weber, Chief Executive Officer/Chairman
Bob Osmond, President
Phil Chadwick, CFO
Carolyn Regan, Senior VP, People

Society has always been propelled forward by technology. There is a growing expectation, however, that innovation must serve humanity—there must be a higher moral purpose than innovating only because we can.

We believe that the complex challenges we face as a global society can only be tackled by embracing creativity and innovation fueled by purpose. Every company in every category is in some way using technology to sustainably change the way we work, live and play.

At Racepoint Global (RPG), our mission is simple: We help our clients navigate and succeed in the new communications landscape by shaping the conversations that matter. We live at the intersection of conversation and innovation and we serve clients with channel-agnostic communications strategies that engage their target audiences in authentic and meaningful ways. Our work with clients establishes competitive differentiation and drives business impact. In 2021, RPG was named a *PRWeek* Top 100 U.S. integrated communications agency, a Top 15 U.S. Technology PR Agency by *O'Dwyer's*, a *PRovoke* Global Top 250 agency and ranked in the Top 25 of *Boston Business Journal's* Largest PR Firms in Massachusetts list.

Clients include: ACD/Labs, Analog Devices, Atmosic Technologies, Consigli Construction, Duck Creek Technologies, eClinicalWorks, E Ink, Infinix, MediaTek, Mythic, Panasonic Connect North America, Qlik, RISC-V, Semtech, and SiFive.

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John Raffetto, CEO
David Herman, President
Danielle Ruckert, AVP, Healthcare Practice Lead

John Raffetto and David Herman founded Raffetto Herman Strategic Communications (RH Strategic) in 2008 with the belief that tying great work to business objectives drives results and transforms innovative companies into industry leaders. We pride ourselves on elevating the stories of next-generation innovators—the visionaries, game-changing brands and hands-on architects of a better future. We deliver creative, integrated communications across the technology, healthcare, sustainability and government sectors—and, importantly, the powerful intersections between them.

As the forces of change in healthcare drive innovation, RH Strategic has elevated the voices of visionary leaders and transformative brands through strategic communications. Our healthcare practice mirrors the healthcare landscape itself, spanning *Fortune* 500 players to Series A disrupters, including providers, insurers, health IT innovators, life sciences, educators, advocates, and digital health platforms.

Our approach is based on a deep understanding of our clients, our up-to-the-minute vertical expertise and our ability to articulate and amplify stories that build brands and thought leaders. We design award-winning strategies that introduce, inform, influence and inspire. We execute those plans with a commitment to precision and adaptability. We work smart and hard.

RH Strategic is more than the sum of its parts. We are our people, our clients and our relationships—collectively focused on ensuring tomorrow is better (and healthier) than today.

REAL CHEMISTRY

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Shankar Narayanan, Chief Executive Officer
Jim Weiss, Founder & Chairman
Jennifer Gottlieb, Chief Client Officer

Real Chemistry (previously W2O) is a global health innovation company with an alchemic

mix of 2,000 people and hundreds of clients and partners working from bench to bedside to make the world a healthier place for all. Purpose-built by Jim Weiss to address modern healthcare challenges, Real Chemistry is the culmination of 20 years of intentional, fiercely independent, sustained growth.

We are committed to improving health outcomes across today's ecosystem by partnering with companies who want to reimagine healthcare. We have built a home where the best health experts collaborate and innovate to deliver commercial, clinical and corporate solutions that put patients at the core, through data, proprietary technology and powerful creativity.

With offices across the United States and Europe, Real Chemistry believes that the way to real, transformative change is through our uncommon combination of talents, disciplines and technologies.

Real Chemistry's proprietary technology products include Swoop, IPM.ai and the Symplur Suite of social listening, analytics and engagement tools, all housed within Real Chemistry Health Technologies. We have tools focused on clinical trial engagement, and expert service brands include W2O (integrated communications), 21GRAMS (advertising and medical), Discern (value-based care consulting), and starpower (influencer and entertainment marketing). Integrated intelligence, media and marketing are all within Real Chemistry's Integrated Marketing and Intelligence Services.

THE REIS GROUP

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Full-service communications for health, medical, science, and social issues.

The Reis Group is a small, woman-owned public relations agency specializing in health care, science, and social causes. Established in 2016, we were named Best New Agency of the Year by The Public Relations Society of America's National Capital Chapter. We are proud to work with a wide range of clients who are committed to

improving health and well-being, including nonprofits, foundations, federal agencies, associations, health systems, corporations, and universities.

Our team of nearly 20 seasoned communications professionals has decades of experience working closely with clients as their communications partners, offering services including message testing, earned media, thought leadership, issues management, media and message training and content development.

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, Nemours Children's Health System, National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America and Society of Interventional Radiology.

ROSICA COMMUNICATIONS

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Chris Rosica, President

Founded in 1980, Rosica Communications is a strategic, integrated PR and digital marketing agency specializing in the healthcare, animal health, non-profit, and education sectors. The award-winning PR and communications programs we develop and execute are driven by our clients' goals, objectives, and strategic imperatives.

Rosica's Healthcare PR services include thought leadership advancement, positioning and messaging, earned media, publication planning, KOL relationship development, B2B social media marketing, corporate communications, crisis communications, media training, and content creation.

Through Interact Marketing, the digital agency we co-founded in 2008, Rosica offers such digital marketing services as SEO, online reputation management, and SEM (paid search and paid social). This enables us to effectively measure the impact of our clients' PR and comms. programs. One key metric we monitor is the number of

[powerful] inbound links our work generates as this bolsters SEO. We also review website traffic, email open rates, page one search results (for reputation management), and website conversion rates.

What differentiates Rosica?

- Our hands-on senior team that brings decades of strategic experience to our clients.

- The award-winning earned media campaigns we creatively execute.

- Our ability to strategically repurpose and leverage earned media and other quality content to impact stakeholder communications, sales, perception, fundraising, government relations, and partnership development.

Rosica's healthcare communications team quickly assimilates to our clients' needs, handily tackling complex and technical subjects and creating authentic positioning statements, key messages, differentiators, stakeholder communications, and story ideas. We identify and develop key opinion leaders and media train KOLs to conduct powerful talks and highly effective media interviews. Clients say our PR team is smart and strategic, providing white glove service from a senior-level team of PR and comms. professionals.

Rosica continuously cultivates and broadens relationships with national and regional media as well, including trade/business/consumer print, online, and broadcast outlets.

Clients, past and present, include: Easterseals, Exergen, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, NJ Sharing Network, Parker Laboratories, Pfizer, ShiftKey and Suvento.

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

SPECTRUM SCIENCE

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Jonathan Wilson, CEO
Michelle Gross, President
Michelle Strier, Chief Strat. Officer
Rob Oquendo, Chief Innovation Officer
Justin Rubin, Chief Creative Officer
Dan Zaret, Chief Financial Officer
Andrea Sessler, Chief Human Resources Officer
Tim Goddard, Pres., Global Health Marketing & Comms. (GHMC)

Spectrum Science is an integrated marketing, communications and media agency hyper-focused on healthcare. An independent, full-service agency with end-to-end capabilities, Spectrum's team are experts in science—focused on strategic engagements with their client audiences. Clients seek out Spectrum for high-caliber, high-science communications and the elusive efficiencies of integrated solutions—advertising/market-

ing, PR, med comms, clinical trial recruitment and everything in between.

Spectrum's interwoven model integrates specialists across client service, strategy, creative and innovation to put clients at the center. Fueled by its proprietary methodology, the Spectrumentific Method™, Spectrum leverages human-centered insights, atomic creative, innovative storytelling and technology to deliver the right solutions for each client's goals and reach their audiences where they are with content they need and want.

Spectrum is taking on the world with a geographically fluid, hybrid model that allows every employee to determine when and where they work. With offices in Washington, D.C., New York, Chicago, Atlanta and London, and an expansive global reach as U.S. partner and chair of Global Health Marketing & Communications (GHMC), the largest independent health and science communications agency partnership worldwide, Spectrum is ready to go Beyond the Science Quo for its clients.

For more information, visit www.spectrumscience.com or follow @SpectrumScience on Twitter and Instagram.

STANTON

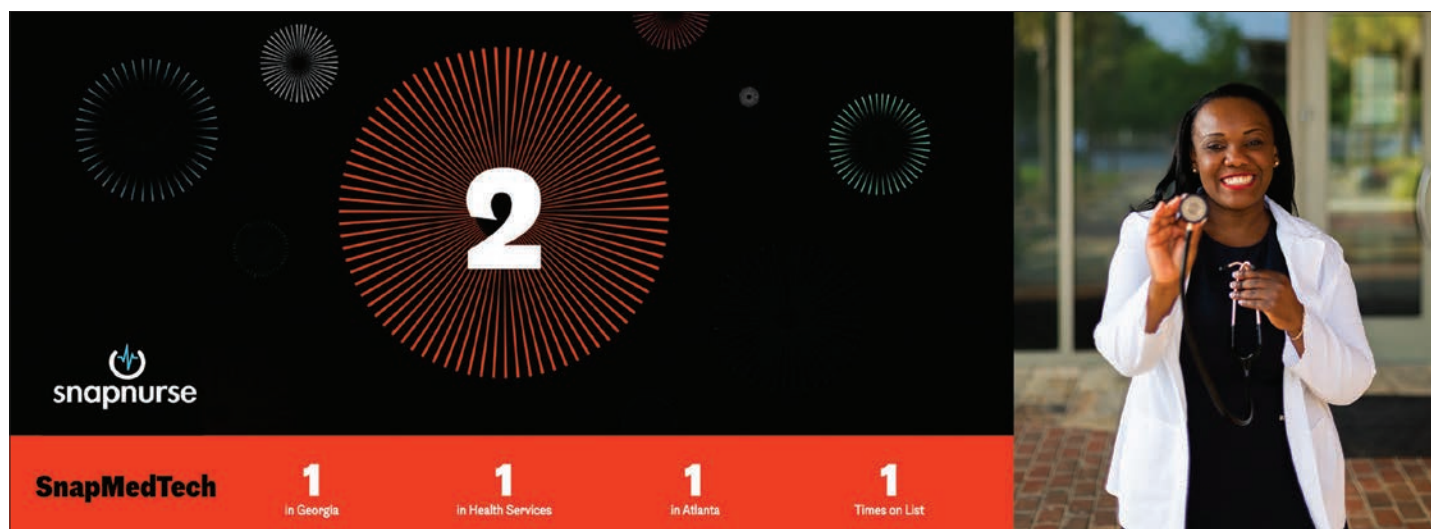
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Tom Faust, **Charlyn Lusk**, Managing Directors
Liam Collopy, **Matthew Conroy**, **Michael Goodwin**, **Scott Lessne**, **Caroline Luz**, **Katrin Lieberwirth**, SVPs

Continued on page 60



Spectrum Science's leadership pictured celebrating together at the agency's annual holiday party.



Trevelino/Keller supports SnapNurse with an aggressive public relations strategy, resulting in this year's *Inc.* 5000 #2 ranking with a growth of 146,319 percent.

STANTON

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Stanton is a strategic communications partner to global firms, mid-size leaders and entrepreneurial enterprises in sectors including financial services/insurance, healthcare, professional services, and technology. Stanton works with a wide variety of emerging and established organizations across the spectrum of healthcare and life sciences, from providers and management organizations to services and insurance, senior care, treatments, and technologies. This is why growing healthcare organizations turn to Stanton. We excel at helping healthcare innovators grow their businesses by raising company profiles, building reputations and capturing mindshare.

With teams in New York and the San Francisco Bay Area, Stanton supports clients through strategy, media relations, content development and marketing, design and production, executive visibility, thought leadership, crisis management, analyst relations, social media management and more.

Our healthcare clients & experience includes: AavantiBio, Autism Learning Partners, Beacon Health Options, Cereval, CityMD, ClearChoice, CRC Health, EDAP, EmPRO, Essentix, Fullscript, Health Advocate, Innovacare, John Muir Health, Lighthouse Guild, Marin Health, National Hemophilia Foundation, Northwell Health, Simplura Health Group, Summit Health, Surgery Partners, T1D Fund, and Wellbridge.

TIER ONE PARTNERS

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Marian Hughes, Co-Founder,
Managing Partner—Chicago
Sue Parente and Kathy Wilson,
Co-Founders, Managing
Partners—Boston

Tier One Partners delivers experience-based and culturally relevant PR, Content, and Digital Marketing programs that drive measurable results. Our integrated marketing communications programs, and services including strategy, content, communications, creative, and digital, help healthcare innovators “thrive on change” while remaining true to their purpose and customer value proposition.

Our proprietary Agile Communications methodology taps into the collective consciousness of healthcare business and consumer audiences and applies fast-acting, creative, and nimble programming to bring a brand's vision and mission to the forefront—and keep it there.

In today's environment of rapidly shifting market dynamics, our programs effectively respond to those shifts while keeping a focus on business and marketing goals. Change creates opportunity, so we design our plans in quarterly sprints with weekly and monthly adjustment check-ins. This lets us add new strategies and tactics to drive higher, in-the-moment impact. We integrate modern PR and marketing

analytics to measure program effectiveness and continuously iterate to test new strategies and approaches.

Our Agile Insights practice helps us spot trends and insert our clients' perspectives into the national conversation at the right time when their insights matter most. We use multiple, cross-agency tools to identify and instantly share potential trends and business issues, enabling our clients to capitalize on the most relevant thought leadership opportunities.

Co-headquartered in Boston and Chicago, Tier One is a 19-year-old, certified women owned business. We're proud to have built brand awareness for disruptive healthcare organizations including Global Healthcare Exchange, Level Ex, Hospital IQ, GI Supply, Virgin Pulse, Medisafe, and Omada Health.

TREVELINO/KELLER

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Ranked #1 in Healthcare in Atlanta, Trevelino/Keller continues to see its healthcare practice rank as one of its highest performing. Its long-standing base of experience with the CDC, United Healthcare and Snapnurse [#2 on *Inc.* Fastest Growing], coupled with one of the country's deepest technology practices and Atlanta's leading lifestyle practice, has advanced its health work across Health IT, retail health and nutrition. The world's pandemic crisis shined a spotlight on firms with extensive disease-related


work and Trevelino/Keller became Georgia's go to firm, representing Georgia's COVID-19 Health Initiative on both COVID-19 awareness programs that would eventually transition to COVID-19 vaccine programs. This important work, coupled with a base of experience with Ebola, Zika and other health crises, has made the firm one of the country's established health firms.

Some other highlights of recent engagements include groundbreaking work in the cancer treatment segment with Specicare, a first mover in Live Tissue Science™, 360 reputation marketing for SOC Telemed, as well as the launch of Mossa's Movement Health initiative to address both the sedentary market and health club crisis through virtual, accessible programming. Its growing base of work in healthy eating and nutrition with clients like unMEAT and its launch of plant-based products, as well as Qunol Turmeric Supplements, indicate an increased demand for the agency's predisposition to healthier brands. While the firm's public relations discipline continues to grow, it's seeing greater demand for its reputation marketing approach which leverages its Growth Marketing department as well as its Creative Studios.

As this year's third fastest growing firm, the agency continues to own the industry's number one retention rate, having lost two staffers to an agency in 19 years. It is known for its progressive, culture-rich programs like Red with Ted, Cooleaf Pro, Read to Lead, Patio55 and its recently released, Wild Blue Yonder, a curated travel getaway for staff. For more information, visit trevelinokeller.com. ○

O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

HEALTHCARE & MEDICAL PR FIRMS



Firm	Net Fees (2021)	Firm	Net Fees (2021)
1. Real Chemistry , San Francisco, CA	\$475,000,000	42. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	\$1,287,730
2. Edelman , New York, NY	208,904,000	43. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	1,286,759
3. Evoke , Philadelphia, PA	181,000,000	44. Beehive Strategic Communication , St. Paul, MN	1,123,440
4. Spectrum , Washington, DC	48,850,000	45. Bospar , San Francisco, CA	1,092,910
5. Ruder Finn Inc. , New York, NY	45,040,000	46. L.C. Williams & Associates , Chicago, IL	936,979
6. Finn Partners , New York, NY	44,150,000	47. Merritt Group , McLean, VA	790,446
7. ICR , New York, NY	38,450,548	48. Judge Public Relations , Tampa, FL	778,586
8. APCO Worldwide , Washington, DC	36,713,000	49. Brownstein Group , Philadelphia, PA	713,102
9. imre, LLC , Baltimore, MD	34,822,000	50. Racepoint Global , Boston, MA	682,000
10. Crosby , Annapolis, MD	28,463,929	51. G&S Business Communications , New York, NY	674,158
11. JPA Health , Washington, DC	16,900,782	52. Bellmont Partners , Minneapolis, MN	636,604
12. M Booth Health , New York, NY	16,290,421	53. Ehrhardt Group, The , New Orleans, LA	610,345
13. Zeno Group , New York, NY	13,128,981	54. Rasky Partners, Inc. , Boston, MA	574,303
14. Canale Communications , San Diego, CA	12,402,707	55. Singer Associates PR, Inc. , San Francisco, CA	520,450
15. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	12,400,000	56. Otter PR , St. Petersburg, FL	472,869
16. Sam Brown Inc. , Wayne, PA	9,741,816	57. Fish Consulting , Fort Lauderdale, FL	386,000
17. Padilla , Minneapolis, MN	8,452,864	58. Rosica Communications , Fair Lawn, NJ	370,228
18. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	8,406,415	59. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	369,283
19. Matter Communications , Boston, MA	7,586,000	60. Tier One Partners , Boston, MA	345,715
20. MikeWorldWide , New York, NY	7,531,998	61. Slide Nine Agency , Columbus, OH	333,542
21. McCabe Message Partners , Washington, DC	7,143,239	62. Franco , Detroit, MI	304,583
22. LaVoie Health Science , Boston, MA	5,726,799	63. Lansons , New York, NY	281,541
23. Hunter , New York, NY	5,500,000	64. IW Group, Inc. , West Hollywood, CA	271,055
24. PAN Communications , Boston, MA	5,316,400	65. Standing Partnership , St. Louis, MO	186,394
25. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	5,200,000	66. TruePoint Communications , Dallas, TX	167,680
26. Moore, Inc. , Tallahassee, FL	4,459,562	67. Marketing Maven Public Relations , Camarillo, CA	166,638
27. Bliss Group, The , New York, NY	4,316,157	68. Greentarget Global LLC , Chicago, IL	164,000
28. MCS Healthcare Public Relations , Bedminster, NJ	3,585,681	69. Lavidge , Phoenix, AZ	154,000
29. Lovell Communications , Nashville, TN	3,490,674	70. Milk & Honey PR , New York, NY	144,760
30. BRG Communications , Alexandria, VA	3,376,473	71. Buchanan Public Relations , Bryn Mawr, PA	140,267
31. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	3,291,970	72. BizCom Associates , Plano, TX	116,500
32. 720 Strategies , Washington, DC	3,261,027	73. WordWrite Communications LLC , Pittsburgh, PA	102,600
33. Gold PR & Social Media , Irvine, CA	3,197,630	74. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC , Annapolis, MD	84,530
34. Public Communications Inc. , Chicago, IL	2,488,590	75. Zapwater Communications, Inc. , Chicago, IL	39,000
35. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	2,365,432	76. Wordhampton Public Relations, Inc. , East Hampton, NY	28,400
36. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	2,020,865	77. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	25,878
37. Raffetto Herman Strategic Comms. , Seattle, WA	2,016,093	78. Inspire PR Group , Westerville, OH	23,753
38. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	2,000,000	79. Peppercomm , New York, NY	16,225
39. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	1,732,000	80. Champion Management Group , Dallas, TX	10,250
40. Tunheim , Minneapolis, MN	1,592,643	81. Lawlor Media Group , New York, NY	6,000
41. Gregory FCA , Ardmore, PA	1,547,749		

Public relations arguments that will carry the midterms

By Fraser Seitel

One telling barometer of the cumulative intelligence of a society is the content of its political advertising.



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*.

What better way to assess the critical thinking, comparative judgment and mental acuity of a nation's citizenry than the caliber of the debate to determine those who will lead its government?

Against that solemn backdrop, here's a representative sample of the unassailable quality of the \$10 billion in political advertisements that will honor the effort of those competing in

November for 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, 35 seats in the U.S. Senate and 36 gubernatorial seats.

Oklahoma GOP Gov. J. Kevin Stitt was accused of the largest mass release of felons in U.S. history, one of whom murdered his neighbor and tried to feed her organs to his family.

Arizona GOP gubernatorial candidate Kari Lake told ad viewers they were "watching fake news, because they won't cover the biggest story out there ... the rigged 2020 election."

Wisconsin senatorial candidate Mandela Barnes was branded a "different kind of Democrat" because "he wrote the bill saying courts may not use the nature, number and gravity of the offenses as the sole sufficient reason for releasing the defendant."

Texas Democratic Congressman Henry Cisneros was accused of "political corruption" after FBI agents gathered evidence at his house for a DC grand jury.

Mercy me.

Whatever happened to common sense, compromise and compassion? Is the paranoia of the Trumpsters and the Thomases and the Cruzes of the right and the Sanders and the Warrens and the Occasios of the left destined to be America's lot in life forever more?

Maybe. But maybe not.

And so, in the cause of hope and optimism, here are five moderate positions for

political consultants and their candidates, regardless of party, to consider if next month's mid-terms somehow trigger a return to political sanity.

Argument #1: back off abortion.

The Supreme Court's decision to strike down *Roe v. Wade* was a mistake. Abortion is a loser issue, period.

Perhaps it made constitutional sense to return the abortion issue to the states, but practically, it was a disaster of significant consequence for Republican candidates throughout the land. A Republican gubernatorial challenger like Cong. Lee Zeldin in New York might have had a chance against a dim Democratic incumbent like Kathy Hochul, but now he's toast, thanks to *Roe v. Wade*.

Unlike Zeldin, smart Republicans should favor allowing abortions for rape, incest, the safety of the mother, etc., and otherwise avoid the issue as much as possible. Democrats, on the other hand, owe a great debt to the Supreme Court for giving them an issue they will—and should—optimize.

Argument #2: support the police.

Democrats finally seem to realize that nobody—regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or social status—likes crime. It may be too late.

The disastrous revolving door/no bail/ignoring shoplifting policies perpetrated by do-gooding district attorneys from New York and Philadelphia to San Francisco and Los Angeles have connected Democrats to rising crime rates and lawlessness.

No self-respecting Democrat this side of Rashida Talib would any longer be caught preaching "Defund the Police." The disasters that are Portland, Chicago, Minneapolis et al. have motorized Republican momentum.

Smart Democrats have no choice but to adopt a policy of "well-funded but smarter policing" and hope for the best.

Argument #3: build back the border.

The same is true with the mess that is America's southern border.

The Biden "policy" that has uncontrollably ushered in millions of unchecked migrants is toothless, rudderless and leaderless, not to mention "feckless," if one includes—or can find—Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas.

Of course, the problem is intractable, with nothing but bad choices but ... the Biden administration's refusal to assert itself even a little bit against the tidal wave of ever-increasing illegal entrants is an open

wound for Democrats. And smart Democrat candidates will back off the showboat shenanigans of divisive Republican governors and focus, instead, on taking the border crisis more seriously.

Argument #4: confront economic reality.

Here's the cold, hard truth: No politician running for office can do a whit to revive the economy. After more than a decade of bountiful growth, we're stuck with a period of rising prices, high inflation and ultimate economic downturn.

That's the fact, Jack.

And while much of our immediate economic fate will depend more on Jerome Powell's Federal Reserve money management, Xi Jinping's social controls and Vladimir Putin's megalomaniacal arrogance—the people we vote for can at least try not to muck things up further.

That translates into limiting federal spending, avoiding tinkering with the tax laws and generally preaching patience while we experience the inevitable recession that lies ahead.

It also means ...

Argument #5: adopt rational climate change.

The last great climate change denier was Rush Limbaugh, who's now dead.

Today, few can deny that the climate is a-changin', with higher winds, heavier rains, hotter hots and colder colds.

And we—and more importantly, our children and their children—have got a problem.

So, we've got to do something. The Biden climate bill—with its alternative energy tax credits, battery storage incentives, clean hydrogen and carbon capture, etc.—is a helpful start. But what's unhelpful are the zealots on either side who refuse to compromise on transitioning to lasting solutions.

Even climate-change evangelist Tom Friedman has called for an interim period where we enable greener-minded energy companies to produce more fuel, open up more pipelines, frack for more natural gas and incentive fossil fuel producers to move to cleaner sources. This is particularly urgent on the cusp of a Russian oil shutdown in Europe.

There's a good reason why trust in politicians has descended steadily over the last half-century. But a month from now, we get yet another opportunity to set things right. We live in hope. ○

Recent tax updates that may impact your business

By Dominic Rovano

Details regarding new legislation and recent updates to tax laws that may benefit your business.

As our country continues to grapple with an unsteady market and the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our governing bodies have worked to address some of the biggest issues facing us. Over the past few months, various legislation focused on inflation, high gas prices and climate change have been introduced. As a business owner, it's imperative to stay up-to-date on all laws affecting the business landscape and to understand how they may impact your company.

While these laws may not directly relate to your line of work, you might be able to leverage key pieces of new legislation, especially as it relates to tax credits or other tax advantages. Here are a few recent updates to be aware of:

Inflation Reduction Act

On August 16, President Biden signed the sweeping Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 into law. The legislation is intended to relieve the economic stresses caused by the rising inflation rate, help tackle climate change and lower prescription drug costs. While the legislation may not significantly impact small-to-midsize business owners, there are a few key aspects to be aware of. The Inflation Reduction Act will:

- Impose a 15 percent minimum tax on corporations with profits over \$1 billion each year. However, it does not raise taxes for small businesses or families making less than \$400,000 per year.
- Increase refundable payroll tax credits for research and development expenditures for small businesses from \$250,000 to \$500,000. The tax credit could apply to business owners investing in business improvement projects including implementing new products, processes, software and more.

- Impose a one-percent excise tax on stock buybacks in an effort to generate more funding.

- Extend excess business loss limitations an additional two years to 2028. Currently, non-corporate taxpayers' business losses are limited to \$262,000 for single taxpayers and \$524,000 for joint filers due to Internal Revenue Code Sec 461(I).

- Increase the IRS budget by an additional \$80 billion per year. Over half of the budget will be directed toward enforcement activity—*Forbes* predicts the increase in enforcement spending will mostly target large corporations, not small businesses—while the remaining budget will go toward enhancing IRS operational efficiency, improving customer service and updating technology.

- Extend a clean energy tax credit for homeowners and certain car buyers. While this doesn't directly affect your business, you still may be able to take advantage of the tax credit extension by installing solar projects and purchasing other clean energy items for your home, including energy-efficient water heaters and HVAC systems. The Act extends tax credits for those buying a new or used electric vehicle to 2032, excluding high-priced luxury vehicles.

As a business owner or homeowner, the Inflation Reduction Act may not directly impact your taxes, but it can offer you certain relief through the increase and extension of tax credits.

Standard business mileage rate increase

In June, the IRS announced it would be increasing the standard business mileage rate for qualified driving expenses for the remaining months of 2022. Beginning July 2022, the standard business mileage rate increased as follows:

- Business travel increased to 62.5 cents per mile, up four cents from the 58.5 cents-per-mile rate effective for the first six months of the year.
- If you use your vehicle for medical reasons and deduct medical expenses on your tax return, the mileage rate increased to 22 cents per mile, up from 18 cents at the beginning of 2022.
- The moving expense mileage rate for active-duty members of the military increased to 22 cents per mile, up from 18 cents.

While the IRS annually adjusts the standard business mileage rate, higher gas prices seen over the past few months triggered a mid-year evaluation and increase.

Pass-Through Entity Tax by state

Over the past year, 29 states—and one locality—have adopted a Pass-Through Entity Tax to allow individuals to deduct business taxes on their personal income tax returns. While PTE taxes are paid by the entity, its members or shareholders are provided the benefit of a deduction or credit on their individual tax returns. The states that have enacted or proposed a PTE-level tax are as follows: AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, GA, ID, IL, KS, LA, MA, MI, MD, MN, MO, MS, NC, NJ, NM, NY, OH, OK, OR, RI, SC, UT, VA and WI as well as locality NYC.

While the intricacies of each law differ from state to state, the foundation of the PTET laws remain consistent. Check your local PTET program for specific ruling and updates.

Employee Retention Credit refund status and claim reminder

If you claimed the Employee Retention Credit to help support your business through the COVID-19 pandemic but have not yet received your refund, you're not alone. While the IRS is still processing backlogged claims—some dating back to 2020—the IRS Commissioner announced the IRS expects to complete its unprocessed work by the end of 2022.

If you're unfamiliar with the program, the Employee Retention Credit was created under the CARES ACT to encourage businesses to maintain their staff throughout the economic disruption of the pandemic. The ERC allows business owners to claim a cash refund of up to \$26,000 per employee for qualified wages paid from March 13, 2020, through September 30, 2021. Speak with your accountant to see if you qualify for the credit.

Next steps for taxpayers

While these updates may not directly impact your business, it's a smart idea to understand the economic effects of legislation and how you or your business may benefit from new tax laws. Speak with your accountant to see if any of the above topics apply to you, including receiving tax credits from the Inflation Reduction Act, the increase in the standard business mileage rate, a local PTET enactment or update, the possibility of filing an ERC claim, receiving an IRS late filing penalty refund or getting into compliance with the IRS. If the topics addressed do apply to you or your business, speak with your accountant about how to incorporate its benefits into your business plan. ○



Dominic Rovano, CPA, is a Co-Partner in Charge of Janover LLC's New York City office. He leads the Professional Services group, and helps its clients satisfy their financial reporting requirements successfully by providing assurance, tax and other advisory services.

Invariant reps Colton Underwood Foundation

Invariant is providing DC support for the Colton Underwood Legacy Foundation, an organization launched by the veteran of ABC TV's Bachelor franchise to help people living with cystic fibrosis.

The 30-year-old Underwood was a contestant on "The Bachelorette" (2018) and "Bachelor in Paradise" (2018) and lead on "The Bachelor" (2019). He made news by being the first lead in the Bachelor franchise to come out as gay.

Prior to the reality show, he was a member of the practice squads of the National Football League's San Diego Chargers, Philadelphia Eagles and Oakland Raiders.

Invariant has Annabell McWherter (former Republican counsel on the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs), Christopher Gillott (deputy chief of staff for Louisiana Republican Senator Bill Cassidy) and Katie Wise (legislative director for Florida Republican Congressman Vern Buchanan) handling the Foundation. ○

Clean Path NY taps TBA for D.C. work

Tonio Burgos & Associates is providing D.C. support for Clean Path New York, which has proposed an \$11B emissions-free energy transmission project comprised of more than 20 wind and solar installations throughout the Empire State.

A new underground 175-mile transmission line will deliver more than 7.5 million megawatt-hours of power into NYC, according to the organization.

Clean Path claims the project will create more than 8,300 jobs, save ratepayers' money and help the state meet its ambitious climate goals.

The Hudson Yards-based entity is a partnership between New York Power Authority and Forward Power, a joint venture between energyRe and Invenergy.

Tonio Burgos, a long-time aide to New York Governor Mario Cuomo and one-time Port Authority of New York and New Jersey commissioner, spearheads the Clean Path team.

He is joined by Steve Fier, TBA's DC president; Tim Ursprung, VP-legislative affairs; and Kristen Walsh, aide to NY Senators Chuck Schumer, Hillary Clinton and Kirsten Gillibrand. ○

Heritage Foundation's Binion shifts to OnMessage

Tommy Binion, VP of Government Relations at the Heritage Foundation, has joined OnMessage Public Strategies.

He will maintain ties to the conservative think tank as a consultant.

Brad Todd, founding partner of OnMessage, said Binion's "expertise, insights and experience will be a major asset for us as he has a singular understanding of the House and Senate Republican conferences, and the opportunities the legislative arena can bring."

Jim Banks, Indiana Congressman and Republican Study Committee chair, praised Binion's work at Heritage and called him "a leader in the conservative movement, and an advocate for conservative principles." ○



Tommy Binion



FTI adds FBI cybersecurity pro

FTI Consulting has hired Brian Boetig, a 24-year veteran of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as senior managing director in its cybersecurity unit.

During his FBI stint, Boetig served as director of the National Cyber Investigative Joint Task Force, which is responsible for coordinating, integrating and sharing information to support threat probes and intelligence for government decision-makers, infrastructure operators and companies.

He also was assistant director of the FBI's international operations, overseeing staffers in 90 offices around the globe.

Boetig was the FBI lead on strategic engagements with law enforcement partners in the Five Eyes Alliance of the US, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand.

Anthony Ferrante, global head of FTI's cybersecurity unit, said Boetig's "experience with investigations, counterintelligence, cyber risk mitigation and incident response will greatly enhance our ability to support our clients all over the world with their most complex challenges."

Boetig is based in Seattle. ○



Brian Boetig

Former congressman Crowley gets bullish

Former New York Congressman Joe Crowley is representing Bullish US LLC, the technology company that operates the regulated cryptocurrency trading platform Bullish exchange.

In his role as senior policy director at Dentons US, the 10-term Congressman handles financial services and cryptocurrency policy matters for Arlington, VA-based company that has about 400 employees.

Bullish is in the process of merging with Far Peak Acquisition Corp., a special purpose acquisition company.

The companies have extended the deadline to complete the deal from July 8 to Dec. 31.

Crowley was the fourth-highest-ranking Congressional Democrat when he was defeated in the 2018 primary by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Matthew Cutts, Dentons' head of US policy and government relations; Callie Fuselier, former aide to Democratic Senators John Breaux and Harry Reid; and Pat Kirby, who worked in the Treasury Dept.'s financial crimes enforcement unit focused on cryptocurrencies, also serve on the Bullish team. ○



Joe Crowley

APCO reps leader of democratic opposition in Belarus

APCO Worldwide is providing strategic communications and media relations in the US for Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the leader of the democratic opposition to Belarus president Alexander Lukashenko, who has been in power for 28 years.

She stepped in for her husband, video blogger Siarhei Tsikhanouskaya, and ran for president in the 2020 election after he was arrested and sentenced to 18 years in prison.

Independent monitors said the election was rigged by Lukashenko, a close ally of Russian president Vladimir Putin.

Rioting broke out following the vote, which led to the arrests of more than 3,000 people and Putin sending tanks to Minsk to put down the uprising.

Tsikhanouskaya, who is currently living in exile in Lithuania, visited New York this month for the opening of the UN general assembly.

In a Sept. 19 interview with the Voice of America, she urged continued western support for Ukraine, which borders Belarus. She said: "It is very important to distinguish the Belarusian regime that became an accomplice to Russian invasion of the war and Belarusian people who are against this war, who are supporting Ukrainians in this situation." ○

Panama picks Potomac Partners DC

Panama has selected Potomac Partners D.C. for a push to amend the U.S. Passenger Vessel Services Act to designate Panama as a "distant foreign port."

That reclassification would help Panama "obtain a more strategic advantage in shipping and tourism," according to Potomac's government relations proposal.

The firm will develop a narrative that outlines the US national security benefits that will result in granting the DFP designation to a top U.S. ally in Central America. The DFP also may help Panama to develop a new manufacturing base in the region.

Rick Alcalde, owner of Potomac, and Dan Feliz, Managing Partner, handle the Panama push. Alcalde has extensive experience working with the Cruise Lines International Assn. and several of its members. Feliz is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, nuclear engineer and former submarine officer.

Potomac will receive a \$100,000 advocacy fee for the Panama program that began Aug. 26 and runs through the rest of the year. ○

UAE picks BCW for COP28 support

BCW is hammering out an agreement to provide strategic communications services to the United Arab Emirates, which will host the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 28) slated to be held in Dubai from Nov. 6-17.

That contract, which will include development of the overall communications strategy, global media relations, social media and stakeholder outreach, is with Masdar, Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company.

Masdar operates solar and wind power systems in the UAE, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Mauritania, UK, Spain, Serbia and US.

It is part of the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030 program designed to diversify the emirate's economy.

BCW MENA President Sunil John and chief innovation officer Chad Latz will work on the COP 28 effort. ○

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.

Brunswick Group LLC, New York, N.Y., **registered Aug. 26, 2022 for United Kingdom Dept. for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy**, London, United Kingdom, concerning preparation of informational materials, including press releases, reports, and media briefings, in order to support the success of the Glasgow Breakthroughs.

Cornerstone Government Affairs, Washington, D.C., **registered Aug. 12, 2022 for Embassy of the Republic of Korea**, Washington, D.C., regarding contacting members of Congress and their staffs about a professional visa initiative incentive for Korean nationals to work in the United States and issues of economic growth and trade.

Mercury Public Affairs, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered Sept. 16, 2022 for Instituto Nacional de Promocion Turistica**, Embassy of Argentina, Washington, D.C., regarding providing strategic consulting and management services, including media relations and lobbying.

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 Sept. 9, 2022 for Seqirus USA Inc.**, Summit, N.J., regarding FY24 National Defense Authorization Act, FY24 Appropriations.

Holland & Knight LLP, Washington, D.C., **registered Sept. 7, 2022 for The Spaceport Company**, Woodbridge, Va., regarding FY24 National Defense Authorization Act and Appropriations Act.

Strategies 360, Washington, D.C., **registered Sept. 15, 2022 for Hawaii Land Trust**, Honolulu, Hawaii, regarding appropriations to support habitat restoration projects.

Tonio Burgos & Assocs., Inc., New York, N.Y., **registered Sept. 14, 2022 for Clean Path New York LLC**, New York, N.Y., concerning issues relating to new energy transmission project.

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Employees: 65. Founded: 2005.

Agency Statement: J Public Relations (JPR) is an international luxury PR and social media agency specializing in hospitality, travel and luxury 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., Canada, Mexico, Caribbean, Dubai, Europe, New Zealand, Asia and more. JPR steadily garners and retains notable clients including Relais & Châteaux, Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, Vail Resorts Hospitality, 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 Bulldog Reporter in addition to multiple trade and consumer awards for company culture and brand success.

Jamie Sigler O'Grady, Sarah Evans, partners

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