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# O'Dwyer's

Communications & new media

Sept. 2011 | Vol. 25 No. 9



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MORE CREATIVE ROLES ONLINE

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# Social media inspires change, reveals world in motion

**O'Dwyer's**

**T**he revolution won't be televised. If the *cause célèbre* of uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa are any indication, it will instead be tweeted, linked, posted, hashtagged, reposted, and followed.

This year's historical role call of political unrest can be seen not only as a bellwether for people's unwavering calls for change, but proof that we no longer live in a world that will allow voices — anyone's — to go unheard.

This year more than ever, social media have proven a critical tool for citizens effecting change under the thumb of regimes that oppress them.

In Libya, Facebook was instrumental in igniting protests in Benghazi, where hundreds of thousands of citizens rallied against Muammar Gaddafi and the decades of atrocities committed under his regime.

In Egypt, anger over widespread government corruption resulted in a series of rattling demonstrations against President Hosni Mubarak, finally causing him to step down. Popular Facebook pages such as "We Are All Khaled Said" — which made online headlines of an Egyptian businessman allegedly beaten to death by Egyptian police in 2010 — were a call-to-arms for nearly one million Egyptians and was instrumental in the country's uprising and Mubarak's final resignation.

After more than three decades of autocratic rule, Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh announced he would not seek another term in office, the result of millions of protesters who took to the streets — after initially rallying on Facebook and Twitter — to confront his government's ubiquitous corruption, lack of democratic reforms and human rights abuses.

In Tunisia earlier this year, President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali stepped down amid widespread citizen opposition curried in part by — you guessed it — social media. Word of police opening fire on demonstrators spread through the social media channels like wildfire, igniting citizens to take action.

It would be a mistake to assume that

social media itself was the cause of all this commotion. Twitter and Facebook didn't invent

concepts like democracy and freedom — we did.

Rather, social media's *raison d'être* lies in its

ability to broadcast what is intrinsically *us*. Earlier

this year, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said

the U.S. now plans to spend \$25 million each

year supporting online dissidents living in repressive

regimes. It is simply no longer

a question whether social media

can work as a catalyst for change. What's important to understand here is that while

social media broadcasts a voice for the voiceless, it does not serve as the voice itself.

It simply enables us to share what was there from the beginning.

Change has always been the single biggest threat to oppressive regimes. When new

technologies enable faster and clearer forums of communication, our ability to share

ideas *en masse* shapes who we are and, inevitably, evolves the human conversation. It

ensures a proliferation of new ideas, a language for tomorrow. The world won't wait

for change. It has become increasingly obvious that silencing people — or an entire

nation of them — from participating in this marketplace of ideas is no longer an option.

Dictatorships are *soooo* yesterday.

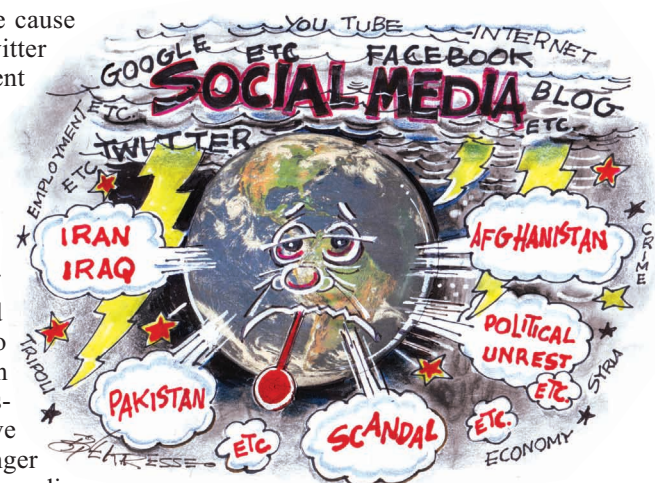
The worldwide struggles for freedom and democracy illuminate their universality in

the human spirit. Being free is more than an unalienable right — it is woven into the

fiber of our very being. History offers irrefutable proof: if there weren't people who

stood up and questioned the status quo every once in a while, we'd still be living in

caves. ●



## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Jack O'Dwyer

jack@odwyerpr.com

## ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Kevin McCauley

kevin@odwyerpr.com

## EDITOR

Jon Gingerich

jon@odwyerpr.com

## SENIOR EDITOR

Greg Hazley

greg@odwyerpr.com

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

John O'Dwyer

Fraser Seitel

Richard Goldstein

## ADVERTISING SALES

John O'Dwyer

Advertising Sales Manager

john@odwyerpr.com

Jack Fogarty

National Advertising Representative

jfogarty@odwyerpr.com

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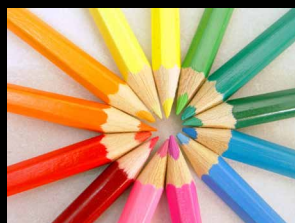
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— Jon Gingerich



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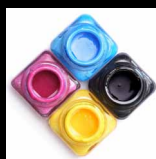
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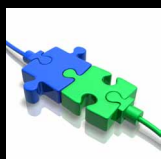
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# Summer's Eve delivers not-so-fresh marketing campaign

**Feminine hygiene brand Summer's Eve recently pulled a series of television ads in response to accusations they perpetuate stereotypes about black and Latina women.**

By Abby Rose Dalto

**S**ummer's Eve, owned by C.B. Fleet Laboratories, recently launched a multimedia campaign for its feminine hygiene products titled "Hail to the V." The campaign included a redesign of the Summer's Eve Web site and two series of ads. The first was a three-part series of video spots featuring a black, white, and Latina talking hand (meant to represent a woman's vulva). The second series focused on historical female archetypes, such as Cleopatra and Helen of Troy, and includes both video and print ads.

Shortly after the July launch, Summer's Eve pulled two of the videos amid accusations of sexism and racism. Many criticized the "talking hands" for perpetuating stereotypes about black and Latina women and reducing women to sexual objects. Stan Richards, Founder of The Richards Group, the Texas-based agency behind the ads, initially defended the campaign. The ads were later pulled.

Much of the criticism Summer's Eve received on the ads occurred online — on

blogs, Twitter, on the wall of the Summer's Eve | Hail to the V Facebook page and in a Change.org petition entitled "Tell Summer's Eve to End its Sexist & Racist Ad Campaign."

After the ads were pulled, Richards PR executive Stacie Barnett said in a statement to *Ad Week*, "The decision to take the videos down is about acknowledging that there's backlash here. We want to move beyond that and focus on the greater mission." She added, "We do not think they are stereotypical, nor did we obviously intend that. However, it's a subjective point of view. There seems to be an important perception out there that they may be." A link to this article was posted by the official Summer's Eve Facebook page, though no other official mention appeared on the company's website or anywhere else online.

Negative comments on the Facebook page have not been answered, while the account continues to post filler like "High heels or sneakers?" and "What's your favorite new trend for fall?"

Summer's Eve also came under fire last year for an advertorial in *Women's Day* that suggested that starting off every day using feminine hygiene products was the first step to getting a raise at work. In response to the



**Summer's Eve's "Hail to the V: Lady Wowza" commercial was pulled following accusations that it was racist. The company's ad agency defended the campaign, stating that "in house multi-cultural experts confirmed the approach."**

criticism, Summer's Eve pulled the ad and created a Twitter account @Eve\_Cares to field complaints. Eve\_Cares was deleted this July, shortly after Twitter users started directing complaints about the new campaign to the account. Their other official Twitter account (@FleetSummersEve) has sat unused since last summer until it apparently was taken over by spammers this August.

The California Milk Processor Board also pulled a series of controversial ads in July, but unlike Summer's Eve it took full advantage of the benefits of social media. The "Everything I Do is Wrong" campaign, created by ad agency Goodby, Silverstein & Partners (part of the Omnicom Group), focused on the claim that the calcium in milk helps reduce PMS symptoms. The campaign featured a series of print ads showing men holding cartons of milk, apologizing for "listening to what you said and not what you meant" or for "not reading between the right lines," as well as a website for men that gave advice on how to deal with menstruating wives and girlfriends.

In response to numerous complaints — including a petition on change.org started by *Ms.* magazine that called the campaign "overwhelmingly sexist, playing on the tired stereotype of menstruating women as volatile monsters" — the Milk Board pulled the ads.

The California Milk Processor Board also replaced the original website Everythingidoiswrong.org with GotDiscussion.org and offered a "representative sampling" of comments made about the campaign. The site encouraged people to "join the discussion" both on Facebook (Facebook.com/gotmilk) and on Twitter under the hashtag #gotdiscussion. ●

## Letter suggests hacking cover-up

**A** four-year-old letter written by former News of the World correspondent Clive Goodman and released publicly by a U.K. parliamentary committee in August implies phone hacking was "widely discussed" at editorial meetings at the News Corp. property until a former Editor and PR advisor to the U.K. Prime Minister banned mentions of it.

Andy Coulson, the former Editor named in the letter, was hired by Prime Minister David Cameron as a PR aide last year before he quit as the hacking scandal simmered.

Coulson has previously denied any knowledge of hacking at the paper.

*The Guardian* reported Aug. 16 that the letter confronts Rupert and James Murdoch with the "humiliating prospect" of being recalled before

Parliament and says that Goodman's claims "raise serious questions about Rupert Murdoch's close friend and adviser, Les Hinton," who was sent a copy of the letter but did not give it to police.

One member of parliament said the letter "is the most significant piece of evidence that has been revealed so far. It completely removes News International's defence. This is one of the largest cover-ups I have seen in my lifetime."

Goodman served time in prison in 2007 for accessing voice messages of royal family aides. He sent the letter to a News Corp. HR representative after being fired and CCed Hinton.

News Corp. has reiterated that its board has set up a committee to co-operate with the investigation. ●



# Report: crisis plans, confidence lacking among execs.

Security breach, fraud and investigation are the most common forms of company crisis, according to a new study of executives and risk managers. And while many claim their companies have a crisis plan in place, few are confident in their efficacy.

By Greg Hazley

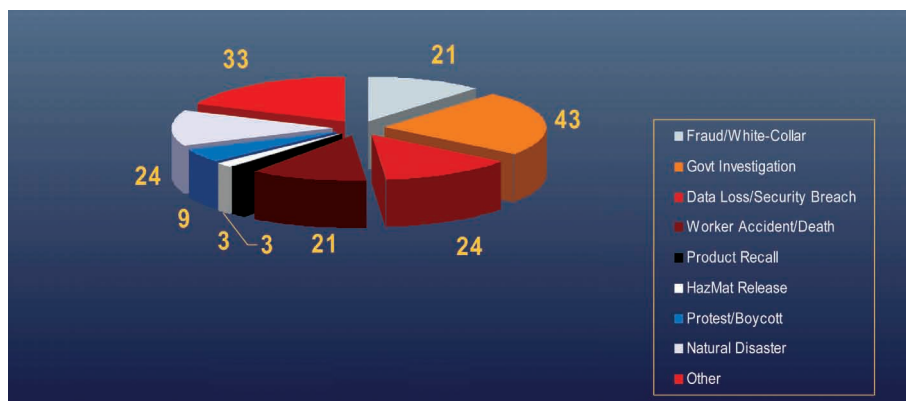
While most top executives and risk managers say their companies have crisis plans in place, only 29% feel very confident their firms would respond effectively in a crisis situation.

Those figures were revealed in a survey of 50 C-suite executives, general counsel and risk managers by Levick Strategic Communications and law firm Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman, the latter which recently counseled BP's Deepwater Horizon partner Moex Offshore.

Sixty-three percent of respondents said their companies do not conduct annual training drills or exercises, a high figure that a Pillsbury Partner and Crisis Chief Tom Campbell said could be contributing to the uncertainty and lack of confidence. He also pointed out that one-third of companies with a crisis plan could not recall the last time it was reviewed or revised.

The survey also showed social media could be a cause for any lack of faith in crisis plans as well. Fifty-two percent said their companies' crisis plans do not specifically address adverse content on Twitter, Facebook or YouTube, while 21% said they did not know and 26% said their plans do address social media.

Richard Levick, CEO of LSC, said too many companies operate under the assumption that because crises are unpredictable, there is little that can be done to prepare. "But what companies can be sure of is that sooner or later, a crisis will indeed hit, and when it does, legal risks, business operations, and reputation management all have to be dealt with simultaneously and decisions often have to be made in a matter of hours, or in some cases, where human lives are at stake, a matter of minutes," he said.



A recent survey of C-suite executives, general counsel and risk managers conducted by Levick Strategic Communications and law firm Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman reveals the most common types of crisis reported to have occurred during the last three years. Data loss/security breach, fraud/white collar crime and government investigation topped the list.

Although only a small percentage say they are very confident in crisis plans, the companies of those surveyed have been enmeshed in various crisis situations over the past three years. Forty-two percent said their firms were the subject of a government probe, while 24% said their companies have faced a natural disaster, data loss or security breach. Another 21% experienced at least one worker accident or death and nine percent felt the wrath of protesters or a consumer boycott.

Forty-two percent said a team of executives involving a mix of general counsel, VP of corporate comms., CTO, risk officer and COO has primary responsibility for reporting back to the

CEO and board in a crisis. Thirteen percent said that duty falls solely on the VP of communications.

The positive news from that data is that nearly 80 percent said their companies made changes — additional training and a crisis audit were the most cited tweaks — to crisis protocol following such incidents. And while few are "very confident," a majority of 56% said they are at least "somewhat confident" in their companies' crisis plans.

Among several crises outlined in the survey, executives responding cited a data breach or security as the situation that would most negatively impact their businesses, followed by a natural disaster and power outage. ●

## Net slides 50% at Washington Post

Washington Post Co. reported a 50% slide in second quarter net income to \$45.5 million as its Kaplan education unit failed to make the profit grade. Second period revenues declined 10% to \$1 billion.

Kaplan generated \$628 million of revenues for the period. That was down 15% from last year's performance. Operating income tumbled 82% to \$20.4 million as enrollment at Kaplan University and Kaplan higher education campuses tumbled 30% to 78,534 students.

WPC also was hurt on the financial front with the introduction of the Kaplan Commitment program in

which students get free trial periods to help determine if the program is right for them. That cut \$27 million in tuition revenue for the first-half.

WPC expects Kaplan's operating income will decline for the remainder of the year. A restructuring is in the works, which could result in a "material" cost for the year.

The Washington Post-led newspaper group recorded revenues of \$162.8 million, down 6% from 2010. Operating loss dropped to \$2.9 million from \$14.3 million.

During the first-half, WP registered a daily circulation of 531,400 and Sunday circulation of 745,300. Those numbers are down 4.5% and 4.1%, respectively. ●

# Abercrombie & Fitch spins savvy fashion “Situation”

**Most PR experts long ago discarded the adage that “no publicity is bad publicity.” One company, however, saw just how far the theory could go, deliberately calling attention to a not-so-ideal ambassador for their brand in an attempt to — you guessed it — call attention to their brand.**

By Jon Gingerich

**T**he saga began during an August airing of MTV’s reality hit “Jersey Shore,” now in its fourth season. In the episode, cast favorite “The Situation” (née Michael Sorrentino) was seen wearing a pair of Abercrombie & Fitch sweatpants as he strolled the streets of Florence, Italy.

Not surprisingly, the retailer seized on the occasion. How it responded however, grossly diverged from how most companies would treat a celebrity for promulgating their brand. Instead of commending Sorrentino for promoting A&F, the company issued a public statement saying it had “deep concern” that Sorrentino was touting the brand. The statement, titled “A Win-Win Situation,” then went on to offer Sorrentino and his cast mates a “substantial payment” to cease wearing Abercrombie & Fitch clothing in the indefinite future.

A spokesperson for the company turned the knife further, explaining that Sorrentino’s association with A&F “could cause significant damage to our image,” and suggested Sorrentino “wear an alternate brand.”

Predictably, A&F’s public blasting of the reality star won major ink in the press and blogosphere. The *Wall Street Journal*, Huffington Post, CNN, and U.K.’s *The Guardian* all reported on the tiff, and even CBS News and “The Today Show” discussed the item.

Experts are now weighing in on the swipe, analyzing whether Abercrombie’s PR play was a brilliant use of marketing panache or a pathetic cry for attention.

“I thought it was a savvy move,” said Doug Simon, President and CEO of DS Simon Associates. “Any time you can position your brand against a pop cultural phenomenon everyone loves to hate it’s a good thing. While Abercrombie is creating all this attention, they’ve still got this muscled guy out there wearing their stuff. And they didn’t have to pay him a cent.”

Peter Himler, Founding Principal of Flatorin Communications and President of the Publicity Club of New York, wondered if there was an accidental luster to Abercrombie’s abrasiveness, a sort of PR gaffe gone horribly right.

“The question is whether the keepers of the Abercrombie & Fitch brand are sufficiently savvy to have foreseen the PR bump they’d get by publicly releasing a statement offering to pay the Jersey Shore crew not to wear their branded clothes,” he said. “Conversely, could they be so naive to think that they can protect their brand from the tainted Jersey Shore tide by releasing such a statement?”

Himler believes the former is likely the case.

“This is a PR ploy,” Himler said, “to connect the Abercrombie & Fitch name with the desirable MTV demographic — even if it means stirring up the murky waters on the Jersey Shore.”

## Shareholder’s new clothes

Pundits and bloggers have since weighed in on A&F’s mean spirited marketing. One theory gaining traction lies in the fact that A&F chose to blast the MTV star on the same day it reported dismal quarterly earnings, which sent its stock tanking by 10% several days later.

It’s a coincidence many say can’t be ignored. A&F CEO Mike Jeffries is even reported to have joked on the matter during the company’s earnings call, asking “is no one going to ask about the Situation?”

Experts believe the convenient timing, coupled with the fact that the message was reiterated from the highest senior levels of the company, demonstrates a deft purpose.

“It seems this was done to create this diversion into a fun, upbeat news item that fit the Abercrombie brand,” Simon said. “It’s better for the company to be talked about regarding this Situation than a bad business situation.”

## Shore cast, celebrities respond

Sorrentino has since responded to the A&F release, penning on his Twitter account — in his “character’s” trademark obtuse demeanor — “Looks like Abercrombie got themselves (sic) into a Situation!”

“Jersey Shore” cast mate Paul “Pauly D” DelVecchio managed to articulate the matter slightly better, highlighting a hypocriti-



**The Situation, née Michael Sorrentino, seen sporting a pair of Abercrombie & Fitch sweatpants during a recent episode of MTV’s “The Jersey Shore.” A&F spokespersons have since offered to pay Sorrentino to stop wearing the company’s clothing.**

cal streak in A&F’s treatment of the show and its cast: “Hmmm if They Don’t Want Us To Wear Those Clothes Why Make GTL Shirts #yourPRsux.”

“GTL” is Jersey Shore parlance for “gym, tan, laundry.” DelVecchio’s tweet was in reference to a line of t-shirts recently manufactured by Abercrombie & Fitch that bares the acronym. A&F last year also allegedly sold a shirt in many of its stores titled “The Fitchuation.”

Former porn star Jenna Jameson also weighed in on A&F’s apparent hypocrisy, coming to Sorrentino’s defense in an August tweet by stating: “It’s funny that Abercrombie & Fitch is worried about the Situation wearing their clothes, but they hired me to model in their catalogue!”

Meanwhile, *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt took the opportunity to attach his brand to the fray, offering to pay Sorrentino to wear clothes bearing the Hustler brand.

“The Sitch may not be good enough for Abercrombie & Fitch,” Flynt wrote on Twitter, “but he’s good enough for us.” ●



# Marketing tips keep your product the apple of mom's eye

**Ten ways marketers can reach out and engage with one of the most consistently influential markets — the 'Mom' consumer.**

By Stacy DeBroff

For more than a generation, savvy marketers have recognized Mom as the key household consumer — wielding significant decision-making and purchasing power in the home.

But not until the recent rise of social media — with Moms embracing emergent platforms such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter at an overwhelming rate — did the very nature of marketing to Moms shift. Today, brands need to rethink their Mom consumer interactions to both incorporate the dramatic embrace by Moms of social media platforms and the strong tune out Moms have to top-down messaging from companies.

Here are 10 key steps for savvy marketers to reach Mom consumers and engage them as passionate brand advocates:

- **Understand Nuances:** With 9 out of 10 Moms on Facebook and Moms' Twitter use at 63%, Moms utilize social media for so much more than keeping in touch — they pay close attention to how brands interact with them online. And, 4 out of 5 Moms maintain two separate identities on Facebook — one public and one private.

- **Go Where They Hang Out:** Driving Moms to brand websites represents a thing of the past. Today, Moms want brands to come to them — to the online neighborhoods where they congregate, such as Twitter, Facebook and blogs. In fact, 56% of Moms agree that brands can most effectively reach them via social media networks or through Mom bloggers.

- **Talk with Them:** Moms want conversational engagement with brands — and 81% say they feel more connected to a brand with regular interaction. They want brands to seek out their ideas and opinions — not push marketing messaging at them.

- **Inspire Them to Talk about You:** Moms love hearing insight from fellow Moms — and they particularly seek out “been-there, tried-that” knowledge on brands and products. First-person peer

perspectives resonate so much more effectively and with more credibility than advertising or celebrity endorsements.

- **Get Real:** Moms look for authenticity and candor in dealing with brands. When hearing from companies, Moms want original content, direct interaction, and attentiveness from a real “human.” Plus, Moms inherently distrust brand messaging.

- **Keep At It:** When brands interact regularly with Moms, it creates a sense of connection and fosters the feeling that Moms can access content or relationships before others — which generates strong word-of-mouth action. Ninety-one percent of Moms say they feel more informed about a company's promotions with regular engagement.

- **Meet Up:** Smart brands know the importance of offline personal interaction. Face-to-face meetings, whether they're with top Mom bloggers or key influencers, allow brands to listen, engage, and interact directly with Mom ambassadors. These events signify a willingness by brands to take the time to share their stories with Moms, to engage them on the latest developments, and, most important, to learn from them.

- **Embrace Advocates:** Moms want to

engage with the brands they feel passionate about — and then share their insight with other Moms. Set your best advocates in motion on behalf of your brand and watch the enthusiasm ignite — both online via social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and blogs, as well as offline, for example, through local Mom groups and parenting organizations.

- **Encourage Connections:** One in three Moms wants to meet other Moms in their community. Brand teams who facilitate these connections — by creating local, offline opportunities for Moms — extend the reach of their national programs and generate loyalty.

- **Go Mobile:** With more than 70% of Moms toting smart phones and 31% carrying one for over two years, more and more opportunities exist for brands to stay on Moms' radar screens — offering coupons, special offers, and keeping connected.

In the newly emergent conversational marketing paradigm, relationships rule the day with Moms. When Moms feel listened to, answered, respected and celebrated, their passion about a brand or company translates into long-term loyalty and increased spending.

*Stacy DeBroff is Founder and CEO of Mom Central Consulting. ●*

## Former staffers apologize to Hill & Knowlton

By Greg Hazley

Two former Hill & Knowlton Australia executives have apologized to the firm for poaching clients and staff, part of an out-of-court settlement after H&K brought legal action against them and Edelman, where they both now work.

Michelle Hutton, now Australia CEO for Edelman and former Australasia CEO for H&K, and Anna MacIntosh, consumer marketing director at Edelman who previously led H&K's Australia consumer practice, have admitted in letters to H&K that they were “involved” in soliciting certain clients and staff of H&K while employed at Edelman.

“I recognize that my conduct was not appropriate in the circumstances and I apologize to H&K unreservedly,” each said in apology letters to H&K's Asia-Pacific president and CEO Vivian Lines.

Dave Robinson, President and CEO of H&K's Australia, Middle East, Africa and South/Central Asia region, told *O'Dwyer's* the complaint brought in Supreme Court of New South Wales was resolved out of court, substantially in the favor of his agency. He noted apology letters from both executives were part of that deal and added that the actions they admitted to performing run counter to Edelman's own ethics code.

In a statement to *O'Dwyer's*, Hutton said she is pleased that the legal proceedings against her, MacIntosh and Edelman have been concluded.

“A range of allegations were made against each of us, and we have jointly defended our conduct and position in relation to these matters very strongly,” she said. “We look forward to putting the proceedings behind us and getting on with business at Edelman Australia.”

H&K is part of WPP. Edelman is independent.

# Social media's rise presents new fashion PR challenges

By Robin Kassner

**M**edia is in a constant state of flux. As a beauty and fashion publicist, you need to shift with that landscape or you'll lose your efficacy.

Social media is a tool that allows consumers to interact with their favorite brands. Once considered the bastard stepchild of the media, online communications channels such as blogs, Facebook and Twitter are now becoming increasingly more popular than their print counterparts. Social media is fast and can deliver immediate, measurable results, which makes clients happy. You might not be able to get an article into a print magazine for months, whereas you can get an article placed in *People Style Watch Online* or *Daily Candy* the next day. For online shops, online media has a very tangible monetary value because they can see exactly how many clicks they get from a certain media placement and know how many of those clicks result in sales.

Social media is now integral to driving a new brand's image and maintaining an established line's popularity; it's something you must be immersed in to be an effective brand advocate for your clients.

Unfortunately, many 'traditional' beauty and fashion PR firms have been slow to accept that social media is here to stay. Some communicators still do not recog-

nize social media's power in transmitting their clients' messages directly to consumers. These firms are like an ostrich burying its head in the sand. Magazine sales are dwindling, and familiar titles are going out of business because most of the content consumers read is online media. While traditional media is still important, a thorough understanding of online media awards opportunities to connect with consumers, especially in beauty and fashion PR.

But using social media isn't enough. You need to provide relevant and intriguing content to create a dialogue that attracts your target market. Yes, Twitter moves fast, but that does not mean your tweets should not be carefully thought out. You cannot just create your Twitter account and start tweeting anything and everything that comes to mind. You need to have a clear idea of who your audience is and what kind of voice you want your company to have. Just like traditional PR, it is all about the image you portray. The information you put out needs to be valuable to those that will be reading it, so if your target market is made up of young fashionistas, you need to put yourself in their (trendy) shoes and think about what kind of information will catch their attention and keep them coming back for more. Tweeting stock market news to fashion-obsessed teens is just as ineffective as pitching a celebrity fashion story to the sports editor of the *New York Times*.

We all know the old saying "a picture is worth a thousand words." Well, in the social media world, "a twit-pic is worth 140 characters." Followers and fans love to get a glimpse of what goes on behind the scenes. Tweet pictures of the production of a photo shoot, the filming of a commercial, or even something as simple as snapping a pic of a day in the office. This will allow them to feel a personal connection, and will strengthen the relationship between the brand and it's consumers. Another crucial Twitter move? ASK your followers for their advice and feedback. This will show them how important they are to the brand and that their opinions are the ones that matter.

The terminology of your tweets should match the lingo of your target audience. For instance, If your audience is primarily comprised of young women, saying words like "perf" and "obvi" are totally apropos for your tweets. I've seen some desperate PR firms buy (yes, literally

purchase) Twitter followers, and it's unfortunate for their clients. They end up having the mirage of a high number of followers but little impact on consumers because of the lack of customer engagement. Thus, their brand message is not getting across and their clients are being underserved.

Two brands that have really mastered the use of social media are DKNY and Oscar de la Renta. DKNY PR Girl and Oscar PR Girl are Twitter rockstars. Their tweets are witty, interesting, fun, and appeal to their target audience of young fashionistas. They have high quality content so they have a great deal of impact in the twitterverse. These fashion behemoths could have chosen to just tweet from their corporate names DKNY or Oscar de la Renta and could choose to feature boring corporate tweets, but the companies that are using that method don't have any impact on social media.

Recently, a client of Haute PR was a bit apprehensive when we took over their Twitter account. Although their brand appealed to young, hip, fashionable girls, their Twitter was very corporate and dry and did not grab the attention of consumers. They had millions of website users but had very few Twitter followers and did not understand why. At first, they were reluctant to hand over the reins to their Twitter account, telling us that important business information was being disseminated via Twitter that their customers need to know. I read the top tweet and it said "the site will be down between the hours of 3:00-5:00 a.m. for system maintenance." Let's be honest, not even the nerdiest of nerds wants to read that on Twitter. If you want to go shopping on the site and it's down, that might be a relevant message for the homepage, but having it on Twitter for days just makes their Twitter seem unengaging to the consumer.

Social media is becoming an increasingly attractive tool for public relations firms. Although traditional PR is still necessary, firms need to integrate a comprehensive social media plan into their overall public relations campaigns to successfully reach their client's consumers. In this day and age, social media should be mandatory for any successful PR practitioner.

*Robin Kassner is CEO of Haute PR in New York, a full-service public relations and marketing agency representing beauty, fashion, and luxury lifestyle brands. ●*

## PR News Briefs

### REGAN GRABS FASHION SHOP

Regan Communications, the \$20 million Boston-based firm, has acquired boutique beauty/fashion shop 5s PR.

5s Founder Jessica deGuardiola has relocated to New York and takes a VP title at Regan.

George Regan, President of the No. 11 independent firm, said deGuardiola brings an "outstanding" roster of clients that creates a new dynamic for the firm in the Big Apple.

Clients have included designer Sophie Blake, JFS Design Studio, New York attorney Daniel Gershburg and Fabricadabra.

deGuardiola, who started out as a PR assistant for Saks Fifth Avenue in 2004, said Regan's travel and hospitality PR will compliment her background in the fashion and lifestyle sector for an "even stronger foothold in the New York market."

Regan, which also has outposts in Connecticut, Rhode Island and Cape Cod, posted revenue of \$19.5 million in 2010, according to *O'Dwyer's* 2011 rankings of PR firms.



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# Unilever unveils 'tween' outreach efforts

More companies are now taking an interest in the 'tween' market, that awkward gray area between childhood and adolescence. In one unique attempt, British consumer product giant Unilever teamed up with Weber Shandwick to reach out and market their products to this often-unnoticed segment.

By Abby Rose Dalto

Unilever, the company behind the Degree, Dove and Suave deodorant brands, recently hosted a back-to-school party in Manhattan to promote the Dove go fresh Rebalance line to tweens.

The August 2 "Back To School Bash" was hosted by Unilever, Stardoll and Weber Shandwick and took place at Hudson Studios, where the company targeted tween girls by offering them a night of pampering

and fun.

A fashion consultant introduced girls to the newest trends in tween fashion, showing off racks of clothes and rows of shoes. Guests were treated to makeovers with professional stylists followed by a photo shoot with Stardoll and a meet-and-greet with parenting expert and author, Rosalind Wiseman.

Wiseman signed copies of her books "Boys, Girls and Other Hazardous Materials" and "Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends, and the New Realities of Girl World," while the girls snacked on finger foods and sipped fruity drinks. The newest Dove go fresh scent, Rebalance, was introduced at the party in the form of a deodorant, body wash and body mist. Every guest went home with a free Dove sample, a mini Caboodles



Two 'tweens' show off their treats from the Unilever "Back to School Bash" event in New York City.

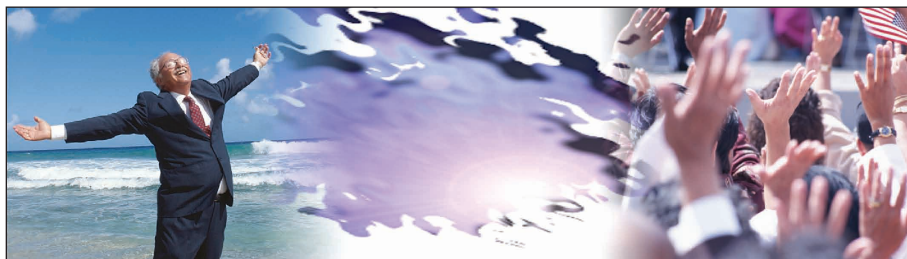
Photo by Abby Rose Dalto

makeup case and a photograph commemorating the night.

Tweens are now the source of more than \$40 billion in annual spending power. Although the Dove products are not specifically designed for tweens, it's no surprise that the brand would be looking for a unique way to target this demographic — and more importantly — their parents.

The event was held as part of Unilever's "Don't Fret The Sweat" campaign, aimed at helping parents and children to "successfully navigate the tricky tween years" including all their "sweat-inducing moments". Unilever has partnered with HealthyChildren.org to promote access to children's health and hygiene information and provide pediatricians tools to communicate with families of tweens. According to a survey commissioned by the campaign, 53% of 8-to-12-year-olds and 85% of parents feel stressed about the upcoming school year, including anxiety about hygiene, appearance and personal care. The company has compiled a team of experts on their website DontFretTheSweat.com, to offer advice regarding the physical and emotional changes that tweens face.

No longer children but not yet adults, tweens are often attracted to brands and products that are "cool" or allow them to feel independent and grown-up. The web campaign may successfully engage the parents, but reaching out to tweens via social media alone is difficult due to COPPA regulations and other online restrictions for children under 13. Companies like Unilever are trying to reach out to this age group by treating them to fun, interesting experiences like the "Back To School Bash," which are designed to make them feel special. ●



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# How social media has changed the B2B landscape

**Social media has seeped into every industry conceivable, yet business-to-business companies continue to struggle with what exactly “being social” means.**

By Jackie Gustner and Steffen Ryan

If large numbers of customers aren't on Twitter or Facebook talking about a relevant B2B product or service, many companies rightly question whether they should have a presence on these platforms. Others succumb to perceived competitive pressures and jump into social media without fully considering their strategy and the investment needed for success.

Becoming more social ultimately means being more transparent. It's less about the technology and platforms, and more about creating ways to authentically engage with clients and prospects — building a community where like-minded people can connect with each other. The ideal outcome is increased loyalty to your brand and advocacy on its behalf.

There are many ways to accomplish this. Here's six we find valuable.

**1. Listen before you speak.** The first step in any successful social program is uncovering what resonates with your audience and listening to how they talk about your content, as well as how and where they interact with each other. Information offered in the wrong way, in the wrong place to the wrong audience is no doubt a waste of resources.

**2. Think of your website as a digital storytelling engine.** People gravitate toward online destinations where they can have conversations around shared interests. Sometimes conversations are sparked with a thought-provoking idea or opinion; other times the spark is a piece of content.

Beyond providing the basic information about your company, products and services, your website should be a platform for news, opinions, images and data — a launch pad for content that can generate or contribute to conversations online.

**3. Leverage video for storytelling, even if it's not perfectly polished.** Video is a great tool for social media engagement, but companies sometimes fall into the trap of over-thinking video production — emphasizing polish over authen-

ticity. Production costs and time-consuming editing or branding requirements can add up, and good stories may end up not getting told at all.

People often just want genuine and timely information. A low-tech, in-the-moment interview with a company expert can be immensely valuable even if you don't have a great studio, ideal lighting or perfect acoustics.

When a U.S. Army client hosted a surgical tent exhibit at the 2010 American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress, they used a simple handheld video camera to capture Lieutenant Colonel Dwight Kellicut, chief of Vascular Surgery at Tripler Army Medical Center, explaining the role of the forward surgical team in combat. The video was then syndicated via the widely read Army Strong Stories blog and on its corresponding YouTube channel. This was a quick and easy way to help people experience the exhibit from anywhere.

**4. Don't get hung up on one format.** Presenting audience-relevant information in a variety of formats encourages visibility through multiple access points. For example, a lengthy white paper can be repurposed as an infographic, video, and other online or mobile-friendly formats to accommodate the various ways people consume and share information.

Other, newer formats up the ante on interaction. One brand built a simulation game that allows participants to play the role of CEO and solve business challenges with its products. This type of “gamification” is a nascent trend that leverages the mechanics and psychology of social gaming so customers can interact with a company's brand, products or services in a way that's socially connected and personally rewarding.

**5. Empower employees, then prepare them.** A company's greatest asset is its employees. They're the ones who come up with the ideas, build the products, sell and support them. Your goal should be to facilitate access so they can share knowledge and expertise. Consider allowing certain employees to do guest blog posts or video interviews.

But also realize that while you have some level of oversight when giving employees the spotlight on your official channels, they have the editorial control when broadcasting to their own social networks. Company leaders may worry about what employees say online, and rightly so. It's a drastic change from hav-

ing only designated PR or marketing spokespeople speaking for your organization. That's why it's important to have a social media policy in place along with adequate training. Be sure to provide specific examples of what's appropriate to say or do with social media, and what's not — and explain how such guidelines are simply an extension of ethical behavior and common sense.

**6. Think about what you'd do in a crisis.** There's nothing like a crisis to make companies realize the importance of social media. What do you do when something erupts and people begin talking about it on Twitter and Facebook? How do you react when facts go out the window as the conversation spins wildly out of control?

The best way to prepare for a crisis is to create one that feels uncomfortably real. Weber Shandwick uses social media crisis simulator that puts company leaders in the middle of such a “crisis,” complete with incendiary posts and comments from fictional people we control from behind the curtain. Real-time dialogue defines crises today, and a company must practice in order to be prepared. These simulations help identify deficiencies or gaps in a company's current crisis procedures.

Even if you don't go through a crisis drill, you can still think through what might happen during a crisis and how you would respond. Are your current communications tools adequate? Do you have a procedure for monitoring and analyzing issues as they arise? Does everyone know their role? Do employees understand your social media policy?

A successful social media strategy depends on adapting to new standards of openness and engagement. Don't be afraid to experiment as you build on your natural strengths to best tell your stories.

*Jackie Gustner, APR, is a Vice President in Weber Shandwick's Financial Services practice. Steffen Ryan is a Weber Shandwick Digital Strategist. ●*



Jackie Gustner



Steffen Ryan

# Philanthropy beats freebies at blogger conference

**Brand-sponsored conferences have always been notorious havens for ‘swag,’ that promotional bounty companies use to swoon attendees. Now many conferences with a corporate presence are taking the opportunity to push another product: corporate responsibility.**

By Abby Rose Dalto

The seventh annual BlogHer Conference, one of the world’s largest forums for women in social media, took place August 5-6 at the San Diego Convention Center. A who’s who for the female blogging community, this year’s conference brought more than 4,000 attendees together to focus on women’s growing impact and influence in the blogging community. As always, the conference hosted a series of workshops — from media literacy to video blogging to social media marketing — and the opportunity to connect with online peers in the real world.

At the center of the conference was BlogHer (blogher.com), the leading participatory news, entertainment and information network for women online, which reaches more than 20 million women each month according to Nielsen.

Making a noted appearance were the 100-plus brands that helped sponsor the event, which included *Fortune* 500 companies such as Procter & Gamble, Johnson & Johnson, and PepsiCo. While the primary focus of the conference is hands-on-learning, discussions, and networking opportunities, the sponsors’ presence each year simply cannot be ignored.

## ‘Swag’ takes a backseat

Throughout the two-day conference bloggers were given the opportunity to stop in at the Expo Hall to meet with representatives from every company, view product demonstrations and receive free samples and coupons. BlogHer is well known for doling out massive amounts of free “swag” to its members, and while the 2011 conference proved no exception, there was another element this year that was far more altruistic. The theme at BlogHer11 seemed to be Causes, with many of the sponsors happily promoting their current philanthropic endeavors and community outreach programs.

For instance, LG Mobile hosted the “LG Text Ed Lounge” where they offered tips and resources on how to protect chil-

dren and teens from potentially harmful mobile behaviors and promote safe, responsible phone usage for the entire family.

McDonald’s kicked off their “Listening Tour” at BlogHer with a luncheon to gain input on how they can best serve and improve communities by helping customers make nutrition-minded choices. They also announced their “Commitments to Offer Improved Nutrition Choices” plan to expand and improve their nutritionally-balanced menu choices and passed out coupons for low calorie choices like their fruit and maple oatmeal, premium grilled chicken sandwich and apple dippers.

Even the standard “swag” tote bag full of freebies that bloggers receive upon check-in every year had an eco-friendly twist for 2011. The bag, courtesy of CVS/pharmacy, also included an ExtraCare “Green Bag Tag”. The goal of the Green Bag Tag program — which rewards CVS shoppers for using reusable shopping bags instead of single-use plastic bags — is to reduce the amount of waste from disposable plastic bags.

## Philanthropy on display

While most of these companies have impressive histories when it comes to corporate social responsibility, this year



The “Voices of the Year” honorees are at the 2011 BlogHer Conference Community Keynote.



The BlogHer Conference offers women bloggers the opportunity to connect face-to-face with online peers.

Photos by Ayala Photography

those endeavors were prominently on display in the Expo Hall. Among these was P&G’s “Future Friendly,” a program that helps consumers save energy, conserve water and reduce waste. P&G’s “Home Away From Home” in the Expo Hall not only offered information on P&G brands and products, but also eco-friendly tips. P&G also sponsored the Future Friendly Swag Exchange suite,

Continued on next page



where attendees could drop off unwanted swag and provided recycling bins throughout the conference center.

P&G brands Iams and Bounty also heralded their individual projects, Iams Home 4 the Holidays and The Teacher Wish List, respectively. Iams Home 4 the Holidays is one of the largest and most successful pet adoption programs in the world. Since it began in 1999, the program has had a hand in nearly six million pet adoptions.

TeacherWishList.com is a Web site launched by Bounty and School Family Media that helps reduce the amount of money teachers are spending on essential classroom supplies. According to a recent survey of elementary and middle-school teachers, 71% reported spending an average of \$462 a year out of their own pockets on supplies for their classrooms.

“With budget cuts sweeping through schools nationwide, the financial burden of providing necessary school supplies falls on teachers’ shoulders,” said Laura Lewis, External Relations Manager for Bounty. “Bounty is delighted to help educators be boundless in their classrooms.”

Representatives from Best Buy gave out bracelets made by female entrepreneurs in India, to promote their Women’s Leadership Forum (WOLF). WOLF@Best Buy is a network of employees, consumers and nonprofit partners working together to make Best Buy a great place for women to work and shop. The bracelets were purchased as part of WOLF’s partnership with the Grameen Foundation, through which they support local female entrepreneurs around the world.

“Giving back to organizations that support women and girls is incredibly important to the work,” said Carolyn Aberman, Senior Manager of Public Relations at Best Buy. “During the BlogHer event, these bracelets allowed us to connect with the bloggers in a really authentic way.”

#### Non-profits make noted appearance

Jimmy Dean worked with MWW Group to drive awareness for the brand’s new partnership with Share Our Strength’s “No Kid Hungry” Campaign. Conference attendees were asked to take a pledge, noting their commitment to ending childhood hunger in America. In exchange for every pledge taken on-site, Jimmy Dean made a donation to help Share Our Strength feed a child in need. Over 1,100 pledges were generated at the conference according to Sara Matheu, Communications Director for Sara Lee,

and as a result, Jimmy Dean helped connect 10,000 hungry kids with up to 10 meals.

Matheu called BlogHer “the perfect platform to introduce and seed this cause marketing initiative to a highly-influential audience and allow bloggers the chance to experience the Jimmy Dean brand while becoming more familiar with its products and values.”

Other nonprofit organizations present in the Expo Hall included “Moms for Antibiotics Awareness”, part of the PEW Campaign on Human Health and Industrial Farming; Bankrupting America, an educational project that explores the policies hindering economic opportunity and growth in America; and HealthyWomen, the nation’s leading independent health information source for women. The conference wrapped up Sunday morning with the first ever BlogHer Family Walk, organized by Together Counts, a nationwide program inspiring active and healthy living.

While these companies have always had corporate responsibility and cause marketing policies, it seems that in recent years they have been putting more of a public focus on these programs. Many people would agree that big businesses have a duty to “give back” to the community and to contribute to the rest of the world in a socially conscious and responsible way, but how a corporation treats the environment, their local community and the global community matters even more nowadays.

Blogging and other social media can play an important role in generating awareness and discussion about these programs. BlogHer co-founder and CEO Lisa Stone has described the female blogger as “one of the most powerful communicators in social media today” and it’s clear that many corporations already recognize the growing influence that female bloggers hold. There are over 160 million adults on the Internet in the U.S. and women represent the majority of that population. Women also control the majority of consumer spending.

In this economic climate, consumers



The Jimmy Dean Sun shows off the “No Kid Hungry” pledge wall at BlogHer. The event generated over 1,100 pledges, resulting in 10,000 children in need receiving nourishing meals.

Photo courtesy of Sara Lee.

are more discriminating than ever when it comes to how they decide to spend their money. They want to support companies and brands that share their values and make a real difference in the world. At conferences like BlogHer, it is no longer enough for these companies to give female bloggers a free sample and hope that they will mention or review the product on their blogs. They now also need to give these women a reason to support the company by showing them how the brand contributes to the rest of the world. ●

#### PR news briefs

### IPG SELLS FACEBOOK STAKE

Interpublic has unloaded half of its five-year-old stake in Facebook for \$133 million, a significant return on its initial \$5 million investment.

The advertising and PR conglomerate bought a small stake of less than one-half a percent of FB in 2006.

CEO Michael Roth said an attractive opportunity to divest a portion of its position presented itself as he also announced that IPG would spend \$150 million buying back stock, expanding on an existing \$300 million re-purchase program started back in February.

Interpublic in late July reported a 31% rise in second quarter net income to \$108.9 million as revenues jumped to \$1.7 billion. Its shares at around \$8.90, toward the lower end of its \$7.49-\$13.35 range over the past year.

Based on the sale of IPG’s small stake, Facebook’s valuation is pegged around \$66 billion.

Roth said Facebook’s “ubiquity” has meant the “strategic value of our initial investment has moderated, while the financial value of that stake appreciated significantly.”

IPG did not disclose the buyer of its stake.

The company first divulged the stake in a footnote to its 2010 annual report, noting it had become big enough to require the company to disclose it to the SEC. IPG PR units include Weber Shandwick, GolinHarris, Rogers & Cowan and DeVries PR.

# Media landscape puts fashion PR pros in creative roles

**Like every facet of the communications industry, social media has changed the game for PR pros specializing in beauty and fashion. Faced with a new landscape of media outlets — and so many of them to choose from — PR pros have been forced to adopt a fiercer, increasingly specialized approach. According to experts, one byproduct of this transformation has been more creative decisions being made by PR pros, controls formerly wielded only by editors.**

By Jon Gingerich



**The new beauty and fashion media landscape is far more vast and unpredictable than its print counterpart, often making work difficult for PR pros. A lack of editorial leadership at many blogs however, has now placed creative decisions in the hands of those crafting marketing messages.**

Photo by Michael OShea.

In case you're still unaware, page-counts at U.S. fashion magazines have been shrinking universally for the past three years. Advertising revenues have dried up, not only because readers have left but because many big retail brands have closed and fashion houses now find themselves mired in debt.

The resulting vacuum, combined with the birth of new technologies and an online communications revolution, has resulted in a reader diaspora to a glut of ever-specialized beauty, fashion and lifestyle blogs. Now competing with top print magazines are hundreds — no, thousands — of daily beauty and fashion sites, some run by massive publishing houses, others run from bedrooms, many of which are pumping more information into the ether than magazines and now reaching bigger audiences.

Our media landscape is louder than ever. But there's something else. The demographics, distribution and audiences filling these venues are widely more disparate than their old-world counterparts. Blogs' niche draw demands they be fed more specific information. For PR pros to survive in this landscape, specific targeting is needed now more than ever. Strategic messaging has always been a rule in communications. Now it is paramount for survival.

"There's no real concentration of media anymore," said Amanda Schuon, Partner at Truth be Told Inc. "Getting on one of the big national morning shows, while still great, just doesn't have the impact it used to. By that time people are at their desks getting on 15 or 20 different sites. Instead of looking under one boulder you're picking up a lot of small rocks. I think, in general, there's now

this delusion that it's hard to find your end consumer just because they're hiding in a lot more places."

According to Jayne Morehouse, President of Jayne & Company in Cleveland, the addition of so many media outlets doesn't simply mean PR pros must have their thumbs on more pulses. Not only do PR pros have to pinpoint messages more strategically than before, there's an added variable that readers can now interact in this new forum, both with each other and directly with those message. Constant monitoring — of readers, of outlets, of clients — is needed to craft and evolve the conversation.

"It used to be that if I wanted to hit the college crowd I could get them with a story in *Glamour*. Now readers are more likely to hit specific blogs that are targeting them more directly. It's a concept I think everyone's struggling with every day," Morehouse said. "A lot of agencies tend to apply their same approach across all of their clients. You simply can't do that and provide any meaningful benefit. Today's media landscape and communications options are just too vast, while time and budgets are shrinking. You have to be targeted and strategic."

Given all the crafting and targeting one message needs just to take root, the assembly line models of yesteryear are geared to work in 2011 like a steam

engine on an interstate. In order for any form of communications to be successful, it must be customized.

"The first thing I ask a client is 'what is your goal of this program?'" Morehouse said. "That goes whether it's a large global hair care brand or a single salon owner/stylist/makeup artist who just wants to make a bigger name in her city. You must define the one most important goal, get agreement from the client's whole team and work out from there. Then, we develop a very customized brand communications program and budget accordingly."

## Industry takes creative reins

With audiences becoming so increasingly fragmented, no one can expect every message to hit home, just like PR pros can't be expected to reach everyone all the time. Fortunately for the industry, there's a payout in the midst of all this extra work.

Everyone knows social media is far more democratized than print or broadcast media in the content it accepts. However, experts say blogs — many of which are still small operations and lacking in editorial wherewithal — rely more on input from outside message crafters, thereby placing PR pros in the default roles of creative director.

"We're reaching out to final audiences more instead of reaching out to the edi-

Continued on next page



tors who would then reach out to those readers,” Morehouse said. “We’re doing a lot more creative work now, creating more original content when before we were sending it to the various intermediaries.”

Losing the shackles of these traditional intermediaries, the message crafters find they are not only allowed more creative control, they can craft messages that get to their targets directly.

“We see a ton of interest from the fashion/beauty community in Facebook and Twitter chats, which give consumers direct exposure to personalities and brand ambassadors they usually wouldn’t be able to access,” said Liz Kaplow, head of Kaplow in New York. “For example, our Target client recently hosted a chat with maternity designer Liz Lange which enabled her fans to directly engage with her. These interactions continue to drive a lot of consumers to interact directly with the brand.”

According to Kaplow, this also means beauty and fashion clients can use an armory of new creative tools built for direct engagement. Video continues to be a big area of interest in social media, as is a new trend Kaplow referred to as “Haul Vloggers.”

“These are bloggers who literally go shopping and take videos of what they are buying (their “haul”) and talk about the fashion. These vloggers are hugely influential and have large followings on YouTube/Facebook/Twitter. Brands are engaging with these vloggers by offering them gift cards to go shopping or sponsoring their individual videos.”

#### **Authenticity a must**

Today’s consumers were raised with a cynical eye. Authenticity is coveted, culturally mined, sought after like a precious resource. With this much direct, personalized engagement, experts said the onus is on PR pros to craft messages that are consistent and sincere. It’s more important than ever to spend the time developing a strategy before it’s spread through the channels.

“We used to dedicate our creativity, time and budgets trying to persuade the media to write and talk about our clients. Today that’s still important, but it’s at least as important to inspire our end users and influencers,” Morehouse said. “A lot of times that means saying no and turning down opportunities and events that might generate a short term buzz but don’t fit within the long- or short-term strategy. Plus, many companies want to ‘do PR,’ but aren’t necessarily sure what they want to accomplish or how they will measure it. That’s why you have to

get the agreement up front if you want to both build a relationship on behalf of your client and maintain a positive relationship between your agency and the client.”

This increased demand for authenticity has also changed the messages that work. Many industry standbys, such as the celebrity endorsement, are waning. Some experts said that while consumer tastes are changing, the success of celebrity endorsement still depends on the product and the audience.

“On one hand there’s been this proliferation of ‘real people in real moments’ that give people inspiration. For celebrities, it depends on the product,” Schuon said. “For some of the products we represent, like jewelry clients, the right celebrity can contextualize the piece. People still need a guide on how to wear it, and depending on the celebrity, it can become the gateway to the weekly entertainment publications. I really think it depends on who the celebrity is and what the product is.”

#### **Print far from ‘dead’**

With all the segmentation and diversification, and an Alexandrian library of new rules surrounding the social media PR playbook, it’d be a reasonable assumption that PR pros could avoid the social media rigmarole and make things easier on themselves by sticking to print outlets. It just doesn’t work.

“Traditional” beauty editors have since joined the blogging, tweeting, and Facebooking fray. A typical fashion magazine editor is now interested not only in her print flagship, but the magazine’s blog and website, as well as her own personal blog, each of which has been created with a different personality in mind. This means PR pros must stay on top of a publication’s different media offerings and understand the reach, scope and style of each. Agencies need to manage and execute the client’s message consistently in this realm; messages should not only be personalized, they should be integrated uniformly across the gamut of media’s various outlets. So, be consistent, but deploy that consistency in different messages each time. If it sounds difficult, that’s because it is.

“We have to be creative and have to understand how different media help elevate visibility,” Schuon said. “There’s always going to be your top fashion magazines and lot of them have digital versions and if you don’t get your story in print, digital is still powerful.”

Of course, many fashion editors have since left their print posts outright for blogs. And many bloggers are now a

kind of celebrity in their own rite. Kaplow said one of her firm’s recent clients, Timex Style, has now partnered with blogger Jessica Quark to drive visibility for their client toward what Kaplow called the “fashionista” crowd.

“One of the key trends we see is the emergence of the blogger as a key media constituent for brands and an incredibly influential ambassador to the consumer,” Kaplow said. “Bloggers are in a way the new kind of celebrities and brands are using them in the same way celebrities are used to showcase product into their wardrobe.”

“It’s no longer run to the bookstore to get the next month’s issue,” Morehouse said. “The most important step is to develop a relationship (with the editor) and her team, but then you need to read all of the above, know what and how they cover various topics, and track it all on a regular basis.” ●

## **PEOPLE IN PR**

### **Moore heads Easton-Bell comms. unit**

**E**aston-Bell Sports, the sporting goods company created with the 2006 merger of Riddell Bell and Easton Sports, has brought in Kimberly-Clark veteran Laura Moore to establish and lead a corporate communications unit.

Moore takes the role of Senior VP, Corporate Communications, reporting to president/CEO Paul Harrington and overseeing public affairs, media relations, crisis communications, PR and internal comms.

She has merger integration experience from an earlier stint as Senior VP, PR and Internal Comms., for Regions Financial Corp.

E-B, based in Van Nuys, Calif., had first quarter revenue of \$203.4 million. Its sports equipment brands include Easton, Bell, Riddell and Giro for pursuits like baseball, football, cycling and hockey.

Moore was also VP of Global Comms. for Kimberly Clark, Senior VP, Comms. and PR, RadioShack Corp., and VP, Corporate Comms., for Zale Corp.

MSLGroup is E-B’s PR agency.



**Laura Moore**

# O'Dwyer's Guide to: BEAUTY & FASHION PR

■ 9.11



Angelina Jolie wears a Jenny Packham evening gown on the red carpet at the Los Angeles premier of the *Tree of Life*. Film Fashion Client: Jenny Packham.

## BEEHIVE PR

1021 Bandana Blvd. E., Suite 226  
St. Paul, MN 55108-5112  
651/789-2232  
Fax: 651/789-2230  
www.beehivepr.biz

**Lisa Hannum, CEO**  
**Nicki Gibbs, Vice President**

Beehive PR is a strategic PR

boutique located in Saint Paul, Minn. We help our clients find creative paths from where they are to where they want to be. Our inspiration comes from listening to what their key audiences need, then engaging them when and where it matters most.

Beehive's staff has extensive beauty and fashion expertise, and has represented brands like Christopher & Banks, Dayton's, Dressbarn Stores, Juut Salonspa



Mary Kay and Coyne PR created experiential workshops for press to test out Mary Kay's groundbreaking new foundation. This intimate, multi-session event provided a personalized experience for editors, during which a celebrity makeup artist provided shade-matching tips and Mary Kay's Chief Scientific Officer spoke about the formulation and benefits, as well as data from a survey of real women on perceptions and concerns about foundation, helping to demonstrate the need for this new "foundation + skin care" product.

and J.R. Watkins Naturals.

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New York, NY 10018  
212/938-0166

**Tom Coyne, CEO**  
**Rich Lukis, President**  
**Deborah Sierchio, Vice President, Beauty & Fashion**

Coyne PR is unlike any agency you've experienced before. Brands come to us for our reputation and stay with us for the commitment and passion we have for their business. With an

unbridled creative force, limitless enthusiasm and unmatched client service, Coyne PR attracts high-caliber clients and leading brands in every industry, including the beauty and fashion industries. Coyne PR's Beauty & Fashion team implements campaigns for clients including Mary Kay, Naturalizer and Casio Timepieces. The team knows that the measure of success is based on the ability to impeccably groom the client's image. From product launches and special events, to social media campaigns, the Beauty & Fashion team thinks bigger and accelerates buzz for its clients, always keeping a finger on the pulse of this fast-paced industry. Coyne PR's Beauty & Fashion team combines strategy and creativity to generate the best possible results — taking each and every client exactly where they want to be ... and beyond.

The October issue of *O'Dwyer's* will profile PR firms that specialize in healthcare. If you would like your firm to be listed, contact Editor Jon Gingerich at 646/843-2080 or [jon@odwyerpr.com](mailto:jon@odwyerpr.com)



## FILM FASHION

A Division of Rogers & Cowan  
Pacific Design Center  
8687 Melrose Ave., G684  
Los Angeles, CA 90069  
310/854-8195  
Fax: 310/854-8138  
carla.blizzard@filmfashion.com  
www.filmfashion.com

**Carla Blizzard**, Senior Vice President

Film Fashion, an exclusive division of Rogers & Cowan, specializes in matching fashion and accessory brands with prominent celebrities to provide heightened brand awareness. This specialty PR firm creates customized solutions to match clients and their latest fashions with the "right" celebrities and trendsetters that embody their brand and promote the desired image.

The firm leverages these Hollywood associations into media coverage through the execution of strategic media relations campaigns targeting key fashion, lifestyle, and entertainment press. Day-to-Day media activities for their roster of fashion designers, fine jewelers, luxury goods, and specialty retailers may include designer profiles, collection launches, and fashion shows. Film Fashion's unique showroom space provides an optimal location to introduce media, stylists and celebrities to our client's brands by housing an edited collection of samples.

Recent projects have included dressing celebrities for magazine photo shoots and red carpet appearances, securing editorial placements and coordinating product placement working with talent such as Jennifer Lopez, Taylor Swift, Penelope Cruz, Halle Berry, Eva Mendes, Carrie Underwood, Beyoncé and Katy Perry. Clients include A Pea in the Pod, Catherine Malandrino, Chopard, David Meister, Georges Chakra, Jenny Packham, Pamela Roland, Swarovski, Tadashi Shoji and Zuhair Murad.

## FRENCH / WEST / VAUGHAN

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Raleigh, NC 27601  
919/832-6300  
www.fwv-us.com

**Rick French**, Chairman & CEO  
**David Gwyn**, President / Principal

**Natalie Best**, Executive Vice President / Principal

French/West/Vaughan (FWV) is the Southeast's largest public relations, public affairs and brand communications agency, independent or otherwise. Founded in 1997, FWV continues to play a leading role in beauty and fashion industry marketing.

Headquartered in Raleigh, N.C. with offices in New York City, Dallas, Tampa and Los Angeles, FWV specializes in helping clients build retail and consumer demand for their product lines through celebrity product placement, media coverage, line reviews, fashion previews, cooperative retail promotions and high-visibility trade show support.

The agency consistently earns accolades for its outstanding work and recently placed fourth in the country for PR firms specializing in beauty and fashion, according to the 2011 O'Dwyer's Ranking of PR Firms. FWV also won the 2006 O'Dwyer's award for PR excellence in beauty and fashion for its work with Justin Boots' Vintage Collection.

FWV's present and past beauty and fashion clients include Wrangler and Riders jeans, Justin Boots, Gemesis Diamond Company, Kinder Soles, Lily of France and Vanity Fair lingerie, Speedo, Vidal Sassoon, Givenchy, Ferragamo, Bob Mackie, Celine, Escada, La Prairie, Joanna Mastroianni, Charles & Colvard Created Moissanite, That's So Raven Fragrance and Wrangler Fragrance for Men, Vincent Shoes, Dearfoams, Diana Vincent Jewelers, Swatch, Monet, Marithe & Francois Girbaud, Kasper A.S.L suits and sportswear, Susan Gail handbags and Joe Boxer.

## HOPE-BECKHAM, INC.

17 Executive Park Drive, Suite 600  
Atlanta, GA 30329  
404/604-2613  
dvanvoorhis@hopebeckham.com  
www.hopebeckham.com

The latest "must have" dress or beauty product, the opening of a new retail location ... what do these things have in common?

They lack a voice, a way to



Hope-Beckham's client Belk Inc. unveiled the 2011 fall fashions with Givency's "Belfort" collection. Check out more fashions at [www.belk.com](http://www.belk.com).

effectively communicate with the consumer that raises awareness and influences buying decisions.

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From the launch of a new clothing line or the season's top colors, new product innovations or celebrity fragrances, to the re-branding and celebrating new retail locations, Hope-Beckham understands how to effectively reach a targeted audience.

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Hope-Beckham is committed to being the best resource for clients — responding quicker, working faster and smarter and providing the best possible value for its clients.

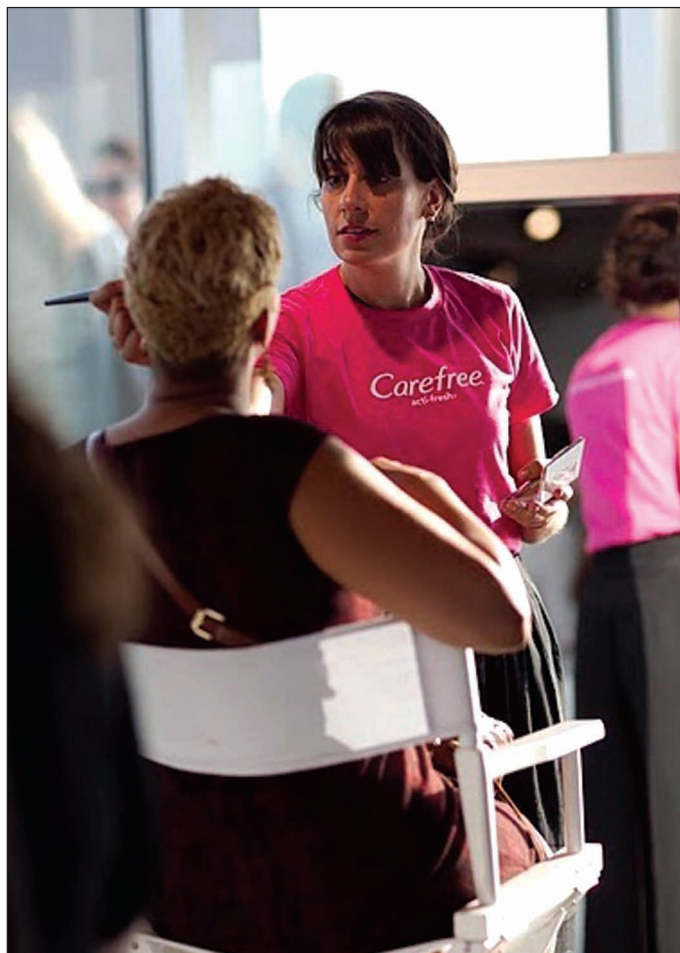
## HUNTER PUBLIC RELATIONS

41 Madison Avenue, 5th Floor  
New York, NY 10010-2202  
212/679-6600  
smormar@hunterpr.com  
www.hunterpr.com

**Grace Leong**, **Jason Winocour**,  
**Jonathan Lyon**, **Claire Burke**,  
**Mark Newman**, **Donetta Allen**  
and **Gigi Russo**, Partners

Hunter Public Relations is a certified woman owned, top-ranked marketing communications firm specializing in consumer and lifestyle public relations. Revitalizing mature brands, creating buzz for new products and building awareness among key influencer

Continued on page 22



Hunter Public Relations leveraged a Spa Week sponsorship to launch its new Carefree® Acti-Fresh™ liners. As the title sponsor of Spa Week 2011, the makers of Carefree® liners hosted a relaxing cocktail party where select consumers received spa treatments, as well as hair and makeup consultations from Allure. During this evening event in New York City, Allure educated consumers with tips on how to refresh their summer beauty routine.



JGA Account Executive Jade Moore (left) with CARGO Cosmetics Make-up Artist Renée Ryan, preparing for a deskside meeting with Marie Claire beauty editors.

## HUNTER PR

Continued from page 21

groups and celebrities are among the firm's specific areas of expertise.

Independently owned and operated for 22 years, the 80-person firm offers strategic marketing PR services including creative ideation and brainstorming facilitation, traditional and social media relations, special event production, product introductions, anniversaries, consumer contests, local market events, spokesperson tours and crisis counseling on behalf of some of America's most beloved and best known brands. Clients have included Johnson & Johnson, L'Occitane (Melvita U.S. launch), Dana Classic Fragrances, Alberto-Culver, Church & Dwight, and the New York City Clothing Bank.

## JANINE GORDON ASSOCIATES

11 East 26th Street, 19th floor  
New York NY 10010  
212/221-1713  
jgordon@jgordonassociates.com  
www.jgordonassociates.com

**Janine Gordon, President & CEO**  
**Alvin Schechter, Chairman**  
**John Donofrio, CFO**

Established in 1993 by Janine Gordon, formerly CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi Public Relations, JGA is a highly creative boutique with the savvy and energy required to build successful beauty brands.

We know that the most valuable component of a premium beauty product is its brand image. JGA's Health & Beauty specialists are highly skilled in communicating that image through our solid connections to leading consumer beauty and lifestyle journalists and personal access to trendsetters, influencers and third-party spokespeople. Clients have included Bare Escentuals, Make Up For Ever, naitiques, CARGO Cosmetics, diptyque, and Mustela®, among others.

Our chairman, Alvin Schechter, brings outstanding branding expertise to JGA clients, being one of the founders and former CEO of Interbrand Corporation.

JGA has especially wide experience in luxury lifestyle brands.

As long-term publicists for the American Express-Harrison Group yearly Survey of Affluence and Wealth in America, we are privy to the most up-to-date, detailed findings on what drives the behavior of the rich and super-rich.

Our work product is characterized by ingenuity in thinking and transparency in work style. Our goal is to deliver shrewd brand strategy, high-impact media outreach, exciting events, compelling celebrity endorsements, targeted social media and bold strategic alliances — always in the context of an integrated strategy. Result: positive brand awareness, increased sales and long-term brand value for our clients.

For more information, please visit [www.jgordonassociates.com](http://www.jgordonassociates.com).

## KAPLOW

19 West 44th Street, 6th Floor  
New York, NY 10036  
212/221-1713  
liz@kaplowpr.com  
www.kaplowpr.com

Kaplow West  
795 Folsom Street  
San Francisco, CA 94107

**Liz Kaplow, CEO**  
**Evan Jacobs, CFO**

Kaplow is an award-winning public relations firm dedicated to cultivating brand identities and reputations that nurture happy, loyal consumers. Kaplow exists for a singular reason: to emotionally connect our clients' brand stories with consumers who matter. We create programs that integrate a mix of traditional and social media to reach and influence consumers where they live.

Kaplow's creative digital strategy division, Kdrive, partners with our video creation, production and distribution center, Kstudio, to push PR beyond the edges of traditional media to build word of mouth about brands, fueling conversations where they occur.

Best-in-class clients include: Target, Skype, CVS Corp, Foursquare, Avon mark & Avon Foundation, Timex, Alberto Culver (Nexxus & St. Ives), Carter's & OshKosh, Tumi, Baby Phat, CafePress, Groupe SEB (Rowenta & T-Fal), GSI Commerce, HauteLook, Coupons.com, TheFind, Shiseido and CEW.





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Fax: 212/213-4790  
www.lovingandcompany.com

Loving + Company is a full-service public relations firm specializing in building brands that help people feel good, look great and live well. Focusing on consumer-engaging, bottom-line-driving lifestyle PR, the agency works with major personal care, beauty, wellness, home design and fashion brands.

The agency blends classic PR expertise with new media know-how to produce consumer-surrounding brand experiences. Loving + Company builds client programs that change minds, build dialogues, win hearts and move products. Strategic creativity is a hallmark of the firm. With an eye on pop culture and serious style, agency thinking is adventurous, unexpected and engaging.

Specializing in Brand Building, Media Relations, Social Media Marketing, Event Management, Crisis Communication and Cause-Related Marketing, Loving + Company delivers true life + style marketing.

## MALONEY & FOX

89 Fifth Avenue, 4th floor  
New York, NY 10003  
212/243-2000  
Direct: 646/356-8383  
Fax: 212/243-5500  
info@maloneyfox.com  
jlevinthal@maloneyfox.com  
www.maloneyfox.com

**Julie Levinthal**, *Fashion Biz Director*

Maloney & Fox (M&F) understands how important editorial is for fashion and accessories brands. That's a given. We build a strong foundation of coverage for our clients and then execute a holistic set of PR and Marketing strategies to bring brands into the zeitgeist and boost profits.

M&F knows how to maximize an attribute and celebrate an idiosyncrasy. Our highly successful experiential marketing initiatives — such as for the launch of a new line of Rockport shoes or the opening of outerwear brand Nau's first New York City store

— play to and ignite consumers' tactile, sensual, emotional and style prerogatives, providing a traditionally static craft with a powerful sensory dimension.

Furthermore, M&F is an agency capable of "master pairings." Uniting brands that share visions, yet don't compete, has yielded provocative and fruitful partnerships, promotions, editorial coverage and new customers. These include working with "Project Runway" Season Six winner Irina Shabayeva, to incorporate actual Tupperware plastic into her designs for her first Fashion Week runway show; pairing RCA televisions with skin care brand Malin & Goetz; and launching Italian beer Peroni at NY Design Week. VIP and celebrity relationships are also incorporated in both subtle and substantial ways.

M&F's exclusive client roster includes footwear leaders Rockport, Brooks Sports and MBT; Mercedes-Benz USA; Brookfield Properties; and William Grant & Sons' portfolio of brands, including The Balvenie, Hendrick's Gin, and Glenfiddich.

## MCENTYRE PUBLIC RELATIONS

305 Madison Avenue, Suite 1028  
New York, NY 10165  
212/856-9777  
Fax: 212/883-1771  
info@mcentyrepr.com  
www.mcentyrepublicrelations.com

Although the company has won business in the toy, publishing and luxury travel market, beauty and fashion remains the cornerstone at McEntyre Public Relations. And while the agency works with domestic clients, it continues to attract foreign companies eager to launch their products in the American market. Companies in India, Australia, Taiwan and Ireland look to McEntyre for the agency's big ideas — creative and ingenious ways the firm uses to get clients noticed fast and favorably. Media placement is key here and the firm, utilizing all media channels, routinely scores national television, print and online hits. Working in tandem with clients' brand managers, the company takes pride in helping to accomplish marketing and sales goals — whether it is for one of the

world's largest beauty companies or a new entrant to the beauty/fashion marketplace.

## MOREHOUSE COMMUNICATIONS INC.

16496 Falmouth Drive  
Cleveland, OH 44136  
440/846-6022  
Fax: 440/846-6024  
jayne@morehousepr.com

**Jayne Morehouse**, *President*

At Morehouse Comms., Inc., we build beautiful relationships for new, growing and established brands, products and personalities. We communicate beauty, fashion, wellness, natural and lifestyle brands' stories directly and via targeted traditional and social media to the audiences who matter most — from end consumers to your industry, from your distribution partners to your own community to create, build and strengthen awareness, leadership positioning, sales and ongoing connections. Our point of difference comes from a deep and interactive understanding of our clients' businesses, coupled with an indelible passion for the growth of their brands. But most of all, our fun, entertaining and relevant communications process makes your brand memorable.

## ROGERS & COWAN

919 Third Ave, 18th Floor  
New York, NY 10022  
212/445-8400  
Fax: 212/445-8290  
inquiries@rogersandcowan.com  
www.rogersandcowan.com

**Fran Curtis**, *Executive Vice President* (New York)  
**Maggie Gallant**, *Senior Vice President* (New York)  
**Carla Blizzard**, *Senior Vice President* (Los Angeles)

Rogers & Cowan treats each one of its Fashion and Beauty brands as a celebrity — because every brand has a distinct personality that sets it apart. With many of the top brands in Fashion and Beauty under our banner, we were among the very first PR agencies to leverage the explosive marketing power of fashion and celebrity.

The agency is located in New York and Los Angeles, two of the largest fashion capitals in the world. We offer extensive expertise in the fashion, beauty and luxury categories providing publicity and marketing campaigns, social media strategies, special event support, celebrity/influencer seeding, promotions and product placement. Our commitment is illustrated in the work we do in promoting men's, women's and children's apparel, eyewear, handbags, shoes, jewelry, timepieces, beauty/skincare products, celebrity brands, designers and fashion-related events.

Clients have included Kohl's Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony collections, Avon Voices, Pastry by Angela and Vanessa Simmons, Miche Bag, Byer California, TW Steel, Swarovski, Sunglass Hut, Ray-Ban, Clinique, Coty's Beyoncé Pulse and David Beckham Fragrances, Luxottica Group, Innovative Skincare, Wrinkle Free Eyes, David Babai for WildAid, Sponge Skincare, Dylan's Candy Bar, ETRO, Origins Earth Month Concert and Glamour's Reel Moments.

## RUDER FINN. INC.

310 East 57th Street  
New York, NY 10022  
212/593-6400  
Direct: 212/593-6387  
harris@ruderfinn.com  
www.ruderfinn.com

**Louise Harris**, *President, International, New York*

Ruder Finn offers award-winning brand positioning, media expertise and insider access to traditional press, social media and influencers to communicate a clear message to consumers. With global capabilities in the U.S., Europe and Asia, Ruder Finn's team of lifestyle experts help to develop storylines, shape strategy and deliver measurable business results for luxury, fashion and beauty brands.

Our client roster has included such luxury fashion and beauty brands as Sephora, Hermes, and Cartier.

One of the earliest international agencies strategizing with luxury brands to enter China's 2nd-tier and 3rd-tier cities, Ruder Finn has developed long-standing client relationships that include Canali, Givenchy, Folie

Continued on page 26



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## RUDER FINN

Continued from page 24

Folli, Hennessy, Forevermark (previously DTC / De Beers) and The Cotton Council to name a few. As China continues to enjoy remarkable economic growth, wealthy Chinese are catching up with the rest of the world and making a global impact on luxury and fashion brands around the world. China is now the 3rd biggest luxury goods consumer, growing at an annual rate of 20%-30%. The China Luxury Forecast, a yearly in-depth annual analysis by Ruder Finn Asia, examines and charts the trends and influencing factors in the market. This unique knowledge has allowed Ruder Finn China, with offices in Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou and Hong Kong, to offer even more communication and positioning services in this key market.

## TRUTH BE TOLD, INC.

183 Madison Ave., Suite 1201  
New York, NY 10016  
212/477-8090  
Fax: 212/213-4482  
Amanda@tbtp.com  
www.tbtp.com

9350 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 324  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212  
310/550-7200  
Fax: 310/550-7240

**Stacy Kaplan and Amanda Schuon, Founders**

Truth Be Told, Inc. is a premier public relations, brand development, event management, and entertainment agency with offices in New York and Los Angeles. Founders Stacy Kaplan and Amanda Schuon are perfectly contrasting and complementary in their approach to clients, demonstrated by the partnership they have forged.

Founded in 2002, Truth Be Told is known for their professionalism, integrated, strategic and creative programming. Truth Be Told focuses primarily on luxury lifestyle brands including: fashion and accessories, wine and spirits, publishing, youth and baby, travel, hotels, hospitality, entertainment/celebrity, cultural institutions and beauty.

On behalf of their fashion and accessories clients, Truth Be Told maintains relationships

with key fashion stylists who pull items that appear on red carpets and in fashion editorials, garnering worldwide exposure for the brands.

With sound judgment and common sense, this boutique firm provides small agency service with big agency reach. Senior level involvement at every stage of programming, allows Truth Be Told to provide big-picture branding that goes well beyond traditional public relations.

Service offerings include: media relations, brand building events, social media utilization, product launches, integrated marketing concepts, promotions and events, corporate identity and cause-related programming.

## VIDICOM

1775 Broadway, Suite 401  
New York, NY 10019  
212/895-8300  
www.vidicom.com

**Christy Ferer, Founder and CEO**

Vidicom is a leading innovator in multi-media content and interactive consumer experiences for brands. We create and distribute content leveraging earned, paid, and owned media that bridges both traditional and digital/mobile media outlets. Vidicom was the first company to produce and distribute fashion runway videos in the late 70's. It continues to be a pioneer in the beauty and fashion industries. During the 2011 fashion season, Vidicom produced the first interactive video community across social media for Isaac Mizrahi and Charlotte Ronson.

Through the power of video and live digital broadcasts, Vidicom creates virtual communities that engage with brands, and each other, over streaming websites including Facebook. This broadcast video is then repurposed to embed brand messaging again in digital, television and out of home distribution. Brands including L'Oreal, Macy's, Calvin Klein, Donna Karan and Ralph Lauren targeted engaged viewers and after, gain impressions from traditional media.

Streaming to partners' websites and television outlets, our media partners turn to Vidicom for fashion and beauty coverage.

"Vidicom's fashion week video is fast and relevant."

David Grant, President, PopSugar Studios & TV explains "They are pros who have the runway, front-of-house and back stage well-covered, with solid bites from many of the key designers and celebrities."

"We turn to them not just for runway footage, but for all the celebrities and red carpet action," says Inside Edition producer Lisa Azran. "Vidicom covers fashion like any news story and gets the relevant interviews."

Among Vidicom's guaranteed distribution for client content, is its subsidiary CityBuzz (www.citybuzz.com) which broadcasts on the web and in luxury hotel rooms, JetBlue, cruise lines, and NYC Television.

In addition, Vidicom launched www.News2know.com in 2011. The site posts all client video projects for subscribing web and TV journalists to download. And, to energize consumer interaction, Vidicom's www.dealdiva.com posts brand videos and brand freebies or benefits.

## VI NELSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.

1560 N. Sandburg Terrace  
Suite 3410  
Chicago, IL 60610  
312/944-1262  
kate@vinelson.com  
vi@vinelson.com

**Vi Nelson, President**  
**Kate Cicela, Vice President**

Vi Nelson & Associates, Inc., (VNA) specializes in connecting with and influencing the beauty and spa industry through creative and integrated communications. Among the firm's proven strengths are salon/spa industry research, strategic communications, multi-faceted marketing programs, strong media relations, educational and promotional material development, cause and relationship marketing. VNA combines PR and marketing expertise with a high level of salon industry understanding.

We are the communications resource for leading associations, events and companies in the beauty industry, including America's Beauty Show, American Association for Esthetics, ColorAmerica, Cosmetologists Chicago, Cosmetólogos Latinos,

International Nail Technicians Association (INTA), Independent Cosmetic Manufacturers and Distributors Association (ICMAD), P&G Beauty & Grooming, P&G Salon Professional and Pivot Point International.

## WEBER SHANDWICK

919 Third Avenue  
New York, New York 10022  
212/445-8000  
www.webershandwick.com

**Lisa Sepulveda, President,**  
*Global Consumer Marketing*  
212/445-8179  
LSepulveda@webershandwick.com

**Buffy Hersly, Senior Vice President, Beauty & Fashion**  
212/445-8133  
bhersly@webershandwick.com

**Jill Murphy, Chief Business Development Officer**  
212/445-8339  
jmurphy@webershandwick.com

Weber Shandwick has extensive experience in the beauty, personal care and fashion category. The beauty and fashion group represents top-tier brands in the industry ranging from skin and hair care to intimate apparel and outerwear.

We offer a strategic approach to beauty and fashion with an experienced, passionate team of experts who know how to break through the clutter of competitive, fast-paced and dynamic markets. Expertise includes brand building, product launches, social media strategy and execution, editor and blogger events, celebrity spokesperson acquisition, event and fashion show planning, grassroots marketing, branded entertainment including integration and sponsorships, celebrity and influencer seeding, retailer support, cause marketing and issues management.

The team's style-savvy, coupled with strong relationships with key influencers including beauty & fashion editors, producers, celebrity stylists, makeup artists and Hollywood A-listers enable us to produce award-winning results for clients. From the beauty and fashion pages to national morning shows and entertainment media to the most influential blogs, Weber Shandwick gets beauty & fashion brands noticed — by the right audiences, in the right venues and at the right time. ●



# O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

## TOP BEAUTY & FASHION PR FIRMS

<b>1.</b>	Edelman	New York	<b>\$32,008,078</b>
<b>2.</b>	Ruder Finn	New York	<b>7,000,000</b>
<b>3.</b>	Kaplow	New York	<b>3,550,000</b>
<b>4.</b>	French   West   Vaughan	Raleigh	<b>2,854,475</b>
<b>5.</b>	5W Public Relations	New York	<b>2,600,000</b>
<b>6.</b>	Coyne PR	Parsippany, NJ	<b>1,142,000</b>
<b>7.</b>	Hunter PR	New York	<b>869,302</b>
<b>8.</b>	zcomm	Bethesda, MD	<b>602,841</b>
<b>9.</b>	Gregory FCA	Ardmore, PA	<b>425,000</b>
<b>10.</b>	Allison & Partners	San Francisco	<b>320,000</b>
<b>11.</b>	O'Malley Hansen Comms.	Chicago	<b>299,000</b>
<b>12.</b>	TransMedia Group	Boca Raton	<b>250,000</b>
<b>13.</b>	Linhart PR	Denver	<b>232,639</b>
<b>14.</b>	Beehive PR	St. Paul	<b>221,628</b>
<b>15.</b>	Black Twig Comms.	St. Louis	<b>157,200</b>
<b>16.</b>	rbb PR	Miami	<b>131,515</b>
<b>17.</b>	Zeno Group	Chicago	<b>123,835</b>
<b>18.</b>	Seigenthaler PR	Nashville	<b>73,922</b>
<b>19.</b>	Maccabee Group	Minneapolis	<b>73,255</b>
<b>20.</b>	Richmond PR	Seattle	<b>52,074</b>
<b>21.</b>	Trevelino/Keller	Atlanta	<b>52,000</b>
<b>22.</b>	Boardroom Communications	Plantation, FL	<b>50,000</b>
<b>23.</b>	Luckie Strategic PR	Birmingham, AL	<b>40,500</b>
<b>24.</b>	Kotchen Group	Farmington, CT	<b>30,643</b>

# Five rules for social media

By Fraser Seitel

**S**ince social media rules the communications scene, every organization should create and abide by its own social media rules. Indeed without corporate guidelines about who can use it, when they can use it, and how they can use it — organizations run the risk of employees running amok on Facebook and Twitter, to the ultimate detriment of their employer.



Fraser P. Seitel has been a communications consultant, author and teacher for 30 years. He is the author of the Prentice-Hall text, *The Practice of Public Relations*.

Social media zealots, of course, argue against imposing rigid corporate guidelines on the use of social media during work. After all, they argue, social media isn't "part time" but is at work 24/7, and employees aren't restricted by "firewalls." Companies that block social media, they say, "are unwisely removing themselves from the conversation." Conversely, if employees are allowed to vent, unfettered by corporate sanctions, so this argument goes, they will ultimately be happier, more trusting, more dedicated workers.

Poppycock.

You work for the company, get paid by the company, and, therefore, when you are at the workplace, you are subject to the company's rules. And if the company wants to monitor your emails, restrict your computer browsing, and bar you from socializing on Facebook or Twitter, then that's its right as your employer; just as it's your right to leave if you don't like those policies.

So what kind of social media rules then, should internal communicators suggest that management adopt? The following should be considered:

## 1. Admit you're watching.

Every employee should know straightaway that Big Brother is aware of what they're sending out. They may grouse about it, but they'll at least give you credit for making them aware that off-color emails, boneheaded tweets, or foolhardy Facebook messages will be monitored.

Employees should understand that some companies go to great lengths to continually scan internal social media activity to catch inappropriate or non-compliant activity. Forewarned is forearmed — and ultimately appreciated by those being watched.

## 2. Explain who can do what.

An increasing number of organizations sponsor corporate blogs, designed for employee participation. In so doing, companies encourage the staff to share their experiences, air their concerns, suggest improvements, and engage in the conversation. So everybody is eligible.

Then, too, for some employees, social media is a primary part of their job. Public relations staffers, for example, are assigned to monitor and keep apprised of developments on the 'net. So those employees are relatively unrestricted in their use of social media.

For others, however, whose jobs have nothing to do with conversing on the 'net, the use of Facebook and Twitter and other social media vehicles may be expressly limited to use at breaks or outside work.

Again, all of this should be spelled out.

## 3. Forbid anonymity.

Anybody who posts a comment on an internal blog must identify him or herself. If not, the censors shouldn't allow the comment.

Corporate blogs should be "moderated" by the company, and employees should understand that. Comments shouldn't be posted immediately, but rather only after they are screened for relevance and compliance to internal rules of the road for social media conversation.

Censorship? You bet. But the boss pays your salary so he makes the rules. We need to know who you are and that you are not posting a "no-no."

## 4. Clarify what's a "no-no."

Prohibited social media activities should be clearly spelled out in guidelines for all, so that employees are aware of what they're not permitted to do.

Here, for example, is what Wells Fargo prohibits from going on its internal blog:

### • *Offensive language.*

Maybe if you work for Eminem or Akinyele, tossing around Internet profanities might be par for the course. But

in most organizations, profane or provocative language has no place on the corporate blog. And that goes double for racist, sexist, ethnically offensive or obscene language of any type.

Politically correct? You bet.

### • *Personal attacks.*

Dissing other employees is also taboo on a corporate-sponsored social communication vehicle. The blog is meant for civil discourse. Civility may be a concept that is becoming outmoded in a society of declining standards. But corporations ought to be better than that.

### • *Litigation-related.*

As loathsome a collective group as they might be, nonetheless lawyers must be listened to. Blog comments on actual or threatened lawsuits can only lead to trouble. And the last thing an organization needs from its internal blog is more trouble.

### • *Sales-related.*

Comments focused on selling or recommending a product or service also ought to be barred from the blog. Such spam has no place in a blog designed for airing employee concerns and suggestions.

### • *Off-topic.*

The Internet is a spawning ground for uninformed, off-the-wall, and often reckless commentary, offered up by manic shut-ins with little better to do than ramble on to the blogosphere. (No offense.)

So those who manage the corporate blog must keep a sharp eye on the conversations represented. They should exercise the prerogative to exclude comments that have little relevance to the topic-at-hand.

## 5. Acknowledge the penalties.

Just as all employees should know the rules that govern internal social media, so, too, should they know the consequences they will face if they violate the corporate social media strictures.

The point is — as professional communicators know better than most — any time anyone puts words on paper or a computer screen and sends those pearls of wisdom to others, he or she is taking a calculated risk. When the words are sent under the auspices of a corporate employer, it is the organization which shares in the risk.

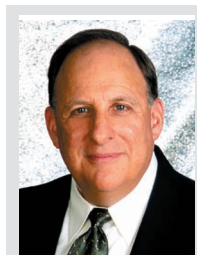
That's why in a day where "social media rules," every organization must clarify for its employees, its own set of "social media rules." ●



# Limited liability co. vs. S corporation

By Richard Goldstein

**T**he most popular entity of the nineties was the limited liability company. Most new PR firms that I meet with seem to opt for the LLC. However, the LLC may not be the



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

best choice in all cases. [This column does not consider a regular C corporation. In most cases the C is not the entity of choice for midsized and small agencies and is not discussed in this column.]

The LLC does offer flow-through tax advantages (the income or loss flows to the individual or other entity tax return). For example, a LLC owned by an individual will report the result of operations on his or her personal tax return (Schedule C). A LLC owned by two or more is generally treated as a partnership. The same flow-through to the personal or other returns exists. An individual would report the income or loss on his or her personal return based on the information provided on form 1065 K-1.

In general, the LLC offers the same benefit of the S corporation without many of the S corporation restrictions. However, for most small or midsized agencies, the S corporation restrictions will just not apply.

Two restrictions of the S corporation — the inability to have a corporation as a shareholder or a foreign person as a shareholder — may make the LLC the best choice. For example, the agency may desire to raise equity capital, the capital being invested by a corporation in exchange for stock. This transaction will automatically terminate the S election. An agency may desire, as an example, an individual domiciled in Brazil to be an equity owner. The issuance of the shares will automatically terminate the S election. While there are structures that can be proposed to mitigate these problems, they just do not exist when

using a LLC.

## Non-tax reasons for forming an S corporation versus the LLC

There are many non-tax related reasons for forming an S corporation. Some of these reasons are listed below:

- A shareholder death does not affect the legal existence of an S corporation. However, the death of an LLC member can dissolve the LLC.

- A shareholder rarely has the right to require the corporation to cash him or her out. To the contrary, LLC members often have the right to receive fair value for their interests. S corporations are generally preferable. However, a minority owner may consider the LLC preferable.

- As previously indicated any individual or entity, foreign or domestic can be a member of an LLC. Only individuals, certain trusts, and certain corporations can be shareholders of an S corporation. Neither the C corporation nor partnership nor complex trust can be an S corporation shareholder. In this respect the LLC is preferable.

- Generally speaking, forming an S corporation is inexpensive. State filing fees are modest and legal fees for drafting the organization documents are usually modest. If the shareholders desire a detailed shareholders agreement the legal fees can become substantial. Such an agreement is not required but highly recommended.

## Tax reasons for forming the S corporation versus the LLC

- An S corporation can participate in a tax-free reorganization whereas a non-corporate entity cannot. This only becomes an issue when the owners of a business are willing to sell in exchange for stock in the purchaser. If some day the owners may wish to sell the agency in a tax-free transaction, the S corporation is preferable.

- If an LLC qualifies as a partnership for tax purposes, the LLC itself is never subject to federal income tax. All of its income flows through and is taxable only at the member level. Sometimes however, an S corporation's income itself is subject to federal income taxation. This is usually not the case unless the S corporation resulted from the conversion from a C corporation.

- Special allocations. The taxable

income of an LLC may be allocated among the members as they agree subject to rules restricting abusive income shifting. S corporation income, however, is allocated ratably per share and one economic class of stock is permitted. In this respect, the LLC is preferable.

- The shareholder of an S corporation can deduct his or her flow-through losses only to the extent of his or her basis in the S corporation stock and in any loans made to the S corporation. The deductibility of losses by an LLC member is similarly limited to basis, but basis is increased by his or her share of the LLC's indebtedness to others. Thus, when a business intends to borrow significantly and anticipates substantial taxable losses, LLCs are preferable.

- Cash distributions from an S corporation or an LLC are tax-free to the recipient to the same extent as losses would be deductible. That is, basis is the key, and since member's basis in an LLC interest is increased by the LLC's other indebtedness, LLC's offer a greater opportunity to distribute cash tax-free.

- An LLC can distribute appreciated property to a member without triggering any taxable gain. For example, assume art costing \$100,000 current fair value of \$500,000 is distributed. The \$400,000 appreciation is not taxable to the member. On the other hand, an S corporation which distributes appreciated property will result in S corporation income — in this case \$400,000.

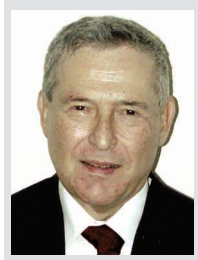
- The flow through income from an S corporation to a shareholder is clearly not self-employment income subject to self-employment tax. However, the flow-through income of an LLC member is not clearly subject to or exempt from self-employment tax. The issue at hand is whether a member in an LLC, who is a partner for tax purposes, is treated as a limited or general partner for self-employment tax purposes. This subject requires extensive discussion which is not pertinent to this column.

This subject will be continued next month and explore tax planning that may be beneficial if the agency is considering a sales transaction. ●

# Crisis PR often ignores forces of change

By Arthur Solomon

**W**e are now well into 2011. By this time last year, PR crisis specialists, from big and small companies, were all over the media landscape, frequently offering unsolicited advice, often from playbooks that should have been revised years ago.



**Arthur Solomon**, a former newsman, was a senior VP at Burson-Marsteller.

Corporations were knee deep in crises situations. Remember BP/Halliburton, H.P., Toyota, Goldman Sachs, J&J, and Verizon Wireless? And who can forget Tiger Woods, Mel Gibson, Lindsay Lohan, Gov. Haley Barbour and

The Vatican?

So have things changed in 2011? Obviously not. It's a boom time for crisis pros with ubiquitous media coverage of the Murdoch family / News Corp.'s hacking scandal, debt ceiling debate, Wall Street meltdown and the specter of a double dip recession.

And as certain as day follows night, more crises will occur. And like history that is often repeated, most of the advice offered will be outdated.

If there is one important PR lesson learned from the disaster rich crops of 2010/11 media crises, it is that the aged formula of confronting a media crisis often does clients a disservice.

Each crisis has to be approached differently, even if it means delaying a response for a day or three, until approaches that make sense for the situation are formulated. Until they are, a general statement should suffice. Something like, "We are reviewing the facts and will answer media questions after all the details are in," or, in legal situations, "We have been instructed by our attorneys not to answer any questions." (But never "no comment.") That might not make the media happy, but agencies commitments are to clients, not the media that loves "gotcha" journalism.

Responding too quickly after a crisis, (the old-fashioned way still in vogue with many crisis specialists), instead of gathering and analyzing all the facts and consulting with corporate lawyers before going

public, can do considerable harm to clients.

Too quick statements from BP and Tiger Woods denying the severity of their problems resulted in loss of credibility, and fueled public and media distrust of future comments. Conversely, waiting too long and trying to conceal negative information, as J&J did before announcing a product recall, can also damage a company's reputation.

PR firms and their crisis specialists only have to read the papers and watch TV to see how crisis coverage has changed: sensationalism, panel discussions and repetition of charges flourishes.

The transformation from reporting it "straight" to "exclamation!!!" reporting actually occurred years ago with the advent of the 24/7 cable channels and talk radio. But too often the reactions were from tired playbooks, not responses that kept up with the changing media. That's because crisis plans are often on the back burner until one occurs and not continually updated (or so it seems).

PR firms push media training on their clients. But media training is a poor substitute for crisis preparation. Unlike planned newspaper and electronic interviews, there is no advance notice of a media crisis. Thus, it's difficult to prep clients. It makes more sense to conduct a crisis media training session after one occurs and the facts are in.

However, competent media training should be undertaken as a preventative crisis tool. But, in my experience too many media training sessions were taken from the one-size fits all agency play book, and not tailored to specific client needs. Only the names of the company, not the facts, were changed during the sessions.

Also, it should be a must for crisis teams to have a person on the unit with hard-news reporting/editing experience, both to tell company executives what to expect when the crisis first occurs and then to evaluate how the media may react to what is proposed.

During and after my nearly 25 years at Burson-Marsteller (where I traveled internationally as a media consultant to Korean and Australian government and Olympic officials and played key roles on a variety of significant national and international sports and nonsports accounts), I always believed that protecting a client from media controversy was more important than the "big hit."

Thus, for all clients, I always practiced "precautionary PR" — meaning pre-crisis prevention — when planning or implementing an agenda. But unforeseen happenings occur. When crisis situations did occur, I used out-of-the-box strategy and tailored the responses to each situation, fortunately limiting the media coverage.

Common sense and knowledge of which media will give your client a fair shot at telling its story may temporarily assuage the bad coverage, but facts are facts and in most cases no strategy can make it go away until the crisis runs its natural course.

Why do I believe that each crisis requires a different approach? Want an example? See the *New York Times* story of August 9, 2010 about H.P. dismissing Mark Herd as chief executive. The story, under a four column headline, said that a PR crisis specialist convinced the directors that if they wanted to prevent a media circus, Herd should be fired. The best laid plans, etc. etc.

Bottom lines:

- The traditional PR crisis management playbook with musty, unoriginal and boiler plate ideas should no longer be pulled off the shelf and used; it should be amended to fit a specific client crisis. The same is true for media training.

- When public safety is involved, underplaying the severity of a crisis or attempting to hide the facts, as BP and J&J did, will result in continual government and/or media skepticism when statements from companies are issued.

- Avoid adding fuel to a crisis by saying others exaggerated its extent, as Bob Dudley, CEO of BP did in London on October 25, 2010.

- The Delta Air Lines GI/baggage media coverage proves that even fast corrective action after PR crises will not immediately cease news stories.

- Respond to a crisis but don't rush to make a statement, be cautious of your assertions and make certain they are factual; err on the side of caution.

- Getting out in front of a crisis does not assure it will shorten media interest and not be covered extensively.

- Holding more than an initial press conference during a crisis situation is rarely a good idea. Every story that emerges from the conference will revisit the situation that caused the crisis, often

*Continued on next page*



# The art of sandbagging Obama

By Kevin Foley

In golf, it's called sandbagging. You deliberately manipulate your handicap upwards. When it comes time to bet, your unsuspecting opponent gives you shots based on his lower handicap. You blow him away and collect the Nassau.



**Kevin Foley** is president of KEF Media Associates, an Atlanta-based producer and distributor of sponsored news content to television and radio media.

Thus, it was instructive to watch Barack Obama play golf with John Boehner because you knew, sooner or later, the wily old GOP pol would find a way to sandbag the newbie prez.

There they were three months ago, famously on the golf course, just a couple of high octane swells working out a debt limit

deal.

When the match was over, no doubt Obama retired to the White House confident Boehner was a man of honor who would sort it all out on his side of the aisle. Sure, the speaker would huff and puff on Fox News, but in the end, a fair deal would be struck.

So imagine the looks on the faces of

the president and Harry Reid, his metaphorical caddy, as the President watched the speaker drop in putt after putt, winning hole after hole.

Suddenly, Obama was left on the metaphorical 18th green with the sinking feeling that he wouldn't be able to cover his bet.

Meantime, Boehner, looking like the fat cat that swallowed the birdie, played his role in a bizarre Kabuki performance, pretending to cajole House Tea Party freshmen into a compromise when meeting Obama half way was the last thing on the speaker's agenda.

Boehner and his own caddy, Eric Cantor, must have been hootin' and hollerin' over Obama's childlike naiveté when they hit the 19th hole. The Democrats got next to nothing in the debt ceiling deal but hard line conservatives took a big first step toward their long-cherished goal of dismantling Social Security, Medicare and other social programs.

Not surprisingly, FreedomWorks President Matt Kibbe was taking a victory lap on the talk shows taking credit for the deal. This is the guy with the carefully manicured side whiskers who purports to lead the "spontaneous," "grass roots" Tea Party, which in reality is a Frankenstein funded by the billionaire Koch brothers' and chaired by their own dependable caddy, former Texas con-

gressman and Tom DeLay henchman Dick Armey.

Speaking of sandbagging, Armey now wears a ten gallon hat on that 11 gallon head of his to convey to the good folks in flyover country he's just one of them and not really a hard boiled inside-the-beltway cynic out to cash in by doing the bidding of the nation's most powerful and wealthy citizens.

America is falling for the con. Take a look at the rubes who show up at Tea Party rallies and you'll see a bunch of graying baby boomers who now or will soon depend on Social Security and Medicare, or know a family member or close friend who already does.

Yet they're supporting the very people who want to take it all away.

It's a testament to the communications skills and/or duplicity of FreedomWorks and other such outfits when they can get large numbers of the electorate to vote against their own best interests. All Kibbe has to do is tap those rich veins of prejudice, fear, anger, and ignorance. As long as you're prepared to be completely dishonest as FreedomWorks, it's easy to sandbag hapless voters.

Sandbagging is a big no-no at many golf clubs, where quaint virtues like honor and trust remain in vogue. Cheat and you quickly become a pariah. In Washington, there appears to be no penalty for sandbagging your opponent. In fact, conservatives have made it an art form. ●

## CRISIS IGNORES CHANGE

Continued from previous page

overshadowing new positive information.

- It is not a good idea to question the integrity of reporters, when defending your own honor.

- After an initial statement, it is best to let update announcements be posted on Web sites until all the facts are in.

- Importantly, don't think you or your crisis team can control the media.

- Always be honest with the media.

- Don't fall for the media game of "I need a statement immediately."

- Proclamations of innocence, as the New York Mets owners did in the Madoff situation, on February 17, instead of letting attorneys do the talking, only will intensify media coverage.

- As I've said many times, top executives should rarely make themselves

available to the media. Example: Fred Wilpon's interviews with *The New Yorker* and *Sports Illustrated* only emphasized the financial plight of the Mets, rehashed his Madoff connection and resulted in extended media coverage regarding unflattering comments he made about his ballplayers.

- Apologizing for an indiscretion has no affect on immediately minimizing media coverage or preventing follow-up coverage.

- Attempted cover-up of a crisis only worsens the media coverage.

- In an attempt to show clients how smart the agency is, (or maybe to justify a huge new billing opportunity), too often "crisis team specialists," with little knowledge of the account, are positioned as saviors.

- If an account is well-staffed, the account supervisors, who should know all aspects of the client, should primarily

be calling the shots during crisis planning and media responses. Crisis specialists should take their leads from account managers.

- A crisis is like Old Man River. It just keeps rolling along. The crisis team must never assume "a job well done" just because the media suspended reporting the crisis as a daily news story. Government hearings, feature stories and other follow-ups are often certain to emerge.

- Never promise a client that you can limit media coverage of a crisis (unless you want to jeopardize the account).

- Crisis specialists should have learned from the many past disasters the importance for corporations and their agencies to review and amend their crisis plans on a regular basis.

As I've also preached about PR crisis actions: unlike inexpensive clothing, one size does not fit all. ●

## Bank lobby taps PR Chief

**T**he American Bankers Association has a new PR face as the trade group for the \$13 trillion banking industry replaces 20-year veteran Ginny Dean.

The Podesta Group's Stephanie Matthews O'Keefe will take over as executive VP of communications for the Washington, D.C.-based group on Sept. 6.

ABA president and CEO Frank Keating said the group is fortunate to recruit the former investment banker "at such a critical time for the banking industry."

O'Keefe has been a principal and director of business development for the past year at Podesta, which she joined in 2010 after a year as senior VP/comms. for the Export Import Bank of the U.S.

Her longest tenure has been with the non-profit development group Local Initiatives Support Corp., where she stepped down in 2009 as senior VP, external affairs, after 15 years. She was also an investment banker at Credit Suisse First Boston.

A West Virginia native, O'Keefe was state director for the 1996 Clinton-Gore re-election campaign.

ABA represents the \$13 trillion banking industry. •

## D.C. housing group seeks PR

**T**he District of Columbia Housing Authority, D.C.'s top landlord and one of its largest developers, is dangling a strategic communications contract to buff its image and build support for authority programs and public housing.

The DCHA, which was put in court-ordered receivership from 1995-2000, issued an RFP on Aug. 8 for research and strategic communications planning to "expeditiously" develop and implement a PR plan.

The authority manages 8,000 apartment units, runs a large voucher program, and works with private landlords to house 12,600 households each year. It expects \$300 million per year in federal Housing and Urban Development grants.

Past efforts included a PR audit "several years ago" that found stakeholder impressions were based on "pre-receivership problems." A website overhaul was done in 2010 and two external newsletters were launched to foster information flow and outreach. •

## PB reps Croatia on war crimes

**P**atton Boggs has inked a \$60,000-a-month pact with Croatia to address issues arising from the April decision of the International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia that convicted two retired Croatian generals of war crimes against ethnic Serbs during the split-up of Yugoslavia during the 1990s. The third defendant was cleared of charges.

The trial covered actions during a three-month campaign called "Operation Storm," a program that killed at least 150 civilians and forcibly drove tens of thousands of Serbs from their homes in Croatia, according to a BBC report. An estimated 200K Serbs were evicted from Croatia in 1995. The convicted generals, said the BBC, are considered heroes in Croatia.

PB handles matters regarding "military standards and regulations" with respect to Operation Storm, according to its Justice Dept. filing. The firm also counsels Croatia on relations with the U.S.

Tommy Boggs and Ed Newberry, PB managing partner, lead the Croatia account. They report to the country's Minister of Justice. •



## APCO adds health veteran

**A**PCO Worldwide has recruited Colin Mackay, former communication and partnerships director at the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Assns., as director of its healthcare practice in Brussels.

Mackay is a 20-year veteran of the healthcare scene, holding posts at Weber Shandwick, Aventis and Organon Laboratories.

Tresja Bolt, European chair of APCO healthcare, believes Mackay's "first-hand experience working in the pharmaceutical business, healthcare-focused trade associations and PR enables him to provide effective counsel to clients on range of issues including stakeholder engagement, reputation and campaign management," according to a statement.

Robert Schooling is Worldwide Health Chief at APCO. •

## Kellogg gets labeling advice

**K**ellogg Co. has retained powerful Republican government relations firm Fierce, Isakowitz & Blalock in a nutritional labeling tussle between food marketers and the Federal government.

Kellogg is a member of the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, which announced in July a set of voluntary guidelines to cover foods like the snacks and cereals sold by the Battle Creek, Mich.-based marketer.

Those standards are not as strict as ones recommended by the government, though Federal Trade Commission chairman Jon Leibowitz called the proposals a "step in the right direction." •

## Prime Policy Group powers IBM

**I**BM has signed up Burson-Marsteller affiliated Prime Policy Group to handle corporate tax reform, patents, cyber-security issues, trade and labor matters.

Big Blue shelled out \$2 million in D.C. lobbying outlays during the first-half of the year, according to its federal filings.

It sought input on matters related to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, Korea/Panama/Colombia free trade agreements, digital economy trade pacts and conflict minerals.

PPG has nine staffers handling IBM including chairman Charlie Black, former Republican National Committee spokesman; Gardner Peckham, ex-national security advisor to House Speaker Newt Gingrich; Pam Turner, former assistant secretary for legislative affairs at the Dept. of Homeland Security and Keith Smith, alum of United Technologies Corp. •



## Israel's Likud taps Rubenstein

Israel's ruling conservative Likud party has retained Rubenstein Public Relations to a three-month contract to reach out to media outlets to publicize its political positions and project the party in a "positive and constructive manner."

The contract inked by Richard Rubenstein, president, also has the New York-based firm doing damage control to "minimize negative publicity or counteract negative media or other statements."

RPR receives a \$10,000 fee for its efforts. It is required to seek approval for out-of-pocket expense in excess of \$100. The firm may be called on for additional services at a mutually agreed on cost.

RPR's contract runs through September, the month in which the United Nations may vote to recognize a Palestinian state.

The U.S. and the Government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu strongly oppose any bid by the U.N. to recognize a separate Palestinian state.

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas has urged his people to take to the streets in support of the vote, according to an Associated Press report. "We are led by the protests of the Arab Spring, which we all say should be peaceful," he said. ●

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.

**Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, LLP**, Washington, D.C., **registered July 29, 2011 for Embassy of the Republic of Korea**, Washington, D.C. regarding counseling and advising the principal on U.S. policy and communicating with U.S. government officials concerning the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement.

**Brown Lloyd James**, New York, N.Y., **registered July 14, 2011 for Kingdom of Morocco** (via Gerson Global Strategic Advisors, New York, N.Y.), regarding providing services for Gerson Global Strategic Advisors in support of the Kingdom of Morocco, including strategic communications advice and international media guidance and outreach.

**Fenton Communications**, Washington, D.C., **registered August 1, 2011 for Embassy of the Republic of Ecuador**, Washington, D.C., regarding providing media relations advice and support for the Ministry of External Relations in the U.S. and supporting the Embassy of Ecuador in Washington, D.C. and their continuous relations with the communication media in the U.S.

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](http://www.senate.gov).

**Alston & Bird, LLP**, Washington, D.C., **registered August 5, 2011 for Maritz Holdings Inc.**, Fenton, Mo., regarding proposed privacy legislation.

**Blank Rome Government Relations**, Washington, D.C., **registered August 5, 2011 for National Association of Home Builders**, Washington, D.C., regarding housing, mortgage finance and tax issues.

**The Flournoy Group, LLC**, Washington, D.C., **registered August 8, 2011 for Screen Actors Guild**, Los Angeles, Calif., regarding intellectual property protection/online theft and federal public policy issues.

**Prime Policy Group**, Washington, D.C., **registered August 2, 2011 for IBM Corporation**, Washington, D.C., regarding patent reform, corporate tax reform, cyber security, trade and labor issues.

**Van Scoyoc Associates**, Washington, D.C., **registered August 5, 2011 for Merlin International, Inc.**, Englewood, Colo., regarding Veterans Affairs Information Technology programs.

**The Walter Group**, Alexandria, Va., **registered August 2, 2011 for Comcast Corporation**, Washington, D.C., regarding general telecommunications issues.

## BLJ was tapped by Syria

Brown Lloyd James, which worked for Libya's Col. Gaddafi, received \$25,000 from Syria for arranging a photo shoot for *Vogue* with First Lady Asma al-Assad, according to its just-filed Justice Dept. registration.

She's the wife of Bashar al-Assad, who invaded Lebanon, allied with Iran/Hamas and is currently leading a bloody crack-down on protestors. Syria ranked as the fourth member of President Bush's "axis of evil."

The BLJ assignment began Nov. 22 and ran until the article was published in March. BLJ's effort resulted in a flattering piece that was headlined "A Rose in the Desert."

It described Asma al-Assad as "glamorous, young and very chic — the freshest and most magnetic of first ladies." She's a "rare combination: a thin, long-limbed beauty with a trained analytic mind who dresses with cunning understatement."

The "fawning treatment of the Assad family and its portrayal of the regime as tolerant and peaceful generated surprise and outrage in the Washington foreign policy community," reported [theatlantic.com](http://theatlantic.com).

BLJ collected \$1.3 million from Libya in 2009 for arranging Gaddafi's visit to the United Nations. ●

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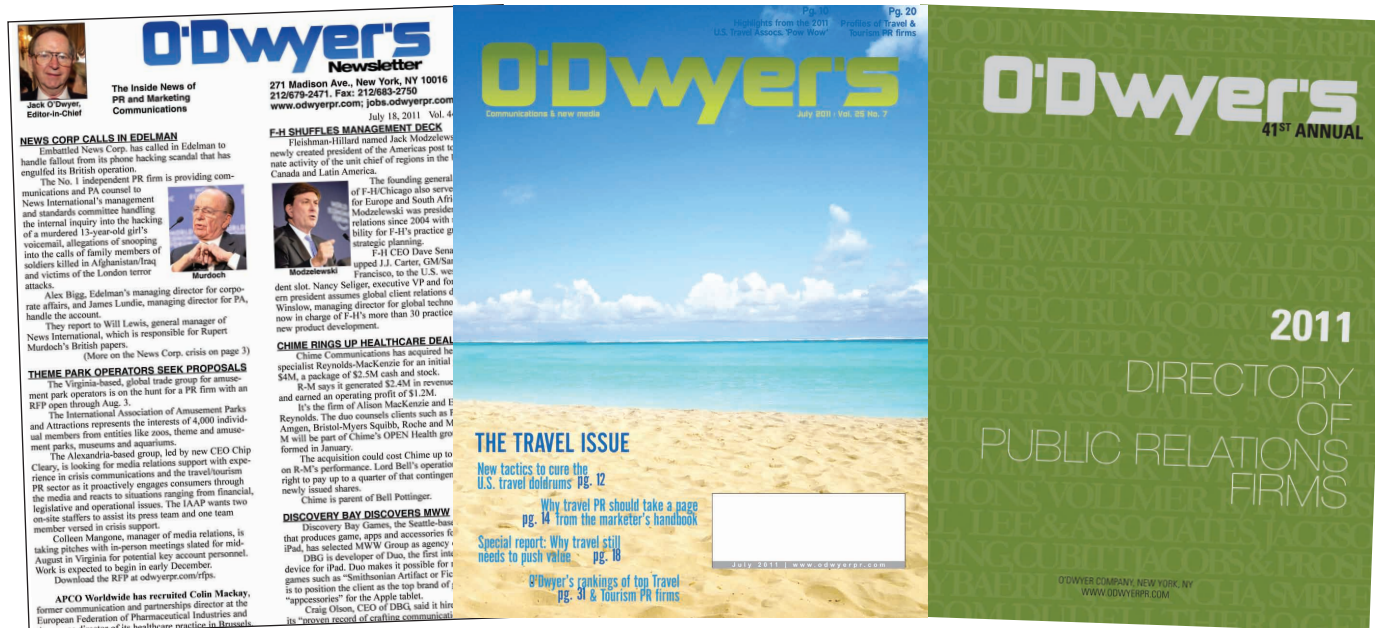
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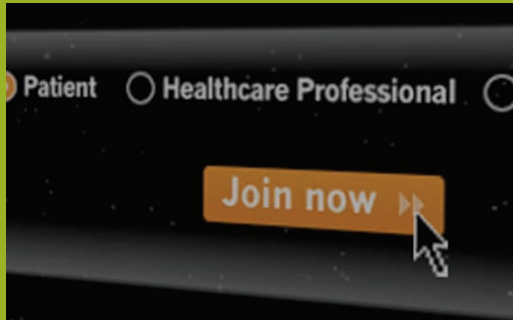


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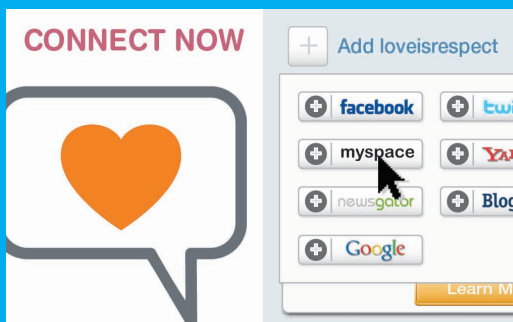
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