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Editor-in-Chief

O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
PR and Marketing
Communications

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MIAMI BEACH REVIEWS PR

Miami Beach has kicked off a review of its PR, destination marketing and communications account with an RFP process open through mid-May.

The review by the Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority follows the award of the larger-scoped Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau's PR account to Interpublic's Current last month, following an RFP.



Photo: MBVCA

The Miami Beach call for proposals was issued April 25 with a deadline of May 16.

The authority, which promotes the city's image, wants a firm to develop a media outreach plan, implement and manage social media strategy, and handle other tasks like maintaining an image library.

RFP is available at odwyerpr.com/rfps.

BAXTER'S WHITE TO EDELMAN

Kym White, VP-global corporate communications at Baxter International, will join Edelman as vice chair of its health group on May 31. She will report to Matthew Harrington, president/CEO U.S., and Nancy Turett, global health president.



White

White had a 16-year stint at Baxter. Previously, she held various slots at Ogilvy PR Worldwide, including health head and managing director of its New York office. Her PR career began at Burson-Marsteller.

Edelman's health operation generates 20 percent of the No. 1-ranked independent's revenues and employs more than 500 staffers. Clients include Johnson & Johnson, Merck, GE Healthcare, and PepsiCo.

White is to work in New York and Chicago.

TD BANK DEPOSITS ACCOUNT AT BACKBAY

TD Bank has deposited its commercial banking PR account at BackBay Communications after a competitive search.

Jennifer Morneau, PR manager for the top 10 U.S. bank, told O'Dwyer's that TD did not previously have an agency for its commercial banking brand. She said Boston-based BackBay was tapped after a "broad competitive search," noting the firm's financial experience among factors for the B2B PR assignment to "elevate the profile" of the growing sector of its business.

TD, based in Cherry Hill, N.J., and Portland, Me., has more than 1,250 branches and 6.5M customers.

SUBSCRIBERS: SEND US YOUR E-MAILS

Dear Subscriber:

O'Dwyer's Newsletter has re-surfaced for one more print issue to make sure that you are getting the new e-mail version.

We're still missing a number of e-mails of subscribers. If you do not use e-mail and would like a printed copy of the NL mailed to you, please call Eileen at 646/843-2081 or Melissa at 646/843-2082.

If you did not receive the last three issues of the digital (PDF) newsletter, e-mail john@odwyerpr.com or call one of the above two numbers with the proper e-mail.

Your subscription to the Newsletter also entitles you to access the subscriber area of the O'Dwyer website, www.odwyerpr.com. If you do not already have a user name/password combination, e-mail what you would like us to use to John O'Dwyer at john@odwyerpr.com.

Each issue of the PDF NL contains links to content online that can only be accessed with your username and password.

The e-letter is being well-received since it's available on Monday afternoons, rather than later in the week, and has color illustrations and pictures of PR people as well as numerous links in the text that lead to further exploration of subjects.

Cordially,

Jack O'Dwyer

INTERPUBLIC TRIMS LOSS

Interpublic CEO Michael Roth reported April 28 that first-quarter loss tumbled to \$48.1.2M from last year's \$71.5M, which topped Wall Street's expectations.

Revenue jumped 10.3 percent to \$1.5B, bolstered by a 14.2 percent surge in overseas business. U.S revenues advanced 7.7 percent to \$865.3M.

Roth says IPG is on target to develop full-year organic growth of four to five percent as the firm delivers "highly digital, integrated and accountable marketing solutions to clients."

Weber Shandwick CEO Harris Diamond told O'Dwyer's that IPG's constituency management group, which houses WS, DeVries PR, Rogers & Cowan and GolinHarris, had a "terrific" quarter as the operation "fired on all cylinders."

The CMG operation registered an eight percent rise in organic growth for the quarter, powered by spending in social media, consumer and strengthening of the U.K. and Continental Europe regions, according to Diamond.

WPP'S PR UNITS UP 5.5% IN Q1

WPP today reported first quarter revenue rose 7 percent to £2.2B (\$3.7B) continuing a recovery started in 2010.

PR and public affairs at units like Burson-Marsteller, Hill & Knowlton, Cohn & Wolfe, Ogilvy PR Worldwide and Public Strategies rose 5.5 percent on a like-for-like basis to £207.9M (\$333.3M) during the quarter.

WPP singled out PR business in Asia-Pacific, Western Europe and Mideast as performing well, with Ogilvy and C&W, along with its Buchanan U.K. unit and Hering Schupener in Germany, also getting a nod.

CEO Martin Sorrell said profits and margin are ahead of budget and “well ahead” of last year. He plans to lay out £200M in acquisitions this year.

“The pattern of revenue growth in 2011 has started similarly to the second half of 2010, with improvements across all sectors and geographies,” he said.

WPP is based in Ireland but is planning to move back to the U.K. as corporate tax rates are slated to be cut, Sorrell said.

Advertising (+9.3%) and WPP's branding and identity, healthcare and specialist communications category (+6.9%) were the top gaining categories in Q1.

U.S. growth at 7% to £807.9M continued a strong performance akin to an “emerging market,” said Sorrell. The U.S. outpaced Western Europe (+1.9%) and the U.K. (+5.4%), but was behind emerging markets like Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Africa, Mideast and Central/Eastern Europe (+11.5%).

Argentina and India surpassed 20% growth for the quarter, followed by Brazil, China, Korea and Russia (from 15-20%).

Looking ahead, Sorrell cited forecasts of stronger growth in Asia Pacific and Latin America “counter-balanced by lower growth in the U.S.”

Sorrell said new business in Q1 was “reasonably strong” at \$1.3B, not as good as Q1 of 2010 but in line with the quarterly average for last year.

B-M RECRUITS DIGITAL PRO BASSIK

Burson-Marsteller has named Global Strategy Group senior VP Michael Bassik managing director and digital practice chair. He reports to Pat Ford, U.S. CEO.

At GSG, Bassik ran online marketing, reputation management and media relations for a diverse set of clients such as Google, IBM, Al Jazeera English, Dan Malloy's successful run for governor of Connecticut, *O, The Oprah Magazine* and the Ultimate Fighting Championship.

He played key roles in Democratic Presidential politics, handling digital programs for John Kerry, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama.

Bassik also served as chief digital officer for Air America Media and established America Online's political advertising unit.



Sorrell



Bassik

NAT STRATEGIES BAGS PRO-PAKISTAN WORK

National Strategies has an open-ended \$35K a month deal to back the Committee Supporting Democracy and Justice in Pakistan.

Paul Johnson, former vice chairman at Fleishman-Hillard, is among those working the business. He is CEO of K-Global, a sister company of NSI. Both are owned by Washington-headquartered Interpoint Group.



Pakistan flag

Though a formal agreement between NSI and the New York City-based Committee has yet to be ironed out, the mission of NS is to educate the media, political leaders and the public about the importance of backing democratic institutions in Pakistan. A key goal, according to the federal filing of NS, is to support the “Pakistani people's chosen leaders whomever they may be, against misinformation, misrepresentation and unfounded attempts to undermine their authority.”

U.S./Pakistan relations are at an all-time low. Pakistan is demanding that the CIA curb its armed drone strikes against suspected terrorist groups and wants the U.S. to cut the number of Special Operations forces operating within its borders.

The *New York Times* reported April 29 that President Obama's selection of Gen. David Petraeus to head the CIA does not sit well with the Islamabad Government. The chief of Pakistan's army has dismissed Petraeus as a “political general”

Johnson could not be reached for comment about the committee's reaction to the killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan.

U.S. CHAMBER VP TO EXIT FOR NRF

Tita Freeman, VP of communications and strategy for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, has moved to the National Retail Federation to build up its public affairs function.

Freeman will take the title of senior VP for communications and public affairs at the NRF, the top trade group for retailers which has created a new strategic plan geared toward advocacy, communications and grassroots engagement.

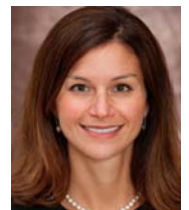
Freeman is charged with growing and enhancing the federation's growing PA operation.

In a statement, NRF president and CEO Matthew Shay said Freeman is “uniquely qualified” to advance the retail industry's agenda “and to bring NRF's public affairs to the next level.”

Freeman headed comms. strategy, media, advertising, marketing and online efforts for the Chamber, which she joined in 2008 from Google's Washington, D.C., outpost. Previous stints included the Business Roundtable and APCO Worldwide.

The Chamber, which has been conducting a search for a PR agency and recently bolstered its digital capabilities, has not yet named a replacement for Freeman.

The NRF notes retailers include 1.6M companies and 25M workers who post sales of \$2.4T/year.



Freeman

NPR HIRES LOBBYIST TO FIGHT CUTS

NPR, which is looking for a PR firm to bolster its image, has hired Bracy Tucker Brown & Valanzano to fight future Republican efforts to defund public radio.

Despite all the noise from the GOP and its Tea Party allies, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's \$445M budget was kept in place under the budget compromise ironed out earlier this month.

Michael Bracy, partner in the government affairs firm, handles the NPR account. He is a veteran of media tussles on Capitol Hill and at the Federal Communications Commission, repping the Low Power Radio Coalition on the regulation and consolidation fronts.

Bracy, co-owner of the Misra independent record label in Austin, is co-founder of the Future of Music Coalition, which works to achieve fair compensation for musicians in the digital age.

BTB&V represents a mix of corporate, municipal and non-profit clients including Willis North America, Longhorn Partners Pipeline, Puget Sound Energy, City of Tucson, Allied Pilots Assn., American Ballet Theater, Girls Inc. and the Girl Scouts.

NPR shelled out \$131,666 for lobbying during the first-quarter 2011. Its targets included H.R. 68 to eliminate federal funding and H.R. 69 to ban local public stations to use federal dollars to acquire programming.

NPR spent \$410K for lobbying during 2010.

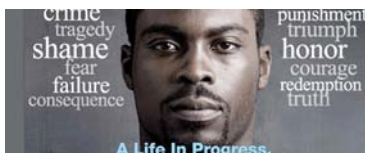
FWV GOES HOLLYWOOD

Raleigh-based French|West|Vaughan has established a Hollywood venture with showbiz veterans Stella Solper and Brian Sher, CEO Rick French told O'Dwyer's.

French says ownership of the Los Angeles operation is divided among himself, Solper, Sher and FWV principals David Gwyn and Natalie Best.

Stolper is the former VP-talent and creative development at VH1 and creator of the "celebrality" brand that became a hallmark of VH1 and MTV programming. She was executive producer of Paris Hilton's "My New BFF," 50 Cent's "The Money and the Power," and DJ AM's "Gone Too Far."

Sher, an ex-ICM talent agent, runs Category 5 Entertainment and is partner with Kelsey Grammer in Grammet



Productions. He was also BET's "The Michael Vick Project" executive producer of "The Michael Vick Project" for BET and has been working with FWV for the past six months to guide the off-the-field career of football quarterback Vick, who served jail time in connection with a dog-fighting ring and made an NFL comeback last year.

French formed the venture because "the world is fascinated by what celebrities wear, eat, read and otherwise consume." That fascination is "arguably the biggest drive of consumer buying behavior."

The West Coast outpost is to create embedded content opportunities and storylines for FWV clients and provide PR and marketing support for Solper and Sher's independently produced film and TV projects.

GEISSER TUNES IN TO BRAVO

Former Hallmark Channel communications chief Jennifer Geisser has flipped over to NBCUniversal's Bravo Media as senior VP, communications.

Geisser held the same title during five years at the Hallmark Channel and earlier at Court TV. In between stints, she ran her own shop, Geisser Media.

Jennifer DeGuzman, who joined Bravo last April as VP/comms. from MTV, has moved over to AOL, said a Bravo spokeswoman.



Geisser

Geisser oversees all of Bravo's PR for programming, digital and merchandising reporting to Bravo Media president Frances Berwick and NBCUniversal executive VP Cameron Blanchard.

Blanchard said in a statement that Geisser will help "promote Bravo's pop culture brand and innovative programming throughout the industry."

Previous posts for Geisser included WETv, AMC, CBS Television and DKC.

PABST GETS PR BLAST FROM KEKST

Publicis Groupe's Kekst and Company is defending client Pabst Brewing Co., which is under attack by state attorneys general for marketing the Blast fruity malt liquor.

Endorsed by rapper Snoop Dogg, the AGs contend that Blast is being marketed to the under 21 crowd via social media and other means.



Pabst's Blast

Sold in a 23.5-ounce can, Blast comes in flavors such as grape, strawberry lemonade and raspberry watermelon. Since it contains a 12 percent alcohol compared to the six percent alcohol content of beer, opponents have blistered Blast as a "binge-in-a-can."

The AGs from 18 states sent a letter to Pabst last week to express serious concerns about the possible health risk posted by Blast and the "youth friendly" marketing campaign that is spearheaded by Snoop Dogg, who has more than 3M Twitter followers. They want Pabst to lower the alcohol content of Blast that was launched in March.

Kekst distributed a statement, saying "Blast is only meant to be consumed by those above legal drinking age." The firm said Blast's alcohol content "is clearly marked on its packaging, we are encouraging consumers to consider mixing Blast with other beverages or enjoy it over ice, and we are offering a special seven-ounce bottle for those who prefer a smaller quantity, among other important initiatives."

The attack on Blast follows last year's move on Four Loko, a malt drink that mixed caffeine and alcohol, and was blamed for a string of deaths. The formulated Four Loko does not have the same sales buzz as the original.

Kekst's statement for Blast mentions that it does not have any caffeine.

FCC's KENNY MOVES TO MERCURY

Robert Kenny, acting Federal Communication Commission press secretary, has moved to Mercury Public Affairs in Washington, D.C.

His job is to provide media relations duties surrounding issues in the healthcare, high-tech and telecommunications categories.

The FCC last week named Tammy Sun, founder and CEO of PR agency Let it Shine, as communications director head of the office of media relations, effective April 29. Neil Grace was tapped as press secretary to Chairman Julius Genachowski, effective May 2.

Sun was deputy communications director for the William J. Clinton Foundation, press secretary for the Democratic Leadership Council and spokesperson for Sen. Joe Lieberman's 2006 re-election campaign.

Grace was recently director of Burson-Marsteller's issues and crisis practice, starting with the firm in 2004. He started in PR with the National Restaurant Association. Kenny moved into the shoes of chief spokesman for FCC chair Julius Genachowski after Jen Howard departed in December. He had been handling the FCC's public safety and homeland security bureau.

Omnicom owns Mercury.

LA TIMES WIN SERVICE PULITZER

The *Los Angeles Times* won the coveted Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for its exposure of corruption in Bell, Calif.

The Times team reported a series on Bell officials who used city treasury funds to pay themselves large salaries. The reporting resulted in arrests and reforms, Columbia University noted in announcing the 95th annual Pulitzers.

Paige St. John of the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* was awarded the prize for investigative reporting as she examined "weaknesses in the murky property-insurance system vital to Florida homeowners."

Mark Johnson, Kathleen Gallagher, Gary Porter, Lou Saldivar and Alison Sherwood of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* won the prize for explanatory reporting as they covered an effort to use genetic technology to save a four-year-old boy afflicted by an unknown disease.

The national reporting Pulitzer went to *ProPublica's* Jesse Eisinger and Jake Bernstein for their coverage of questionable practices on Wall Street that contributed to the nation's economic meltdown. The *New York Times'* Clifford Levy and Ellen Barry won the Pulitzer for international reporting as they covered Russia's justice system "remarkably influencing the discussion inside the country" the prize board said.

Other awards included a *Chicago Sun-Times* team for local reporting, Amy Ellis Nutt of the *Star-Ledger* for feature writing, the *New York Times'* David Leonhardt for commentary, and Sebastian Smee of the *Boston Globe* for criticism.

Joseph Rago of the *Wall Street Journal* was honored for editorial writing, Miek Keefe of the *Denver Post* won for editorial cartooning, and Carol Guzy, Nikki Kahn and Ricky Carioti of the *Washington Post* won for breaking news photography for coverage of the Haiti earthquake.

Full list of winners is at pulitzer.org.

WHITE HOUSE THREATENS S.F. CHRON

The White House has threatened to cut the *San Francisco Chronicle* from pool coverage in the Bay Area after political reporter Carla Marinucci posted a video of protesters disrupting a fund-raising breakfast, where donors paid up to \$38,500 each to hear a re-election pitch President Obama at the St. Regis Hotel on April 21.

The protesters stood and sung in support of Pfc. Bradley Manning, the soldier who allegedly leaked U.S. documents to Julian Assange's WikiLeaks outfit. The Justice Dept. has promised to prosecute Assange if he ever steps on American soil.

White House advisors said Marinucci broke the rules of pool reporting. As part of a "print-only pool," she was supposed to provide only text for distribution. Marinucci sent the written pool report, and used the video in her online story on the Chron and a political blog.



View the footage

Chronicle editor Ward Bushee said the White House rules are too restrictive. He finds the White House media policy "objectionable and just not in sync with how reporters are doing their jobs these days," according to a report in the April 29 Chron.

The policy is "not in the spirit" of the Obama Administration goal of being the most transparent White House in U.S. history.

The White House had no comment.

MEREDITH REVENUES DECLINE

Meredith Corp., publisher of magazines like *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Parents*, and *Family Circle*, said April 27 that fiscal third quarter revenue fell to \$340.7M from \$353.3M a year earlier amid declines in advertising and circulation revenue.

Net earnings declined 7.4% to \$30.8M compared with Q1 of 2010.

CEO Stephen Lacy said ad revenues were down due to "belt-tightening" by advertising clients facing sharply higher commodity prices. He sees ad revenue declines "moderating" as the company moves into its fiscal fourth quarter.

During the quarter, Meredith launched iPad versions of BH&G, *Parents* and *Fitness*, along with tablet editions of *Successful Farming*, *Siempre Mujer* and *Wood*.

Meredith said it generated \$140 million in cash flow from operations in Q3 and reduced its total debt by \$75 million to \$225 million.

SOUTHERN LIVING GETS NEW PUB

Greg Schumann is the new publisher of *Southern Living*, the Birmingham-headquarters lifestyle magazine that is owned by Time Inc.

The former group publisher of The Parenting Group led marketing efforts at magazines such as *Babytalk* and *Parenting*.

Schumann worked at Time's *Teen People* and exited as eastern ad director before joining TPG in 2003.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS

CALIF. HEALTH INSTITUTE WANTS PR

The California Health & Longevity Institute is looking for a PR firm to generate positive coverage for its products and services in the corporate health and wellness arena, according to an RFP.

The program breaks down to executive physicals (70 percent) and group programs (30 percent).

The Institute is located at the Four Seasons Hotel Westland Village near Los Angeles.



The Institute was founded in November 2006 via a partnership forged between Dole Food Co. chairman David Murdock, WellPoint and geneticist Andrew Conrad to promote healthier living via a 360-degree approach integrating medical, nutrition, life balance and spa.

Western preventive care is fused with alternative Eastern medical techniques, according to the Institute's website.

The Institute wants to increase the number of executive physicals to 1,500 a year. The Institute is eager to connect with a firm based in Southern California or a big firm with a strong office there.

Lifestyle/spa specialists need not apply. That category is handled in-house or through corporate channels.

Deadline is May 10. Kameron Nesen at KNesen@CHLI.com is fielding questions. He has not been reached by this website.

M BOOTH NOW 'COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY'

M Booth, New York, unveiled a new graphic identity last week, including a revamped logo and website, www.mbooth.com.

The firm, acquired by NextFifteen Communications Group in 2009, now describes itself as a "global communications company pioneering creative science – the intersection of research, insight and imagination."



CEO Margi Booth said the changes match "the true creative spirit of our agency."

METZGER MARKS 20 YEARS

Metzger Associates, Boulder, Colo., marked its 20th anniversary in April, noting its adaptations through several industry changes, including most recently social media and digital.

CEO John Metzger said integrating newer technologies into PR has been key to recent success. That includes hiring for positions not traditionally associated with PR agencies, like community managers, digital marketing directors and analytics pros.

"The days of unquantifiable PR retainers and over-produced, over-priced websites are over," said Metzger, who founded the firm in 1991 after time at Carl Thompson Associates and in journalism.

Justin Rosenthal, who holds one of those titles as digital marketing director, said clients that hire different agencies for the various functions can run into problems.

"When clients spread these requirements over several providers, each company brings a hidden agenda to maximize their portion of the budget," he said.

NEW ACCOUNTS

New York Area

CooperKatz & Company, New York/The Physicians Foundation, nonprofit, as PR agency to serve as its communications department. The foundation gives grants, and produces research and policy studies.

Nancy J. Friedman PR, New York/Z Hotel, Long Island City, for PR for opening in June; The Charles Hotel, as AOR for PR for the Harvard Square hotel in Cambridge, and LeSPORT/Body Holiday and Rendezvous in St. Lucia.

Hanna Lee Communications, New York/Wines of Croatia, to organize and promote the inaugural New York event this summer, sponsored by the Association of Winemakers at the Croatian Chamber of Economy.



Carolyn Izzo Integrated Communications, Nyack, N.Y./European Travel Commission, to promote its web portal, www.visiteurope.com, and all aspects of an integrated marketing campaign.

East

Prompt Communications, Boston/The Refinishing Touch, environmentally friendly furniture refinishing, for customer communications after handling PR for the last three years.

Dimension PR, Harrisburg, Pa./TNDV, mobile production company, and DataNab, IP-enabled solutions for audio streaming, data collection and other uses, for PR starting in May and July, respectively.

Environics Communications, Washington, D.C./The

Ad Council, on behalf of the U.S. Forest Service, to develop and implement a social media program to support its "Re-Connecting Kids with Nature" national PSA campaign. EC will work to encourage parents and families to connect to the campaign via Facebook and its website.



Southeast

Calysto Communications, Atlanta/Endstream Communications, VoIP communications, for PR initially supporting its mobile dialer application, StreamDialer.

TransMedia Group, Boca Raton, Fla./Jerry McGlothlin, publicist, to tout his firm's success in booking guests on national broadcast shows, and Franco Corso, baritone recording artist, for PR.

South

Peritus, Louisville, Ky./Prairie Oat Growers Association, Canada-based group, for U.S. awareness campaign targeting horse owners highlighting the benefit of oats for feed.

Mountain West

Turner PR, Denver/Four Seasons Resort Jackson Hole, Four Seasons Resort Whistler and The Brown Palace Hotel (Denver), for strategic media relations.

West

Weber Shandwick, Los Angeles/City of Hope, research and treatment center for cancer and other diseases, as AOR for PR.

— Greg Hazley

NEWS OF SERVICES**TEXAS SEEKS PR SOFTWARE VENDOR**

The state of Texas' motor vehicle agency is bidding out its PR software contract with an RFQ through May 6.

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles wants a vendor to provide a media contact database, handle press release distribution and monitoring pick-up. Social media monitoring is listed as an optional service.

The DMV issued the RFP April 28.

RFP is at odwyerpr.com/rfps.

VOCUS REVENUE UP 21%; LOSS WIDENS

Vocus on April 26 posted a 21% increase in first quarter revenue to \$27M on a wider net loss of \$1.9M compared with Q1 of 2010.

The company's net was hit by a \$1.2M, one-time cost for professional fees and a break-up fee after Vocus terminated a potential "cross-border acquisition" following its investigation, said CFO Steve Vintz. Net loss for Q1 of 2010 was \$579K.

"In summary, we were a little bit uncomfortable with some of the changes we saw in the business as we were working out way through due diligence," said CEO Rick Rudman, adding the deal was outside of North America.

Revenue rose for Q1 as the PR software provider added 682 net new subscribers like GameStop, iRobot and the Office de Tourisme de Marseille during Q1, up from about 400 for the same period of 2010. Renewal rate is in the 80-90 percent range and it had 9,256 subscribers at the close of Q1.

Vocus shares surged nearly 12 percent in Wednesday's trading to \$27.92, near a 52-week high of \$28.46.

Rudman said Vocus' year-old social media add-on product is also selling well and expects that revenue to hit \$5M by the end of this year. That service will be rolled out of the small business market this summer.

Although the company said it didn't materially affect first quarter results, Vocus in Q1 paid \$7M in cash for Facebook applications developer North Social, a deal that could cost up to \$18M over two years.

CISION Q1 REVENUE SLIPS

Sweden-based PR software and monitoring purveyor Cision on Aug. 27 reported a seven percent decline in revenues to \$41M compared to the 2010 period. Profit was flat.

CEO Hans Gieskes said Cision US organic growth "continues to develop in a positive direction" at three percent in Q1, compared to a four percent decline in Q1 2010.

He said the company shows growth in most markets, with the exception of a few where traditional media monitoring as its main business reduces the positive trend.

Operating profit hit 32M Swedish krona (\$5.3M), down slightly from 33M SEK for Q1 of 2010. Gieskes said currency developments hurt its profit in Q1.

The CEO said Cision will continue to take measures to transform or divest media monitoring operations to complete its shift to a "true PR software and information services company."

PEOPLE**Joined**

Keith Dailey, communications director to former Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland, to The Kroger Co., Cincinnati, announced as director of external corporate communications responsible for national media corporate communications as the grocery giant's spokesperson. Kroger has 2,458 supermarkets and multi-department stores in 31 states. **Meghan Glynn** held the director post at Kroger until late last year, when she left to become VP of external affairs, Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport.

Pamela Lippincott, healthcare media director at Zeno Group, has returned to Spectrum, Washington, D.C., as VP of strategy development. She left the firm in early 2010 after nearly eight years for Zeo. At Spectrum, she directs several major accounts and provide senior oversight and counsel across

**Lippincott**

Spectrum's client base, the firm said. Also at Spectrum, **Liz Bryan**, **Lauren Fulk** and **Megan Lustig** were promoted to senior A/S.

The firm said it is actively hiring for its digital and account teams.

Crystal Litz, who ran her own shop in

**Proctor**

New York, to Cerrell Associates, Los Angeles, as a VP in its campaigns and issues management practice.

Kristin Proctor, A/E, Integrity PR, to Morgan Marketing and PR, Irvine, Calif., as an A/E handling

**Liz**

Wienerschnitzel, Sapphire Laguna, True Food Kitchen, Daphne's California Greek and Wildfish Seafood Grille, among others.

Frank Buscemi, director, strategic comms., The Quell Group, to TI Automotive, Auburn Hills, Mich., as director of marketing and communications. He handled the launch of TIA's new brand identity while at Quell. Earlier, he managed PR for ZF Group North America.

Promoted

Bret Perkins to VP, external and government affairs, Comcast Corp., Philadelphia. Perkins, who was senior director of public policy for Comcast Corporation and a 10-year veteran of the company, takes responsibility for Comcast's government affairs team in Philadelphia, as well as the company's outreach efforts to third party groups.

Mike Ryan to executive VP, global communications and branding, RE/MAX, Denver. He takes the lead on the company's expansion into distressed property projects and oversees government relations and brand marketing, RE/MAX University, event management and corporate communications. He's a 17-year veteran of the real estate company.

Elizabeth Romero to management supervisor, Howard, Merrell & Partners, Raleigh. The nearly five-year veteran of the firm oversees PR and social media for accounts like Butterball, CORDURA fabric, and Component Hardware Group.

SEATTLE TRANSIT TARGETS KIDS WITH PR

The transit agency for the Seattle area has reached out to agencies via RFP as its department of communications and external affairs seeks to develop lessons plans and school curricula materials for students K-12 on transportation topics.

Sound Transit, which last week tapped incumbent Cocker Fennessy for a separate strategic communications pact after a March RFP, foresees transit topics incorporated into sciences, social studies, math and English studies that would foster “use and support of transit services.”

The plans have been criticized in Seattle media and blogs, but ST officials told bidders in a pre-proposal conference that the attention has not represented a “reasonable concern” to halt the RFP process.

Mike Ennis, director of the Washington Policy Center’s Center for Transportation, told Seattle’s King5 News: “They are not supposed to be going into the classroom and targeting kids with their agenda.”

“Desired outcomes include contributing to students’ academic learning while demystifying transit during students’ early years and overcoming barriers to transit ridership, including expanded awareness of transit ability to increase riders’ personal independence by reducing reliance on automobiles while attaining environmental sustainability,” reads the RFP.

Proposals are due May 10. Download the RFP (PDF) at odwyerpr.com/rfps.

Sound Transit said April 26 that Cocker Fennessy won its review for a six-figure contract to guide strategic communications for the transportation system.

APCO WORKS \$7.9B ENERGY DEAL

APCO Worldwide has been called on to support Exelon’s \$7.9B acquisition of renewable power company Constellation Energy announced today to create one of the largest electricity generators in the U.S. with about 6.6M customers.

Exelon is the top nuclear power generator in the U.S.

The deal, approved by both boards, is a stock-for-stock transaction to create a combined company based in Chicago under the Exelon name. The Constellation brand will stay on its retail and wholesale electricity business and add Exelon’s power marketing unit under that banner.

Elizabeth Wolf, corporate media relations manager for APCO in Washington, D.C., told O’Dwyer’s the firm has been retained by both parties to assist in communications efforts surrounding the transaction.

The combined entity would reach 38 of the 50 states and two Canadian provinces.

The companies have produced a website for the deal – www.exelonconstellationmerger.com – which is expected to close next year, pending shareholder and regulatory approval.



MDC REPORTS 60% Q1 REVENUES

MDC Partners reports a 60 percent rise in first-quarter revenues to \$218M and a cut in red ink from \$10.2M to \$8.7M.

Organic revenues jumped 26.5 percent operating profit hit \$2.2M compared to a \$749K loss in the last year’s period.

CEO Miles Nadal says the performance is a “terrific way to begin the year.” He believes MDC’s “transformational” work for clients and “unique understanding of how consumers consume influence in a digital economy” drove Q1 results. He is keen on “creating platforms that have longevity, rather than short-term campaigns, leading to long lasting relations with clients driven by increasing return on marketing investment and resulting in a strong pace of news business,” according to his statement.

MDC predicts Q1 momentum will power it to a \$1B run rate during the next nine months. The firm narrowed its net loss from \$10.1M to \$8.7M.

MDC’s PR units include Allison & Partners, Kwittken & Co. and Sloane & Co.



Nadal

FLORIDA SEEKS FIRM TO WOO CANADIANS

Florida’s tourism marketing organization is reviewing its Canadian PR account with RFP through May 16.

Visit Florida wants pitches from agencies that can guide strategic PR and communications to lure Canadian leisure travelers, build awareness of the organization, and boost tourism stats like length of stay and repeat visitations. Media relations (tours, inquiries, pitching) is the key component of a planned contract.

The RMR Group of Toronto currently handles the account. M. Silver & Associates is its U.S. PR firm.

VF is also reviewing its Latin American advertising and PR account.

Download the RFP at odwyerpr.com/rfps.

BRUNSWICK, SV WORK \$5.7B HOSTILE BID

Brunswick and Sard Verbinnen & Company are squared off in the PR battle over Valeant Pharmaceuticals’ \$5.7 billion hostile bid for Cephalon.

Frazer, Pa.-based Cephalon, which is working with Brunswick, said April 21 that it is urging shareholders to reject Valeant’s effort to replace its board and noted the company’s current board is reviewing the takeover proposal, as well as “alternatives and options.”

“Valeant has no duty to act in the best interests of Cephalon’s shareholders, but rather for Valeant shareholders and their interests – such as buying Cephalon at the lowest possible price,” read the statement from Cephalon.

Brunswick senior partner Steve Lipin and partner Jennifer Lowney in New York are working that account. Cephalon has also hired the proxy firm Innisfree M&A.

Valeant, based in Mississauga, Ontario, shot back later that same day saying that Cephalon has not engaged the company.

Sard Verbinnen managing director Renee Soto and principal Cassandra Bujarski are handling media for Cephalon.

PR OPINION

Attacks on sugar proliferated last week including a renewed campaign by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg to stop food stamp recipients (now a record 41 million nationwide) from using stamps to buy “sugar-sweetened beverages.”

Bloomberg’s aims were covered in a 1,100-word article in the (Sat.) April 30 *New York Times*.

Sugar content should be graphically depicted on the front of soda cans.

Banned would be any drinks with more than 10 calories per eight-ounce serving.

Twelve-ounce cans of Coke and Pepsi have 150 calories or ten teaspoons of sugar (15 calories per teaspoon).

Come to think of it, since youth (a principal target of the soda companies) is so graphics-minded and soda companies profess a policy of openness, containers should show sugar content in terms of readily understandable teaspoons of sugar.

They can keep showing their calorie, carbohydrate and gram counts (in the usual minuscule type) but should show either a sizable picture of ten teaspoons in the case of Coke & Pepsi or a picture of one big spoon with the number “10” on it and “sugar” underneath the number.

That would get across the amounts of sugar involved.

Excess sugar in drinks turns into fat if not burned quickly.

Lobbying Budgets Zoom

While both Coke and Pepsi have “do-good” Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs under way (“Live Positively” for Coke and “Performance with Purpose” at Pepsi), their lobbyists are spending record amounts to block taxes on soda across the nation.

The American Beverage Assn., supported by Coke, Pepsi and others, spent \$12.9 million to fight the soda tax proposed by former Governor David Paterson in 2010.

ABA was the biggest New York lobbyist, outspending the United Fed. of Teachers, No. 2 at \$7.8M, said NYPIRG, a reform group.

Total state lobbying spending was a record \$210M, up from \$198M in the previous year and a far cry from the \$80M spent in 2001.

D.C. Spending ‘Super-Sized’

Proposed federal taxes on sugary drinks in 2009 caused Galen Reser, Pepsi VP-government affairs, to say that they are “one of the biggest public policy threats the company has ever seen.”

The ABA nationally spent \$9.9 million on lobbying in 2010, according to reports filed under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995.

ABA SVP Kevin Keane told the NYT April 30 that “Once you start going into grocery carts, deciding what people can or cannot buy, where do you stop?”

Bloomberg said he wants food stamp users to buy “foods and drinks that provide real nourishment.”

The benefits are paid by the Federal Government and are administered by the Agriculture Dept.

The NYT said President Obama’s position on the New York plan is “unclear” and that it puts him in “an awkward situation.”

First Lady Michelle Obama’s anti-obesity program calls for Americans to “drink less soda or sugar-sweetened drinks.”

New York officials say sugary drinks are the single biggest contributor to the obesity epidemic. They are marketed heavily to children who acquire a lifelong “sweet tooth,” say the critics.

Athlete endorsements and “brilliant” coloring help to “hook” the children, they add.

President Obama has said that Americans drink “way too much soda” and that taxing soda is “an idea that we should be exploring.”

PR a ‘No Show’ in NYT Article

The NYT sought comment from Susan Davidson, Kraft director of corporate affairs, and Kirstie Foster, General Mills director of corporate PR. Both refused.

Kraft products include, besides cheese and candy (Cadbury), Kool-Aid and Oreo cookies.

Davidson sent the NYT to the Food Research and Action Center and Foster suggested the Grocery Mfrs. Assn.

Brian Kennedy, spokesman for the GMA, referred questions to two other trade groups, the Food Marketing Institute and the National Grocers Assn., both of which object to Bloomberg’s proposal.

California health officials say the state is in a fiscal crisis and cannot afford the costs of obesity driven by highly profitable soda companies who especially target youth.

Assemblyman Bill Monning last week said he is “temporarily” giving up on his bill to tax sugared drinks at the rate of a penny-per-ounce.

The GOP-controlled Assembly requires a two-thirds majority to pass such a law and the “Republicans adamantly oppose any such new tax,” said the *Sacramento Bee*.

Said Monning: “I remain committed to educating the public about the dangers of sugary drinks – the biggest contributor to current obesity trends.” He said the state “must avoid a future influx of chronically ill adults into an already overstressed healthcare system.”

The California Center for Public Health Advocacy says 56% of state adults are overweight as well as 28% of the children and there has been a “dramatic rise” in chronic diseases such as diabetes which costs the state \$41 billion a year.

Dr. Harold Goldstein of the CCPHA said half of African-American and Latino children and one-third of Caucasian children born in 2000 will develop Type 2 diabetes in their lifetimes under current trends.

CCPHA has focused on the role of sugary beverages in the obesity epidemic.

Nationally, 12.5 million children and teens or 16.9% are “obese,” according to the Centers for Disease Control.

The *Wall St. Journal* had a feature April 29 on Maine’s campaign to get children to eliminate “sugary drinks” from their diets.

— Jack O’Dwyer



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