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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
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FIJI CALLS FOR GLOBAL PR PITCH

Fiji's tourism entity said it is on the hunt for PR agencies for key global markets, including the U.S. and China.

Tourism Fiji acting CEO Michael Meade said TF wants PR firms to bring "the story of Fiji to their international markets in a fresh and memorable way." He is looking for expressions of interest from firms by April 27 ahead of a competitive review process.



Photo: Tourism Fiji

Firms are asked to include a background, description of expertise, ownership, staff counts and client lists, as well as from two to five case studies in the tourism and travel PR sector.

Markets covered include Australia, New Zealand, U.S. (based on West Coast), and Greater China, including Taiwan and Hong Kong.

The country's government, which came to power in a 2006 military coup, is not recognized by the U.S. and has been criticized by Australia and New Zealand for alleged labor and human rights violations.

Submissions for the PR review go to Meade at mmeade [at] tourismfiji.com.fj, according to Susan Bejeckian, a Los Angeles-based PR consultant who works with Tourism Fiji.

Qorvis Communications in December picked up a \$40K-a-month pact to promote business and investment in the Pacific state.

VANITY FAIR'S WARD TO MWW

Vicky Ward, contributing editor at *Vanity Fair*, has joined MWW Group as senior VP-corporate communications at its New York office.

At VF, Ward has profiled movers and shakers such as former Morgan Stanley CEO Phil Purcell, ousted Hewlett-Packard chief Carly Fiorina, and the late Lazard CEO Bruce Wasserstein.

Before VF, she was executive editor of Tina Brown's short-lived *Talk* and news features editor at the *New York Post*.

Ward is author of "The Devil's Casino: Friendship, Betrayal and the High Stakes Game Inside Lehman Brothers" and is currently working on a history of the General Motors Building.

She plans to continue as contributor to Fox News and Fox Business.



Ward

OMC GETS MAJOR STAKE IN PORTLAND

Omnicom has taken a majority stake in U.K.-based Portland Communications, the firm founded by former BSKyB PR exec and Tony Blair advisor Tim Allan.

Allan, who splits time between London and New York, said the firm after 11 years has more than 80 staffers and noted top management will be maintaining a "significant stake" in the company. He was director of comms. for News Corp.-owned BSKyB after serving the Blair government and built the agency with the satellite TV service as a flagship client.

Portland counts blue chips like Coca-Cola and McDonald's, as well as tech heavyweights Google U.K. and Facebook among its clients.

Omnicom will have PC working closely with its Brussels-based European political PR unit, g+ Europe. Allan said the two firms have collaborated over many years and "have a great deal in common."

The firm will fall under OMC's Diversified Agency Services unit, which includes its major PR operations like Ketchum and Fleishman-Hillard.

The U.K. press reported last year that Allan was talking with Publicis. The firm's 2010 revenues were placed in the £6-7M range. Allan reportedly turned down the top communications job in Blair's government in 2005 so that he would not have to dismantle Portland.

Based in London, the firm has operations in New York and Nairobi.

PR Rankings Issue:
Prof. Services,
Travel, Home,
Agriculture



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EDELMAN'S MARKSON TAKES OGILVY POSTS

Mitch Markson, Edelman's global chief creative officer, is joining Ogilvy PR June 4 as president of its global marketing practice and CCO of the "Purpose Branding" initiative aimed at forging emotional bonds between products and people.

He will report to CEO Christopher Graves, who predicts Markson will be an Ogilvy "giant" who will develop content and context that "clients now crave and demand."

At Edelman, Markson ran its consumer practice for the past decade. During his 21-year stint there, he counseled clients such as Microsoft, Starbucks, KFC, Shell, General Electric and Unilever. Markson also created Edelman's "good purpose" practice that was developed in conjunction with the firm's StrategyOne market research arm.

He also worked at Ketchum and Burson-Marsteller.

AIDS GROUP SEEKS PR FOR TRANSITION

The NO/AIDS Task Force, a New Orleans advocacy and healthcare services group, is on the hunt for a PR firm as it plans to expand to a full-service healthcare center and secure funding under the new federal healthcare law.

The task force, which has operated for 29 years, released an RFP April 13 calling for a new communications and marketing plan to “grow our identity” and “become immediately recognized as a provider of quality healthcare to every member of the family and the community.”

The group fears speculation that after passage of the Obama administration’s healthcare reform law funding for groups like the task force as currently constituted will dry up.

But the new law has money set aside for federally qualified health centers, community health clinics that serve all patients rather than a specialties like HIV/AIDS, as well as so-called “wrap-around services” like food programs, housing services and disease prevention efforts.

Proposals are due May 18. Communications director T.J. Rogers (tjr [at] noaidstf [dot] org) is handling the search. A one to two-year contract is planned.

View the RFP : <http://odwpr.us/HN9qHk>.

COYNE SCOOPS UP STANLEY STEEMER

Coyne PR has picked up PR and social media programming duties for Stanley Steemer, the 65-year-old home and office cleaning service, in a pitch that included incumbent ad agency Young & Laramore and MSLGroup.

Brian King, VP-marketing as SS, defines Coyne’s mission as establishing the company as the “industry leader through education, alignment and inspiration.”

The Jersey-based PR firm has home cleaning savvy gained from work for Brillo, Seventh Generation and Activelon Solution.

Stanley Steemer has more than 300 locations and covers 95 percent of American homes and offices.

CRONIN JOINS WCG

Rob Cronin, who led corporate communications at Surescripts, the country’s biggest health information network, is now practice leader of WCG’s healthcare technology and transformation unit.

Jim Weiss, CEO of WCG’s parent W2O, calls Cronin a healthcare tech communicator without peer. Cronin has engaged “CIOs as well as M.D.’s, gadget gurus, journal editors, experts across industries, health IT evangelists/critics, nurses that tweet and patients that blog,” said Weiss in a statement.

Cronin has PR firm experience from posts at Weber Shandwick, TSI Communications and Outcast. He has counseled AT&T, IBM and EMC.

WCG ranked as O’Dwyer’s sixth biggest independent PR firm in 2011. It chalked up \$47.6M in net fees, up 29 percent from 2010.



A PARTNERSHIP FOR LIFE

MALDIVES WANTS PR HELP AMID CRISIS

The Maldives, the group of South Asian atolls in the midst of political upheaval drawing international attention, on April 9 kicked off a weeklong search for a global PR agency to counter negative press coverage.

Mohamed Nasheed, a political activist previously jailed in the country, won election in 2008 as a reformer but resigned in February after large street protests. Its foreign minister raised eyebrows April 6 when she said the country will not hold elections “in the foreseeable future” because the government was too weak for such a process. Vice President Mohammad Hassan took power on Nasheed’s resignation in the country, which uses an Islamic religious legal system and forbids open practice of any other religion.

The Maldives Marketing and PR Corporation released an RFP April 9 with an April 14 deadline for an agency to work on an initial three-month assignment to “instill confidence” in the country’s key tourism industry, “gain understanding and public acknowledgement of the Maldives from the international community,” and in general improve its image.

The scope of work calls for strategic comms. counsel to the government, message and storybook development, media outreach, and “shareholder mapping” and engagement.

The country’s archipelago is spread over 35,000 square miles but it is the smallest Asian country by area and population. View the RFP: <http://odwpr.us/HMo43i>.

BRUNSWICK RECRUITS LUCAS, MORAN

Samantha Lucas, who chaired the U.S. brand marketing practice and led the international brand and corporate reputation unit at Burson-Marsteller, has moved to Brunswick Group as a partner in New York.

Lucas led Burson’s Merrill Lynch account for several years and handled other clients like Ford and Sony Mobile over 12 years at B-M, which is part of WPP. Previous stints included TSI Communications and Brodeur Worldwide (London).

Brunswick, which has more than 90 partners and 600 staffers, is independent.

Brunswick has also added former StrategyOne president Robert Moran as a partner in D.C. to develop the firm’s insights practice.

Moran was tapped to lead Edelman’s polling and research unit last March.

NEW MEXICO TAPS TUCKER FOR TOURISM PR

New Mexico has tabbed Dallas-based Tucker & Associates to guide tourism PR for the state, following a review kicked off in January.

The state was dangling a \$75K pact through June 30, the end of its fiscal year, with an extension for up to three years to be determined at that time.

Tucker is led by former Patrice Tanaka & Co. VP Lori Tucker, who is also a former PR director for Hyatt Hotels.

New Mexico brought in former PepsiCo marketing exec Monique Jacobson last year to overhaul its tourism marketing.

Development Counsellors International and Ballantines PR have worked the business in recent years.

Ranking of Professional Services PR Firms

| Firm | 2011 Net Fees |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Edelman, New York..... | \$44,467,185 |
| 2. MWW Group, E. Rutherford, NJ..... | 3,963,000 |
| 3. Hager Sharp, D.C..... | 3,834,486 |
| 4. 5W Public Relations, New York..... | 2,600,000 |
| 5. CJP Comms., New York..... | 2,514,880 |
| 6. Allison+Partners, San Francisco..... | 2,500,000 |
| 7. Black Twig Comms., St. Louis..... | 2,500,000 |
| 8. APCO Worldwide, Wash., D.C..... | 2,466,000 |
| 9. Quinn & Co., New York..... | 2,385,701 |
| 10. Rasky Baerlein, Boston..... | 2,273,082 |
| 11. BlissPR, New York..... | 2,218,000 |
| 12. rbb Public Relations, Coral Gables, FL..... | 1,959,665 |
| 13. Gibraltar & Assocs., Washington, D.C..... | 1,929,000 |
| 14. CooperKatz & Co., New York..... | 1,725,500 |
| 15. Levick Strategic Comms., Wash., D.C..... | 1,620,629 |
| 16. Gregory FCA Comms., Ardmore, PA..... | 1,300,000 |
| 17. CRT/tanaka, Richmond..... | 1,232,000 |
| 18. Ruder Finn, New York..... | 1,121,331 |
| 19. LVM Group, New York..... | 1,103,000 |
| 20. Maloney & Fox, New York..... | 1,091,900 |
| 21. PAN Comms., Andover, MA..... | 978,010 |
| 22. L.C. Williams & Assocs., Chicago..... | 848,907 |
| 23. Linhart PR, Denver..... | 630,579 |
| 24. Standing Partnership, St. Louis..... | 596,296 |
| 25. Furia Rubel Comms., Doylestown, PA..... | 548,118 |
| 26. Godwin Advertising, Jackson, MS..... | 528,823 |
| 27. French/West/Vaughan, Raleigh..... | 500,000 |
| 28. Padilla Speer Beardsley, Mlps..... | 499,174 |
| 29. Zeno Group, New York..... | 419,350 |
| 30. Schneider Assocs., Boston..... | 410,894 |
| 31. Casey Comms., St. Louis..... | 397,265 |
| 32. IW Group, West Hollywood, CA..... | 385,000 |
| 33. Seigenthaler PR, Nashville, TN..... | 370,000 |
| 34. Maccabee Group, Minneapolis..... | 363,232 |
| 35. McNeely Piggott & Fox, Nashville, TN..... | 359,063 |
| 36. Formula Public Relations, San Diego..... | 346,750 |
| 37. Kohnstamm Comms., St. Paul..... | 345,551 |
| 38. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta..... | 340,281 |
| 39. Lane PR, Portland, OR..... | 231,717 |
| 40. Finn Partners, New York..... | 191,000 |
| 41. Bender/Helper Impact, Los Angeles..... | 188,926 |
| 42. Beehive PR, St. Paul..... | 133,737 |
| 43. Intermark Group, Birmingham, AL..... | 103,250 |
| 44. Rosica Comms., Paramus, NJ..... | 94,115 |
| 45. Richmond PR, Seattle..... | 86,256 |
| 46. O'Malley Hansen Comms., Chicago..... | 76,000 |
| 47. Open Channels Group, Ft. Worth..... | 70,324 |
| 48. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta..... | 50,000 |
| 49. Bridge Global Strategies, New York..... | 40,269 |

Ranking of Agriculture PR Firms

| Firm | 2011 Net Fees |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Edelman, New York..... | \$39,843,916 |
| 2. Gibbs & Soell, New York..... | 7,674,914 |
| 3. Morgan & Myers, Jefferson, WI..... | 4,934,650 |
| 4. Padilla Speer Beardsley, Mlps..... | 4,008,110 |
| 5. Standing Partnership, St. Louis..... | 703,353 |
| 6. French/West/Vaughan, Raleigh..... | 212,000 |
| 7. Levick Strategic Communications, D.C..... | 199,366 |
| 8. Guthrie/Mayes & Assocs., Louisville..... | 90,687 |
| 9. Feintuch Comms., New York..... | 34,650 |

Ranking of Travel PR Firms

| Firm | 2011 Net Fees |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Edelman, New York..... | \$22,288,557 |
| 2. The Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee..... | 6,950,000 |
| 3. Lou Hammond & Assocs., New York..... | 5,059,922 |
| 4. MMGY Global, New York..... | 2,924,704 |
| 5. Development Counsellors Int'l, New York..... | 2,910,765 |
| 6. Allison+Partners, San Francisco..... | 2,700,000 |
| 7. Quinn & Co., New York..... | 2,650,202 |
| 8. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ..... | 1,520,000 |
| 9. Finn Partners, New York..... | 1,372,000 |
| 10. Lane PR, Portland, OR..... | 1,258,452 |
| 11. CRT/tanaka, Richmond..... | 1,209,640 |
| 12. J Public Relations, San Diego..... | 1,133,748 |
| 13. Zeno Group, New York..... | 1,070,368 |
| 14. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta..... | 1,021,596 |
| 15. French/West/Vaughan, Raleigh..... | 1,009,872 |
| 16. Fahlgren Mortine, Columbus, OH..... | 821,934 |
| 17. rbb Public Relations, Coral Gables, FL..... | 802,721 |
| 18. Ruder Finn, New York..... | 746,510 |
| 19. Padilla Speer Beardsley, Mlps..... | 735,313 |
| 20. Seigenthaler, Nashville..... | 542,000 |
| 21. Standing Partnership, St. Louis..... | 444,339 |
| 22. Blaze, Los Angeles..... | 390,200 |
| 23. Black Twig Comms., St. Louis..... | 390,000 |
| 24. MDi media group, Mobile, AL..... | 343,835 |
| 25. Richmond PR, Seattle..... | 341,667 |
| 26. McNeely Piggott & Fox, Nashville..... | 307,390 |
| 27. Formula Public Relations, San Diego..... | 195,881 |
| 28. Linhart Public Relations, Denver..... | 121,871 |
| 29. IW Group, West Hollywood, CA..... | 112,000 |
| 30. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA..... | 100,000 |
| 31. Bridge Global Strategies, New York..... | 80,869 |
| 32. Shelton Group, Dallas..... | 66,647 |
| 33. WordHampton, East Hampton, NY..... | 58,730 |
| 34. Red Sky Public Relations, Boise..... | 51,233 |
| 35. Maccabee, Minneapolis..... | 38,763 |
| 36. Open Channels Group, Ft. Worth..... | 33,750 |
| 37. Guthrie/Mayes & Assocs., St. Louis..... | 30,136 |
| 38. GodwinGroup, Jackson, MS..... | 22,776 |

Ranking of Home Furnishings PR Firms

| Firm | 2011 Net Fees |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Edelman, New York..... | \$39,725,514 |
| 2. Zeno Group, New York..... | 4,968,942 |
| 3. L.C. Williams & Assocs., Chicago..... | 3,078,632 |
| 4. Gibbs & Soell, New York..... | 2,798,969 |
| 5. Kaplow, New York..... | 1,431,000 |
| 6. Luckie Strategic PR, Birmingham, AL..... | 1,322,417 |
| 7. Hunter PR, New York..... | 1,054,478 |
| 8. Lou Hammond & Assocs., New York..... | 829,928 |
| 9. CRT/tanaka, Richmond..... | 702,005 |
| 10. Formula Public Relations, San Diego..... | 679,462 |
| 11. Fahlgren Mortine, Columbus, OH..... | 676,210 |
| 12. Finn Partners, New York..... | 246,000 |
| 13. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA..... | 195,500 |
| 14. Rosica Comms., Paramus, NJ..... | 164,682 |
| 15. CJ Public Relations, Farmington, CT..... | 119,378 |
| 16. Schneider Assocs., Boston..... | 115,352 |
| 17. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta..... | 100,000 |
| 18. Shelton Group, Dallas..... | 97,690 |
| 19. Allison+Partners, San Francisco..... | 51,000 |
| 20. Seigenthaler PR, Nashville..... | 17,000 |

YAHOO! RESTRUCTURES

Yahoo! is revamping into consumer, regions and technology groups on May 1 to improve customer experiences and increase accountability at the struggling company. In an April 9 memo, CEO Scott Thompson wrote: "It's time for Yahoo! to move forward, and fast."

His highest priority is "winning our core business and that will earn us the right to pursue new growth opportunities."

Yahoo!'s key consumer division includes media, connections and commerce units that will "will provide users the uniquely relevant and personalized content and services they expect and deserve, leveraging Yahoo!'s vast consumer interest data," according to Thompson.

On the corporate front, Penny Baldwin is interim leader of the marketing and communications team until a chief marketing officer is hired. Chief product officer Blake Irving is exiting and will work over the next few weeks to assure a smooth transition.

Earlier this month, Yahoo! announced the layoff of 2,000 people.

CBS SELLS FIVE RADIO STATIONS

CBS Corp. is selling five of its West Palm Beach stations for \$50M to a group led by local broadcasting veteran Dean Goodman and Garrison Investment Group as part of its plan to focus on major markets.

The move follows the sale of CBS stations in mid-size markets like Denver and Portland, Ore.

Goodman, who has been involved in south Florida radio for 35 years, said in a statement that it's "extremely gratifying to add these excellent stations to our community-focused radio service in the Palm Beach market." He sees radio "experiencing a renaissance in the digital age" and is pleased to be part of that effort.

His firm is Palm Beach Broadcasting.

BAY CITIZEN CUTS NYT TIE

The *Bay Citizen*, which has covered San Francisco for the *New York Times* for the past two years, has ended that relationship.

The split follows the online BC's merger with the non-profit Center for Investigative Reporting in Berkeley. The union takes effect April 30.

Robert Rosenthal, executive director of the Center, said it left the Times arrangement because it did not want to be tied down to a single news outlet.

GANNETT GIVES STAHL STRATEGY POST

Saira Stahl, VP of operations and communications at Gannett Digital, has been upped to corporate-wide VP strategy post.

She takes responsibility for the newly established program management office on April 23.

CEO Gracia Martore said in a statement that Stahl is to "leverage our many competitive advances to deliver best-in-class content and services across an integrated multi-platform portfolio."

Prior to Gannett, Stahl was director of business development at AOL and manager in Ernst & Young's critical technologies unit.

She reports to Martore.

U.S. SUES APPLE, FIVE PUBLISHERS

The Justice Dept. April 11 filed an antitrust suit against Apple and five publishers, charging they colluded to raise prices in the e-book market.

Attorney General Eric Holder told a press conference the companies "worked together to eliminate competition among stores selling e-books, ultimately increasing prices for consumers." He believes that collusion costs consumers millions of dollars.

The suit alleges the defendants schemed to raise prices to punish Amazon's move in 2007 to sell their books for \$9.99.

The lawsuit claims the late Apple CEO Steve Jobs orchestrated the pricing plan urging the publishers to see if "we can make a go of this to create a real mainstream e-books market at \$12.99 to \$14.99."

HarperCollins, Hachette, Macmillan, Penguin and Simon & Schuster are named in the suit. A proposed settlement has been ironed out with Hachette, HC and S&S.

Under that deal, the publishers would offer Amazon and Barnes & Noble the freedom to reduce prices on their e-titles and sever their "most-favored nation" agreements with Apple's iBookstore and other e-book retailers.

The trio also will not constrain retailers from offering discounts during the next two years and are prohibited from sharing competitive data with other for five years.

Apple, MacMillan and Penguin have denied wrongdoing. MacMillan said it had entered negotiations to settle the suit, but found the Justice Dept. demands were "too onerous."

PARENTS EXTENDS REACH

Parents magazine on April 14 kicked off a six-week run on Sirius XM Radio to feature its editors and experts tackling child rearing issues, parental problems and family health. They will take questions from listeners via phone, Facebook and Twitter.

Parents editor-in-chief Dana Points, deputy editor Diane Debrovner and host Wesley Weissberg will provide "it worked for me advice" and deal with topics covered in the magazine that reaches 15M readers a month and attracts 4.5M unique visitors monthly.

Booked guests include Dr. Michael Thompson, author of "Raising Cain," and Pamela Redmond Satran, a baby naming expert.

Parents is owned by Meredith Corp.

CONDE NAST GOES HOLLYWOOD

Conde Nast Entertainment Group has hired Jeremy Steckler, Fox Searchlight veteran, as executive VP-motion pictures, and Michael Klein, Sundance Channel alum, as executive VP-alternative programming.

The Los Angeles-based Steckler and New York-headquartered Klein are to develop film, TV and digital programs based on content from CN's magazines. They also may use seed money to fund project start-ups.

Also, Conde Nast's senior VP brand communications Maurie Perl is moving to the entertainment group on April 23. She began at Conde Nast in 1992, after handling publicity duties at ABC News, PBS and MTV.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS**RLM FINSBURY, BRUNSWICK TOP M&A TABLE**

RLM Finsbury was the top global M&A PR advisor by deal value in the first quarter, counseling 25 transactions worth \$89.9B, according to mergermarket, which noted M&A activity fell more than 30% during the period over Q1 of 2011.

RLM worked the quarter's top two deals, representing commodities trading company Glencore International in its \$53.4B acquisition of Xstrata, as well as Sterlite Industries of India, which was acquired for \$10.3B by Sesa Goa Ltd.

Brunswick was the top global firm by deal count with 41 and led U.S. firms by value (\$32.5B) as it handled the \$7.2B purchase of EP Energy Corp., Roche's \$6.8B acquisition of Illumina, and Sinopec's \$2.5B grab of Devon Energy, among others.

The EP Energy deal was the quarter's largest in the U.S. and also involved Kekst, Rubenstein and Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher.

Kekst and Company was the U.S. workhorse, counseling 28 deals during Q1, more than any other firm domestically. Kekst was followed in the U.S. by Brunswick (21), Sard Verbinnen & Co. (20), Abernathy MacGregor Group (18), Joele Frank Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher (17) and FTI Consulting (8).

The U.S. market suffered the most precipitous drop in M&A activity, down nearly 54% over 2011, according to mergermarket, which said buyers were possibly put off by unrealistic valuations fueled by a U.S. stock market rally. Mergermarket said first quarter activity was the lowest since Q3 of 2009 and continued a downward trend that has lasted for five consecutive quarters.

H+K HANDLES SHOCKER BEST BUY CEO EXIT

Hill + Knowlton Strategies is handling the shocker resignation of Best Buy CEO Brian Dunn, who left the electronics retailer after 28 years following a probe by the board into his "personal conduct."

Three weeks ago, Dunn announced a "new transformation strategy" for the \$50.7B company that lost \$1.2B during its latest fiscal year ended March 3.

The board announced that it has no disagreements with Dunn, a one-time Best Buy stereo salesman who assumed the helm in 2009, on any matter relating to "operations, financial controls, policies or procedures." It has selected director Mike Mikan, former CFO of UnitedHealth Group, as interim chief while a search is underway for a new leader.

Best Buy founder Richard Schulze, remains chairman of the Minneapolis-based chain that received an unsolicited mini-tender offer from TRC Capital Corp. on April 9. Best Buy told shareholders to ignore that bid.

Claire Koeneman, H+K's executive VP and Chicago office head, works the Best Buy business. She joined the WPP unit from the Financial Relations Board last May.

BRIEF: Colorado is looking for agency help to plan a campaign to restore confidence in the Rocky Ford cantaloupe, which took a hit last year after 32 people across the country died from a listeria outbreak traced to a Granada, Colo., grower. The RFP can be downloaded at the state's procurement website.

NEW ACCOUNTS**New York Area**

RF|Binder, New York/ Abine, online privacy tools for everyday internet users, as AOR for PR. Its products include Do Not Track Plus (DNT+) and DeleteMe.

MWW Group, New York/Vitals, online physician review and ratings resource, for consumer brand communications. More than 100 million patients visit the site each year.

Affect, New York/Cellebrite, products and services for mobile data extraction, decoding, analysis diagnostics, forensics and content delivery, for PR.

Bullfrog & Baum, New York/Chile Oliva, the Chilean Association of Growers and Producers of Olives and Olive Oil, for PR for its first consumer campaign in the U.S. with the tagline "How Virgin is Your Extra Virgin?" Focus is on New York, Miami and Boston and the campaign was created by Vivaldi Partners Group.

The S3 Agency, Boonton, N.J./Social Stage, creator of online platforms that allow users to build custom websites within Facebook pages, as AOR for PR.

Swordfish Communications, Laurel Springs, N.J./Coatings for Industry Inc., supplier of floor coatings and other industrial applicants, for trade publicity, and Sumo Heavy Industries, a Philadelphia e-commerce website design company specializing in clients in the high-end fashion, consumer goods and extreme sports industries, for PR.

The GRI Marketing Group, Trumbull, Conn./Norhill Wealth Strategism, for consulting, creative, media planning/buying and production management.

East

Clapp Communications, Baltimore/Smith, Gildea & Schmidt, LLC, Towson, Md.-based law firm, for PR.

Midwest

Blick&Staff Communications, St. Louis/GO! St. Louis, non-profit promoting a healthy and active lifestyle, as AOR for PR. The group's annual marathon and fitness event draws more than 25,000.

AutoCom Associates, Bloomfield Hills, Mich./Alcantara S.p.A., Italian producer of automotive interior materials, as AOR for PR in North America. Alcantara serves car makers including Ferrari and Lamborghini.

Southwest/Mountain West

Weber Shandwick, Dallas/Reading Is Fundamental, children's literacy nonprofit, following a competitive pitch. WS is providing guidance and counsel for a variety of PR efforts as part of an integrated communications campaign for the group, which is marketing its 45th year.

202 Communications, Salt Lake City/MultiDyne Video & Fiber Optic Systems, for PR.

West

McGrath/Power PR, San Jose/LiveOps, cloud-based customer engagement across multiple social, mobile, and traditional channels, for PR.

The Pollack PR Marketing Group, Los Angeles/RKF, New York-based urban retail real estate services firm, for PR for its Los Angeles office.

Driven PR, Temecula, Calif./Kumho Tire USA, as AOR for PR.

— Greg Hazley

NEWS OF SERVICES

VISIBLE ACQUIRES CYMFONY

Visible Technologies on April 13 agreed to acquire WPP-owned Cymfony, combining the social media analytics, monitoring and consulting companies.

WPP owned 24% of Visible and now has 49% of outstanding shares of the combined entity.

Former Cymfony chief Richard Pasewark takes the reins as CEO of Visible, based in Seattle with operations in several U.S. cities and London.

Customers of each company will continue to receive support for their respective products.

PRN ADDS GETTY STOCK IMAGES

PR Newswire and Getty Images have partnered to give PRN customers access to Getty's extensive database of stock imagery for use in press releases.

Dan Hennes, VP for multimedia distribution at PRN said photography can be cost-prohibitive for some clients, even though multimedia often increases the pick-up of releases.

"We want them to get the most out of their communication campaigns, but also understand that many marketing and professionals don't have the budget or the time to hire a photographer for every occasion and announcement," he said.

PRN has incorporated images from Getty's Thinkstock and iStockphoto services into its online member center, allowing users to add photos with a single click.

Getty also said last week it has inked a deal with travel publisher Lonely Planet to become the sole global distributor for LP's library of 420,000 travel images built over 14 years. It has also signed to distribute photos for French news magazine *Paris Match*.



CRITICAL MENTION EYES HISPANIC MARKET

Monitoring company Critical Mention said it has doubled the number of Spanish-language TV stations tracked, expanding to the top 50 U.S. Hispanic markets.

CM president Dave Armon said the TV consumption among Hispanics is "sharply higher" than the general population and its audiences are growing.

He sees a strong demand from Hispanic marketing pros to monitor earned, paid and "owned" media.

The U.S. Hispanic population has surpassed 50 million people, growing 43%, according to the latest Census.

CM notes that three-quarters of U.S. Hispanics live in nine states – Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York and Texas – down from 81% in 2000 as the population spreads out among the U.S.

Critical Mention addressed the newly expanded Hispanic media footprint by doubling the number of Spanish outlets it monitors in all those markets as well as regions with growing Hispanic populations like Philadelphia, Seattle, Atlanta, Portland and Raleigh-Durham.

PEOPLE

Joined

Marc Greene, senior director, U.S. corporate media relations, Sanofi-Aventis, to RF|Binder Partners, New York, as executive managing director and chief media strategist. He previously held posts at Fleishman-Hilliard, Chandler Chicco, Burson-Marsteller, and Rubenstein Associates.

Peter Ward, independent consultant with previous comms. roles at Greenwich Capital Markets and The Royal Bank of Scotland, to multi-asset brokerage and clearing company Newedge, New York, as global head of marketing communications.

Peter Gladstone, VP, Carton Donofrio Partners, to Crosby Marketing Communications, Annapolis, Md., as VP, director of integration management.

Christina Saull, manager, media advocacy, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, to Widmeyer Communications, Washington, D.C., as a senior account manager. **Julia Gotwald**, previously with Hilltop Public Solutions, and **Brad Rizza**, comms. manager, Pappas Group, join as A/E, public affairs, and senior A/E, higher education, respectively.

Brett Player, creative director and co-founder, Play/VTA, to Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, as creative director. Also, **Colin Owens**, marketing manager, Hay Group, joins as marketing and business development manager, replacing **Caroline Duffy**, and **Aimée Reif**, marketing manager for User Experience Alliance of Chicago, joins to handle social media/digital accounts.

Kelly Wanlass, who runs her own shop and previously held posts at MCA and Applied Communications, to Snapp Conner PR, Salt Lake City, Utah, as a senior PR associate to handle social media and digital accounts.

Andrew Marshall, a veteran of Fishburn Hedges and Hill & Knowlton, to Cognito, as its managing director for EMEA, based in London.

Matt McKay, head of comms. for BioMed Central, to collaboration software developer Mendeley Ltd., London, as director of comms., a new post.

Promoted

Jason Maloni to chair the litigation practice at Levick Strategic Communications, Washington, D.C. Maloni is a senior VP of the firm and joined six years ago, handling assignments involving Microsoft, Roger Clemens and Hooters Restaurants, among others.

David Griffith to PR director, Buffalo Communications, Vienna, Va. He joined the golf-focused firm in 2008.

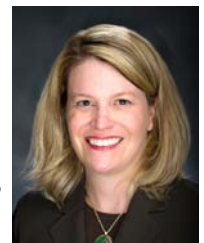
Heather Swain to VP for communications and brand strategy, Michigan State University, East Lansing, effective April 13. She joined the school in October 2006 and has been interim VP since August 2010. She was previously at Ball State Univ.



Gladstone



Player



Swain

PRESS-DODGING, PINCH-PENNY WAYS MAR PR

By Jack O'Dwyer

Several problems confront the PR industry but they are not being attacked by the PR trade associations.

The Edelman Trust Barometer released earlier this year showed the U.S. was the only country with a decline in trust in all institutions in 2011—government, business, media and non-governmental organizations.

The Edelman survey does not target PR's institutions but we're sure that they would rate low with PR people.

They are, in order of size, the PR Society, Arthur W. Page Society, (PR) Seminar, the Council of PR Firms, and the Institute for PR.

Seminar dropped the "PR" from its name in 2007 when Jon Iwata of IBM was its chair. Iwata is the current Page chair. Several members of the Page executive committee are Seminarists including vice chairs Ray Kotcher of Ketchum and Ray Jordan of Johnson & Johnson. Margaritis of FedEx, immediate past chair of Page, is a Seminarist.

Seminar, formed by PR heads of major companies at the annual meeting of the National Assn. of Mfrs., met first under the PR Seminar name in 1952.

Seminarists and others created the Page Society in 1983 and won its tax status as a 501(c)(3) "charity" which allows companies to make tax-free contributions to it.

Media Are Shrinking

No. 1 problem that the above groups should address is the shrinkage of media. Dealing with media was the reason PR depts. were created in the first place.

Newspaper ad revenues hit \$20 billion in 2011, down from \$49 billion as recently as 2006. Revenues were \$63B in 2000 adjusted for inflation. Circulation has dipped from 62 million in the 1990s to 45 million. More than 700 magazines a year folded from 2007-2009 according to www.mediafinder.com.

The current generation, accustomed to getting news and information free on the web, rarely subscribes to anything. One way of funding media would be for companies to purchase site licenses for their employees.

Blocking and Tackling, Stonewalling, Etc.

Another problem is the pullback of PR from media relations.

Every so often someone at a major media launches a blast at PR that none of the above groups ever answers.

Examples are the *Washington Post's* Gene Weingarten in 2007 calling PR people "pathetic dillweeds," Andrew Cohen of CBS-TV who said in 2009 that PR people make "racehorses out of milk cows," and more recently (Jan. 29, 2012) *New York Times* columnist David Carr writing Jan. 29 that "The modern CEO lives behind a wall of communications operatives, many of whom ladle out slop meant to obscure rather than reveal."

Someone from the five groups (or all of them) should visit Carr and find out what's on his mind.

Candidates Sought by PRS

The boards of Page and the IPR have so many people them (37 on Page and 44 on IPR) that they are actually resume-building exercises more than governing bodies. Selection is strictly by insiders.

The one group that conducts open "elections," although flawed, is the PR Society.

It has just started its annual quest for candidates.

Past abuses include board members trying to pick the new board members, which was condemned by the Jack Felton committee in 2004, and the rejection of qualified candidates for political reasons or to reward cronies.

An example is Marlene Neill of Waco, Texas, who was rejected as an at-large candidate in 2007 on the ground that she did not have enough "experience." She had 14 years of news and PR jobs. The real reason was that she was working on an M.A. in journalism at the Univ. of Missouri and could not logically take part in the boycott against the O'Dwyer Co. that was initiated in 2006 when Cheryl Procter-Rogers was chair. The at-large post went to Barbara Whitman of Hawaii.

Rejected in 2009 was Gold Anvil Winner Ofield Dukes, who would have been the second male African-American on the board in 62 years.

Rejected by the nomcom in 2010 was African-American Regina Lewis of the Potter's House of Dallas, a 22-year veteran, Society member since 1992, and far more qualified than Susan Walton, an associate teaching professor at Brigham Young.

With such politics and cronyism at work, it's no wonder PRS has a hard time coming up with candidates. No one could be found last year for the S.E., S.W. and North Pacific districts although 1,200 APRs were eligible.

The nomcom itself is flawed because 16 of its 19 members are APR when only 18% of the 21,000 members are.

A non-APR majority might look for candidates who would overturn the APR rule for board posts.

The insiders tightened their grip on the top posts by getting the 2009 Assembly to pass a bylaw that restricts officer posts to those who have served on the board. That eliminates any "white knight" from coming in to clean house. No other profit or non-profit board would place such a limit on who can be CEO.

Noxious Policies Deter Candidates

Hardly anyone wants to join a board whose members are condemned to a lifetime of silence no matter what the majority of the board decides.

Currently PRS is in defiance of the National Press Club which has urged it to drop the boycott against the O'Dwyer Co.

The boycott is so embarrassing that VP-PR Arthur Yann posted on PR Newser March 7 that no such boycott exists!

Not only was the boycott in writing (PDF: <http://bit.ly/yc2LVT>), but it was also delivered to the O'Dwyer offices March 19, 2010 by chair Gary McCormick and COO Bill Murray.

Perplexing is the return of McCormick as chair of the nomcom. He quit the board on Oct. 1, 2011 and only cited "personal and professional reasons."

He quit the board once before, in 2006, citing additional job duties.

Shortly after McCormick quit, so did Ron Owens of Kaiser Permanente.

PR OPINION

A shocked *New York Times* on April 4 headlined, “In China Press, Best Coverage Cash Can Buy,” expressing dismay that advertising was influencing editorial coverage. It said editorial space was for sale at well-publicized prices not only in Chinese media but in media in other countries.

This “play for pay” story must be paired with the latest stats on newspaper ad/circulation figures.

Ad revenues fell to \$20 billion in 2011, a 60-year low and down from \$49B as recently as 2006. Revenues were \$63.5B in 2000 (adjusted for inflation).

Circulation declined from 62 million daily in the mid-1990s to 45 million. The result is a tidal wave of newspaper closings, shrinkage and staff cuts. Journalists fell from 56,900 in 1990 to 41,600 in 2011. The PR population, meanwhile, went from about 100,000 in 1980 to 270,000 currently.

More than 700 magazines a year folded from 2007-09 or more than double the number launched according to www.mediafinder.com.

No doubt the same thing is happening in China and other countries. Companies that don't advertise nor buy any subscriptions to publications and/or broadcast media are showing up with pieces that are ill-disguised ads. Marketing's view of PR is that it is “free advertising.”

Media in China and elsewhere know a bad business deal when they see one. They do not like getting stiffed by PR firms that are well paid to place stories for clients that are far more effective than paid ads. The “Macy's 10-1 rule” is all too true—one inch of editorial = ten inches of ads.

A Better Solution Is Buy Website Licenses

Failure to say that editorial matter has been paid for compromises the media involved. “Paid advertisement” should be put somewhere even if it's in small type.

But media need to find new sources of revenue because ads and circulation have dried up. Recent generations mostly stopped reading newspapers and rarely subscribe to anything. Companies have to take up the slack.

Robert McChesney and John Nichols in “The Death and Life of American Journalism” in 2010 proposed government-funded press as the solution. That idea did not go too far.

We have a better idea. Media can reasonably ask if the PR firm and its clients are subscribers. The unkindest cut of all for newspeople is to be asked to run a story and then send a tear sheet to the PR person.

Companies cannot be expected to buy thousands of copies of a medium but they can pay substantial fees for website licenses. Surely they want their employees to read any story! Would that influence coverage? Not if a medium had lots of such contracts. Whereas purchase of ads next to or near a story implies a quid pro quo, purchase of web access is a private transaction.

Marketers must stop thinking of PR as free advertising. Media must get paid one way or another if they are to survive.

— *Jack O'Dwyer*

“60 Minutes” correspondent Mike Wallace, who died April 7 at the age of 93, was a gift to the PR business.

I remember attending countless crisis management workshops and seminars during the early 1990s that promoted themselves as events loaded with insider information about “What to do when Mike Wallace knocks on the door.”

The sponsors of those sessions made money, but the audience was always short-changed. When one-man truth squad Wallace showed up, the jig was up. The PR workshop/seminar take-aways were either to keep your corporate nose clean or door closed when Mike came a-calling.



Image: CBS News

The no-frills newsman was also a goldmine for PR firms. They earned millions in fees pitching the fear of Wallace to skittish clients.

CBS ultimately phased-out the “ambush journalism” that was so perfected by Wallace. Executive producer Don Hewitt decided that ambushes were nothing more than “showbiz baloney.” He told Mike to “retire your trench coat.” An era passed.

In today's 24/7 electronic communications environment, 60 Minutes has lost some of the power that it had as the only game in town.

Though CBS has ditched ambush journalism, the hypothetical question, “What do you do when Steve Kroft knocks on the door?” just doesn't have PR people running for the exits.

Kroft is good. Wallace was one-of-a-kind.

In last night's 60 Minutes tribute, Kroft remembered Wallace as the program's “most public face,” “a true giant of television” and a correspondent with a “reporting style and interviewing technique” that influenced generations of journalists.

Morley Safer, who knew Wallace longer than anybody else on the show, called him a “restless man always chasing the next story.”

Wallace is now at rest.

Former Microsoft CEO Bill Gates is the only business representative on Burson-Marsteller's study of Twitter's ten most powerful political influencers.

That's a signal of Corporate America's retreat from the public discourse.

It's unclear whether Gates' clout comes from his reputation at Microsoft or from the good deeds of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Barack Obama, Mitt Romney, Michael Bloomberg, Nancy Pelosi and five media players (Fox's Bret Baier, CNN's Anderson Cooper, MSNBC/NBC's Chuck Todd and *Washington Post's* Ezra Klein and Chris Cillizza) round out the list.

— *Kevin McCauley*