



Jack O'Dwyer,  
Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of  
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Communications

271 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016  
212/679-2471. Fax: 212/683-2750  
www.odwyerpr.com; jobs.odwyerpr.com

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## MIDDLEBERG ACQUIRES G.S. SCHWARTZ

Middleberg Communications has acquired G.S. Schwartz & Co., the New York firm founded by 44-year PR veteran Jerry Schwartz.

Schwartz told O'Dwyer's he has known CEO Don Middleberg for several years and approached him a few months ago about taking on Schwartz clients and staff.

"When you have a 30-year history in your firm, you don't just walk away one day and close," said Schwartz, 64, who will take a senior counseling role with Middleberg. "Don presented a wonderful opportunity and I feel secure in transitioning our clients and staff over to him."

Middleberg said he and Schwartz have been "friendly competitors" for years. "I was very flattered when he came to me," he said.

Schwartz' firm had revenue of \$3.8M last year with clients like Anheuser-Busch, Hallmark, the Toy Industry Association and Dow Jones & Co.

Middleberg, who sold his 150-staffer tech firm to Euro RSCG in 2000, opened MC in 2006. The firm has made a series of smaller acquisitions, including the Dowd Agency and The Weiser Group in 2009, and TowersGroup in 2006. Two principals of Towers who joined MC after that deal – Scott Sunshine and Andrew Healey -- recently left the firm to set up their own shop, Water & Wall Group. MC has about 20 staffers and revenue in the \$3M range.

"I have a longer view of what I want to do with writing and other things, but in the short term I will work with Don," said Schwartz, who started out in PR as a writer and press relations staffer for the American Stock Exchange.

He later moved to Harshe-Rotman & Druck in the mid-1970s before setting up his firm in 1981.

## MONTEREY SEEKS TRAVEL PR PITCHES

California's Monterey County has opened an RFP process to guide travel and tourism PR for the region.

The Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau is conducting the review process following last month's implementation of a new strategic plan.

The CVB wants an established travel and tourism PR agency to develop a communications plan, focus on high-profile media opportunities, and run media tours of the county all in support of its two-person in-house PR staff. The CVB said it will entertain pitches with fee estimates in the \$5K-a-month range for a contract that could stretch through mid-2015.

KOLI Communications recently concluded a PR pact with the CVB. The RFP, released July 20, is open through Aug. 10. Details: <http://bit.ly/NfbXI>.

## IPG PR POSTS STRONG GAINS IN 'HEADWINDS'

Interpublic reported second quarter organic growth in the U.S. declined 3.2% amid "headwinds" from losses in 2011 and fell 0.8% across the ad/PR conglomerate, but its PR operation bucked that trend with strong gains for the quarter.

Overall IPG revenue for Q2 fell 1.4% over 2011 to \$1.7B, including a 3.7% drop in the U.S. to \$950.9M. Net income slid 3.1% to \$105.5M in Q2.

But IPG's Constituency Management Group, which includes PR units like Weber Shandwick and GolinHarris, saw organic revenue climb 8% (8.7% overall) during Q2. Its advertising-laden Integrated Agency Networks fell .5% organically and -3.3% overall to \$1.4B. PR on its own saw organic growth of 5.7% (7.2% overall) during the quarter and an increase of 4.2% organically for the first six months of the year.

Harris Diamond, CEO of the CMG unit, singled out Weber Shandwick, DeVries and GH for strong performances in the quarter and said PR is capitalizing on opportunities it didn't have in the past to pitch against other disciplines for business. He said PR showed continued strength across the board with only "softness" in public affairs, a typical dropoff ahead of a presidential election which came earlier than in previous cycles.

Chairman and CEO Michael Roth said the global economic situation remains uncertain and will require "vigilance" through the rest of 2012, but he maintains IPG's goal of 3% organic revenue growth for the year. "Once again, we demonstrated the ability to effectively manage the business so as to improve profitability, despite these headwinds," he said.

Latin America and Asia Pacific boosted earnings with organic growth of 27.2% and 14.3%, respectively.

## REUTERS' PELOFSKY MOVES TO KETCHUM

Jeremy Pelofsky, legal and federal correspondent for Reuters, has moved to the PR realm as a VP and media strategist in Ketchum's D.C. office.

Pelofsky, who has registered to work PR for Ketchum's lucrative Gazprom Russian energy account, was with Reuters for the past 15 years, covering various elements of the federal government, including the recent Bush White House, Federal Communications Commission, Justice Dept. and Congress.

Earlier, he covered the International Monetary Fund and World Bank beat for Bloomberg News.

Ketchum is part of Omnicom.



Pelofsky

## **MAGNET MAKER MOUNTS PR DEFENSE**

Maxfield & Oberton, maker of the Buckyballs desktop magnets popular in offices, is relying on PR support as it faces extinction from an administrative complaint by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The CPSC, which says efforts to educate the public and increase the minimum age for the magnetic product have not reduced a swallowing hazard, on July 25 filed the complaint – essentially a lawsuit – against the New York-based company ordering that it stop selling its Buckyballs and Buckycubes products, notify the public of injury risk, and offer consumers a refund.

The CPSC complaint notes that more than two millions Buckyballs sets have been sold as well as more than 200,000 Buckycubes. The federal agency said it made the legal move only after M&O refused to implement a recall.

M&O is working with Strategy XXI Partners' Andrew Frank, a Kreab Gavin Anderson vet and government communications aide during the Clinton administration, for PR.

"We will vigorously fight this action taken by President Obama's hand picked agency," said CEO Craig Zucker, in a statement from the PR firm.

Zucker contends that the federal agency warned retailers like Amazon and Brookstone to stop selling the product before filing its recent complaint. The retailers agreed to the request.

"I don't understand how and why they did this without following their own rules before allowing us to make our case," added Zucker. "It almost seems like they simply wanted to put our products and industry out of business."

CPSC and M&O worked together on a recall of 175,000 of the Buckyball magnet sets in 2010 because they were marketed to ages 13+ without meeting federal toy standards for magnets, which start at age 14.

The regulator and the company last year collaborated on a consumer safety video about the hazards of swallowing the magnets, but CPSC said it has learned of at least a dozen ingestion accidents since 2009, many requiring surgery.

"The commission staff alleges in its complaint that it has concluded that despite the attempts to warn purchasers, warnings and education are ineffective and cannot prevent injuries and incidents with these rare earth magnets," the CPSC said in a statement.

"As a small business owner I'm left wondering what to tell my employees and their families. How can this happen in America?" said Zucker.



## **PROTEST HITS RUDER FINN U.K.**

A handful of protesters assembled outside of Ruder Finn's U.K. offices July 24, criticizing the firm's work for Maldives, which is enmeshed in a political crisis.



**Photo of protesters posted to Twitter.**

RF picked up the embattled country's tourism PR business in April after an RFP process, signing a three-month pact for strategic counsel and media relations work effective April 26 and worth at least \$65K per month.

Signs held by participants in the July 24 protest outside of 1 Bedford Street, London, dubbed RF the "gold medalists of spin" and said the firm will "tell lies for money."

"We are all in favor of free speech and we're very proud of the work we've done for them," said Emmanuel Tchividjian, senior VP and chief ethics officer of Ruder Finn, who noted the firm handled President Mohamed Waheed Hassan Manik's appearance at the Rio+20 Summit in late June, during which he reiterated the country's commitment to protecting the environment and providing a sustainable economic future.

RF's contract is with the Maldives Marketing & PR Corp. The firm has defended the PR work, saying it carefully considered the "complexity" of the situation before signing on amid the country's "period of change."

Maldives' elected president Mohamad Nasheed resigned under pressure in February after he ousted a top judge, sparking the crisis. A military-backed government has refused to hold elections and Nasheed last week was charged by prosecutors for the judge's ouster.

Tourism is a key part of the country's economy and it released an RFP in March for PR support to boost travel as international coverage of the political crisis ensued. Nasheed has urged travelers to stay away from the country.

Farah Faizal, former high commissioner to the Republic of Maldives from the U.K., said via Twitter that the action was held because Ruder Finn is "white-washing" a "dictatorship" in the Indian Ocean country.

## **HEIMOWITZ EXITS PORTER FOR BURSON IN D.C.**

Mike Heimowitz, senior VP and an 11-year veteran at Porter Novelli in D.C., has moved over to Burson-Marsteller as a managing director in the firm's issues and crisis group.

Heimowitz, an 11-year PN staffer, handled clients including Monster Worldwide and the American Television Alliance. He was previously senior manager for communications and advocacy for the American Chemistry Council in 11 years for the trade group.

B-M's issues and crisis unit has also added S.C. Johnson's Chris Beard in Chicago. Beard was director of global reputation management, handling crisis and public affairs issues for the consumer cleaning products company. Earlier, he was at Kraft Foods, Phillip Morris USA and Arthur Andersen.

**CHICK-FIL-A PR CHIEF DIES SUDDENLY**

Chick-fil-A's longtime corporate communications chief, Don Perry, died suddenly on July 27 as the company remains enmeshed in a PR storm over anti-gay marriage remarks by its president.

Reports out of Atlanta suggested Perry, VP of corporate comms. for the fast food company, suffered a heart attack.

Atlanta-based Chick-fil-A said in a statement that Perry was a member of the company for nearly 29 years. "For many of you in the media, he was the spokesperson for Chick-fil-A," the company said. "He was a well-respected and well-liked media executive in the Atlanta and University of Georgia communities, and we will miss him. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family."



Perry

Press inquiries are being directed to the company's PR firm, Jackson Spalding of Atlanta.

Funeral arrangements for Perry are to be announced by Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory, Decatur, Ga.

Perry said last week that Chick-fil-A's "intent is to leave the policy debate over same-sex marriage to the government and political arena," adding that the company's "culture and service tradition in our restaurants is to treat every person with honor, dignity and respect – regardless of their belief, race, creed, sexual orientation or gender."

Perry joined Chick-fil-A in 1983 after nine years at General Electric. He was president of the PR Society's Georgia chapter in 1993.

Chick-fil-A president Dan Cathy sparked a backlash this month (7/23 NL) when he told a religious news outlet that "we are inviting God's judgment on our nation when we shake our fist at Him and say, 'We know better than you as to what constitutes a marriage.'"

Supporters of the franchise are organizing an "appreciation day" Aug. 1.

**BROOKS, COULSON CHARGED IN HACKING**

Rebekah Brooks, former CEO of News International, and Andy Coulson, ex-editor of the now shuttered *News of the World* and one-time communications chief of U.K. prime minister David Cameron, were charged July 24 by Britain's crown prosecution service in the phone hacking case of murdered teenager Milly Dowler and more than 600 other people.

Alison Levitt, legal advisor to the director of public prosecutions, said they will be charged with "conspiring

to intercept communications without legal authority." Those communications were the "voicemail messages of well-known people and/or those associated with them."

Brooks, who also edited the NOTW, issued a statement to deny all charges. "I did not authorize, nor was I aware of, phone hacking under my editorship," she said. "I am distressed and angry that the CPS have reached this decision when they knew all the facts and were in a position to stop the case at this stage." She finds the Dowler hacking allegations "particularly upsetting, not only as it is untrue but because I have spent my journalistic career campaigning for victims of crime."

Coulson, who will appear with Brooks in court on Aug. 16, vowed to "fight these allegations."

Brooks was a key deputy of News Corp. CEO Rupert Murdoch. He resigned from the boards of his company's British newspapers this month in what a spokesperson called a "corporate housecleaning exercise."

Murdoch shut the NOTW following news of the Dowler hacking. He personally apologized to the girl's parents and agreed to a multi-million dollar payment.

**FORMER COO OF DISCOVERY JOINS CARLYLE**

Peter Liguori, who was COO of Discovery Communications, has joined the Carlyle Group as consultant in its telecommunications and media team.

He is to advise Carlyle executives on investments from "sourcing to acquisition to exit," according to the announcement from the \$159B asset management giant. Liguori also will counsel managers at acquired companies on operational and growth strategies.

Liguori served at Discovery from 2009 to the end of 2011. He spent 13 years at Fox Entertainment as president and chairman from 2005-09, handling program development and marketing. Prior to that, he was CEO of News Corp.'s FX Networks and VP-consumer marketing executive at HBO.

James Attwood is Carlyle's managing director of the telecom and media group, which has received more than \$8B in investments since 2001. Those investments include Nielsen Co., AMC Entertainment, Genesis Cable, Neptune Comms.-Pacific Telecom and Prime Comms.

**YAHOO EX-CHIEF TO SHOPRUNNER**

Scott Thompson, who was ousted from Yahoo! two months ago due to discrepancies in his resume, is the new CEO of ShopRunner Inc., the online shopping site in Philadelphia.

The former PayPal president did a five-month stint at Yahoo before relinquishing the post in May. He was a ShopRunner board member before joining Yahoo.

Thompson was receiving treatments for a form of thyroid cancer, but has recently been given a clean bill of health. Michael Rubin, CEO of Kynetic LLC, which owns a 70 percent stake in ShopRunner, said he's not concerned with Thompson's dismissal from Yahoo.

Thompson splits time between Silicon Valley and Philadelphia.



Liguori

**MEDIA NEWS continued****BOSTON GLOBE CUTS 20 NEWS STAFFERS**

The *Boston Globe* is cutting 20 news staffers as it trims 43 from the payroll to cope with the challenging print media environment.

In a memo to staff, publisher Christopher Mayer, noted the paper faces "rapid change in how readers get their information and how advertisers communicate their messages."

That requires the New York Times Co. property to "make tough choices along the way about how to allocate our resources."

The cutbacks are part of Mayer's drive to "rebalance the business and will allow us to reallocate resources toward the investments we need as we innovate and introduce new products."

The *Globe* employs nearly 1,900 people.

**MSNBC ELEVATES PR EXEC IN 'REBRAND'**

MSNBC, newly split online from its longtime partner Microsoft, has elevated Lauren Skowronski to a top media relations post in its bid to "rebrand" the TV network's digital presence.

Skowronski, a former NBC page who handled media relations for shows like "The Rachel Maddow Show" and "Morning Joe" for the past three years, takes a VP title in the move, managing internal and external communications and serving as chief spokeswoman for the cable and Internet property.



**Skowronski**

NBCUniversal parent Comcast paid \$300M to buy out Microsoft this month from MSNBC.com. NBC acquired the TV network in 2005.

The MSNBC.com site has been redirected to NBCNews.com until a new portal is unveiled next year. Microsoft and NBC teamed up in 1996 to create the website and news network.

Skowronski reports to Phil Griffin, president of MSNBC.

**DILLER TAKES OVER BEAST**

Barry Diller's IAC/InterActiveCorp has taken control of *Newsweek Daily Beast* as the family of his former partner Sidney Harman has stopped investing in the venture, according to Reuters.

Jane Harman, the former Congresswoman from California and wife of the deceased stereo magnate, will remain on the media company's board of directors.

Harman acquired *Newsweek* from the Washington Post Co. in 2010 for \$1 plus assumption of more than \$50M in liabilities.

The then 91-year-old founder of Harman International merged with Diller's *Daily Beast* in 2010



with the idea of cross-selling advertising and subscriptions between the media properties.

*Newsweek*, according to Publishers Information Bureau, showed a 13.3 percent rise in ad revenue to \$67M through June. Its circulation of 1.5M is down from its 4 million-plus all-time high.

The *Daily Beast's* six-month traffic is up 73 percent to 11.4M compared to last year.

Tina Brown oversees editorial of *Newsweek Daily Beast*.

Diller reported that IAC posted a 2.1 percent gain in second-quarter income to \$43.3M on a 40 percent rise in revenues to \$680.6M.

**RUBENSTEIN GUIDES MGM STUDIO RETURN**

Rubenstein Communications has been the steady PR hand for MGM Holdings, the parent of famed Hollywood studio Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer that has emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy with plans for an initial public offering.

MGM said July 24 that it has submitted a confidential draft registration to the Securities and Exchange Commission for a possible IPO.

Rubenstein took the PR reins back in 2010 when MGM implemented a pre-packaged bankruptcy filing with a plan for creditors to forgive \$4B in debt as management from Spyglass Entertainment ("Invictus," "Get Him to the Greek") took the reins. It emerged in early 2011.

MGM produced legendary films like "The Wizard of Oz" and "Ben Hur" and is slated to release the two-part, likely blockbuster "The Hobbit."

Susie Arons, chief operating officer at Rubenstein, is handling media regarding the IPO filing.

**TW MEDIA LAB SEEKS COLLEGE PARTNER**

Time Warner Media Lab is looking for a U.S. college's faculty and students to conduct a social media research project at its state-of-the-art facility in New York.

In the RFP, TWML says it will provide free access to the lab and pay out-of-pocket expenses for its use.

The opportunities may be to explore new research approaches, insights into how people think, use and are affected by new media; use of social media; ways to use media to advance learning and development, and predicting the next new thing in social media.

The research findings will be "used for academic purposes, for publication and to advance knowledge," according to the document.

The RFP, which describes the Media Lab's equipment and capabilities, is at [medialabrpf@timewarner.com](mailto:medialabrpf@timewarner.com). Submission deadline is Nov. 1.

The Media Lab is the research center for Home Box Office, Time Inc., Turner Broadcasting System and Warner Bros. Entertainment.

**NEWS OF PR FIRMS****FIRMS BREW PR FOR PEET'S DEAL**

Sard Verbinen & Co and Abernathy MacGregor Group are working the \$1B deal to take coffee retailer Peet's Coffee & Tea private.

The Emeryville, Calif.-based roaster and retailer, a smaller competitor of Starbucks which was said to be an inspiration for the coffee giant, is publicly traded on the NASDAQ.

Peet's said on July 23 that it reached a deal on a \$73.50-per-share offer by German investment group Joh. A. Benckiser.

"We are very excited about this next chapter in Peet's rich history," said Patrick O'Dea, president and CEO of Peet's, which said it will skip its Q2 earnings call.

Sard's San Francisco-based managing directors John Christiansen and Paul Kranhold are handling PR for Peet's. AbMac president Charles Burgess and M&A chief Tom Johnson represent JAB.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported July 23 that some investors are speculating another suitor, possibly Starbucks, may emerge. One analyst noted a past remark by Starbucks CEO Howard Shultz about the founder of Peet's – Alfred Peet – being a "spiritual godfather."

A special meeting of shareholders is being scheduled to gain approval.

Peet's, which went public in 2001 and was founded in 1966 in the Bay Area, has around 200 retail locations in the U.S. Chicago merchant bank BDT Capital is a minority investor and advisor in the deal.

**GOV TROLLS FOR PR TO RAISE PFD USE**

The federal government is trolling for an agency to increase the use of personal floatation devices among commercial fisherman in the country's bountiful northwest, including the Bering Sea crabbers made famous by Discovery's reality series "Deadliest Catch."

PFDs are not mandated under federal law for commercial fishermen but the Centers for Disease Control, which will fund the communications campaign, notes that of the 155 fatalities among such anglers from 2000-09, none were wearing one.

The CDC's National Institute for Occupation Safety and Health recently wrapped a research project among Alaskan commercial fishermen who rated PFDs for comfort and "wearability," and produced a DVD on responding to overboard events.

The federal entity seeks an agency to work with NIOSH staffers who conducted the study to develop a strategy communication campaign utilizing tactics such as social media, the Internet, media relations, printer products, PSAs or other tools.

Three groups of fisherman are to be targeted. Alaskan salmon fisherman, Bering Sea crab fishermen, and west coast Dungeness crab fishermen.

A one-year contract is planned.

Proposals are due Aug. 4. View the solicitation at <http://bit.ly/Q6JxVI>.

**NEW ACCOUNTS****New York Area**

**The Brandman Agency**, New York/Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, for travel PR.

**Ogilvy PR**, New York/Standard Innovation Corporation, makers of the We-Vibe vibrator and other sexual wellness products, for PR, media relations, events, thought leadership opportunities, content strategy and creation on all We-Vibe social platforms.

**Trylon SMR**, New York/TruEffect, digital display advertising technology, for media relations.

**MWW**, New York/ANCILE Solutions, workforce performance and training software, as AOR for PR.

**Feintuch Communications**, New York/Synthesis Energy Systems, Houston-based global energy and gasification technology, for PR.

**Child's Play Communications**, New York/9 Story Entertainment, for a media relations social media outreach campaign supporting its animated TV series, "Almost Naked Animals," and new lines of licensed products.

**Stuntman**, New York/TASTE Williamsburg Greenpoint food festival, for marketing for the September event.

**East**

**SHIFT Communications**, Boston/Imogo Mobile Technologies Corp., secure mobile cloud services, as North American AOR for PR.

**French/West/Vaughan**, Raleigh/Dude Ranchers' Association, trade group for 100 guest ranches in North America, for PR following a national search and competitive pitch.

**Southeast**

**Uproar PR**, Orlando/Make-A-Wish Foundation of Central and Northern Florida, for PR.

**Diamond PR**, Miami/The Angler's Boutique Resort and on-site restaurant 660 At The Angler's, for travel PR and social media for the South Beach property.

**Izzo Gaudelli Communications**, Miami/Bitrex, safety ingredient used as a taste aversive in household products, to enhance awareness of the benefits of the additive among U.S. consumers, retailers and product manufacturers via media relations, trade show support and partnerships with government and non-government organizations.

**TransMedia Group**, Boca Raton/Spine Revitalizer, nutritional supplement for those with herniated and bulging discs, for PR.

**Midwest**

**Lambert, Edwards & Associates**, Detroit/Search Optics, digital marketing firm, for comms., including brand positioning, strategic counsel and media relations.

**The Eisen Agency**, Newport, Ky./Ericka Nicole Malone, to promote her urban stage play "In Love with Tyrone" on its nine city U.S. tour.

**West**

**Hayes Martin Associates**, Newport Beach, Calif./HomeAid Orange County, to develop the theme for its Project Playhouse 2012 fundraiser.

**International**

**GolinHarris**, Hong Kong/eBay Classifieds Group, to promote the business in major Asian markets, including support for launch of new sites and its existing Gumtree site in Singapore. GH won the business after a competitive pitch.

— Greg Hazley

**NEWS OF SERVICES****VOCUS REVENUE SURGES; LOSS HITS \$5.2M**

Vocus reported its second quarter net loss jumped to \$5.2M although revenue surpassed expectations at \$43.6M, buoyed by price increases, sales of its marketing software, and the acquisition of email marketing suite iContact.

CFO Steve Vintz said the 56% jump in revenue was boosted by higher average selling prices -- Vocus raised prices in April -- and more units sold, resulting in better than expected bookings for the quarter.

Vocus, which has been aggressively expanding its initial PR focus to a broader marketing offering to woo small and mid-sized businesses, spent \$23M on sales and marketing in the quarter, including the addition of 70 sales reps. It set an expanded goal of 475 reps by the end of the year, up from a forecast of 450 last quarter. It had 270 reps in January.

The company bought iContact in February for \$169M in cash and said the unit's sales beat expectations, but Vocus did not break out its contribution to earnings.

The PR and marketing software provider added 1,013 net new subscribers during Q2, including Cash for Cars Quick, Tripwire and the University of Pennsylvania.

Vocus forecasts third quarter revenue in the \$44.7M-\$45M range and earnings per share of -\$0.24 to -\$0.23.

**DIGITAL BOOSTS JAMA REACH**

Dallas-based VNR-1 Communications said second quarter audience reports for client *Journal of the American Medical Association's* multimedia JAMA Report increased 115% over the same period of 2011.

Jann Ingmire, director of media relations for The JAMA Network, said the VNR-1-produced digital news release for JAMA has expanded its reach to the public with a package of video, audio and print. "It's a wonderful way to showcase our content," he said.

VNR-1 produces the weekly report with Big Shoulders Digital Video Productions of Chicago.

Jack Trammell, president of VNR-1, noted the JAMA Report has been the "preeminent source of medical news" for about 25 years. He measured the second quarter audience at 273,421,118.

JAMA has been published since 1883.

**EDELMAN GRABS H+K RESEARCH GURU**

Edelman's StrategyOne research unit has recruited Hill+Knowlton Strategies exec Peter Ventimiglia as executive VP and geography lead for its Washington, D.C., operation.

Ventimiglia, who has advised and conducted polling for both corporations and political candidates, was president of Public Strategies Research and U.S. director primary research and data insights at H+K.

He did a one-year stint at StrategyOne in 2002 before an eight-year run at Lombardo Consulting Group, the firm of Strategy One CEO Steve Lombardo.

StrategyOne has also promoted Barbara Coons to head of operations and deputy geography lead handling clients like Visa, Chevron and Boeing.

**PEOPLE****Joined**

**Keri Prestia**, a freelancer and former VP for Nancy J. Friedman PR, to Hawkins International, New York, as a VP. **Corey Finjer**, who joined in 2006, was promoted to VP.

**Eric Booth**, seven-year veteran of Hill+Knowlton Strategies, to Mazda North American Operations, Irvine, Calif., as senior manager in its PR and brand experience department. Booth led H+K's account with Mazda, where he now handles product, corporate and internal communications, reporting to Jeremy Barnes, director. Booth earlier held posts at Nissan NA in its Nissan and Infiniti divisions.

**Ashley Seashore**, A/S, Atomic PR, to Bite Communications, San Francisco, as an A/D to help lead SAP's mobile team. She was previously at Access Communicatios and AOL Digital City. Edelman alum Monique Sherman joins as a senior A/E handling Lithium, SAP and Nicira. Also, Stacey Ngo of Brew Media Relations joins as an A/E.

**Joselyn Williams**, a corporate and sports event marketing pro, to French/West/Vaughan, Raleigh, N.C., as a VP overseeing its Southwestern Athletic Conference and CIAA account.

**Williams, Ackerman**

**Amy Ackerman**, manager of client services, CBS Interactive/CNET, joins as an A/S focused on finance, food & beverage and lifestyle clients. **Tara Trask**, who worked PR at Lawrence & Schiller and CMT, joins as an A/E; and CNN and Turner Broadcasting vet **Charlotte Rollins** signs on as senior media planner. Recent grads **Lauren Towns** and **Andrew Harrel** were named A/C and digital content producer, respectively.

**Lauren Cook**, VP of client services for D.C.-based JESS3, and **Jon Woods**, former marketing manager at Staples, to GroundFloor Media, Denver, as senior directors of social media and digital strategy.

**Kyle Bishop**, who led FOX25 Boston's digital team, to 360 Public Relations, Boston, as director of digital strategies and creative services. He was previously at Herald Interactive, handling digital efforts for the *Boston Herald*.

**Raycheal Proctor**, SEO and pay-per-click specialist, Apogee Results, to Crosby Marketing Communications, Annapolis, Md., as a digital connection planner to manage search engine marketing and other digital/mobile efforts.

**Proctor****Promoted**

**Jeffrey Heinz** to VP of investor relations, Gannett Co., McLean, Va. He has been director since 2003 and earlier was managing director of IR at SLM Corp. (Sallie Mae).

**Micki Steele** to senior A/E, Marx Layne & Company, Farmington Hills, Mich. She joined in early 2011 after reporting for the *Detroit News*.

## **H+K FRONTS CHINA'S CANADIAN ENERGY GRAB**

Hill+Knowlton Strategies is fronting China's audacious all-cash \$15.1B bid for Nexen Inc., one of Canada's biggest energy companies, as it mounts its biggest foray into the North American market.

The acquisition bid by 70-percent-state-owned-China National Offshore Oil Corp. is bound to trigger heated political opposition in Washington over Nexen's properties in the Gulf of Mexico.

The Democratic and Republican tandem of Bob Ludke and John Ullyot are H+K staffers who rep Cnooc in D.C. Ludke is former legislative assistant to Sen. Tom Harkin (Iowa) and senior policy analyst for the Senate Democratic Policy Committee.

Ullyot was communications director for Republican Senators John Warner (Virginia) and Arlen Specter (Penn.).

Kim Jordan of H+K's global energy practice joins them on the account. She was Houston bureau chief for Bloomberg News.

Cnooc's \$18.5B bid in 2005 for California's Unocal fell apart after a political uproar. The Chinese were largely interested in the southeast Asia holdings of Unocal, which was ultimately acquired by Chevron.

Cnooc CEO Li Fanrong said July 23 in Calgary that Cnooc learned valuable lessons from the Unocal failure, and noted that the current deal is a friendly acquisition that has the full support of Nexen's board of directors. Cnooc promises that Nexen's U.S. assets will continue to purchase materials from local suppliers and be managed by current management.

Under the acquisition agreement, Cnooc will receive a \$425M termination fee if either Nexen nixes the deal or it collapses due to regulatory pressures.

H+K's Peter Hunt is spokesperson for Cnooc in Canada.

## **SINCLAIR REJOINS ENTERGY**

Jim Sinclair, who was at Kinder Morgan, is rejoining Entergy Corp. on Aug. 6 in charge of communications for its nuclear plants in Vermont and Massachusetts.

Those are the Vermont Yankee Station in Vernon and Pilgrim Power Station in Plymouth.

Sinclair had been responsible for Kinder Morgan's liquid natural gas import terminals in Georgia and Mississippi. Earlier, he was director of PA for El Paso Corp.'s northeast operations.

Sinclair began his career at Vermont Yankee and spent 20 years there before moving to ISO New England, the non-profit responsible for the region's grid.

At Entergy, Sinclair will report to Terry Young, VP/nuclear communications. "He served in key roles at Vermont Yankee for nearly 20 years, and he is very familiar with the region and its stakeholders," Young said of Sinclair.



**Nexen shale gas site at Dilly Creek, British Columbia.**

## **FTI POWERS WORLD ENERGY COUNCIL**

FTI Consulting has picked up an 18-month contract with the World Energy Council, a London-based consortium of corporations, governments, NGOs and other entities focused on global energy use.

WEC, which has member committees in 93 countries, including the U.S., holds a congress every three years with the latest slated for Daegu, South Korea, in October 2013.

Stuart Neil, director of communications for the WEC, told O'Dwyer's FTI will support communications, including building the brand for the upcoming congress, and work toward setting the event's agenda, securing speakers and other aspects.

The Japanese Fukushima disaster, deep-water drilling in the wake of the BP Gulf of Mexico spill, and sustainability are expected to be hot topics at the congress, which has adopted the theme "Securing tomorrow's energy today."

Speakers include Khalid A. Al-Falih, CEO, Saudi Aramco; Mohamed Bin Dhaen Al Hamli, minister of energy, UAE, and Steve Bolze, president and CEO, GE Power & Water, among others.

Neil said the WEC looked at agencies that had Korean operations with access to a global network.

Burson-Marsteller, Incomm Brodeur, Ogilvy PR and Porter Novelli were involved in the pitch, but Edelman declined the March-April RFP process.

Bechtel president Jack Futcher chairs the U.S. committee of the WEC.

Joong-Kyum Kim, CEO of Korea Electric Power Corp., is chair of the 2013 congress.

FTI/London heads the work with Korean partner Insight Communications.

## **GIBSON PR HEAD EXITS FOR CORNERSTONE**

Ed James, VP of PR for iconic guitar maker Gibson, has left the company and returned to the PR agency he co-founded as Gibson navigates an ongoing PR and political crisis over its use of rare wood.

Federal agents raided Gibson's headquarters and factories last year after tracing what they say was illegal Indian hardwood used to make guitars.

The company says it complies with foreign laws and has fought the charges on the PR front while lobbying to loosen restrictions of importing wood under the federal Lacey Act.

James, 42, led PR for the company for the past 11 months before this month returning to Cornerstone, the New York-based firm he co-founded with Rob Stone and Jon Cohen in 2006. He was previously a senior VP with New York PR firm The Morris + King Company.

Cornerstone, with additional offices in Los Angeles and London, has worked for Converse, Guitar Center, Diageo and HBO. James is based in Nashville.

Gibson told O'Dwyer's a replacement has not yet been named for James. The company shows an opening for an executive VP, global PR, on its corporate website.

Gibson, which has worked to rally supporters to its cause criticizing the Justice Dept., in October hired Crowell & Moring to handle lobbying in D.C.

**Chris Sorek, who graduated from Michigan State and worked** for Ogilvy & Mather in Taiwan and Singapore and Cohn & Wolfe in New York, and who has spent the last 11 years in PR jobs in the U.K. and Switzerland, has joined the Int'l Assn. of Business Communicators as executive director.

Sorek will find that the PR community in the U.S. is pretty much like that in the U.K.-frightened of traditional media and confused about the role of social media and how to use the technological advances available to communicators.

"Clients are too scared to say anything" that might get picked up by the media, Richard Moss, director of the U.K.'s Good Relations, told [www.prmoment.com](http://www.prmoment.com). Content has become "too vanilla to matter," he added.

Daney Parker, who authored the U.K. blog, quotes Henry Griffiths of Little Red Rooster as urging PR people to set up face-to-face meetings with reporters, who complain they are seeing less and less of PR staffers.

The situation sounds just like the U.S. where PR/press lunches are a distant memory and ditto even for phone conversations.

Corporate/institutional PR staffers are under tight control and mostly limited to e-mails with reporters that are vetted by legal.

*New York Times* columnist David Carr on Jan. 29 rapped corporate PR as staffed by "underlings" who dish out "slop." <http://bi.ly/A5rWeG>.

The *Washington Post's* Gene Weingarten on May 10 said it's a "ludicrous lie" that PR people are "tight with the media." <http://tinyurl.com/bwyc9e2>.

IR/PR exec Tim Cost phrased it nicely some years ago when he said "Corporate PR experiences a press call as a drive-by shooting."

#### **Sorek Promises Openness**

Sorek, in an interview with Ed Lallo of [newsroomink.com](http://newsroomink.com) and brief comments with this reporter, described himself as an ex-reporter and ardent fan of being open and available to the press. He said he was "kind of a 24/7/365-type person."

We certainly hope so. This reporter had maybe one phone conversation with Julie Freeman in her ten years as president of IABC.

The association has done a major right in removing the president's title from a staffer. "President" implies choice by an election process and it also means the CEO of an organization. A staffer cannot be CEO.

Also, if you're going to have the title of president you should act presidential. In the U.S., this means being open and responsive to constituents and the press.

The three major professional groups, American Medical Assn., American Bar Assn. and American Institute of CPAs, all have volunteer presidents who are elected by the memberships. The executive directors are drawn from each profession.

The PR Society and Arthur W. Page Society have staff "presidents" who serve as bulwarks against press and member contact with the elected chairs.

#### **Page Blew \$\$ on Ill-fated Paid President**

Page has just gone through an expensive and unfortunate experience in having its first paid president-Julia Hood. The former editor of *PR Week/U.S.* came in with trumpets blaring, promising a commitment to Page.

She was supposed to have performed a "spokesperson" role for Page and the industry but we never saw any signs of that. We never met her or talked to her on the phone in her 18 months on the job that cost Page \$394,910 according to the 2010 and 2011 IRS Form 990s. Current Page president Roger Bolton says the true figure is \$338,803 but we await a further explanation.

Paid president Bill Murray at the PR Society is one of the most reclusive executives we have ever encountered. He has never addressed any New York group that we know of and that includes the local chapter.

#### **Suit by Ex-COO Allan Embarrassed**

IABC wanted a lower profile after being in the news for several years due to its flirtation with creating a website called "TalkingBusinessNow" that cost it at least \$1 million and nearly bankrupted it.

On top of that, IABC and 2001 interim president Lou Williams were sued by former president Elizabeth Allan on charges of defamation after Williams made some remarks about Allan and TBN at an IABC meeting. <http://tinyurl.com/cnjg7mu>.

Membership as of May 2012 was 14,028 regular members and 806 student members. The peak was reached in December 2008 when there were 15,323 regular members and 866 student members.

Revenues in the year ended Dec. 31, 2011 were \$6,096,886, a slight gain from \$6,039,673 in the previous year. Expenses were \$5,946,762 v. \$5,577,718.

IABC's IRS Form 990s for several years report revenues of \$1.6M to \$1.8M which are about \$4M less than the revenues being reported to members.

IABC, unlike the PR Society, defers about half of its dues income on the ground that it is unearned. Deferred revenue was \$1,714,987. The latest 990 shows no spending at all on "legal" although PRS has spent \$400K on that in the five latest available years.

IABC dues are more than those charged by PRS. Regular dues are \$249 plus mandatory chapter dues of \$65 and regional dues of \$10, a total of \$324. PRS dues are \$255. Chapters charge an average of about \$55 but members are not required to join.

PRS and IABC had lengthy merger talks in the 1980s but they were broken off by IABC.

Sorek's last post was CEO of Drinkaware, London, a non-profit devoted to prudent use of alcohol, which he founded. The elected head of IABC is keeping the title of chair, leaving no one in the title of president. Installed as chair in June was Kerby Meyers who heads The Communications Refinery in Denver.

Meyers, a former reporter, has written that he is in favor of "old school journalistic principles."

Sorek and Meyers can demonstrate openness by having a press conference with the PR press based in New York.

— Jack O'Dwyer