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# O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of  
PR and Marketing  
Communications

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## PR GIANTS PITCH FOR CHINA ACCOUNT

US agencies including Ketchum and Ogilvy PR have pitched the Chinese government to handle Western PR, according to Reuters.

Edelman, Fleishman-Hillard and Hill+Knowlton Strategies have also participated in a preliminary round of interviews with China's State Council Information Office, which asked agencies to present what they perceived to be the country's image problems and potential solutions. Reuters, citing an unnamed executive, reported Chinese leaders feel they are being unfairly portrayed in foreign media and recognize a need to communicate more effectively to Western audiences.



Qorvis MSL won a large, two-year PR pact with China's Washington Embassy in 2014 to monitor news and engage in media outreach on behalf of the People's Republic.

Hill+Knowlton and Weber Shandwick have also worked on Olympic bids for the country.

## FLORIDA SEEKS LATIN AMERICA PR FIRM

Visit Florida, the tourism marketing org for the Sunshine State, is reviewing its mid-six-figure Latin American PR account.

VF, which adopted a new strategic plan in September aimed to reach \$100B in tourism spending by 2020, wants a firm to guide in-market events, press trips and day-to-day PR in Latin America, especially Mexico and Brazil. Budget is \$320,000. VF slates a 12-month contract with two renewal years.

Proposals are due May 20. View the invitation to negotiate at <http://odwpr.us/1T9034S>.

## VISA GLOBAL COMMS HEAD STEPS DOWN

Michele Quintaglie, global head of communications for Visa, is stepping down after two years after the payments company brought in a top exec to oversee marketing and communications earlier this year.

Quintaglie moved to Visa in 2014 in a senior VP role from Fidelity Investments. That hire followed a re-vamp of Visa's marketing and communications. She worked on the agency side at Blanc & Otus and its Hill+Knowlton Strategies parent.

Visa in February tapped Time Inc. EVP Lynne Biggar as executive VP and chief marketing and comms. officer. She is a former marketing exec at Amex.

Visa has begun a search for a replacement.

## ORGANIC REVENUE INCREASES FOR IPG IN Q1

Interpublic April 22 posted revenues of \$1.74 billion for the first quarter of 2016, revealing a revenue increase of 3.9 percent from \$1.68 billion in the first quarter of 2015, with organic revenue growth of 6.7 percent compared to the year prior.

The figures reveal a continuing trend of strong organic gains at the ad/PR combine, particularly in the U.S., where organic revenue grew 8.3 percent, compared to 4.3 percent internationally. IPG had witnessed a similar 5.2 percent surge in organic revenue during 2015's fourth quarter.

Operating income at the holding company was \$20.9 million for Q1, a skyrocketing leap from the \$7.8 million reported in operating income for 2015's first quarter.

Q1 net income loss was \$2.7 million, an improvement from its \$4.2 million loss in 2015's first quarter. Total operating expenses increased 3.2 percent in Q1 from a year prior.



Polansky

IPG's Constituency Management Group, which includes PR agencies Weber Shandwick, Golin and DeVries Global, among others, grew approximately 4 percent, revealing 3.2 percent organic growth. Leading this growth, according to Friday's earnings call, were agencies Weber Shandwick, Octagon and Golin.

Weber Shandwick CEO Andy Polansky told O'Dwyer's that digital, social and content marketing work fueled growth across the CMG portfolio, with Weber Shandwick registering high single-digit organic growth in the quarter on top of double-digit gains in the first quarter of 2015.

"Seventeen Weber Shandwick operations around the world had double-digit organic growth in the quarter, with a robust performance from the healthcare, consumer and corporate practices," Polansky said.

IPG CEO Michael Roth, in a Friday earnings statement, said that "while the first quarter is seasonally small" for the global advertising holding company, its performance for the quarter demonstrates that IPG remains on target to produce "on the high end" of its projected organic revenue growth goal of between three and four percent for the year.

"We are pleased to report another quarter of very strong performance, driven by solid contributions from across the portfolio," Roth said. "Our results reflect growth with existing clients, as well as new business wins, and strength in all geographic regions, led by notable domestic performance."

## **PR SLIPS AT OMNICOM Q1**

Omnicom reported first quarter PR revenues fell 1.5% to \$318.8M as advertising revenues, up 4% to \$1.8B, buoyed the conglomerate for the period.

Overall revenue rose 0.9% to just under \$3.5B, including organic growth of 3.8%. Foreign exchange rates and acquisitions dragged down growth.

Net income rose 4.4% to \$218.4M over the prior year's quarter.

Organic growth in PR slipped 0.9%, compared with 7.9% growth in advertising.

Omnicom's PR units include FleishmanHillard, Ketchum and Porter Novelli.



**Wren**

President and CEO John Wren called the results "very good" despite "capital market swings we saw in the first quarter, the uncharted actions of central banks around the world and the tragic events in Brussels, Paris and other cities," which are "creating uncertainty for consumers and corporations and a cautious approach to spending."

OMC last month organized its agencies into specialized groups, including a PR group that includes its 10 firms and led by former Porter Novelli CEO Karen van Bergen.

"Even though they are growing, PR it has a little trouble in the last quarter or two," Wren said, adding part of the role of the new groups will be "getting more folks" to "drive growth and to make recommendations for incremental acquisitions" to supplement and compliment its existing firms.

## **PUBLICIS GROWS ON MEDIA STRENGTH IN Q1**

Publicis Groupe posted a first quarter revenue rise of 8.9% to €2.3B (\$2.6B) as organic growth climbed 2.9%.

Chairman and CEO Maurice Levy called the performance a "promising start to 2016" driven by end-of-year wins and momentum in the media market.

Europe, North America and Asia Pacific all posted organic growth of more than three percent, while Latin America declined 3.1% on poor performances in Chile, Colombia, Brazil and Mexico.

Overall, North American revenues rose 12.9% mainly on its media business. The crush of media reviews in 2015, dubbed Mediapalooza in the business, did not affect Publicis' Q1 results but Levy said the effects could be seen down the road.

Publicis owns MSLGroup.

## **BROOKS BECOMES B-M U.S. TECH CHAIR**

Burson-Marsteller announced that it has appointed Jodi Brooks chair of the agency's U.S. technology practice.

Brooks succeeds Sabrina Guttman, former senior VP and GM of Cohn & Wolfe tech unit Axicom, who chaired B-M's tech practice from the agency's San Francisco office.

Brooks, who will be stationed in the WPP unit's New York headquarters, begins in her new role immedi-

ately.

Brooks joined B-M in 2013, and previously served as managing director of the agency's technology practice, where she worked with clients such as Oracle, FitBit Wellness and Meltwater. Prior to that, Brooks was stationed at Interpublic powerhouse Weber Shandwick, where she held the title of senior vice president and managed accounts for Bausch + Lomb, Honeywell ACS and Polaroid. She has also held senior roles at Ketchum and Ogilvy Public Relations.



**Brooks**

Brooks will now be responsible for leading B-M's technology practice and growing its presence across the U.S., and will collaborate with other U.S.-based agency practice and market leaders.

She will report to Burson-Marsteller U.S. CEO Michael Law, who in a statement said Brooks "brings fresh perspective, unique insights and a level of drive and energy that inspires her colleagues and clients."

## **C&W BOOKS DUTIES FOR NEWELL BRANDS**

Cohn & Wolfe has won global consumer and B2B PR duties for Newell Brands, the Atlanta-based consumer products giant behind Sharpie, Paper Mate, Graco and Rubbermaid, among more than two dozen other brands.

Newell BrandsThe large account, won in a competitive review, spans 13 countries across North and Latin America, Europe and Asia-Pacific.

Edelman handles corporate PR for the company, which changed its name from Newell Rubbermaid after the \$15.4B acquisition of Jarden. Corp. (K2 skis, Yankee Candle, Oster appliances) last year. Newell is eyeing cost savings and larger scale with that deal, including global expansion of its brands.



## **BURSON BUYS ISTANBUL AFFILIATE**

Burson-Marsteller has acquired a majority stake in Istanbul-based Effect PR, its affiliate for the past four years.

On closing of the deal, the newly branded Effect Burson-Marsteller will focus on a market B-M sees as critical for its global growth. CEO Don Baer called Effect "one of the country's leading agencies."

Effect has 80 staffers and posted 2015 revenues of \$2.5M.

Gonca Karakas, CEO of Effect, founded the firm in 1995. Clients include Microsoft and General Electric.

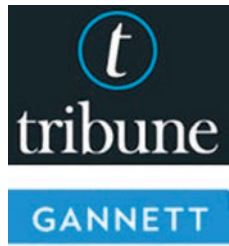
B-M is owned by WPP Group.



**GANNETT MOVES ON TRIBUNE**

Gannett has gone public with an \$815M offer to buy Tribune Publishing Co., eyeing strategic and financial benefits of combining the two publishing giants.

Gannett chairman John Jeffrey Louis said the board "unanimously believes that the acquisition of Tribune would deliver substantial strategic and financial benefits." It would also advance Gannett's plan to build its *USA Today* network of journalists in more local markets and new platforms.



Gannett forecasts savings of around \$50M.

Tribune, which owns the *Los Angeles Times* and spun off from Tribune Co. in 2014, responded to Gannett's overtures via letter last week to say it hired financial advisors to conduct a thorough review. The company said today that it is reviewing the bid with advisors "and will respond to Gannett as quickly as feasible."

Gannett's \$12.25 per share cash offer includes \$390M of Tribune debt and marks a 58% premium on Tribune shares as of April 22. President and CEO Robert Dickey added the deal "would bring together two highly complementary organizations with a shared goal of providing trusted, premium content for the readers and communities we serve."

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher is supporting Gannett on the PR front regarding the proposed deal. Amber Allman is VP of corporate comms. for Gannett.

Sard Verbinnen & Co. is working with Tribune on the PR front. D.F. King & Co. is bolstering IR.

**GOOGLE REVENUE GAINS TO SLOW IN 2016**

After several years of impressive gains, growth in worldwide ad revenues at Google could trickle to single digits this year, according to a recent report by digital market research company eMarketer.

Google is expected to hit \$57.8 billion in worldwide net ad revenues in 2016, according to eMarketer, accounting for 9 percent growth for the year. By contrast, Google's worldwide ad revenues grew by 15 percent in 2015 (to \$53.05 billion) and 19.1 percent in 2014 (to \$46.13 billion).

eMarketer had also previously reported that while Google's worldwide net search ad revenues had jumped 17.7 percent in 2014 from the year prior and continued growth by 14.5 percent in 2015, that growth too is expected to slow in 2016, to about 8.2 percent.

eMarketer noted that Google's declining growth still leaves the search giant "with by far the largest share of digital ad revenues of any company in the world." eMarketer expects about a third of worldwide net digital ad revenues — 30.9 percent — will go to Google in 2016.



Google also takes in about a third of the world's mobile Internet ad revenues, and eMarketer expects Google's revenues in this sector to climb at a rate more than four times faster than its overall ad revenues.

**TAMPA TIMES PARENT SELLS HQ**

*Tampa Bay Times* parent Times Publishing Co. has sold its St. Petersburg headquarters for \$19M and will remain as a tenant under a 15-year lease.

TPC sold the 250,000-square foot, three-building complex to Covergent Capital Partners and Denholtz Assocs.

The publisher, which sold its printing property and another property last year reaping more than \$8M, said it planned to use the proceeds to pay down debt.

**DAILY NEWS FIRES EDITOR**

The *New York Daily News* fired editor Jotham Sederstrom after a plagiarism scandal caused by the editor's removal of attribution in a writer's columns.

In a post on Medium, Sederstrom admitted to a mistake, but called it "unintentional, albeit inexcusable, instances of sloppy editing on my part and a formatting glitch." The removal of attribution came in columns by Shaun King, who was accused of plagiarism until it became clear that the passages in his columns were originally attributed and the attribution was removed during editing.

Sederstrom said he took issue with comments by EIC Jim Rich that the acts were "egregious and inexplicable," adding he was responsible for editing a high volume of content.

Rich said the paper discovered over the course of the past few months that the editor "made a series of egregious and inexplicable errors" on at least three separate occasions. He defended King from accusations of plagiarism, adding: "To suggest — as many already have — that Shaun has done anything wrong here, is completely inaccurate."

**HUDSON'S BAY DRESSES UP COMMS**

Department store retailer Hudson's Bay Company has organized a new corporate communications and PR unit under Andrew Blecher, who was elevated to senior VP. Blecher worked on the agency side with Lividini & Co. as a senior counselor advising fashion and retail clients, including Hudson's Bay Co. He was previously a senior PR exec with Saks Fifth Avenue, which was acquired by Hudson's Bay in 2014.

Hudson's Bay CEO Jerry Storch said the move is part of the Toronto-based company's creation of "centers of excellence" in key functions. The communications division includes global and internal comms., as well as PR and corporate comms.

The revamp is part of a corporate plan announced in September to boost HBC's performance and streamline operations.

The company traces its roots back to 1670 as the oldest company in North America. In addition to Saks, it owns Lord & Taylor, Galeria Kaufhof (Germany) and Home Outfitters.

**AMC CROSSES FANS ON TEXTING**

By Ronn Torossian

Sometimes, when you try to woo one group, you upset everyone else. That's the lesson AMC Theatres is learning — the hard way.

Less than a day after AMC Entertainment's new CEO suggested the company may be willing to make selected theaters "texting friendly," the company received massive backlash. The move ostensibly was meant to entice Millennials to start coming back to the movies.

Silver screen attendance among this age group has fallen sharply in recent years. Between the selections available to stream online and the short wait times between "in theater" and "available to stream," many millions of younger Americans opt to either wait or skip the movie experience altogether.

Someone convinced CEO Adam Aron it would instead be a marvelous idea to open some theaters to texting throughout the movie experience.

In speaking to *Variety* magazine, Aron said: "You can't tell a 22-year-old to turn off their cell phone. That's not how they live their life."

Maybe so, but judging from the "feedback" Aron's statement generated, he may want to rethink that concept.

The idea started innocently enough, with attempts to find a well-intentioned compromise between folks who just want to watch the movie and Millennials who, AMC thinks, can't manage to put their phones down for a couple of hours.

The idea floated would be designated auditoriums where people who wanted to text could do so without impediment, right through the movie.

Speaking through Twitter, the company said: "If ever, we only would pursue (allowing texting) in a way that we can totally be confident all our guests will fully enjoy the movie-going experience at AMC."

It looked like AMC realized their mistake and tried to walk it back, but movie buffs read between the lines and responded in kind, inundating AMC's social media accounts with raving objections and various threats should the decision be implemented. Complaints included typical rants about a "distracted, self-entitled generation," but carried the sting of threats to go to competitive theaters, threats the company can't take lightly.

In response, AMC walked back even further, blaming "press reports" for leaking the information and saying it would be only in limited locations, if at all.

That didn't help, so the company went further, tweeting: "We know the vast majority of our audience wants no texting ..."

Detractors and angry moviegoers didn't relent, so AMC's spokesman Ryan Noonan released a statement to the media: "Given that so many of today's moviegoers are passionate about preserving the purity of watching movies undisturbed in our theatres, there is no specific timeframe as to when we might introduce such a test, if ever ... the overwhelming majority of our current audience does not want texting to disrupt their experience."

Maybe they listened after all.

*Ronn Torossian is CEO of 5WPR, a leading NY PR firm.*

**ON MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS**

By Fraser Seitel

In many cases, mission statements are big, fat wastes of time, the spouting of pie-in-the-sky pabulum that the authoring organization is utterly incapable of emulating.

But mission statements — and vision statements, too — can be eminently helpful in defining the values and priorities of an organization and focusing internal publics on the direction their efforts should follow, and external publics on the reasons why they should buy the organization's products, contribute to causes or support its efforts.

Executed with thought and purpose, they can be of great worth to any organization. And public relations professionals must be the ones to take ownership for creating meaningful missions and visions. So how do you do it?

The first thing to understand is that a mission statement explains who the organization is, which markets it serves and what its overall goals are.

For example: "Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected."

The vision statement, on the other hand, is aspirational, focusing on the potential inherent in the organization's future and what it would like to achieve in the mid-and-longer term. For example: "the vision of the San Diego Zoo is to become a world leader at connecting people to wildlife and conservation."

The second thing to understand is that the mission statement — which should be the organization's key descriptive document — must answer at least six questions:

**Is it relevant?**

The mission should emulate what we are doing and capable of today. The mission of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, for example, may sound grandiose but is perfectly relevant to MoMA's role in society.

**Is it realistic?**

In other words, can we honestly claim this to be the case? AOL's mission, especially in light of the company's celebrated problems over time, isn't particularly realistic: "to simplify the internet for consumers and creators by unleashing the world's best builders of culture and code."

**Is it attainable?**

In other words, can we get to where we say we're aiming? Amazon.com, for example, has a mission and vision that say the same thing for good reason. "It's our goal to be Earth's most customer-centric company where customers can find and discover anything at Amazon.com."

**Is it specific to us?**

Are we the only ones, in other words, who can claim this identity? A good mission statement is discrete to the organization creating it.

**Is it measurable?**

By "measurable," we don't necessarily mean analytically evaluating the statement but rather determining that the statement is, in a general sense, provable.

**Can we bring it to life?**

Does the mission statement reflect what we exemplify in our daily actions? In other words, "is this really us?"

*Fraser P. Seitel has been a communications consultant, author and teacher for 40 years.*

**NEWS OF PR FIRMS****STEINREICH SECURES HOME FURN. AGENCY**

Steinreich Communications has acquired High Point, NC-based home furnishings agency McNeill Communications.

McNeill, whose clients include Bunakara, Durham Furniture, Norwalk Furniture and the American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame Foundation, was founded in 1988. The agency now merges its client roster with Fort Lee, NJ-based Steinreich, which has developed communications campaigns for home furnishings clients such as 1800mattress, Armstrong flooring, Bloomingdales and Tempur-Pedic.

Combined under the same roof, the two agencies will now represent more than 50 brands in the home furnishings sector.

"This was part of our strategic plan to broaden our home furnishings portfolio," Steinreich President and CEO Stan Steinreich told O'Dwyer's. "With McNeill we are undoubtedly the largest agency in that category in the country, with more people and resources to provide even better service to our clients."

Ellyn Small, senior VP and general manager of Steinreich's New Jersey headquarters, will continue to lead the agency's home furnishings practice. McNeill founder and CEO Karen McNeill will now also hold the title of senior VP and general manager. She will remain in the High Point, NC office, along with current members of her staff.

Steinreich, which was founded in 2003, holds additional offices in New York, Washington, London, Los Angeles, Frankfurt and Tel Aviv.

**OGILVY ALIGNS WITH CRISIS APP MAKER**

Ogilvy PR has aligned with mobile crisis management service developer RockDove Solutions.

RockDove created "In Case of Crisis," which Ogilvy has used for projects to create crisis planning content and build for clients.

Under the strategic alliance, Ogilvy will contribute its crisis PR savvy, including response, reporting and activation protocols and multi-level plans to manage the initial stages of specific scenarios for instances like data breaches, product malfunction and natural disasters.

RockDove's app allows password-protected links to contact details of a client's crisis team, functionality such as alerts, texts and emails to immediately communicate with a team, and access to the scenario planning, draft statements and other information needed in the first few hours of a crisis.

Nick Ludlum, EVP and North America crisis and issues management lead for Ogilvy, said RockDove's app makes an early crisis response "ten times more effective than anything that exists without a digital solution." He added: "We have all seen what happens when an organization mishandles its early response to an emerging issue."

RockDove COO Chris Britton summed up the deal: "Our robust and accessible mobile technology combined with Ogilvy's intelligent crisis strategies will ensure clients have actionable, step-by-step crisis communications plans during any scenario."

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

**Intermarket**, New York/Bryn Mawr College, leading women's liberal arts college; Duco, financial technology firm; ECU Line, ocean logistics company specializing in less-than-container loads shipping; FXDD Global, provider of foreign exchange trading to retail and institutional clients, and RealtyMogul.com, real estate investment platform. The firm also added RBC Wealth Management and Israel's Bank Leumi on the international front. The financial specialist, which has branched out into education and corporate comms. work, marks its 30th anniversary this month.

**Magrino**, New York/Wevorce, online platform aimed to "remove the pain, time and expense of divorce." The platform is available in all 50 states and was started in 2013 by a former attorney and mediator.

**Alice Marshall PR**, New York/Belmond's, collection of hotel and luxury travel adventures, as North American AOR. The firm handled Belmond's trains and cruises since 2011. Belmond's presence includes 22 countries across five continents.

**MSLGroup**, New York/LittleThings, digital lifestyle media property, as AOR for the US. Founded in 2014, New York-based LittleThings is one of the fastest-growing lifestyle sites in the country, publishing recipes, stories, videos and inspirational content for women. It garners now 51.1M readers a month. MSL is focused on raising brand awareness in business, trade and consumer media outlets, as well as attracting brands and potential advertisers.

**Brandstyle Communications**, New York/The Skinny Confidential, lifestyle blog by author Lauryn Evarts, for PR.

**East**

**LaVoieHealthScience**, Boston/Oticon Inc., as US consumer PR agency of record, following a competitive RFP, for the forthcoming U.S. launch of a new product by the hearing aid manufacturer. LaVoie will provide media relations support for the launch of Opn and will also deliver counsel on PR planning and content development, as well as relationship building with external organizations, audiology experts, patients and relevant events. Oticon is based in Denmark.

**MMI**, Raleigh, N.C./Research Triangle Regional Partnership, economic development partnership, for multimedia, creative design, PR and event planning for the 2016 State of the Research Triangle Region event on May 19.

**Southeast**

**Carma PR & Marketing**, Orlando/MegaCon Orlando, comics, sci-fi, horror, anime and gaming convention slated for May 26-29 at the Orange County Convention Center. The work includes promotion of the event as well as all media relations.

**West**

**Fifteen Minutes**, Los Angeles/Starwood property the W Hollywood, as AOR for the four-star hotel at the intersection of Hollywood Blvd and Vine, opened in 2010. The firm will manage all of the W Hollywood's media relations, influencer engagement and PR activities.

**NEWS OF SERVICES****PARTOYAN NAMED DIRECT IMPACT CEO**

Burson-Marsteller grassroots operation Direct Impact has promoted president Connie Partoyan to the role of CEO.

Partoyan succeeds Nicole Cornish, who took the chief operating officer position for Burson-Marsteller's U.S. region in late 2014.

Partoyan has held the president title at Direct Impact since 2014, where she led client services, advised key client accounts and managed new business development. Prior to that she served as the public affairs unit's executive VP.

Before joining Direct Impact in 2009, Partoyan served as chief of staff for Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), was an administrative assistant and press secretary to Rep. Rick White (R-WA) and deputy press secretary to Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA). She was also previously counselor and senior advisor to the Department of Commerce's Technology Administration, served as government affairs counselor for Preston Gates Ellis & Rouvelas Meeds, and was executive VP and COO of Microsoft IT web service TechNet.

She was also communications director for Washington, D.C.-based trade association the Information Technology Industry Council.

As CEO, Partoyan, will remain in the firm's Washington, D.C. headquarters. She reports to B-M United States CEO Michael Law.

Direct Impact, which was founded in 1988, is the nation's leading grassroots campaign communications firm, and holds additional offices in Boston, Austin and Chicago, as well as Toronto.

**PRN PARTNERS WITH SHUTTERSTOCK**

Digital stock photography giant Shutterstock today announced a partnership with PR Newswire that will allow PR and marketing pros access to the company's vast trove of licensed images.

Shutterstock's entire image library will now be integrated into PR Newswire's Online Member Center, giving the news agency's members the ability to add the photography provider's images to their press releases.

A recommendation tool will also provide users with image suggestions based on keywords detected in press release content.

"We are excited to partner with PR Newswire as the exclusive image provider for their press release platform," Janet Giesen, Shutterstock's senior director of business development and strategic partnerships, told O'Dwyer's.

She added: "What's unique about this partnership is how PR Newswire has integrated our API using technology to recommend Shutterstock images based on keywords auto-detected in the press release content, saving communications professionals time while boosting the engagement of their announcement."

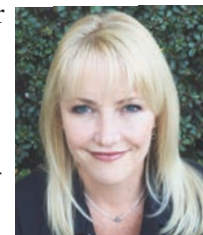
New York-based Shutterstock, which was founded in 2003, currently maintains a library of more than 80 million licensed images, including photos and vector graphics, as well as videos and music provided by more than 100,000 contributors.

**PEOPLE****Joined**

**Darlan Monterisi**, partner and New York managing director for Porter Novelli, to CA Technologies next month as senior VP of corporate communications. She fills a role vacated by CA chief communications officer Jeff Demarrais in February, when he decamped for the chief external relations post at IBM. Monterisi led the Hewlett-Packard account at PN and earlier directed global PR for Rockstar Games, publisher of the popular and controversial Grand Theft Auto series of video games. She starts at CA on May 9, reporting to CMO Lauren Flaherty. Monterisi was a US Marine Corps officer, spokeswoman and PA officer.

**Monterisi**

**Felicia Collins**, chief comms. officer for Ventura Foods, to Tyson Foods as VP of corporate communications. Collins built the comms. unit at Ventura, the Brea, Calif.-based maker of cooking oils, spreads, dressings and other products formed in 1996 by the merger of Wilsey and Holsum Foods. She was a senior VP and food and nutrition group head for Edelman in D.C. and earlier a director for Bozell PR, now Weber Shandwick. At publicly traded Tyson, based in Springdale, Ark., she heads PR, social media and internal comms. under corporate affairs EVP Sara Lilygren.

**Collins**

**Eileen Coyne**, A/M, IMRE, to Kimball Communications, Philadelphia, as PR manager. She was a senior comms. coordinator at Columbus-based insurance giant Nationwide Insurance and earlier was a business reporter for Columbus Business First and The American Banker.

**Betsy Barrett**, VP in Glover Park Group's strategic comms. practice, to Food Policy Action in Washington as political and comms. director. FPA was founded by celebrity chef Tom Colicchio and Environmental Working Group chief Ken Cook in 2012 to highlight food issues to elected leaders and voters. Barrett previously led comms., marketing and event planning for the Internet Association, the trade group of top US 'Net portals. She worked on the Hill as senior advisor and comms. director for Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.).

**Liz Kurantowicz**, VP of sales and mktg., social advocacy platform Wholecrowd, and **Stacey Monahan**, commissioner of the Mass. Dept. of Transitional Assistance, to Cashman + Katz public affairs unit Octagon Strategy Group, Glastonbury, Conn., as managing partner and group managing director, respectively.

**Jordan Isenstadt**, global chief comms. officer for digital education company Ducere, to Marino, New York, as a VP. He was a press officer for Govs. Eliot Spitzer and David Paterson, senior A/E at Edelman and comms. director for NY State Sen. Liz Krueger. **Brandon Levesque**, former assoc. manager of PR for real estate investment company Jamestown, joins as an A/D.

## **DIAFERIA LEADS BUYOUT OF INFINITE SPADA**

Top management of professional services PR specialist Infinite Spada have bought the firm from founder Gavin Ingham Brooke.

Brooke, who founded London-based Spada, merged his firm with New York-based Infinite PR in October 2014. The firm, with around 50 consultants, is particularly known for handling high-profile litigation and law firm clients, but extends into the real estate, corporate, and financial sectors, among others.

Infinite co-founder Jamie Diaferia led the management buyout of Brooke and takes the global CEO title as majority owner of the agency. San Francisco office chief and EVP Zach Olsen takes on the role of global president with a board seat.

Said Olsen: "Our clients around the globe trust us with their most sensitive and valuable of assets -- their reputations -- and we will continue to serve them diligently while looking for ways to grow and expand our capabilities in the U.S. and abroad."

In London, COO Isabel Podda and directors Scott Addison, Ryan McSharry and Bruce Wraight round out management going forward.

Diaferia credited Brooke with making IS into the "go-to PR agency for professional services firms."

## **WALEK EXITS PEPPERCOMM OPENS NEW FIRM**

Thomas Walek, founder and former president of financial services boutique Walek & Associates, which was acquired in 2013 by Peppercomm, has left that agency to form his own venture, Peaks Strategies.

The new firm focuses on capital markets, asset management, fintech and financial and professional services.

Peaks Strategies "I wanted to get back to my roots and into the specialist, boutique model of financial services and capital markets," Walek told O'Dwyer's. "It's a market that demands experience, knowledge and focus, and that's what I built my career on and that's what I'm getting back to."

Walek, who was assistant bureau chief at Commodity News Services before becoming principal managing director of Chicago-based PR shop WeiserWalek, founded Walek & Associates in 1998. That independent firm, which maintained offices in New York and Boulder, CO, specialized in financial services, capital markets and investor relations.

Walek sold W&A to New York-based independent agency Peppercomm in September 2013, adding his firm's roster of hedge funds, private equity firms and other financial institutions to Peppercomm's suite of marketing and communications capabilities. Peppercomm in 2015 accounted for more than \$6.7 million in financial PR and investor relations-related net fees, according to O'Dwyer's rankings of PR firms.

In March, however, less than three years after the acquisition, Walek, who held the president title of the newly minted WalekPeppercomm unit, resigned from the agency.

Sources in late March told O'Dwyer's that nearly the entire Walek staff that arrived in lieu of the 2013 acquisition had since left Peppercomm, with the exception of former Walek principal Armel Leslie, who remains at

the agency in a senior director role.

Peppercomm co-founder and CEO Ed Moed confirmed with O'Dwyer's that "some of the employees who joined Peppercomm with the Walek & Associates acquisition are no longer with the firm, due both to natural attrition and fit."

Moed also said that the WalekPeppercomm name has now been phased out, "as part of an agency rebranding initiative."

Walek told O'Dwyer's that he left Peppercomm "on good terms" and referred to his departure from the agency as "amicable."

Peaks Strategies, Walek's newest outfit, recently opened offices on West 40th Street in Midtown Manhattan.

The new agency has already signed two clients: Hathersage, a macro investment management company; and global industry representative Alternative Investment Management Association.

## **JOELE FRANK LEADS M&A ADVISORS IN Q1**

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher led US M&A PR advisors in the first quarter with 18 deals, according to *The Deal*.

Sard Verbinnen & Co. followed with seven transactions, along with Abernathy MacGregor Group and Brunswick Group at five apiece.

The Deal tallied 184 deals of more than \$100M with at least one US participant during the quarter, including a crush of Chinese buyers like China National Chemical Corp. (\$43B for Syngenta) and Haier (\$5.4B for General Electric's appliance division).

Top proxy firms for the quarter were Innisfree M&A (10), D.F. King & Co. (3), while Georgeson, MacKenzie Partners and Maorow & Co. each handled one deal.

## **COMCAST CALLS FARRAGUT**

Cable and telecommunications giant Comcast has hired Washington, D.C. firm Farragut Partners LLP for lobbying support on a bundle of issues, including taxation, communications, telecommunications, government and consumer matters.

The world's largest cable company has tapped the recently formed firm, which was founded by former Ryan, MacKinnon, Vasapoli and Berzok principals, for help with Net Neutrality legislation, the landmark initiative to reclassify broadband Internet access service as a telecommunications service under Title II of the Communications Act, as well as reform of the 1996 Telecommunications Act.

Other Capitol Hill issues for which Farragut will lend support include spectrum reform, bonus depreciation issues, universal service, PEG programming, cybersecurity, program access, FCC reform, Internet tax, privacy and behavioral advertising and issues relating to broadband deployment and adoption.

Farragut founding partners Jeff Mackinnon, Joe Vasapoli and Jeff Mortier will handle the account.

Farragut, whose key practice areas include telecommunications, energy and healthcare, in February signed T-Mobile to help the wireless giant push its support for the "Wireless Tax Fairness Act."

**Governments, companies, scientists and others who want a “pile of bodies”** before they limit Wi-Fi and other radiation remind Devra Davis of temporizing when smoking, asbestos and air pollution became health threats.

Better PR is needed by the EMR and Wi-Fi health advocates.

Davis, an epidemiologist and author of *Disconnect*, published “Show me the bodies: a monumental public policy failure.”

April 18 on the Oxford University Press blog.

Waiting for deaths to pile up due to a health hazard “seems a cruel and outdated foundation for public policy,” she says. The article has links to 18 supporting documents and websites.

Lung disease in teenagers working with asbestos in the 19th century was ignored until there was evidence of an “epidemic toll,” she writes.

“The situation now posed by cellphones and wireless transmitting devices appears eerily reminiscent of what has transpired with tobacco, asbestos and air pollution,” she said.

Those who begin using cellphones as teens have four to eight times more risk of brain cancer as young adults, according to research. Quoted is a study in Sweden finding that “those who begin using either cordless or mobile phones regularly before age 20 have greater than a fourfold increased risk of ipsilateral glioma” (a type of brain cancer).

### **Telecom, Internet Providers Rapped**

Davis wants not only apologies, which are “overdue,” but action from the major telecom companies and internet providers. She does not name any of them but three of the five biggest advertisers in the U.S. are AT&T, No. 2 at \$3.3 billion, Comcast, No. 4 at \$3B, and Verizon, No. 5 at \$2.5B. Media mostly skip this story.

She doesn’t name companies like Apple, Microsoft, Samsung, etc., but says “manufacturers” continue to market cellphones and other microwave-radiating devices to “infants, toddlers, and young teens without clear notice that such radiation increases the risks of brain cancers, reproductive harm and a host of other health problems.”

Warnings are “buried” in instructions that cellphones should not be kept in pockets or bras, said Davis, who told how 21-year-old Tiffany Frantz contracted breast cancer after keeping a cellphone in her bra.

Frantz described this in an interview by Dr Oz Dec. 15, 2013. Another breast cancer victim cited was runner Donna Jaynes, mother of three, who kept her cell phone in her sports bra for six years. She developed multi-focal primary tumors, invasive carcinoma with ductal and lobular features.

### **Health Advocates Need Better PR**

Wi-Fi and EMR Health Advocates, practically hysterical in their inability to budge governments, institutions or media on this subject, need to use more powerful communications and political tools.

They should study the techniques of the Lesbian,

Gay, Bisexual and Transgender movement, which has been successful in recent years in bringing about a sea change in public attitudes and law.

The effort has been multi-dimensional, targeting local, state and federal courts and legislators, and local and national media.

A host of popular entertainment figures has been recruited to spread the message that there is nothing wrong with love between members of the same sex and that individuals who identify with a gender other than the one they were born with should not be discriminated against.

EMR health advocates have a lot of scientists and academicians on their side but virtually no political leaders or stars from the movies, music or stage.

Now, with a national election under way, is the time to win notice from some of the candidates. A PR figure who has the ear of Hillary Clinton is Michael Kempner, CEO of MWW Group, whose website displays a picture of him standing next to her. He is one of her leading fund-raisers. Regular mail to his office at One Meadowlands Plaza, East Rutherford, NJ 07073 could be effective. Letters should also be sent to the h.q. of all the Presidential candidates.

Requests to look into this issue have been sent to the New York chapter of PR Society of America and Canadian PR Society with no results so far.

Since Wi-Fi and other forms of radiation have a greater impact on children, babies and fetuses, it can be argued that a candidate who backs removing Wi-Fi from schools and libraries, and emblazoning cellphone and computer packages with red letters saying, “Warning, Health Hazard,” will win many female as well as male votes.

### **School Population: 75 million**

The LGBT population, although a single digit percentage part of the general population, has been able to change public opinion because of its sophisticated PR and political organization. At risk from daily classroom bombardment by industrial-grade Wi-Fi routers is a much bigger audience—the 55 million students in grade and high school and the 20 million in college.

EMR health advocates need a good slogan, a good “sound bite” that will resonate with people the way the word “love” is used by the LGBT community. The words could be “child safety” or just “children.” A PR firm or ad agency could help.

The O’Dwyer website, newsletter and magazine are continuing coverage of the EMR threat via a permanent “cyber conference” that will cover breaking news and provide links to scientific papers and other documents.

Not one word of the dangers of Wi-Fi, cellphones, etc., sullied the “Wi-Fi Now 2016” conference in Tysons Corner, Va., April 19-21 from which O’Dwyer reporters were banned. The campaign to win recognition of the hazards of radiation in the U.S. has received a boost with the arrival of Dafna Tachover, who was able to convince Mayor Yona Yahav of Haifa, third largest city in Israel, to shut down Wi-Fi in all the schools. — *Jack O’Dwyer*