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PUBLICIS POSTS 17% Q1 GROWTH

Publicis Groupe's Arthur Sadoun reported Q1 revenues jumped 17.1 percent to \$3B, driven by a robust demand for its Publicis Sapient and Epsilon digital offerings.



Arthur Sadoun

Organic growth rose 10.5 percent compared to a 2.8 percent year-ago increase.

Sadoun said Publicis showed robust growth in Europe, especially in France and the UK; solid gains in Asia (China was up double-digits); and continued momentum in the US.

The financial results included a \$94M "exceptional disposal loss" for the transfer of Publicis in Russia ownership to founding chairman Sergey Koptev.

The 1,200-member group was "deconsolidated" from Publicis' financial structure effective April 1.

Though the French ad/PR group recorded a "stronger-than-expected start of the year," Sadoun declined to upgrade 2022 guidance due to much uncertainty ahead from the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and raging global inflation.

BGR GROUP SNAGS BYTEDANCE'S URBAN

BGR Group has hired David Urban, executive VP of North American corporate affairs for China's ByteDance, as managing director.

He joined the parent of TikTok in 2020 to help it navigate tricky public policy issues and communications challenges. He also advised ByteDance on ESG and corporate social responsibility issues.



David Urban

Earlier, Urban was president of the American Continental Group lobbying shop, handling clients such as Zoom and 7-Eleven.

Urban made his mark in Pennsylvania Republican politics, counseling Senators Arlen Specter, Rick Santorum and Pat Toomey.

He also served as senior campaign advisor to Donald Trump during his presidential run.

BGR founding partner Haley Barbour said Urban's "insights into communications, policy, law and politics make him uniquely suited to the BGR team."

PURPLE STRATEGIES' DRIVER STEERS TO BCW

Nick Driver, who was senior insights strategist at Purple Strategies, has moved to [BCW](#) as senior VP, North America research lead. At Purple Strategies, he handled qualitative and quantitative research programs for tech, pharmaceutical and shipping companies.



Nick Driver

Earlier, Driver was senior VP at H+K Strategies, leading its global research and insights function for clients in the healthcare, technology, energy, financial, entertainment and consumer packaged goods sectors.

COOK COUNTY CALLS FOR COMMS. SERVICES

Cook County Health, the government public health agency charged with serving the healthcare needs of the residents of Cook County, IL, is seeking proposals from agencies specializing in marketing and communication services.

Cook County's CCDPH seeks a full-service agency that can support its efforts by developing communications plans and messaging that advance public health equity—namely, by addressing COVID-19 health disparities—and increases awareness and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

Proposals are due by 2 p.m. (CST) on April 22 and should be delivered or mailed to: Cook County Health C/O John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital; 1969 West Ogden Ave., Lower Level Room # 250A; Chicago, IL 60612; Attention: Supply Chain Management Department.

[Download the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

NJ GOV'S COMMS DIR. TO GUN SAFETY GROUP

Everytown for Gun Safety and its grassroots networks, Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action, has hired Mahen Gunaratna as chief public affairs officer and senior vice president, effective June 1. Gunaratna currently serves as communications director for New Jersey governor Phil Murphy. He was previously deputy communications director for former NYC mayor Bill de Blasio.



Mahen Gunaratna

"With his deep experience at every level of government, Mahen is the right person to help Everytown spread the word about our work," said president of Everytown for Gun Safety president John Feinblatt.

PITCH RESPONSE RATES SLIDE IN Q1 2022

Response rates to pitches fell in the first quarter of 2022, according to a new study from earned media management platform Propel, and one of the best ways to combat that trend is to keep things short and simple.



The [Q2 2022 Propel Media Barometer](#) found that journalists responded to 3.37 percent of the pitches they received in the first quarter, a slide from the average 3.53 percent response rate for 2021.

While the average open rate for pitches was 36 percent, Propel notes that the prevalence of email filtering technology (which can trigger an email “open” without any manual interaction from media contacts) most likely means that fewer journalists are actually responding.

How can communicators increase the chances that their pitch will get a response? From top to bottom, it pays to get right to the point.

The most engaging subject lines, the study found, were from one to five words long. Pitches that stayed to that length had a 5.59 percent response rate. That rate drops to 2.62 percent for subject lines with 10 to 15 words, and hits just 1.87 percent when the word count goes above 16.

The ideal length for pitch leads was between 50 and 79 words, which resulted in a 4.15 percent response rate. Pitch leads with 150 or more words did much more poorly (0.61 percent). PR pros did better here, with the highest number of pitch leads running from 30 to 49 words long.

For the overall length of a pitch, those with 50 to 149 words did the best, with a 7.85 percent response rate.

Keeping things simple does not just apply to pitch length either. Just 2.69 percent of pitches with four or more embedded links got a response, while keeping the number to two or three brought the response rate up to 3.55 percent.

Propel’s study analyzed a sample of nearly 400,000 pitches sent during Q1 2022.

SITRICK NY ALUM FAISON JOINS BRUNSWICK

Seth Faison, who did a five-year stint as managing director of Sitrick And Company’s New York office, has joined Brunswick Group as partner in its freshly minted China hub.

Prior to working at Mike Sitrick’s Los Angeles-based crisis shop, Faison headed the *New York Times*’ Shanghai bureau and served as Beijing correspondent for the *South China Morning Post*.



Seth Faison

More recently, he was head of communications for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Geneva.

Andy Browne, who spent 35 years reporting from Asia as China editor for the *Wall Street Journal* and Asia-Pacific News editor for Thomson Reuters, rejoins Brunswick as head of its China hub.

He was previously at Brooklyn-headquartered Bloomberg New Economy Forum, where he was editorial director. Browne served as partner for Brunswick in Beijing from 2007 to 2009.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

[Pugh & Tiller](#) signs on to work with [Railfield Partners](#) and [FutureAI.guru](#). For Railfield Partners, a Maryland-based real investment firm that specializes in multi-family housing, the agency will provide media relations services, including awards and speaking opportunities. Pugh & Tiller will support FutureAI.guru, an early-stage AI technology company headquartered in Washington, DC with media relations, analyst relations, and web design as well as handling awards and speaking opportunities.



[Hill+Knowlton Strategies](#) has been engaged to work with parking app [AppyParking+](#) on the company’s consumer communications and brand reputation. The account, which will be handled by H+K London’s mobility + transport practice, will focus on helping AppyParking+ grow its PR presence beyond the brand’s traditional B2B focus. “H+K has a great depth of knowledge in the mobility sector, bringing together both corporate and communications expertise,” said AppyParking+ founder Dan Hubert.

[Applied](#) is leading the rebranding effort for Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health, which will now be known as [Dartmouth Health](#). The new brand is part of Dartmouth Health’s strategic plan to strengthen its relationships with the patients it serves in northern New England. Dartmouth Health will phase in its new brand identity over the next two to three years, beginning with its website, collateral materials, digital assets and other publicly visible elements such as facility signage and employee badges.

[Red Lorry Yellow Lorry](#) is named US PR agency of record for [Simplr](#), a conversational experience platform provider. The lorries will roll out a media relations campaign focused on building awareness of Simplr’s intelligent solution among business operations and customer service decision-makers within the retail, e-commerce, food service and technology industries. A key focus of the program, which will be led from the agency’s Boston office, will be to build the thought leadership profiles of Simplr CEO Eng Tan and CMO Daniel Rodriguez.



[Praytell and Dawn Marketing](#) are working together on the launch of [Versus \(VS\)](#), a sports edtech company from St. Louis Cardinals manager Oliver Marmol. The scope of work on the project includes strategic planning, media and analytics, peer-to-peer marketing, social media, digital marketing and public relations services. VS provides aspiring athletes access to elite mentorship and skills training with professional athletes. Using next generation conversational AI technology and exclusive video content, the platform gives users the ability to ask questions live during a session and receive a response from such athletes as San Diego Padres shortstop Fernando Tatis Jr., Cardinals first baseman Albert Pujols, softball player Jennie Finch, and sportscaster and former softball player Jessica Mendoza.

[Buffalo Agency](#) is selected as public relations agency of record for [Capstone Hospitality](#), which partners with over 65 private clubs in the golf, tennis, resort, boating and social spaces to help drive membership sales. Buffalo will deliver a communications strategy and plan that includes a robust media relations program designed to reach Capstone’s audience through earned storytelling in consumer and trade media.

PERFECTING THE PARTNERSHIP

Working with strategic partners is one of the most valuable ways to drive brand loyalty, foster engagement with existing customers and reach new ones. But identifying the right partner is like dating: Sharing common interests and values are a great starting point before getting too deep into the relationship.



Jackie Peskin

Our agency helps clients in various capacities along this journey, from amplifying existing partnerships to recommending partners and developing the activations that maximize value. Let's examine some key factors that may help you

evaluate your next partnership.

Eyes on the prized partner

"Partnership" is a fairly broad term encompassing brands, non-profits, organizations, academic institutions, specialized experts and influencers.

Before reaching out to anyone, it's critical to identify the goal of the partnership. It sets the stage for the nature of the relationship, lays the groundwork for the guiding strategy and helps weed out or zero in on potential partners. Also, think through the duration: Is the goal a limited time offer, an extensive campaign, or a multi-year program?

A match made in insights

Once you figure out your goals, it's time to take a deeper look at prospective partners. Beyond like-minded audiences, goals and values, understanding consumer behavior can take a collaboration to a whole new level of success.

For instance, we know people who work out generally tend to eat healthier. Faced with the challenge of getting health-conscious consumers to consider choosing more nutritious Eggland's Best eggs, Coyne PR went in search of a partner that would build brand awareness and drive trial for our client. While digging through potential partner consumer research and data, we uncovered that two out of three members at Life Time gyms go grocery shopping after visiting the gym. Bingo. Not only did this potential partner check the boxes on common interests, values and potential to reach a shared target demographic, but this insight also revealed we could reach consumers at the exact moment when purchasing healthier products was top of mind.

Leveraging assets

Beyond the traditional cross-promotion efforts, the right partner can bring their unique set of assets to add value. One example is a partnership we proposed and implemented for our client Castello Cheese, a brand that continually looks for ways to educate consumers on Havarti cheese. The target audience over-indexes on the use of charcuterie boards and DIY projects. We combined both interests into a partnership with Board & Brush Creative Studio, a company that organizes workshops for DIYers around the United States, Canada and Japan (we utilized the U.S. system for this campaign). The Castello and Board & Brush target audience overlapped perfectly.

Commit to collaboration

Just as you know your brand better than anyone, so does your partner about their brand. Accept and embrace this fact. This means being open to compromise, to doing things slight-

ly different than you're accustomed to, or moving in different directions than initially anticipated (which is perfectly fine if it continues to meet your original objective).

At Coyne, our goal is to be an extension of a client's internal team. Likewise, you and your partner should work as one team. Keep an honest and open dialogue. Communicate frequently. Be respectful of each other's internal structure and timing for approvals.

Watchouts and pitfalls

We can all agree that even the most thoughtfully designed program will encounter a hiccup or two. It's no different with partnerships, but there are steps that can reduce the risk.

When vetting partners, brands should be clear about their expectations and ensure partners can deliver on the established objectives. Ask for case studies, sample content and referrals to better understand expected results and the experience of working with the potential partner.

If partnering with an individual, a thorough audit can help reveal any potential issues. Take note of your initial communications with the partner and most importantly, listen to your gut. Whether it's a question of culture compatibility or issues that may arise later down the line, if something feels off, chances are it is. A partnership can leave lasting impressions—both good and, unfortunately, sometimes bad.

Once a partner checks all the boxes, make sure to establish ownership roles ahead of time. Confusion over who is owning what during the execution phase can impact timelines, budgets and the overall success of the campaign.

Finding the right partner may seem like a lot of work. That's because it is. But the right partner paired with a well-executed plan will without a doubt deliver great results and set a blueprint for successful collaborations in the future. To end with our dating analogy, the result will be true love for everyone involved.

Jackie Peskin is VP, Food & Nutrition, at [Coyne PR](#).

NH WANTS PR FOR MENTAL ILLNESS SERVICES

New Hampshire's Department of Health and Human Services seeks a firm to promote the 24/7 support that it offers to Granite Staters who are wrestling with mental illness or substance abuse issues.

In January, New Hampshire launched its Rapid Response System, designed to provide faster help to people struggling with mental health, substance misuse or suicidal crisis.

The Rapid Response Access Point is available, around the clock to anyone in crisis via phone, chat and text.

Staff, trained in de-escalation and stabilization, resolve most contacts remotely; however, if an individual needs in-person assistance, a Rapid Response Mobile Team can be deployed to their location, according to the RFP.

The Department wants a communications partner to develop overall messaging for all age groups with a focus on information targeted to specific populations who are at risk and/or underserved. It envisions the communications push kicking off July 1 and running through Sept. 30, 2023. The contract may be extended for up to two years.

Proposals are due April 29. They go to contracts@dhhs.nh.gov.

[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).



GLOBAL STRATEGY GROUP ADMITS IT GOOFED

Global Strategy Group, a Democratic polling firm with union clients, admits it was dumb to represent Amazon as it sought to crush an organizing drive at its JFK8 warehouse on Staten Island.

The New York firm posted this April 11 statement on its website: “While there have been factual inaccuracies in recent reports about our work for Amazon, being involved in any way was a mistake.”

That statement replaced an earlier one that ripped the March 31 CNBC story, “Amazon hired an influential Democratic pollster to fight Staten Island union drive” as grossly inaccurate and a misrepresentation of its work.

GSG’s reputation has taken a hit in the labor community.

The American Federation of Teachers and Service Employees International Union’s New York affiliate told the liberal [Jacobin Magazine](#) that they would never hire the firm again.

Italy’s SEC Newgate on April 6 announced that it took a significant stake in GSG, which is to serve as its US flagship.

JFK8 is Amazon’s only unionized facility, though the company is challenging the results of the vote.

ST. LOUIS TRANSIT SEEKS PR PITCHES

Citizens for Modern Transit, the public transit operator for the St. Louis metropolitan area, is requesting proposals from public relations firms.

CMT is looking for an agency that can help plan, execute and promote a two-year PR campaign that educates community members on the benefits of public transit in an effort to boost ridership and drive revenues. Terms of the contract call for a two-year commitment, beginning in May 2022 and ending March 2024.

Proposals are due by 4 p.m. (CST) on April 29 and should be sent to: Citizens for Modern Transit; 911 Washington, Ste. 200; St. Louis, MO, 63101



Bidding agencies should submit four hard copies of their proposals. An electronic version should additionally be sent to executive director Kimberly M. Cella, kcella@cmt-stl.org. Questions should be directed to Cella.

[Download the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

WESTEXEC HIRES NATION’S EX-TOP SPY

Former Central Intelligence Agency director John Brennan is joining strategic advisory firm WestExec Advisors as principal.

Brennan headed the CIA from March 2013 until January 2017. After leaving that post following Trump’s election, he was harshly critical of the former president. Trump responded by referring to Brennan as a “lowlife” and threatened to revoke his security clearance, a threat on which he did not follow through.

Prior to his CIA post, Brennan was deputy national security advisor and assistant to president Obama for homeland security and counterterrorism.

As Principal at WestExec, he will advise on strategy and geopolitical risk, as well as helping clients handle key business opportunities and navigate global challenges.



John Brennan

NEWS OF FIRMS

According to [ICR’s SPAC Market Update and Outlook](#), SPAC proceeds in the first quarter of this year were \$10.1 billion, the lowest amount since the second quarter of 2020, when SPAC numbers began to take off. The number of SPAC IPOs in Q1 2022 was 54, also the fewest since Q2 2020, the report finds. That’s a big comedown from the peak of 298 SPAC IPOs reached in the first quarter of 2021, which accounted for \$89.2 billion in proceeds. As regards the outlook for the rest of 2022, the report says that until the SEC’s proposed rule and amendment changes for SPACs are formalized, “it is likely that SPAC issuance will slow materially.”

[The Worldcom Public Relations Group](#) adds San Juan, PR-based Duarte Pino, Parris Communications in Kansas City, MO and Pro-Global, located in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, as partners in the organization. “These are all outstanding agencies, and each of them is an important addition to our global partnership,” said Stephanie Paul, managing director of The Phillips Group and Worldcom’s global recruitment chair.



WORLDCOM
Public Relations Group

[Lyceus Group](#), a Seattle-based firm that represents clients in the financial services, real estate, cryptocurrency and technology spaces, opens a downtown Austin, TX office. Lyceus Group’s Austin office will be led by Rex Carlin, who will now serve as vice president for the firm. Carlin has been with the firm since 2019. The Austin office will focus on expanding Lyceus’ footprint in the technology startup and real estate spaces. Financial services continue to be a key priority in both its Austin and Seattle offices.

[Propel](#), an earned media management platform, is making its software available to users for free. The company says that in addition to facilitating contact management and pitch tracking, its database offers access to more than a million journalists, three billion articles, and 50 million Twitter influencers. It also lets users tap into over 100 news, forums, blogs and other web sources, as well as more than a billion accounts across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

[The Greater Kansas City Public Relations of America Chapter](#) names the 2022 class of scholars for the Inez Y. Kaiser GKC-PRSA Memorial Scholarship Fund. The fund of \$25,000 was established to award annual scholarships in memory of Inez Y. Kaiser, a Kansas City public relations business owner who was the first Black woman in the country to join PRSA. This year’s scholarships went to Sirah Diallo of the University of Texas at Austin, Ladazhia Taylor from the University of Kansas and MyAun Boyd of Evangel University.



[280blue](#), a Boulder, CO-based agency focusing on venture-backed B2B technology companies, changes its name to **Outside Labs** as part of an overall rebranding. The agency says the new name more accurately reflects its goal of providing an “outside” perspective to B2B technology founders, CEOs, marketers and the venture capital community. The rebrand includes a new visual identity and website. Founded in 2015 by a group of Silicon Valley marketing leaders led by CEO Kim Kaputska, the agency has helped more than 50 companies, including 10 that were acquired or filed for IPO.

IRELAND WANTS PR TO PUSH VOLUNTEERISM

Ireland wants to hire a firm to develop a communications campaign to promote its national volunteering strategy.



The firm will show how volunteers are essential to help communities function and grow. “Volunteering benefits large sectors of society in the areas of education, arts, heritage, education, health, sport and the socially marginalised. It also benefits the volunteers themselves,” according to the RFP.

The Government understands that it must not take the work of volunteers for granted. “Volunteering is not free and it needs to be harnessed, encouraged, supported and also be representative of our diverse communities which make up Irish society.”

The Department of Rural and Community Development is leading the funding the \$25K campaign that will wrap up in September.

Responses are due April 22.

Read the RFP (PDF).

UNIV OF FLORIDA VET HEADS TO MERCURY

Mercury has brought on Kristen Crawford-Whitaker as a SVP in its Florida office. Crawford-Whitaker was previously assistant vice chancellor of public policy and advocacy for the State University System of Florida. In that role, she acted as the Board of Governors’ chief liaison with the state’s legislative and executive branches, university leadership and organizations throughout the state and coordinated a systemwide advocacy strategy to support the board’s goals and legislative priorities.



**Kristen
Crawford-Whitaker**

“Kristen will be a major asset to our clients and her arrival further speaks to our Florida team’s reputation as a full-service bipartisan firm attracting the state’s top strategists across party lines,” said Mercury partner Ashley Walker.

PLUS HELPS PROMOTE UKRAINE IN THE PRESS

Plus Communications is working with the Ukrainian Volunteer Journalist Initiative, a community of reporters, business owners, lawyers and students, to assist foreign journalists covering the Russian invasion of the country.

The volunteer organization wants to make sure the Ukrainian perspective is presented in the global media. UVJI produces a daily news digest of translated news from military, civilian and support fronts.

It will help journalists report about political and cultural developments in Ukraine and work to counter Russian disinformation and propaganda.

Launched Feb. 27, UVJI also will connect foreign reporters with members of the Ukraine government and help research potential stories. It will send story pitches and find guests for radio, TV and online reports.

Based in Arlington, VA, Plus will book interviews for US media outlets with UVJI staffers in Ukraine and with members of parliament, former government leaders and citizens impacted by the war.

The public affairs shop is working on a pro bono basis.

ON THE MOVE

Relevance International names **Chris Lanzaro** chief financial officer, a newly created role. Lanzaro has served as CFO at Cornerstone Agency/The FADER, vice president/controller at Global Strategy Group, and Senior Auditor E&Y. In his new role, he will lead the day-to-day execution of business and human resource administration across the agency’s offices in New York, London, and Los Angeles. He will also be instrumental in leading organizational growth by analyzing profit margins, team utilization, and client relations.



Chris Lanzaro

BackBay Communications brings on **Fred Baldassaro** and **George Spencer** as vice presidents. Baldassaro, who joins the firm as a vp in the fintech group, previously held several communications and public engagement roles in the Obama administration. He was also a senior advisor at the Treasury Department and has served as director of communications for the Pew Charitable Trusts. Spencer is a vp in BackBay’s impact investing/ESG group. Prior to joining BackBay, he was senior manager of communications for the Global Impact Investing. Before he began his work in impact investing, George spent more than a decade as a broadcast journalist.

Wireless internet service provider **Starry** hires Ben Barrett as vice president of investor relations. Barrett joins the company from real estate technology firm Compass, where he was responsible for building the investor relations function, helping take the company public in April 2021. He was previously senior director of investor relations at T-Mobile.

Walker Sands promotes **Dave Parro** to chief operating officer and **Mark Miller** to chief financial officer. Parro has been with the agency since 2012, most recently serving as executive vp, operations. As COO, he will lead the agency’s operations, IT, client services, sales and marketing teams. Miller was previously senior vp, finance. Before coming to Walker Sands in 2018, he was director, finance and operations at HBR Consulting.

Digital wedding planning company **The Knot Worldwide** brings on **Jenny Lewis** as chief marketing officer. Lewis was previously head of US & Canada Marketing at Uber. She also worked at Undertone Advertising and Fox Networks Group (FX, National Geographic Channel, Fox Sports), where she developed co-marketing strategies with brands such as MillerCoors and Volkswagen. In her new post, Lewis will lead all marketing, insights, and editorial initiatives for The Knot Worldwide and its 19 global brands across 16 countries.



Jenny Lewis

Turning Point Brands, which manufactures, markets and distributes branded consumer products including alternative smoking accessories, hires Summer Frein as chief marketing officer. Frein was most recently general manager at Cronos Group, USA. Prior to joining Cronos, she held a variety of senior leadership roles at Altria Group across sales, digital and brand marketing, strategy and business development. In 2018, she led Altria’s cannabis research investment initiative.

FOR TECH PR FIRMS, '21 SAW BIG GAINS

[ICR Inc.](#) was the big gainer among the top 10 tech PR firms in [O'Dwyer's 2022 rankings](#), racking up a 209.1 percent increase that took their 2021 net fees to \$57 million, making it #2 on the list.

The top spot went to [Edelman](#), which was up 12.2 percent to \$281.2 million. [Hotwire](#) (up 15.1 percent to \$48.2 million) took the #3 spot. Other big gainers included #4 [Finn Partners](#) (up 53.6 percent to \$46.2 million), #5 [Zeno Group](#) (up 44.7 percent to \$30.2 million), #7 [Walker Sands](#) (up 40.2 percent to \$28.5 million) and #9 [The Hoffman Agency](#) (up 33.4 percent to \$20.2 million).

[Highwire PR's](#) 21 percent jump to \$29.2 million brought it in at #6. [PAN Communications](#), whose net fees held steady at \$19.9 million, was #10. [Ruder Finn](#), which did not break out its tech numbers last year, came in #8 with \$21.3 million, and [APCO Worldwide](#), which also didn't list in the tech section in 2021, was #11 with \$16.1 million in net fees.

At Highwire, Tech and Healthcare Join Forces

In 2021, "Highwire saw tremendous growth across all our core sectors including enterprise technology, cybersecurity, commerce and especially in digital health," said agency principal Carol Carrubba.



Carol Carrubba

She noted that "capital markets were ripe again for public offerings," and that Highwire supported companies including GitLab, Qualtrics and Digital Ocean before, during and after IPOs.

Carrubba sees the growing connection between healthcare and technology as a prime mover for growth in the coming year. "We are energized by the unstoppable technology transformation

in healthcare that is creating new models for care and ultimately better outcomes for patients," she said.

Strong Organic Growth at Walker Sands

New clients such as commercetools, Outseer (formerly RSA Fraud & Risk Intelligence) and SambaNova Systems contributed to a healthy jump of more than 40 percent (as well as a move from the #29 spot to #7 on O'Dwyer's tech list) for Walker Sands last year, according to executive vice president, services Andrew Cross.



Andrew Cross

The agency acquired March Communications in 2021, giving it a presence in Boston and Atlanta.

"Looking ahead to the rest of 2022," Cross said, "I expect sectors like cybersecurity, energy and supply chain to continue growth in terms of mindshare and investment dollars."

Hotwire Looks Toward the Future

Hotwire global CEO Heather Kernahan says "a spike in demand for lead generation, account-based marketing, and sales activity" were key elements in the agency's move up the O'Dwyer's tech list from #9 to #3.

"Tech CMOs were under pressure to deliver immediate results today and continue building their brands for the future," Kernahan says. To respond to the shift, Hotwire acquired

McDonald Butler and "added extensive account-based marketing and channel marketing experience."

Kernahan says Howtire "saw more innovation and tech headquarters going into key European cities and an unprecedented level of VC investment." Because of that, the agency named Ute Hildebrandt as managing director of a newly created Continental European organization.



Heather Kernahan

PAN Rides the Start-Up Wave

"A significant move from start-up (emerging growth) to mid and later-stage brands" characterized the tech sector in 2021, according to PAN Communications chief marketing officer Mark Nardone.



Mark Nardone

PAN rose from #25 on last year's list to #10 this year, which Nardone says was "mainly due to how we reacted in order to better accommodate the shifting market."

New clients at the firm included IPOs Weave and Braze, along with Booz Allen Hamilton, Toshiba, Amwell, BitDefender, Quickbase, Algolia and Collibra.

Hoffman Hits Hyper-Growth

"We feel good about our 2021 performance, one that showed us shifting into hyper-growth mode—defined as increasing revenue over 30 percent," said The Hoffman Group CEO Lou Hoffman.



Lou Hoffman

"The top tech shops found demand for their services outstripping supply in 2021," according to Hoffman. "The previous year found buyers with a mindset that simply maintaining the status quo or even retrenching was a win. By the time 2021 rolled out, these same buyers had decided it was time to get on with it and invest in communications."

Another factor in 2021's growth spurt: "employee communications and a renewed emphasis on corporate communications with an eye on demonstrating purpose"

Clarity Expands Its Range

Clarity founder CEO Sami McCabe says that the agency "scaled nearly 60 percent globally" in 2021, working with such clients as What3Words, OpenWeb and Pay Zilch.

With \$14.4M in net fees (up from \$9M last year), Clarity moved up one spot to #13 on this year's tech list.

Clarity acquired digital agency 3WhiteHats in May 2021, a move that McCabe says is "the next step in our journey to provide a robust and comprehensive range of marketing communications services to our clients."



Sami McCabe

As regards the future of the sector, McCabe says he is "optimistic that technology industry leaders will prioritize making a positive impact on society."