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TOURISM IRELAND WANTS PR PARTNER

Tourism Ireland, which was established 25 years ago as part of the Good Friday Agreement, is looking for a global PR partner to promote tourism to the entire island.



Tourism Ireland

The selected firm will work a two-pronged effort. It will boost the number of visitors to Ireland and help Northern Ireland realize its tourism potential.

The Dublin office of Tourism Ireland wants a partner to develop overall PR strategy for this year and publicity planning for 2024.

The contract period will be for one year and begin in July.

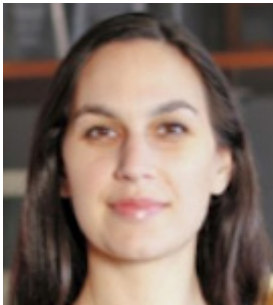
Tourism Ireland is considering the option to continue to work with its partner to support three or four marketing campaigns annually for a period of two years from 2024-2025, according to the RFP.

Elmogh Killeen, head of brand & marketing communications, and Emma Gorman, publicity & brand partnerships manager, handle Tourism Ireland's outreach.

Responses are due May 8 at www.etenders.gov.ie.
[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

EDELMAN UPS MARGOT EDELMAN TO NY/GM

Margot Edelman, a 12-year veteran of [the No. 1 independent firm](#), has been named general manager of its New York office, effective May 1.



Margot Edelman

She will succeed Oscar Suris, who has joined Duke Energy as senior VP & chief communications officer. He is replacing Selim Bingol, who retired last month.

Suris has been working at [Edelman](#) and sister shop, [Zeno Group](#), for the last four years.

Previously, he was executive VP-corporate communications at Wells Fargo and director of communications at both Ford Motor and AutoNation.

Suris also spent ten years as a reporter at the *Wall Street Reporter*, *Miami News* and *Orlando Sentinel*.

Edelman assumed the deputy general manager of New York slot last May.

Earlier, she led the Bay Area operations and the tech practice.

Edelman will report to Dave Samson, US COO.

TECH FIRMS SAW 3.9% UPTICK IN 2022

Firms that handle tech clients saw an upswing in revenues in 2022, rising 3.9 percent to \$818.6 million in tech-related fees, according to the [2023 O'Dwyer's ranking of the top technology PR firms](#).

However, several of the 78 firms on our list saw not just double, but triple-digit increases in net tech-related fees. Padilla, which came in at #18, racked up \$14.6 million, up 176.4 percent from 2021's \$5.7 million. Other big gainers included [Bliss Group](#), which was up 431.2 percent to \$1.6 million and [Wachsman](#), with an 81.8 percent jump in fees to \$25.3 million.

Overall, 18 out of the top 20 firms saw jumps in fee income—and 16 of those were at least double-digit increases.

Most of those firms saw pretty healthy gains in terms of staffers as well. No.2 [Hotwire](#) increased headcount by 46.7 percent, and No. 3 [Finn Partners](#) was up by 18.7 percent.



AI Comes Full Circle at PAN

"[PAN](#) was an early agency representing AI brands," said PAN Communications president and CEO Philip Nardone. "While we saw it flatline a bit in past years, it has now come back full circle."

PAN's fees were up 24.9 percent in 2022, hitting almost \$25 million. While Nardone says that his agency's "legacy in the space" has been a big contribution to those gains, the agency has also seen "a huge uplift in tech infrastructure, and all things related to commerce." That combination led to 33 new clients in 2022.



Philip Nardone

PAN did not open a new bricks-and-mortar office in 2022, but its "virtual office" became the fastest growing one at the agency, accounting for 75 staffers.

He also says that as the tech market develops, the power of storytelling becomes increasingly important. "PAN saw an opportunity to be that agency partner that helps tell a cohesive story across channels to support driving more qualified leads and creating an experience to drive demand."

Highwire Expands Its Presence

"[Highwire](#) continues to expand its presence in the health-care technology space," said Highwire principal Carol Carrubba.

(continued on page 4)

OMNICOM'S Q1 REVENUES INCH AHEAD BY 1%

Omnicom's Q1 revenues inched ahead one percent to \$3.4B, while operating profit dipped 1.8 percent to \$346M as clients grappled with socioeconomic, technological and social challenges, according to CEO John Wren. He called OMC's 5.2 percent organic growth "a solid start to the year."



John Wren

The PR group (Ketchum, FleishmanHillard, Porter Novelli, Mercury, Marina Maher Communications) posted 3.6 percent growth to \$375.5M. It was up 5.8 percent organically.

During the quarter, OMC recognized the transition to a flexible working environment that allows for partial remote work. It took a

\$119M pretax charge (\$91M after-tax) to reduce and reposition its office lease portfolio.

Looking ahead, Wren expects full-year organic growth from three to five percent.

TECH GURU BENECKE TAKES MCKINSEY POST

Rowan Benecke, who has more than 25 years of PR firm experience, has joined McKinsey & Co as director of communications for North America. He

heads a 25-member team focused on the management consultancy's mission to accelerate sustainable growth and partner with clients to meet their challenges and opportunities.

Benecke also will work to protect McKinsey's reputation by creating greater trust among colleagues, clients and leaders in the world of government, academia, nonprofits and think tanks.

Benecke, who co-founded [Zeno Group](#), also served as president of

[Cognito US](#), chief growth officer at Ruder Finn, global tech chair at Burson-Marsteller and executive VP at Text 100.

Since September, he has been working as an independent consultant in the metro New York area.



Rowan Benecke

REEVEMARK, PENTA WORKED DOMINION CASE

[Reevemark](#) strategic communications shop and Penta Group, which calls itself a "comprehensive stakeholder solutions firm," represented Dominion Voting Systems in its legal battle with Fox Corp and Fox News. They worked alongside

Dominion's lawyers Susman Godfrey and defamation specialist firm Clare Locke to secure the record \$787.5M settlement.

Reevemark's litigation support team included CEO/founding partner Brandy Bergman, founding partner Hugh Burns, managing director Nicholas Leasure, VP Jacqueline Zuhse, senior associate Jill Steinman and associate Erin Craig.

Penta Group, which is the former Hamilton Place Strategies, had senior partner Kevin Madden, managing director-strategy Stephanie Walstrom and senior director-strategy Claire Bischoff handling the effort.



**DOMINION
VOTING**

BALLARD GOES TO WORK FOR JAPAN

Japan has hired Ballard Partners, the well-connected Republican firm, to bolster its relationship with the US.

Ballard Partners will provide strategic consulting and advocacy services to the Japanese embassy in connection with its business with US federal agencies, Congress, state legislatures and executive agencies of state governments, according to its contract signed April 10 by Koichi Ai, minister and head of chancery.

The pact became effective April 1 and runs through June. Ballard Partners' fee is \$25K a month.

The contract comes ahead of Florida governor Ron DeSantis' visit to Japan, South Korea, Israel and the UK. DeSantis on April 24 met with Japanese prime minister Fumio Kishida and praised US/Japan relations.

Brian Ballard, who headed Donald Trump's fundraising team in Florida, leads his firm's six-member Japanese team that includes Adrian Lukis, who was chief of staff for DeSantis, and Courtney Coppola, ex-deputy chief of staff for the Florida governor.



MISSISSIPPI ISSUES TOURISM MARKETING RFQ

Mississippi wants to hear qualifications from agencies that can promote the state as a tourism destination among prospective visitors living in Europe's top tourism-generating markets: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Scandinavia, Switzerland and The United Kingdom.

Scope of the work includes developing, coordinating and implementing a European marketing plan campaign and travel-related promotional plans. The contract resulting from this RFQ is set to run for two years, with the possibility of combined renewals for an additional 36 months (three years).

Proposals are due by 2 p.m. (CT) on Monday, May 1, and should be mailed or delivered to: Mississippi Development Authority; Attn: Tricia Shannon; 501 N West Street, Suite 419; Jackson, MS 39201.

Bidding agencies should include one original (with price proposals) and four hard copies of their proposals as well as one electronic version on a USB drive.

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



WSJ'S HALL JUMPS TO BRUNSWICK GROUP

Wall Street Journal veteran Glenn Hall will join Brunswick Group on April 24 as partner and executive editor. Based in New York, Hall will be responsible for global thought leadership.

At the WSJ, Hall was head of professional news and was responsible for Dow Jones Newswires, WSJ Pro and c-suite services.

Earlier, he was editor-in-chief of TheStreet, MarketWatch and worked at various editorial posts at Bloomberg during a ten-year run.

Neal Wolin, Brunswick CEO, called Hall a "highly experienced media professional, with deep expertise in creating and distributing compelling content across channels."



Glenn Hall

RUDER FINN REPS CHINA TECH PRODUCER

Ruder Finn has inked a one-year agreement to provide US PR support for China's Yangtze Memory Technologies Co., which was placed on the Commerce Dept.'s trade blacklist in December.



That Entity List designation requires US companies to get licenses from the Commerce Dept. before they can sell any equipment or service to YMTC.

Founded in Wuhan in 2016, YMTC ranks as China's top maker of advanced flash memory semiconductors.

China state-backed investors in March pumped an additional \$7B into YMTC.

Ruder Finn began work for YMTC on April 1.

The effort includes PR planning & media list development; earned and social media monitoring; thought leadership, content development, proactive media outreach; and issues preparedness & crisis counsel.

The PR firm bills YMTC on a "time-and-material basis." Fees are capped at \$516K for each six-month period.

Ruder Finn anticipates monthly expenses at less than \$70K, but expenses are capped at \$86K.

Senior VP Antonia Caamano and VP Tripti Gusain head RF's five-member YMTC team.

BCW RECRUITS GOLIN'S COLDAGELLI

BCW has named Matt Coldagelli EVP and leader of its corporate affairs practice in Chicago.



Matt Coldagelli

Joining the WPP unit from Interpublic's Golin brand, he will be responsible for building business in the Midwest and managing the office's corporate reputation, ESG, crisis and issues management, and media relations teams.

As Golin's executive director, corporate communications, Coldagelli led efforts in corporate reputation, narrative development, B2B PR, media relations, executive visibility and thought leadership for clients across the manufacturing, tech, agribusiness, professional services, and consumer goods sectors.

He also spent 14 years at Edelman and did a stint at MSL.

Coldagelli reports to Maxine Winer, EVP and Chicago market leader, who joined BCW in January.

TESLA DRIVES TO PIONEER PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Elon Musk's Tesla has hired Washington-based Pioneer Public Affairs to deal with issues related to the implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act, federal fleet electrification and battery supply chain issues.

Pioneer president Joe Britton handles the account. He is a 15-year veteran of Capitol Hill. He served as chief of staff to Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM), legislative director for Sen. Mark Udall (D-CO) and legislative assistant to Sen. Ben Nelson (D-NE).

Tesla also uses Cassidy & Assocs. for DC support. It paid Cassidy \$80K during the first-quarter for its work regarding vehicle electrification. Cassidy CEO Kai Anderson and COO Jordan Bernstein spearhead the firm's six-member Tesla team.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

SourceCode Communications picks up femtech brand **Elvie**. SourceCode previously worked with the company in 2018 on the US launch of Elvie Pump, the world's first silent, wearable breast pump. The agency will build an integrated communications plan, bolstered by creative campaign initiatives and designed to elevate thought leadership, accelerate customer awareness and drive business growth. Since their previous working engagement, Elvie has added such products to its lineup as Elvie Stride, a hands-free, hospital-grade performance electric breast pump; Elvie Curve and Elvie Catch.



5W Public Relations lands Indie Media Beauty Group, a platform that supports beauty entrepreneurs. 5WPR will execute a comprehensive public relations program to support IBMG's Beauty Independent Dealmaker Summit, a May 22 and 23 event for industry professionals to expand their network and learn about the complexities of dealmaking, and Adit Live, an invitation-only event on May 24 and 25 that supports beauty brands deemed ready for retail success. From 2017 to 2019, 5W represented the former Indie Beauty Expo show (produced by IBMG until March 2020).

Adfactors PR signs on as communications partner for **Volkswagen Passenger Cars India**, effective April 1. Adfactors will be tasked with providing media relations, corporate reputation, crisis communications, strategic communications, social impact and digital services for Volkswagen. The agency established its dedicated mobility practice in 2021 to offer public relations services across the automotive, aerospace, railways, roadways, maritime and inland waterways, and micro-mobility verticals.

Axia Public Relations is named US agency of record for **Garage Living**, a franchisor of luxury garage interior makeovers. The agency will handle Garage Living's U.S. media relations strategies, messaging and tactics. Founded in 2005, Garage Living has 38 franchise locations across North America and was named the number one home improvement franchise in the US by Franchise Rankings. The company offers products and services, including custom garage cabinets, flooring, wall organizers, and car lifts, as well as consulting, design, installation, and warranty services.

Marino adds **De Nigris Balsamic Vinegar** to its roster of consumer food brands. The agency is tasked with growing the U.S. presence of De Nigris through public relations, social media and advertising tactics. Marino has also expanded upon its work with Boston's Faneuil Hall Marketplace through the addition of a social media and advertising program to its currently public relations efforts.

Cognito provided media and press functions, social media and post-event content support for **Foxon Media's The Summit for Asset Management (TSAM) portfolio**, including TSAM New York, TSAM London, TSAM ESG New York, and TSAM ESG London. The summit, which took place April 19, focused on the future of ESG in sustainable finance and sustainability in the asset management industry.



2023 O'DWYER'S TECHNOLOGY RANKINGS

(continued from page 1)

Taking the #6 spot on our tech list, Highwire brought in \$34 million in net tech fees, for an overall jump of 16.3 percent. And a big part of that growth was due to healthcare. "In 2022, Highwire's healthcare practice grew by 46 percent, gaining seven new clients," Carrubba says.



Carol Carrubba

Highwire's digital capabilities played a big part in its success. The agency's digital practice "is an instrumental pillar in nearly all of our new business wins."

Carrubba says that prioritizing the agency's people was also a major focus. Highwire joined the Diversity Action Alliance in 2022, and "continues to commit itself to its people, culture and DEI, seeing notable growth in diversity."

In September, Highwire secured a strategic investment from Shamrock Capital, a Los Angeles-based investment firm specializing in media, entertainment, communications and related sectors, which will enable the agency to expand its healthcare practice through strategic additions, as well as further develop its digital marketing, data analytics, public affairs and corporate communications capabilities.

Clarity Confronts a Leaner Environment

"2022 was the year in which we made a decisive move towards becoming a truly integrated agency," said [Clarity](#) CEO Sami McCabe. "As marketing and communications budgets get leaner, our agility and ability to be more than just a comms partner really enabled us to rise to the challenge that the current environment presents."



Sami McCabe

Clarity, which came in at #14 with almost \$17 million in net fees, saw the past year as an opportunity "to expand into some categories we historically haven't focused on, including cleantech and Web3."

The agency also launched Atrium, a venture studio dedicated to investing in and developing new technologies, and brought in such new clients as Fin Capital, Bullpen Capital, Exclaimer, and Red Hat.

Client sectors that Clarity is bullish on include fintech, media and entertainment, broader B2B tech, as well as emerging spaces such as sustainability, privacy, web3 and AI.

SourceCode Sees Growth in Enterprise Tech

At [SourceCode](#), which brought in \$8.5 million in net fees (placing at #23), co-founder and managing partner Greg Mondshein "saw continued growth in enterprise technology platforms, with specific growth in HR, security, cloud infrastructure, financial services and fintech."

The firm officially launched its strategy and analytics practice, which was "designed to support deeper data driven storytelling and provide deeper insights into the business impact and general effectiveness of the PR campaigns we

manage for our clients."

It also signed such clients as Jenius Bank, Getty Images, Accredible, Appen, Databank and Homebase.

While maintaining a focus on its core services, SourceCode is also "focused heavily on expanding our service offerings." Some of those new offerings include executive brand management, internal comms, digital strategy, influencer strategies and a number of measurement and analytics products.



Greg Mondshein

Walker Sands Does More With Less

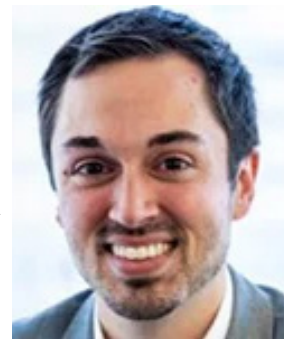
Cybersecurity, healthcare, cloud, and AI-enabled software and services all played a hand in powering #7 [Walker Sands](#) to a 7.1 percent revenue bump to \$30.5 million.

"But perhaps the biggest category winner in 2022 was supply chain and logistics," said agency president Andrew Cross.

"In terms of services," he says, "we continue to have considerable momentum in video, motion graphics and social media, as well as data and insights."

In January 2023, Walker Sands picked up KoMarketing, "which added depth to our capabilities in B2B demand generation, including paid digital advertising and SEO."

A major hurdle facing the firm, Cross says, is the need to do more with less. Companies are "looking for agency partners to be flexible, adaptable and strategic. In some cases, we saw technology clients who experienced multiple rounds of layoffs go out of their way to preserve agency budgets because they view our team as mission-critical."



Andrew Cross

Bospar Embodies All Things Digital

[Bospar](#), our #15 firm, was a big growth story in 2022, with fees up 49.9 percent to \$16.9 million. "We saw a lot of growth in sectors driven by the global shift to all-things-virtual," said Bospar principal Curtis Sparrer, "from HR, education and health technology to data infrastructure and security."

High-profile additions to Bospar's client roster included Croatian IT and telecommunications company which the agency landed coverage on platforms as the Today Show, and REAL Messenger, a social media app for real estate agents developed by a Bravo network alum.

And while the all-virtual agency didn't launch any offices, it did expand its reach to a total of 18 states from coast to coast.

Sparrer sees "huge opportunity to grow in areas where we're already strong, like health tech, and in emerging sectors like Web3."



Curtis Sparrer

RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN TECHNOLOGY

Firm	2022 Net Fees	Firm	2022 Net Fees
1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$224,795,000	40. Bliss Group, The, New York, NY	\$1,621,663
2. Hotwire, New York, NY	59,715,022	41. Rally Point Public Relations, New York, NY	1,599,093
3. Finn Partners, New York, NY	51,600,000	42. Firecracker PR, Brea, CA	1,500,000
4. ICR, New York, NY	37,723,092	43. CommCentric Solutions, Inc., Tampa, FL	1,416,120
5. Zeno Group, New York, NY	37,587,559	44. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	1,350,075
6. Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA	34,007,410	45. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	1,128,000
7. Walker Sands, Chicago, IL	30,502,958	46. Virgo PR, New York, NY	1,100,000
8. Ruder Finn Inc., New York, NY	29,230,000	47. 360PR+, Boston, MA	1,032,000
9. Hoffman Agency, The, San Jose, CA	26,344,000	48. Tier One Partners, Boston, MA	1,012,849
10. Wachsman, New York, NY	25,371,403	49. Feintuch Communications, New York, NY	1,000,894
11. PAN Communications, Boston, MA	24,869,766	50. Berk Communications, New York, NY	788,767
12. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	23,600,000	51. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	731,160
13. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	17,487,677	52. Havas Formula, New York, NY	704,047
14. Clarity, New York, NY	16,972,073	53. Superior PR, Chicago, IL	688,265
15. Bospar, San Francisco, CA	16,949,211	54. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	639,538
16. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	16,400,000	55. Milk & Honey PR, New York, NY	569,866
17. MikeWorldWide, New York, NY	16,138,813	56. Stanton Communications, Washington, DC	475,850
18. Matter Communications, Boston, MA	16,137,000	57. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	431,591
19. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	15,874,093	58. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC, Annapolis, MD	394,191
20. Merritt Group, McLean, VA	14,638,103	59. Comms. Strategy Group (CSG), Denver, CO	386,451
21. Hunter, New York, NY	14,600,000	60. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	360,000
22. Fahlgren Mortine (includes TURNER), Columbus, OH	10,075,150	61. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	352,694
23. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	8,785,000	62. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	285,978
24. SourceCode Communications, New York, NY	8,475,000	63. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	282,500
25. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	8,230,000	64. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	260,780
26. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	7,494,261	65. Red Thread PR, Philadelphia, PA	256,827
27. Crenshaw Communications, New York, NY	5,536,338	66. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	214,000
28. V2 Communications, Boston, MA	5,371,178	67. Slide Nine Agency, Columbus, OH	211,762
29. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	4,724,825	68. BoardroomPR, Fort Lauderdale, FL	200,000
30. Idea Grove, Dallas, TX	3,824,623	69. Hoyt Organization Inc., The, Torrance, CA	200,000
31. Treble PR, Austin, TX	3,586,231	70. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	155,749
32. Alloy, Atlanta, GA	3,467,326	71. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	141,000
33. Kiterocket, Phoenix, AZ	3,255,278	72. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	118,820
34. Karbo Communications, San Francisco, CA	3,155,705	73. Zapwater Communications, Inc., Chicago, IL	82,150
35. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	2,750,000	74. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	76,557
36. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	2,557,852	75. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	60,629
37. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	2,348,548	76. Lavidge, Phoenix, AZ	32,035
38. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	2,244,061	77. Judge Public Relations, Tampa, FL	23,075
39. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	1,753,739	78. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	17,781

BIDEN'S COS KLAIN TO O'MELVENY CRISIS UNIT

Ron Klain, who was president Biden's chief of staff until Feb. 8, has returned to O'Melveny, where he will head the law firm's strategic counseling and crisis management practice.



Ron Klain

He will advise top executives at healthcare, technology, transportation, infrastructure, private equity and finance companies about pressing geopolitical and reputation risks.

Klain was a partner at O'Melveny from 1999 to 2004.

Prior to joining the firm, he was assistant to president Clinton and chief of staff to VP Al Gore.

In 2009, Klain became an aide to president Obama and chief of staff to VP Biden. He joined Biden's

presidential campaign and was named White House chief by president-elect Biden in November 2020.

In the Biden White House, Klain oversaw the passage of the \$1.9T American Rescue Plan Act, Infrastructure and Jobs Act, Inflation Reduction Act and the confirmation of a record number of federal judges by a new president.

C STREET REPS DAVID'S BRIDAL CHAPTER 11

C Street Advisory Group handles David's Bridal as the wedding dress retailer files for its second bankruptcy in five years and fires more than 9,200 workers.

David's Bridal, which boasts of being the "only omni-channel bridal retailer of scale in the U.S." plans to keep its stores open as it searches for a buyer that can operate the business going forward.

CEO James Marcum said David's Bridal "has successfully modernized our marketing and customer interaction processes and driven our retail service levels to best in class."

The company is determined to focus on the future because it believes it plays "an important role in ensuring that every bride, no matter her budget, can have her perfect dress."

One in four of US brides buys her gown at David's Bridal. C Street Advisory Group's Jackie Rubin handles David's.

SNAP'S MITCHELL SHIFTS TO LEVI STRAUSS

Snap chief marketing officer Kenny Mitchell is heading to Levi Strauss & Co., where he will be senior VP and CMO, effective June 5.



Kenny Mitchell

At Snap, the parent company of Snapchat, Mitchell led the growth of the platform's global community, advertising base and developer partners. Before coming to Snap, he was vice president of brand content and engagement at McDonald's USA, and served as head of consumer engagement at Gatorade, a part of PepsiCo.

Reporting to Levi Strauss & Co. president Michelle Gass, Mitchell will be responsible for advancing the brand's consumer marketing strategies, cementing its position as a true lifestyle brand and growing market share.

NEWS OF FIRMS

TiCKER, a shareholder loyalty and engagement platform founded by [Lambert](#) chairman Jeff Lambert, closes on a \$5 million seed funding round, led by Baysore Advisory Group, Red Cedar Ventures, and Flipturn Ventures.

The TiCKER financing is earmarked for new talent and technology, including software and new product development, expanded partnerships with brokerages and other retail investor platforms, enhanced AI technology for improved direct-to-shareholder marketing tools, and sales and developer talent to keep pace with user and client growth. The platform, which completed its first pre-seed funding round in July 2021, says it had a record 2022, delivering a 119 percent increase in registered users and a 140 percent increase in total retail stock holdings connected on the TiCKER platform.

Hopscotch, a Paris-based communications group with 34 offices worldwide, sets up Hopscotch USA in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles office, which will be headed up by business director Laura Crompton. Crompton most recently served as business director at Hopscotch Sopexa London, and previously worked at Hopscotch Europe from 2012 to 2016. "Reinforcing our presence on the West Coast to deliver generalist, full-service PR was the next logical step," said Hopscotch Groupe co-founder Frédéric Bedin.

[The Lisbon International Advertising Festivals Group](#), which now includes the Lisbon AD, Lisbon Health and Lisbon PR awards, is accepting entries for its eighth edition from now until August 8. There is a special opening discount of 35 percent on all entries until May 8. The awards ceremony will take place on September 18.

LaVoieHealthScience launches its Emerging Health Convergence Practice, which focuses on clients in drug development and screening, digital therapeutics, customized treatments and intervention, decision support, prevention, and early disease detection. The new practice offers integrated investor and public relations strategy and execution as well as digital communications solutions designed to assist companies that are dedicated to innovating and thriving amid current market uncertainty. It will employ a different services model than the current LHS Health Commercial Practice which works with companies and brands that are preparing for commercial launch, FDA approval, and beyond. Companies well suited for The LHS Emerging Health Convergence Practice are pre-revenue, venture-backed, or small cap public companies in early clinical development up to Phase 2 or equivalent.

Precision Value & Health, which provides complementary, integrated and specialized capabilities across the commercialization continuum, acquires Makara Health, a UK-based international healthcare communications agency. Makara will become part of the Precision Value & Health team, working closely with PRECISIONscientia, an agency dedicated to delivering medical and scientific communications that interpret and translate the science of medicine. Founded in 2013, Makara has capabilities in learning and development, medical and patient education, PR and brand promotion. The acquisition is intended to expand Precision's European footprint and reinforce the company's market growth position.



PPHC POSTS 9.5% GROWTH IN '22

Public Policy Holding Company posted a 9.5 percent boost in revenues to \$108.8M in 2022, which was its first full year as a publicly traded company. Organic growth clocked in at 6.6 percent.



PPHC's operating units include Crossroads Strategies, Forbes Tate Partners, Seven Letter, O'Neill &

Associates, Alpine Group Partners, KP Public Affairs and MultiState Associates.

They rank as the biggest provider of federal contract lobbying services with combined fees of \$66.6M.

CEO Stewart Hall is bullish on growth, which will be partly driven more than \$4T in US government spending.

PPHC, which acquired MultiState on March 1, is also looking for acquisitions in the strategic communications, public affairs and state advocacy fronts.

Hall said his company is "well placed to act as a natural consolidator with a strong balance sheet."

PPHC trades on the London Stock Exchange.

DGA TAPS BLACKROCK'S VERTIZ

Dentons Global Advisors has recruited BlackRock's Alvaro Vertiz to lead its Mexico City offering and bolster growth in the Latin America and Caribbean region.



Alvaro Vertiz

Vertiz was COO and head of business strategy and strategic partnerships at BlackRock Mexico. He managed day-to-day operations and bolstered its ESG practice.

Prior to BlackRock, Vertiz was general counsel at Prudential Real Estate Investors Latin America, where he was responsible for all legal aspects of the company's investments in Chile and ongoing business in Brazil. He also held senior legal positions at GE Capital Real Estate

and GE Capital Solutions.

Vertiz also led the UN Global Compact Sustainable Investing group where he published a paper on sustainable investing best practices.

GATEWAY GUIDES SUNERGY'S SPAC DEAL

Gateway Group represents Sunergy Renewables, a Port Richey, FL provider of residential rooftop solar panels and energy storage gear, as it goes public via a merger with the ESGEN SPAC in a deal valued at \$475M.

Powered by more than 2,400 installations in Florida, Texas and Arkansas, Sunergy chalked up \$123M in 2022 revenues and delivered \$11M in EBITDA.

Tom Bridgewater, CEO and co-founder of Sunergy, said the combination with ESGEN is a "transformative step on our path to grow as a vertically integrated company." ESGEN is sponsored by Dallas-based infrastructure investment firm Energy Spectrum Partners, which has made more than \$4.5B in equity capital commitments during the past 25 years.

Gateway Group's Cody Slach and Tom Colton handle the investment community, while Zack Kadletz and Anna Rutter deal with the media regarding the SPAC transaction.



BGR GOV'T AFFAIRS REPS SOUTH KOREA

BGR Government Affairs has signed an eight-month \$225K agreement to represent the interests of South Korea's National Assembly in the US.

The pact calls for strategic guidance and outreach to US government officials, NGOs and key decision makers.

The work kicked off April 10, just ahead of South Korea president Yoon Suk Yeol's state visit to the US this week to mark the 70th anniversary of the US/South Korea security pact.

French president Emmanuel Macron is the only other leader who was invited by the Biden administration for a state dinner.

Yoon will address a joint session of Congress on April 27.

BGR's South Korea team includes Maya Seiden, international & trade practice co-head; I&T senior advisors Hunter Strupp and Mark Tavlarides; and PR principal Frank Ahrens.



LA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT NEEDS PR

The Central Basin Municipal Water District, which serves more than two million people living in cities in southeast Los Angeles County, wants to hire a firm for PR and media relations services.

It is looking for a PR partner to provide counsel on the full range of the District's activities, including strategic planning as well as responses to immediate issues that may arise during the normal course of operations, according to the RFQ.

The firm is expected to have strong national, state, local and international media contacts along with savvy in running social media campaigns.

CBMWD will issue a one-year contract, starting July. It will pay a monthly retainer from \$2K to \$6K.

The firm will work under the direction of CBMWD's general manager in order to achieve the District's PR, branding and media goals.

Proposals are due May 3 at the CBMWD's PlanetBids portal.

[Read the RFQ.](#)



TILLMAN TAKES DELTA CMO POST

Alicia Tillman, who was previously chief marketing officer at enterprise software company SAP, is coming on board at Delta Air Lines as CMO, effective in early June.

Tillman will join Delta from fintech company Capitolis, where she has most recently served as chief revenue officer after a stint as CMO.

Before coming to SAP, Tillman served for more than a decade at American Express, where she led marketing, public affairs and business services for the travel division.

In her new position, she will lead brand strategy for the airline, overseeing global marketing, creative services and community engagement teams. As a member of the Delta Leadership Committee, she will influence the airline's vision and strategy.



Alicia Tillman

COMMENTARY



We're No. 2! Hats off to Publicis Groupe CEO Arthur Sadoun for powering his French analytics/ad/PR firm past Omnicom Group to become the second largest communications combine.

Publicis chalked up a 10 percent increase in Q1 revenues to \$3.7B, following two years of double-digit growth. "Putting this performance in perspective, the Groupe has actually changed dimension in recent years, rising to the number 2 position in the industry in terms of revenue," said Sadoun in taking a bow.

Meanwhile, Omnicom CEO John Wren posted a measly one percent growth in the quarter to \$3.4M.

Both Sadoun and Wren project three percent to five percent organic growth for the year. But the swaggering Frenchman expects growth in the upper range of the projection. Touché!

For Sadoun, it's on to toppling Mark Read's WPP from the top of the heap.

You got to hand it to the PR gang at Fox News Media.

The department has mastered the art of snarkiness.

After agreeing to a last-minute record \$787.7M settlement to its defamation suit with Dominion Voting Systems, what other PR department would issue this flight from reality: "This settlement reflects Fox's continued commitment to the highest journalistic standards." Walter Cronkite is spinning in his grave.

I guess that newfound commitment to media standards includes dumping Tucker Carlson, its top-rated talking head, who knew that reports of a stolen election were bunk.

Dominion sued Fox for \$1.6B. I can't wait to see the PR statement that Fox puts out following its next legal battle.

Smartmatic is suing Fox for \$2.7B. A lawyer for that voting machine company said it won't accept any settlement smaller than \$787.7M and it wants an apology.

Fox is ready to defend itself at the trial that will probably begin in 2025. "As a report prepared by our financial expert shows, Smartmatic's damages claims are implausible, disconnected from reality, and on its face intended to chill First Amendment freedoms," the company said in a statement.

The trial will show what party is disconnected from reality.

It's too bad Florida's governor Ron DeSantis is dull as dishwater on the campaign trail.

Or that he thinks that he can ride a one-trick "war on corporate wokism" pony up Pennsylvania Ave and into the White House.

His war on wokism is not exactly a stirring call to battle.

A survey by [PA firm RokkSolutions](#) found that a little more than half (52 percent) say companies have gone overboard on the woke front.

While DeSantis wastes time obsessing over Mickey Mouse, he is being ridiculed 24/7 by his former mentor turned chief tormentor Donald Trump.

That's because Trump knows he's toast against his fellow

Florida Man. DeSantis clobbers Trump by a 52 percent to 38 percent margin in a head-to-head GOP primary battle, according to a *Wall Street Journal/Impact Research* poll.

Trump beats DeSantis by 48 percent to 24 percent if presidential wannabes Nikki Haley, Mike Pence, Chris Sununu, Chris Christie, Tim Scott and Glenn Youngkin are in the mix.

In a contest with president Joe Biden, Trump loses 48 percent to 45 percent, but DeSantis reverses those numbers and becomes the next president.

Biden plans to announce his re-election bid on April 26. Seventy-three percent of Americans don't want him to do so, according to an AP/NORC poll. Seventy percent of Americans don't want Trump to run either.

If DeSantis drops the bully and smarty pants know-it-all attitude, there's an opening for the Florida governor.

Congressman Jim Jordan's Republican clown car suffered a major PR misfire on April 17 as the "victims of violent crime in Manhattan" focused media attention on the hypocrisy of the GOP, which is in the pocket of the gun lobby.

If the GOP really wants to reduce the number of homicides in the Big Apple, it would shut down the "iron pipeline" that transports guns from red states to here.

Though more than 90 percent of homicides in New York involve a gun, Jordan's committee took testimony from only witnesses of two stabbings.

Mark House, principal of Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy, said the failure of Congress to act on gun control is why he has to administer lockdown drills at his school.

Jordan brought the House Judiciary Committee to the media capital of the world in an attempt to smear Manhattan district attorney Alvin Bragg for his "pro-crime, anti-victim agenda."

The media saw through that charade (e.g., murders are down 14 percent in Manhattan) and covered the hearing for what it was: a bid to boost Donald Trump.

Poor pitiful Donald, who loves to play the role of the victim, faces 34 felony counts of cooking the books in the scheme to pay hush money to Stormy Daniels. Bad, bad Alvin filed those charges against Trump.

Jordan should think twice about staging his next publicity stunt in New York. New York's press corps has exposed Jordan as the phony that he really is.

Thank you for your service.... Dan Edelman on April 20 was posthumously inducted as a distinguished member of the psychological operations regiment at the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center at School at Fort Bragg.

In his recommendation letter, Col. (R) Curtis Boyd wrote that [Edelman's service "during a time of war"](#) proved invaluable to not only his comrades in arms but also formed a critical and credible basis for not only the military profession of psychological operations but also set the foundation for PR professionals worldwide."

Dan's PSYOP service was the perfect training ground for launching what has become [the world's No. 1 PR firm](#).

—Kevin McCauley