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L.A.'S HEALTH DEPT. LOOKS FOR PR PARTNERS

Los Angeles County's Dept. of Health Services seeks to hire one or more PR firms for strategic communications and community engagement campaigns.

DHS is leading L.A.'s response to the COVID-19 crisis. It is tasked with "communicating public health orders, guidelines and services to every County resident, regardless of their social-economic status, zip code of residence, preferred language, age, gender, identity, sexual orientation, or racial and ethnic background," according to its RFP.



It wants a partner to bolster its reputation as a leader in public health and handle day-to-day activities and emerging needs.

DHS also is looking for a partner to conduct outreach and education through a network of traditional, ethnic media and local community groups.

Responses are due May 5. They go to PATSMA@dhs.lacounty.gov.

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

MBO BAILS OUT OF LLYC

MBO & Co, a French private equity firm, has sold its 30 percent stake in LLYC to the firm's partners.

MBO & Co came on as an LLYC shareholder in 2015, and since then the agency has combined organic development with acquisitions, which it says have consolidated its leading position in the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking market.

In this period, LLYC has acquired Impossible Tellers (Spain, 2015), S/A Comunicaçao (Brazil, 2015), EDF (USA, 2015), Arenalia (Spain, 2018), Diplolicy (Spain, 2020) and Factor C (Chile, 2020). With an 18 percent average growth rate, its revenues went from €20.7 million (\$25 million) in 2014 to €44.3 million (\$53.5 million) in 2020.

"We are very satisfied with the partnership we entered into with LLYC five years ago and we now leave having met our investment objectives," said MBO & Co. Richard Broche.

LLYC founder and chairman José Antonio Llorente called MBO & Co "the ideal travelling companion at a time of disruption for the sector and for our clients."

LLYC has 16 offices in the Americas, Spain and Portugal, and offers its services through affiliates in several Latin American markets.



OMNICOM'S PR UNIT SINKS 4.9% IN Q1

Omnicom's PR unit suffered a 4.9 percent drop in Q1 revenues to \$317.5M. It posted 3.5 percent in negative organic growth.

The FleishmanHillard, Portland, Mercury, Cone, Marina Maher Communications and Ketchum operation generated 9.3 percent of Omnicom's \$3.4B revenues.



Omnicom CEO John Wren blamed the COVID-19 crisis for the ad/PR giant's 1.8 percent negative organic growth.

Noting that the effects of the pandemic appear to be moderating in several of Omnicom's markets, Wren anticipates positive revenue growth beginning in Q2 and for the full year.

Omnicom reported a 10.8 percent boost in Q1 profit to \$465.4M on a 0.6 percent rise in revenues.

JAMAICA TOURISM BOOKS LOU HAMMOND

[Lou Hammond Group](#) has won the Jamaica Tourist Board following a competitive pitch, replacing [Finn Partners](#), which decided not to compete for the business.

JTB director Donovan White selected LHG due to its "in-depth marketing expertise, respected reputation and celebrated media relationships." Lou Hammond's firm will position Jamaica as a "four-season destination of choice" for Americans.

She told O'Dwyer's that president Terry Gallagher is in the process of putting together a team to tell the story of Jamaica.

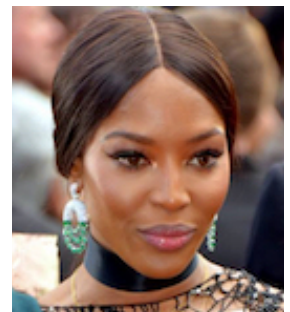
LHG ranks No. 8 on [O'Dwyer's rankings of travel PR firms](#), chalking up \$7.5M in 2020 fee income.

NAOMI CAMPBELL HIRES BALLARD PARTNERS

Naomi Campbell, the British model and actor, has hired Ballard Partners for guidance regarding the US visa process.

The 50-year-old has faced problems obtaining work visas in the US due to a history of violence against associates, staffers and others from 1998 to 2009.

She pleaded guilty in New York for heaving a BlackBerry at a housekeeper, resulting in Campbell being sentenced to pay for medical services, attend an anger management class and perform community service. She also was sentenced in the UK and Italy for assault.



Naomi Campbell

Brian Ballard, a top fundraiser for former president Trump, is advising Campbell.

NEW BEDFORD SEEKS TO HOOK VISITORS

New Bedford, a vibrant city of 100K with a rich maritime history, wants a tourism and destination firm to help create a five-year marketing and tourism strategic plan and one-year implementation effort to attract visitors to the southeastern Massachusetts city.



Developed by Quakers, the city became a “beacon of tolerance, center for the abolitionist movement, major stop on the Underground Railroad, first free home of Frederick Douglass, and the largest whaling port in the world—making New Bedford one of the planet’s wealthiest

cities,” according to its RFP.

New Bedford believes its beaches, history, museums, parks, arts and culture have “serious potential as a tourism destination for New England, and seeks to activate its assets to attract visitors from near and far to the city.”

Proposals are due May 7 at City of New Bedford; Purchasing Dept.; 133 William Street, Room 208; New Bedford, MA 02740. Proposers must email purchasing@newbedford-ma.gov to confirm the city has received the RFP response.

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

NEGATIVE SENTIMENT HITS MARKETING

The overwhelmingly negative tone that has pervaded news coverage since the early months of 2020 is, arguably, at least partially responsible for driving the historic surge of clicks and online content consumption that has occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. But those sentiments have had the opposite effect on marketing campaigns, according to study by conversion intelligence software company Unbounce.

Unbounce’s study, which analyzed millions of visits to websites across 16 industry categories, found that the frequent occurrence of negative emotional language appeared to coincide with lower conversions across multiple industries.

In the e-commerce category, the study found that conversions went down as emotional language with a negative connotation—such as sadness or fear, for example—went up.

Sites specializing in fitness and nutrition witnessed much higher conversion rates when the language on those pages conjures feelings of joy, suggesting language that conjures negative feelings—such as disgust—could be harming these business’ conversion rates.

Unbounce’s data revealed that fitness and nutrition sites with positive and encouraging language correlated with much higher conversions, suggesting drill-instructor-style language could be hurting these business’ page performance.

But the Unbounce study also discovered that, occasionally, positivity appears to result in a decrease in conversions. When it comes to education-based sites, for example, the study found that positive language—words related to joy and anticipation, for example—actually seemed to

have a neutral or negative influence on whether visitors convert, suggesting an exception to the rule that being positive or upbeat is always a must for marketing campaigns.

Unbounce’s “Conversion Benchmark Report” used artificial intelligence to analyze the outcomes of 264 million visits to 44,000 landing pages between November 2019 and November 2020.



ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

The Pollack Group is working with Vivendi and its subsidiary Keysquare on the launch of Kasparovchess.com, former World Chess Champion Garry Kasparov’s interactive community and content platform. The site will feature such content as documentaries, chess lessons, matches and a MasterClass with Kasparov. “The platform is designed to make chess accessible and life-changing in a way that only Garry Kasparov can,” said The Pollack Group president Stefan Pollack, president of The Pollack Group.



Garry Kasparov

Jacobstahl has been selected to represent Project Accessible Oral Health and Berlin-Chemie. PAOH is a

global public-private partnership that assembles and connects dental and medical professionals, corporations, organizations, policymakers, educators, people with disabilities, caregivers and other stakeholders in pursuit of equal access for people with disabilities to oral healthcare. For pharmaceutical company Berlin-Chemie, the agency will support the company’s business in Eastern Europe and the CIS region. Both accounts will be led by Jacobstahl co-founders Sandra Stahl and Jeremy Jacob.

Affect signs up Slync.io, Intersection and TrustSwap as clients. The agency will provide strategic media relations efforts to position Slync.io as a leader in global supply chain solutions and services through ongoing thought leadership and content creation. Affect’s strategic program for smart cities media and technology company Intersection focuses on content creation, media relations and thought leadership. For digital asset ecosystem TrustSwap, Affect will execute media relations, content development and proactive storytelling to raise the company’s position in the cryptocurrency space.

Confidant serves Banza, which makes chickpea pasta, pizza, mac & cheese, and rice. The agency is tasked with building awareness of the brand and bringing its mission to life, focusing on the health and environmental benefits of chickpeas. Launched in 2014 by brothers Brian and Scott Rudolph, Banza has expanded to over 15,000 stores nationwide. The company says it is both the number-one and fastest-growing brand in the category.



Clarity adds several tech brands to its roster. The agency will be providing a mix of media relations, content and social media marketing, and influencer relations for transaction guarantee platform Vesta; React, an adtech platform that connects brands to sports fans; commercial drone technology provider AgEagle; Klas, an Ireland-based builder of edge intelligence hardware and software; and free global social platform ChekMarc.

Rachel Harrison Communications is working with The Grand Adirondack Hotel as it prepares for its opening this summer in Lake Placid, NY. The agency has also signed as communication partner with three Barrière group properties in France. It will lead PR for Hôtel Barrière Le Fouquet’s in Paris and for Le Majestic and Le Gray d’Albion in Cannes. The agency will also be leading PR efforts for Party by Numbers, a new user-friendly digital platform.

TO SPEAK OUT OR NOT TO SPEAK OUT?

Let's say you're the chief communications officer of Atlanta, GA-headquartered Home Depot. Your CEO calls, apoplectic. "Delta, Coca-Cola and Major League Baseball, for God's sakes, have just come out condemning the new Georgia voting law. We've got to say something. What should we say?"

So, what do you suggest Home Depot say?



Fraser Seitel

Your answer should transcend the current knee-jerk consensus view abroad in both the land and the public relations community that "companies have a fundamental responsibility to speak out on social issues."

To which I reply, "bull feathers."

What your company says—or doesn't say—about a social issue depends on a number of factors. Every time a corporation or organization is asked to take a stand on a social issue, it

must first answer these three key questions.

First, should we respond to social issues?

This is an easy one: the answer is "yes."

Companies have every right to and should speak out on issues that concern them, particularly those related directly to their businesses; banks, for example, addressing financial policy, or pharmaceutical companies addressing drug pricing legislation.

In the old days, pioneering CEOs like Chase's David Rockefeller and Citibank's Walter Wriston made their voices heard on policy and social issues. Starbucks' Howard Schultz and Apple's Tim Cook continue that tradition.

So, there's no question that it is, indeed, the province of companies to speak out. The harder question is ...

What specific issues should we confront or avoid?

The answer to this question depends on a company's primary objectives and most important publics.

If by taking a stand, the organization risks alienating a key constituency, it should think twice before sticking its neck out.

Biting the hand that feeds you never makes sense.

That's what Starbucks' Schultz found out when he tried to solve the nation's racial divide by mandating baristas to write "Race Together" on cups to spark discussions of racial inequality. The backlash to Starbucks' embarrassing campaign was withering and instantaneous.

Which brings us to the new Georgia voting law.

The law has good and bad parts. The "good" parts tighten both voter ID and absentee ballot criteria, which were eased in the Presidential election due to COVID-19. The "bad" parts unnecessarily expand power of a Republican-controlled State Election Board to intervene in county elections.

But in no way does the new law merit the "Jim Crow in the 21st century" label that President Biden pinned on it.

So why, then, would the CEO of Atlanta's Delta Airlines reverse course on the voting law and issue a statement "to make it crystal clear that the final bill is unacceptable?"

The answer lies in examining the third key question ...

What major pressures do we face in confronting this issue?

In today's hyper-partisan political climate, where companies are increasingly—and wrongly—urged to stick their beak into every conceivable area of social commentary, the pressure on them to "get involved" is unavoidable. Like it or not, they have to say something.

The downside in succumbing to such pressure is you dig yourself into a corner from which there's no escape.

What then does a company say, in light of enormous pressure to speak out, if it's not as "committed" as Delta, Coke or MLB, but desires to respond credibly without alienating half its constituency by taking an extreme position?

Well, if you're Home Depot, the world's largest home improvement retailer with 400,000-plus employees, you take a step back, recognize there's nothing you can say to please everyone, consider each of the unattractive alternatives and state:

"We believe that all elections should be accessible, fair and secure and support broad-based voter participation. We'll continue to work to ensure our associates, both in Georgia and across the country, have the information and resources to vote." Period.

Which is exactly the right thing to say.

Fraser P. Seitel has been a communications consultant, author and teacher for 40 years. He's author of the Pearson text "The Practice of Public Relations," now in its 14th edition, and co-author of "Rethinking Reputation" and "Idea Wise." He may be reached directly at yusake@aol.com.

PR PIONEER AARON CUSHMAN DIES AT 96

Aaron Cushman, who founded Chicago-based agency Aaron D. Cushman and Associates, died on April 17. He was 96.

After a stint as publicity director for the Chicago Lake Front Fair, Cushman founded the agency in 1952. At first, he mainly represented local clients in the entertainment field, and worked with such celebrities as the Three Stooges, Milton Berle, Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Sammy Davis Jr., Gene Autry, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong and Sarah Vaughan.

The agency was at one point the 10th largest independent PR firm in the U.S., with additional offices in New York, Los Angeles, St. Louis and Omaha.

The Cushman agency also handled tourism marketing for a number of foreign governments. Notably, Cushman's firm was agency of record for the Chicago White Sox from 1959 to 1975. Cushman later became co-owner of the team and joined its board of directors.

Former journalist Thomas Amberg joined Aaron D. Cushman and Associates in 1983 and purchased it fourteen years later, rechristening it Cushman/Amberg Communications. Cushman/Amberg acquired Chuck Werle and Associates in 2000 as well as healthcare marketing and PR shop HealthInfo Direct in 2006. The agency folded in 2012.

After retiring from his agency, Cushman became an author, penning "A Passion for Winning: Fifty Years of Promoting Legendary People and Products" in 2004 and "Public Relations Impacts the World," in 2016.

Cushman was also formerly president of the Publicity Club of Chicago, a member of the Public Relations Society of America's executive committee, president of the Chicago Chapter of the Counselors Academy, president of Public Relations Organization International and a member of the Society of American Travel Writers' board of directors.

He is preceded in death by his wife Doris as well as one grandchild. He is survived by children Gary Cushman, Amy Wilton (Tom Lichamer) and Pamela Cushman (Randy Miller); as well as nine grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.



Aaron Cushman

KENTUCKY SEEKS TOURISM PR

Eastern Kentucky PRIDE, which was formed in 1997 to improve water quality in the 42-county region, wants a PR firm to promote “The Kentucky Wildlands” branding initiative.



PRIDE wants to evolve its mission from cleaning up solid waste program and advancing environmental education to spurring economic development through tourism.

Its PR partner will “tell a positive story of our region and showcase the vast natural beauty, adventure and cultural opportunities in The Kentucky Wildlands,” according to the RFP.

PRIDE understands the journey to become “one of America’s next great outdoor destinations” will be a marathon process. It hopes that in five to 10 years, there will be “national stories that talk about once again, eastern Kentucky’s economy is emerging from its natural resources. Only this time it is not from coal, it is a result of tourism.”

PRIDE expects to issue a contract running from a year to 18 months.

Proposals are due May 3. They go to: Tammie Nazario; President/CEO; Eastern Kentucky PRIDE, Inc.; The Center for Rural Development; 2292 South Highway 27, Suite 230; Somerset, KY 42501

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

B-M ALUM SMITH IS COS FOR SEN. BENNET

Jess Smith, who was managing director of operations in Burson-Marsteller’s public affairs & crisis group, is now chief of staff for Colorado Senator Michael Bennet.



Jess Smith

Most recently, Smith was chief operating officer at J Street, where she managed a more than 70-person staff dedicated to finding a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Earlier, Smith worked in the Obama administration as director of external affairs at FEMA and senior spokesperson at the Justice Dept.

She also was communications director for Virginia Senator Jim Webb.

Bennet expects Smith’s extensive experience in management, communications and public service will benefit his team and the people of Colorado.

FTI BLASTS OFF WITH VIRGIN GALACTIC

FTI Government Affairs is riding with Richard Branson’s Virgin Galactic.

The [FTI Consulting](#) unit represents Virgin Galactic on federal funding and policies to support suborbital science research and aeronautics projects, including hypersonic flight.

Virgin Galactic rolled out its VSS Imagine, its first SpaceShip III class vehicle, on March 30. After ground testing, it is slated for test glides this summer at Spaceport America, the commercial facility in New Mexico.

The company views the Spaceship III class as the linchpin in its goal of 400 flights a year from Spaceport America.

Virgin Galactic is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. It trades at 21.19 and has ranged from \$14.21 to \$62.80 during the past 52 weeks.

BOVIM JOINS ALBERTSONS FROM WHIRLPOOL

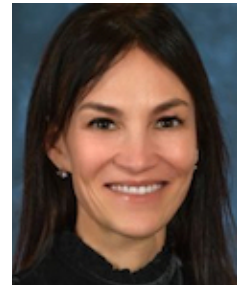
Sarah Bovim has signed on at Albertsons Cos. as senior VP-government affairs & public policy.

She joins the supermarket chain giant after a 15-year spin at Whirlpool, where she exited as VP-government relations & international trade policy.

Earlier, Bovim was at the Office of the US Trade Representative as deputy assistant for industry and market access.

Albertsons chalked up \$54B in revenues and \$994.4M in net income during its most recent nine-month fiscal period.

Albertsons on April 21 unveiled its “science-based targets initiative” designed to meet emissions goals established by the United Nations’ Paris Agreement.



Sarah Bovim

“We are passionate about making a meaningful difference in our neighborhoods and planet and are committed to continuing to reduce our climate impacts,” Albertsons CEO Vivek Sankaran said in announcing the program.

KEF MEDIA CELEBRATES 35TH ANNIVERSARY

KEF Media celebrates its 35th anniversary on May 1. The firm has worked in the marketing, food and beverage, travel, health, pharma, sports, consumer products and retail categories. KEF also carved out a niche advising on and executing brand activations for Olympic sponsors.

“I got the Olympic bug when I went to Sarajevo in what was then Yugoslavia in 1984 on behalf of a client,” said KEF chief Kevin Foley. “Since then we’ve worked with clients in Calgary, Barcelona, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, Athens, Torino, Beijing, Vancouver, London, Sochi, Rio, and PyeongChang.”

Since Japan is not allowing foreigners into the country for the 2021 Summer Games because of COVID, KEF Media has come up with a number of ways for sponsors to get their messages to U.S. audiences.



EVENTS

The National Press Club marks World Press Freedom Day on May 3. The event will highlight the cases of journalists Maria Ressa, Austin Tice and Emilio Gutierrez-Soto, who are all past recipients of the club’s John Aubuchon Award — its highest honor for press freedom. [Registration](#) for the 10 a.m. event is free, but donations are encouraged.

The Institute for Public Relations is presenting a free webinar on April 28 focusing on the role research, analysis and evaluation play in communications. Cognito chief insights officer Mark Weiner will present findings from the “Communicator’s Guide to Research, Analysis and Evaluation,” which was recently released by the IPR’s Measurement Commission. To register for the 1 p.m. event, [click here](#).

The Museum of Public Relations will hold its second annual Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month observance on May 12 at a free 6 p.m. virtual event. The discussion will look at how communicators can help combat the rise of anti-Asian hate and violence in the U.S. Sponsorship opportunities for the event are still available. To find out more, or to register, [click here](#).

RATIONAL 360 HELPS KENYA CEMENT US TIES

Rational 360 has signed a \$600K pact to provide strategic communications services to Kenya.

The one-year agreement calls for Rational 360 to handle “relationship building” with US government and non-government officials, plus communications counsel and management for the African state.



Kenya, which has a population of 55M people, has been battling the Shabab terror group, an Al Qaeda east African affiliate.

A Shabab attack on a Kenyan military base in January 2020 killed three Americans.

Defense secretary Lloyd Austin last month ordered an investigation into the attack and potential security shortfalls.

Rational 360 managing partner Patrick Dorton, who was Arthur Andersen’s chief spokesperson during its implosion and a member of Bill Clinton’s communications shop, heads the Kenyan team.

He’s assisted by Joe Lockhart, who was Clinton’s press secretary, Facebook’s VP-global communications and the NFL’s executive VP-corporate communications; and Nicolas Fitzgerald, a veteran of Target and Gibraltar Associates.

BRUNSWICK TRIES TO DERAIL CN DEAL

Brunswick Group represents Canadian National Railway, which offered \$30B to acquire Kansas City Southern, in an effort to thwart a \$25B takeover deal engineered by Canadian Pacific Railway last month.

Montreal-based CN calls its offer “far superior” than KCS’s existing agreement with CP because it offers better financial value, a more complementary strategic fit, greater choice and efficiencies for customers and enhanced benefits for employees and local communities.



CP promoted its deal as being “transformative for North America,” by creating the first US, Mexico and Canada railroad.

A CN tie-up with KCS also would create a three-country railroad system.

Brunswick has Jonathan Doorley and Rebecca Kral working on the CN railroad in the US, while Longview Communications & PA’s Martin Cej handles Canadian press.

PRIME POLICY GROUP PUSHES PR ECONDEV

Prime Policy Group represents Puerto Rico’s Senate as it pushes for economic development issues in Washington.

COVID-19 walloped the US Commonwealth’s economy in 2020 as it contracted by 4.4 percent, according to a report by Estudios Tecnicos, a consulting firm.



The island’s GDP is expected to slip 0.9 percent this year and grow by 1.5 percent in 2022 and 2 percent in 2023.

Estudios Tecnicos projects Puerto Rico’s modest economic growth prospects will spur an exodus from the island, reducing its population from 3.2M to 3M by 2025.

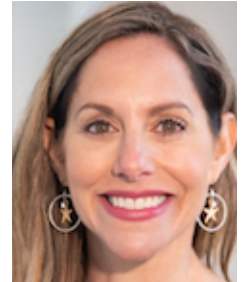
Prime Policy Group chairman Charlie Black, who has worked in the presidential campaigns of presidents Reagan, Bush I and Bush II, spearheads his firm’s Puerto Rico’s lobbying team.

Prime Policy Group is part of BCW, a unit of WPP.

ON THE MOVE

Clyde Group tabs Lisa Josephy to lead its healthcare practice and brings on **Dominic Hawkins** as VP president. Josephy joins the agency from GCI Health, where she served as group vice president, leading campaigns for companies including Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, Novo Nordisk, Amgen, Celgene, and AbbVie. Hawkins joins Clyde Group from Deloitte, where he led external communications for the company’s priority regions and advised executive visibility on topics such as diversity, equity and inclusion, life sciences, and healthcare.

Kellen hires **Diana Gardner** as VP, marketing and communications. Gardner was previously VP of client development at IPM Advancement. At Kellen, she will help lead the firm’s communications practice for its healthcare vertical, leveraging her background supporting organizations such as the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, U.S. Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Commerce.



Diana Gardner

Vans appoints **Kristin Harrer** as global chief marketing officer. Harrer comes to Vans from Dollar Shave Club, where she was CMO. She has also held executive marketing positions at Samsung, Nike and Wieden + Kennedy. At Vans, Harrer will lead the company’s global marketing and creative teams, with a focus on empowering creative self-expression in youth culture across action sports, art, music and street culture.

History Factory recruits **Jill Clancy** as business development director. Clancy comes to History Factory from Dale Carnegie Training, where she was client experience specialist. In her new post, she will collaborate with the History Factory team to spearhead development of clients in a broad spectrum of sectors.

LRXD appoints **Kimberly Bates** chief marketing officer and chief futurist. Bates comes to LRXD from Faith Popcorn’s BrainReserve, where she was Chief Futurist. She has also served as head of strategic planning at INNOCEAN USA. In her new position, Bates is tasked with developing LRXD’s industry presence and thought leadership content as well as working with the agency’s teams and clients.

Allen & Gerritsen promotes **Jason Lewis** to senior vice president of public relations and practice lead for both Boston and Philadelphia. Lewis previously led A&G’s Philadelphia public relations practice as vice president. In his new role, he continues to lead the department’s growth across PR, social media, brand reputation, and executive counsel, as well as overseeing all agency external communications.



Jason Lewis

Gladstone Place Partners names **Felipe Ucrós** partner. Ucrós has been with Gladstone since before its 2017 launch, and has worked on financial communications and investor relations assignments for companies including AT&T, CVS Health, Nomad Foods, Renault Groupe, Marriott International and Thomson Reuters. Before coming to Gladstone, he was at Brunswick Group.

COMMENTARY



New York Mayor Bill de Blasio announced April 21 plans for the largest-ever \$30M marketing campaign to drive tourism to the Big Apple this year.

It's part of the "NYC Reawakens" push from the NYC & Co. destination marketing organization.

The city's tourism sector is far from woke.

NYC & Co. anticipates the city will attract 36.4M visitors this year, a far cry from the 66.6M tourists in 2019.

The 2021 estimate is an improvement over the 22.3M visitors who braved the city during pandemic 2020.

NYC won't top its 2019 record-breaking tourism year until 2024, when it hopes 69.3M people will drop by.

The fact that there's a need for a \$30M campaign to woo people to visit the greatest city on Earth is a measure of the massive negative impact that COVID-19 has had on the travel sector.

Hats off to WPP for its game-changing commitment, which it unveiled on Earth Day, to achieve net zero carbon emissions across its supply chain. The pledge by WPP, the largest buyer of advertising space, covers emissions generated by its TV, print, radio and online media partners.

CEO Mark Read said since WPP spends more than \$60B in media a year, it has an opportunity to make a difference on the environmental front.

"By including emissions from the placement of advertising in our net zero commitment—a first for our industry—we aim to raise the bar for the whole sector," he said.

Read said WPP is eager to advise clients on how to spread science-based reduction targets across their supply chains.

Just joshing... Missouri Republican Senator Josh Hawley, who was last seen giving a thumbs up to the Capitol Hill rioters on Jan. 6, has re-emerged on the national stage to cast the sole vote against the Asian-American hate crimes bill.

Hawley "explained" his vote in a tweet, saying the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act would "turn the federal government into the speech police and gives the government sweeping authority to decide what counts as offensive speech and then monitor it."

Hawley isn't a free speech warrior. He's a rank opportunist with an eye toward wooing Trump supporters in 2024 by out-trumping Ted, Marco and the gang of GOP presidential wannabes.

Hawaii Democratic Senator Mazie Hirono, who sponsored the bill, said the vote sent "a powerful message of solidarity to the AAPI Community, that the US Senate rejects anti-Asian hate."

Hawley sent a much different message: my political future takes precedence over curbing violence and discrimination against Asian-Americans.

Two directors are better than one at GE... General Electric CEO Larry Culp faces an interesting shareholder proposal at the May 4 virtual annual meeting.

Shareholder Martin Harangozo is hopping mad that GE's stock "has lost nearly all its valuation in the last two decades" while the S&P 500 about tripled in value.

Here's Harangozo's beef: *"The dividend is all but gone and less than when Mr. Jack Welch became CEO in 1981. Promised benefits to retirees have been broken. Rolling heads around as Mr. John Flannery replacing Mr. Jeffrey Immelt, or Mr. Lawrence Culp Jr. replacing Flannery has had no substantial positive effect in restoring the company valuation or growing it to the broader market."*

At the very least, Harangozo hopes GE's stock can keep up with the general stock market's performance.

His idea is to give shareholders more of a choice in directors. He wants GE to put forth at least two candidates for every available open board seat.

Culp and company shoot down the resolution, claiming GE employs "a rigorous and thorough process for selecting the candidates" and that each board member has skills that complement each other.

The company claims board teamwork is the key to success. Harangozo suggests it is time to break up the team.

Freshman Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene could use some PR counsel to smooth some of her rougher edges in the aftermath of her "White People's Caucus."

The Georgia Republican took flak for her involvement in the aborted launch of the "America First Caucus," which was supposed to advocate for "Anglo-Saxon political traditions."

After Republican leader Kevin McCarthy trashed "nativist dog whistles," Greene distanced herself from the caucus, saying it was nothing more than a proposal from an outside group that she hadn't bothered to read.

She then trained her sights on the media: "The scum and liars in the media are calling me a racist by taking something out of context," said Greene in a statement. "It's more proof so-called journalists lie and create false narratives."

She's confident millions of Americans stand with her and that "the hyenas in the media are terrified" of that.

Those hyenas may get the last laugh.

Dame Anna Wintour, global chief content officer at Condé Nast since 2020 and *Vogue* editor since 1988, told the *Financial Times* that "it is wrong to think of Condé Nast as an elitist company: we're a company that believes in quality and the best storytelling."

Wintour admitted that the "lines around the block" at reopened Gucci and Dior stores in London are good news for Condé Nast. "People have been locked out for a long time and they are going to go out and want to spend," said the 71-year-old Wintour.

Shoppers at Dior's New Bond Street store can snap up a women's paisley long jacket for 7,100 pounds (roughly \$10,000), a pair of men's hightop sneakers for 1,050 pounds (\$1,463) and a water bottle/holder/strap for 620 pounds (\$864).

Though Wintour denies Condé Nast is an elite company, she certainly has her eye on the super-elite crowd pounding on Dior's door.

—Kevin McCauley