

Kevin McCauley
Editor-in-Chief

O'Dwyer's

The Inside News of PR & Marketing Communications



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

April 27, 2020 Vol. 53 No. 17

IPG Q1 NET REVENUES SLIDE 1.6%

Interpublic reported a 1.6 percent slide in net revenues to \$2B as CEO Michael Roth dealt with the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

IPG registered net organic growth of 0.3 percent, a performance hampered by the 5.3 percent decline in the Asia-Pacific region, which was hard hit by COVID-19. North America organic growth was up 0.8 percent, continental Europe jumped 1.2 percent while the UK dipped 1.8 percent.



Michael Roth

He said while 95 percent of IPG's staff is working from home, "we continue to serve our clients around the globe, generate great ideas across all marketing disciplines and channels, and move the business forward."

IPG's constituency management group, which includes PR units such as Weber Shandwick, Golin, DeVries Global, pmk/bnc, Rogers & Cowan PMK, ReviveHealth and Current Global, reported revenues of \$307.6M. That performance was up 3.0 percent and 3.7 percent organically.

Andy Polansky, who heads the CMG operation, said the PR units posted low single-digit growth on both a reported and organic basis. He cited Weber, Golin, healthcare and consumer goods sectors as solid performers.

Roth said IPG's solid results (\$4.7M net income vs. \$8M year ago loss) "cannot be indicative of the remainder of the year."

DDB'S FLANNERY MOVES TO EDELMAN

Edelman has named Jon Flannery, executive creative director at DDB, chief creative officer of its Chicago outpost.

The 25-year marketing veteran also worked at FCB in the executive creative director and chief creative director jobs in Chicago and Toronto.

He led accounts like Capital One at DDB and Kmart ("Ship My Pants") and Canadian Down Syndrome Society ("Down Syndrome Answers") at FCB.



Jon Flannery

At Edelman, Flannery reports to Kevin Cook, president of the Chicago office. Cook credited Flannery with "creating campaigns for global brands that spark movements and resonate socially."

He noted during the time of the COVID-19 crisis "global crisis consumers have specific expectations of brands and how they communicate: they want them to solve, not sell."

QORVIS REPS SAUDI RIGHTS PANEL

The Human Rights Commission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has hired Qorvis Communications for a nearly \$700K one-year contract to handle strategic communications, media training, editorial services and polling in the United States.

Qorvis, which has long been Saudi Arabia's go-to firm since days after the 9/11 attacks, will receive a \$57,500 monthly retainer, exclusive of expenses, under the one-year contract that began March 1. The move comes as bipartisan support grows in Congress to oppose aid to Saudi Arabia due to its poor human rights record.

Congress Jim McGovern (D-MA), who chairs the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, and Nadine Maenza, vice-chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, wrote an op-ed piece in The Hill on March 25, calling on president Trump to press Saudi Arabia for the release of blogger Raif Badawi, who has been jailed since 2014.

McGovern and Maenza called Badawi's detention a further stain on the Kingdom's already-abysmal human rights record.

Established in 2005, the Commission says it was formed "to promote and protect human rights in accordance with international standards."

Publicis Groupe owns Qorvis, which is the French firm's PA and public diplomacy unit.



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

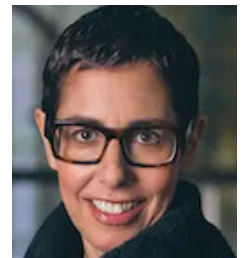
EX-NYC & CO. CMO REISS TO BRUNSWICK UNIT

Jane Reiss, who was chief marketing officer at NYC & Co., has joined MerchantCantos, the creative shop of Brunswick Group that deals with brand/investor communications, employee engagement and sustainability.

Created by former New York mayor Mike Bloomberg, NYC & Co. is the marketing and promotional arm of the city. Reiss was responsible for business development, strategic partnerships and recruitment for NYC & Co while it achieved its target of attracting more than 50M annual visitors a year ahead of schedule.

Reiss joins MerchantCantos from Grey New York, where she was chief brand officer working for clients such as Disney, TJ Maxx, Darden and Nestle.

As North America managing partner, Reiss reports to MerchantCantos CEO Matt Shepherd-Smith.

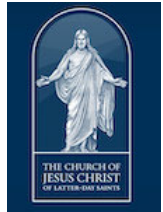


Jane Reiss

MORMONS TAP APCO FOR ‘FREEDOM BILL’

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has hired APCO Worldwide to advocate for the “Fairness for All Act” introduced by Utah Republican Congressman Chris Stewart.

He views the bill as a measure that harmonizes religious freedom and LGBTQ rights.



If passed, it would amend the Civil Rights Act to protect religious freedom in the workplace and the rights of LGBT people while preserving First Amendment rights, according to the Congressman.

The Mormon Church supports the Act because it endorses a “balanced approach that promotes greater fairness for all” by supporting religious freedom and protecting LGBTQ people from discrimination.

The ACLU takes a different point of view. “The bill facilitates the Trump’s administration’s ongoing efforts to give a green light to those who would turn LGBTQ people away from jobs, healthcare, housing, even taxpayer-funded programs, simply because of who they are,” Ian Thompson of the ACLU’s DC office, said in a statement.

By singling out LGBTQ people for lesser protection under the Civil Rights Act, it signals they are less worthy of protection, according to Thompson.

APCO has former Congressmen Don Bonker (D-WA) and Cliff Stearns (R-FL) working the bill. The account is a return engagement for APCO, which worked for the LDS Church a decade ago.

SEALASKA SEEKS TO RE-BRAND

Sealaska, an Alaska Native corporation primarily specializing in timber, land management and seafood, is soliciting proposals from agencies that can develop and implement a new visual identity and redesigned corporate brand.

Juneau- and Seattle, WA-based Sealaska was formed in 1971 as a result of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The for-profit’s primary economic drivers are natural resources, land management, environmental services and seafood. It maintains companies throughout the U.S. West Coast.

Sealaska is looking for an agency that can help adjust its visual identity in an effort to reflect the corporate brand’s recent repositioning to embrace the protection of natural resources in Southeast Alaska.

Scope of the work includes creating a new visual identity for Sealaska and a comprehensive accompanying brand guide; conducting research on stakeholders and other key audiences; testing new brand concepts with a core group of stakeholders; developing a digital library for logo files and visual assets;

working with Sealaska’s communications team and communications agency of record; and advising on the rollout of the new brand over the course of a year following the re-brand.

The work may potentially include Sealaska subsidiary business brands as well.

Proposals are due by 5 p.m. (AKST) on May 18.

All bids should be sent electronically to Brand and Digital Asset Manager Tasha Heumann, tasha.heumann@sealaska.com.

Questions should be directed to Tasha Heumann, tasha.heumann@sealaska.com, or 907/586-9136.

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

NEWS OF FIRMS

Tickr, a marketing and media analytics platform, has introduced the COVID-19 Brand Risk Monitor, a crisis communications management solution to help agencies track the impact of the pandemic. It tracks media coverage and social conversations for client brands in real-time through a unified interface, letting agencies track brands, people, peers and competitors, products, categories and keyword terms on a global level, across multiple industries. It also provides streamlined agency-client reporting, with dashboards that show the most recent, up-to-date data and information.

RooneyPartners has launched The RP HealthCast, a weekly podcast series devoted to healthcare issues and medical innovation.

Hosted by agency managing director Jeffrey Freedman, the podcast will feature interviews with health industry CEOs, medical key opinion leaders, research scientists and journalists reporting on healthcare-related topics. The RP HealthCast is available on all podcast service providers, including Alexa.



VeeKast, a White Plains, NY-based video production company, has launched VirtEventPro, a professional virtual live event production service. The company says that its service differs from such apps as Zoom or Webex because of its ability to handle live events beyond the scope of general meetings. It allows users to stream a professionally produced live event to their website or to such platforms as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Hill+Knowlton Strategies has launched Better Impact, the umbrella for the firm’s global citizenship and sustainability offer. Better Impact’s efforts will draw on H+K’s sustainability, philanthropy; diversity and inclusion; disaster relief and humanitarian aid; community engagement; and environmental, sustainability and corporate governance expertise. It will allow businesses to benchmark their progress in these areas through such offerings as the Better Impact scorecard, which launched in 2017 and measures companies’ progress against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Profile Advisors handled the launch of ClearList, a digital trading platform geared toward helping “level the playing field for investors.” The platform will provide the investor bases of its private-company clients with access to a network of global investors, and is set to deploy a system for accredited retail investors to invest side-by-side with the largest investors in the world. Its ClearPrice feature will use proprietary technology “to continuously calculate a fair and transparent price where buyers and sellers can transact.” ClearList is majority-owned by Global Trading Systems, which will provide it with technology and market expertise.

Nonprofit venture **Leading Harvest**, has been launched by a group of farmers, conservationists, landowners, managers and investors to develop a universal benchmark of agricultural sustainability. With input from growers and agricultural experts, the organization says its “ground-up approach” sets the stage for a benchmark that can be adopted across the agriculture industry. To ensure that required outcomes are being met, Leading Harvest requires that independent, third-party experts audit producer performance in all aspects of the standard. Leading Harvest is launching with over two million farmland acres committed to being enrolled.

HANDLING ACTIVISM'S GROWING INFLUENCE

People place high expectations on the private sector to take a lead in addressing the most pressing social, environmental and political issues facing the world today. Changing demographics, a declining trust in government, the ubiquity of social media and a pervasive desire to see change across a spectrum of social and environmental issues has given birth to a democratization of activism, and this has become one of the top challenges facing corporate brands today.



PR pros find themselves increasingly aware of activist culture's growing influence, yet still often unprepared to manage unexpected events and controversial issues when they arise, according to the latest edition of an annual report released by the USC Annen-

berg Center for Public Relations.

The USC Annenberg's 2020 Global Communication Report, which focused on activist groups and their impact on the communicators sector, found that nearly two-thirds of PR pros (63 percent) believe activists are more influential today than they were five years ago, and about the same number (64 percent) think activists will become even more influential in the coming years.

That said, activists seem to be the least of companies' or clients' worries when it comes to formulating positions on social issues. According to PR pros, 60 percent admit they rarely involve activist groups when creating a new initiative for their company or clients. In fact, the communicators surveyed said any decisions regarding what social issues companies address is influenced primarily by the views of senior executives or the companies' or clients' customers. PR pros ranked activists dead last for influence on the formulation of corporate policy, trailing the media, government officials and even influencers.

While only about a quarter of PR professionals themselves identify as activists, an overwhelming majority (84 percent) believe corporations should take a public stand on societal issues directly related to their business, and an additional 28 percent said they think corporations should take a public stand on issues unrelated to their business as well.

A majority of communicators (30 percent) cited diversity/inclusion as an issue their company or clients would most likely proactively take a public stand on, followed by climate change (26 percent), healthcare (12 percent), education (11 percent) and gender equality (six percent). Homelessness, LGBTQ+ rights, reproductive rights, gun control and immigration bottomed out the list.

According to PR pros, the potential long-term impact on a company or brand's reputation was cited most often as the single primary reason for responding to an activist attack (69 percent), followed by potential legal liability (40 percent), the scope of media interest (35 percent), the validity of the accusation (32 percent) and the threat the attack has on company values (23 percent).

A majority of communicators surveyed (37 percent) said they believe their company or clients are moderately well-prepared to respond to an attack from an activist organization. About a third (32 percent) believe they're not at all or only slightly prepared to deal with such attacks. About the

same number (31 percent) consider themselves "a great deal" or "considerably" prepared.

Nearly half (49 percent) said they consider the potential reactions from activist groups "a great deal" or "considerably" when planning an initiative or new policy for their company or clients.

Fewer than a third of PR pros (29 percent) reported that their organization has policies in place regarding employee activism. About the same number (31 percent) said their company supports employees' involvement in activist groups.

More than half of the PR pros surveyed (56 percent) said they believe activism is more effective at raising awareness of social issues than in influencing the political process (21 percent) or creating long-lasting change (12 percent). In fact, fewer than half of communicators polled (44 percent) are convinced that activists are particularly effective at achieving any real change whatsoever.

Data for USC Annenberg's 2020 Global Communications Report was collected through a live online survey of nearly 840 PR professionals conducted between January 21 and February 24.

QUINSTREET SEEKS PR FIRM

QuinStreet, operator of online marketplaces that match searchers with brands, wants to hire a PR firm with a track record in helping clients in the personal finance and/or insurance sectors.

It is looking for digital marketing and media relations support for its fiscal 2021 communications program set to launch on July 1.

The desired firm will promote QuinStreet's CardRatings.com, CarInsurance.com, HSH.com, Insurance.com, insure.com, MoneyRates.com and MyBankTracker.com properties.

QuinStreet's PR partner will increase its visibility and credibility in the consumer and trade press; build seasonal campaigns in line with branding, SEO strategy and editorial calendars; pitch its experts/spokespeople in key markets such as Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Rochester and Boston; and handle potential crisis situations.

The monthly budget is in the \$5K to \$10K range. Responses are due May 8 at pr@quinstreet.com.

Click [here](#) for the RFP.



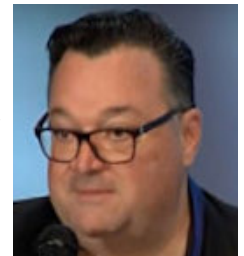
EX-MSL PRES. TSOKANOS DIES OF COVID-19

Jim Tsokanos, former president of MSL Group, died April 17 from COVID-19. He spent a dozen years at the now Public Groupe unit before exiting in 2012.

Earlier, he was VP-group director at Ketchum and account supervisor at Cohn & Wolfe.

Tsokanos is remembered as a "family man, industry maverick, philanthropist, and trusted friend to all those he held close," on a gofundme page established to raise scholarship funds for the education of his children, Sophia and Jim.

Most recently, Tsokanos was running Nu Nexus consultancy.



Jim Tsokanos

JWI MAKES DC CONNECTIONS FOR QATAR

Jefferson Waterman International is working a \$360K one-year political consulting contract with Qatar to help it woo influencers and movers & shakers in Washington.

Representing the public diplomacy office in Qatar's DC embassy, JWI is to meet and then introduce influential and knowledgeable persons to Qatar officials while identifying and analyzing issues of importance. JWI is the firm of Charles Waterman, a veteran of the Central Intelligence Agency. He served as vice-chairman of the National Intelligence Council and National Intelligence Officer for the Middle East, where he was posted in Kuwait, Cairo, Beirut, Amman and Jeddah.

Since 2017, Qatar has faced an economic and political blockade from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt and Jordan for its alleged cozy ties with Iran and support for terrorist groups.

JWI's contract precludes it from advising, representing and receiving compensation from any sovereign state in the Middle East/Northern Africa region for a year after wrapping up its business with Qatar.



**JEFFERSON WATERMAN
INTERNATIONAL**

MMGY HILLS BALFOUR BOOSTS TRAVEL BIZ

MMGY Hills Balfour rolled out the #TogetherInTravel marketing campaign on behalf of World Travel & Tourism Council. Launched April 20, the push is aimed at galvanizing the global travel and tourism community.

The PR firm is donating the time it spends working on the campaign, which encourages travelers from around the world to share the hashtag #TogetherInTravel to stimulate a conversation across social platforms.

The effort also includes a video and a microsite, TogetherInTravel.com, which will host the video as well as user-generated content and stories.

The goal is to fill social media with stories, images and videos to keep the spirit of travel truly alive. "Our message is that everyone can still stay inspired with future travel ideas and bookings," said WTTC CEO Gloria Guevara.

BOYLE BOUNCES TO BBB

Jim Boyle, who founded Boyle Public Affairs with his wife, Kellie Boyle, in 2011, has been named chief marketing & communications officer at BBB National Programs, the branch of the Better Business Bureau that runs national programs on dispute resolution, advertising review, privacy and industry self-regulation.



Jim Boyle

At BBB National Programs, he reports to Eric Reicin, who came on board as president and CEO in November.

Boyle will remain an advisor at Boyle Public Affairs, with Kellie Boyle taking on the role of principal.

Before starting up the firm, he was vice president of brand marketing and corporate communications at Sallie Mae. He has served as senior vice president, corporate communications at Discovery Inc.; director, corporate communications at CNBC; and a press secretary in the U.S. House of Representatives.

JOURNOS OVERWORKED, OVEREXTENDED

The media ecosystem in 2020 has continued positioning journalism as a line of work wrought with challenges. According to findings in [the latest "State of the News Media" report](#) issued by PR software giant Cision, journalists today find themselves increasingly strapped for resources while facing increased expectations to do more.

Cision's annual report, which surveys members of the press around the world to uncover the trends, challenges and perceptions facing the media world, found that a majority of journalists surveyed (22 percent) consider staffing and resources to be the biggest challenges the industry has faced in the last 12 months.

This was followed by social networks and influencers bypassing traditional media (18 percent), the ongoing conversation surrounding "fake news" (16 percent), attacks on freedom of the press (13 percent), the blurring lines between editorial and advertising (13 percent), adapting to advances in technology (eight percent) and threats to journalists' safety or security (one percent).

While the press finds their resources are at an all-time low, their workload has gone up at the same time: more than a third of journalists (36 percent) said they now plan their stories more frequently ahead of time than ever before. Almost half (42 percent) now plan their stories anywhere from a week to a month in advance. By comparison, last year the same number (42 percent) said they work on stories no more than a day ahead.

These challenges present a unique opportunity for PR professionals to improve the relationships they have with journalists. More than a third (36 percent) of journalists said they consider press releases to be a brand's most useful source, and nearly three-quarter (72 percent) counted press releases and news announcements among the sort of content they want to receive.

When asked to list the number-one thing PR pros could do to help journalists, more than a third of respondents (37 percent) said "understand my target audience and what they find relevant." Similarly, nearly half (45 percent) said press releases are more effective when they contain information relevant to that journalist's target audience. Journalists also overwhelmingly said that Monday is the best day of the week to receive pitches (followed by Tuesday).

On a positive note, the journalists surveyed noted that they believe distrust in the media is decreasing overall. While more than half of journalists (59 percent) still believe the public has lost trust in the media over the last year, that figure actually reveals a continuing decrease from previous iterations of the annual Cision report (63 percent in 2019, 71 percent in 2018 and 91 percent in 2017).

Journalists also believe fake news and attacks on freedom of the press have been less of a challenge this year compared to years prior.

Cision's "2020 Global State of the Media Report" surveyed more than 3,200 journalists from 15 countries working for print, broadcast and online-only outlets. The survey was conducted between January and February 20.



CONGRESS WANTS SOCIAL MEDIA WARNINGS

Congressman Jim Banks introduced a bill that mandates warning labels on social media from countries deemed a national security risk to the US.

The Indiana Republican worries that Americans locked down due to the COVID-19 pandemic are spending more time online at sites such as TikTok, which is owned by China's ByteDance. The US Army has banned soldiers from downloading that app, because under China's National Intelligence Act of 2017, the country's Communist party has the right to harvest TikTok data stored on servers in China.



Jim Banks

His proposed warning label reads: "Warning: [Name of Covered Foreign Software] is developed by [Name of Developer of Covered Foreign Software], which [is controlled by a company that] [is organized under the laws of]/[conducts its principal operations in]/[is organized under the laws of]

and conducts its principal operations in] [Name of Covered Country]. Please acknowledge by selecting the "accept" or "decline" button below if you wish to proceed."

The Banks ban covers sites from China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, Syria, Sudan and Venezuela.

NONPROFIT SEEKS PRO BONO PR SUPPORT

Partnership for Food Safety Education, a consumer food safety education non-profit dedicated to raising awareness on issues related to safe food handling, is seeking pro bono public relations and creative services support.

The nonprofit is looking for a U.S.-based public relations or creative services firm that can lend support for the second-annual World Food Safety Day, to be held on June 7.

Partnership for Food Safety Education needs an agency to get word out about this effort, provide digital support for the foodsafetyday.org site, edit submitted stories, provide video editing services and offer any other creative advice/ideas.

The effort calls for an estimated 30 hours of work.

Proposals are due by 10 p.m. (EST) on May 4 and should be emailed to info@fightbac.org. All applying agencies should enclose a one-page proposal and an optional one-page capabilities statement. All submissions should contain the phrase "World Food Safety Day" in the email subject line.

Questions should be directed to Partnership for Food Safety Education executive director Shelley Feist, sfeist@fightbac.org or 202/220-0651.

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

H&K WRAPS UP DS SMITH

Hill+Knowlton Strategies has aced a competitive pitch for DS Smith, London-based \$7.5B global packaging giant.

The WPP unit will provide strategic communications, creative, media relations and PA support from its London office with support from Brussels and New York.

Greg Dawson, director of corporate affairs at DS Smith, said H+K shares his company's "passion for sustainability and innovation" and is the right partner for "redefining packaging for a changing world."

DS Smith has been consolidating its agency roster following the 2019 appointment of Shona Inglis as head of media relations & campaigns.

MEDIA MANEUVERS

NBCUniversal has sold off 5.2 million shares of stock in home exercise equipment and media company Peloton for \$177.9 million, about half of its stake in the business. The sale comes as NBCUniversal seeks cash and liquidity during the COVID-19 crisis. The company also has significant debt obligations following its parent company Comcast's \$39 billion deal for European pay-TV service Sky in 2018, and the expenses incurred in the launch of its Peacock streaming service. Last year, NBCUniversal shed its \$500 million stake in camera and social media company Snap.

Tribune Publishing has instituted mandatory three-week furloughs for non-union employees earning between \$40,000 and \$67,000 a year. On April 9, the company announced pay cuts of up to 10 percent for non-union employees with annual salaries above \$67,000. In a memo, Tribune CEO Terry Jimenez said the company may later implement additional furloughs or extend the length of time for positions "disproportionately affected by the slowdown."

Executive Media Global, an extension of Australian publishing house Executive Media, has come up with an initiative to help niche print magazines find a way around declines in newsstand and bookstore sales. MagBox will send out a bundle of five publications (including their own magazines as well as those from other publishers) every two months for prices ranging from \$44.99 for one box to \$39.99 per box for a one-year subscription.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

The Consultancy PR has been selected as agency of record for Outer, a Santa Monica, CA-based company that manufactures outdoor furniture with an emphasis on sustainability. The agency will work to bring awareness to the brand through a communications program incorporating public relations, thought leadership and product launches. Outer says that each chair of the Outer Sofa, its key product, is made using approximately 100 plastic bottles, resulting in a totally recyclable product that is made from 30 percent recycled materials.



Imagine PR has been appointed North American PR representative for Maisons Pariente, a new collection of boutique five-star hotels in France. Imagine will work to secure US and Canadian print and online consumer press coverage for Maisons Pariente in sectors including travel, lifestyle, design, architecture, food & wine, history, art and wellness. The agency will also focus on creating awareness of the hotel group, gaining interest from prospective guests and key opinion leaders, and developing consumer brand partnerships.

Global Results Communications has been named agency of record for Numa, a virtual answering service powered by artificial intelligence. GRC will produce and launch multifaceted media campaigns to increase Numa's market presence and generate coverage in top-tier news and trade publications. The agency's first task is to support Numa founders Joel Grossman and Tasso Roumeliotis as they temporarily waive all fees, as well as contract and credit card requirements, to support businesses impacted by the coronavirus crisis.



COMMENTARY

What part of injecting disinfectant into one's lungs, didn't you understand, Kayleigh?

Less than three weeks on the job, the credibility of White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany is shot. Where have you gone, Stephanie Grisham? Though Grisham rarely interacted with journalists, at least she didn't embarrass herself.

McEnany charged the media for taking president Trump's lunatic suggestion about ultraviolet lights and disinfectants as magical cures for COVID-19 out of context.

She released a statement on April 24. It said:

"President Trump has repeatedly said that Americans should consult with medical doctors regarding coronavirus treatment, a point that he emphasized again during yesterday's briefing.



Kayleigh McEnany

"Leave it to the media to irresponsibly take President Trump out of context and run with negative headlines."

As New York and Washington sportscaster Warner Wolf used to say, "Let's Go to the Videotape."

The cheerleader-in-chief said during his April 23 COVID-19 ramblings:

"So, supposing we hit the body with a tremendous—whether it's ultraviolet or just very powerful light—and I think you said that hasn't been checked, but you're going to test it," Trump said. "And then I said, supposing you brought the light inside the body, which you can do either through the skin or in some other way, and I think you said you're going to test that too. It sounds interesting.

"Then I see the disinfectant, where it knocks it out in a minute. One minute. And is there a way we can do something like that, by injection inside or almost a cleaning," Trump continued. "Because you see it gets in the lungs and it does a tremendous number on the lungs. So it would be interesting to check that."

McEnany might as well pack it in. She's toast among those who live in the real world.

Sheltering-in-place has provided a PR boost to the tech sector, according to a poll from APCO Worldwide.

The survey found that eight-in-10 Americans are using at least one more technology during the pandemic. Each of the dozen tech and media companies surveyed enjoyed a boost in their reputation. Amazon and Netflix showed the biggest improvement at 34 percent each, while Twitter (12 percent) and TikTok (11 percent) saw the lowest increases.

The best news for the tech/media companies: respondents promise to use their services more often once the pandemic goes away.

PRSA chair T. Garland Stansell urged communicators to step up during this "stressful, disconcerting and disorienting time" of COVID-19, a period when some bad actors are purposefully spreading disinformation, pushing hidden agendas and spinning the truth.

In his April 24 open letter to communicators, Stansell

followed up on this month's decision by UN Secretary-General António Guterres to launch an initiative to combat "a dangerous epidemic of misinformation."

Stansell urged PR people to respond to Guterres' call by serving "as valued and authoritative information resources. We do this not only through our own expertise but also as trusted guides to finding and delivering relevant and reliable information."

Once the pandemic dissipates, Stansell believes there will be a great need for steadying and supportive voices.

He called on PR pros "to reinvigorate our sense of purpose, and to reaffirm our mission to serve as fierce guardians of and advocates for truthful, transparent communication."

Stansell is CCO at Children's of Alabama pediatric health system in Birmingham.

Trump needs to take a page from the book of the last great presidential communicator, Bill Clinton.

He needs to stop talking about reopening the economy and focus on people.

The president should talk about the suffering of millions of Americans who have lost loved ones, jobs and hope of a better future. He must repeat over and over Clinton's trademark, "I feel your pain" and appear to mean it.

Governor Clinton debuted the "I feel your pain" mantra after an AIDS activist heckled him during a 1992 campaign stop in New York.

The Clinton/pain remark became somewhat of a cliché over the years and was a juicy and frequent target for "Saturday Night Live."

But it worked. Clinton was the empathizer-in-chief with an uncanny ability to connect one-on-one with people and assure them that he understood and cared about their plights.

Trump should give it a whirl. As he has said about his quack COVID-19 treatments, it couldn't hurt to try.

Vote as if your life depends on it because it does. Fear the second wave of COVID-19 is what Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Robert Redfield told the *Washington Post* on April 21.

"There's a possibility that the assault of the virus on our nation next winter will actually be even more difficult than the one we just went through," said Redfield. He warned of a simultaneous flu epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic.

Trump doesn't do science. He would rather listen to his gut than the counsel of scientists like Redfield.

The Trump gamebook has always called for denying inconvenient science such as the data that supported the threat posed by global warming. The former gambling casino owner would rather spin the wheel on public health and reopen the country because that is the linchpin of his re-election hopes.

That's why science-supporter Joe Biden is the only hope for the nation to fend off or combat COVID-19 II.

After all, Trump's gambling casinos all went belly-up.

And no need to thank me, Joe. You can use, "Vote as if your life depends on it because it does" as a campaign slogan.

—Kevin McCauley