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TACOMA NEEDS PR FOR COVID OUTREACH

The Tacoma-Pierce County Dept. of Health has a \$600K budget to hire PR firms for COVID-19 outreach to Black, Hispanic, Native American and Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander communities that are more likely than white people to contract the virus due to health inequities.



That HOPI demographic, which comprises 1.6 percent of the county's population, accounts for 6 percent of overall cases.

The Dept. is looking for firms or groups able to develop targeted culturally grounded messaging to inform the various communities about available COVID-19 resources

The desired partners will have the "capacity and credibility to engage the community in ways that promote healing and resilience while getting important information to them."

Since Pierce County has high rates of COVID-19, it wants to quickly hire communicators to help reduce disease transmission.

The Dept. will issue contracts ranging from \$10K to \$100K for work that begins Sept. 1.

Because the effort is funded by the federal CARES Act, the outreach must be completed by Dec. 30.

Responses are due Aug. 19. They go to: Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department; 3629 South D Street; Attn: Procurement Office; Tacoma, WA 98418-6813

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

MASTERCARD'S LEPORE TO MODERNA

John Lepore, who led policy and advocacy at Mastercard, has joined Moderna, the biotech company that signed a \$1.5B deal to sell 100M doses of its COVID-19 vaccine to the US government as part of the Operation Warp Speed effort. As senior VP-government engagement, Lepore reports to CEO Stéphane Bancel.



John Lepore

Before coming to Mastercard, Lepore was head of global government affairs at RELX (ReedElsevier LexisNexis) Group and VP-government affairs for GlaxoSmithKline's emerging markets unit.

Bancel said Lepore's "experience in developing corporate strategy for vaccines at GSK along with his unique blend of government affairs, public policy, commercial and legal experience"

will be important as Moderna transitions into a global commercial-stage enterprise.

MCKINSEY, BCG REPORT SAUDI CASH HAUL

McKinsey & Company and Boston Consulting Group on Aug. 10 reported to the Justice Dept. a combined \$7.6M in fees that they received three years ago from Saudi Aramco to further Saudi Arabia's diplomatic standing around the world.

McKinsey hauled in \$4.7M on June 1, 2017 for its work on behalf of

the Saudi Council of Economic and Development Affairs to establish a strategic partnership office. The entity was to help manage and improve Saudi Arabia's relationships with numerous countries throughout the world.



According to the filing, McKinsey also conducted market testing of various sectors of the Saudi economy; analyzed and explored investment opportunities in Saudi Arabia; commissioned a third-party public opinion survey of American attitudes towards Saudi Arabia; prepared Saudi officials for engagement with certain US private and public sector counterparts in Saudi Arabia; and assisted in arranging and supporting meetings in the US between Saudi officials and think tanks and/or corporations in various sectors including finance and technology.

The work ended June 30, 2016.

BCG received \$2.8M on Jan. 17, 2017 for helping to develop a 21st Century Saudi-US Partnership, and assess reactions and aspirations of key U.S. stakeholders to such a partnership. As part of this engagement, BCG was tasked with exploring the potential for a strengthened Saudi-U.S. partnership along social and economic dimensions.

That project ended June 30, 2016.

BAYER TAPS MOORE FOR US PHARMA PR

Germany's Bayer has brought on Lori Moore as VP & head of pharmaceutical communications in the US.

Moore moves to Bayer from Deloitte, where she most recently served as managing director. Prior to joining Deloitte, she held communications leadership positions at Novo Nordisk and Sanofi.

At Bayer, Moore will be responsible for developing and executing external and internal communication strategies for the company's pharmaceutical portfolio in the U.S.

"Her impressive knowledge and expertise will help us advance our communications about the company's pharmaceutical business here in this country," said Ray Kerins, Bayer senior VP of corporate affairs.



Lori Moore

CONSUMERS SEEK CONTROL OF HEALTH DATA

As healthcare providers increasingly depend on personal health data to fuel such services as COVID trackers, consumers are concerned about how much control they have over that data, according to a new study from W2O.



Seven out of 10 respondents to the survey (70 percent) believe that health data collected about them should either not be shared or shared only with their permission.

There were several reasons why so many people were hesitant to share their health data. Almost half (47 percent) said that they were simply skeptical about data privacy in general. Nearly as many (45 percent) said they feared insurance services could use the information collected to deny services or charge more, and 44 percent thought that by sharing their health data, they would be opening the door to making other personal information accessible.

Older consumers tended to have the most reservations about health data security. For example, fewer than 30 percent of Baby Boomers (ages 55 to 75) said they would be willing to download a COVID-19 contact tracing application, compared with about 65 percent for Millennials (ages 25 to 39) and Generation Z (ages 18 to 24).

Several factors can raise the level of confidence consumers have in how the security of their personal health data is handled. The ability to opt out was cited by 44 percent as a measure that would make them more comfortable with sharing their data. Information about how the data will be used or analyzed was also important (cited by 41 percent of respondents), as was proof that the data shared would be anonymous (40 percent).

"The COVID-19 pandemic and interventions such as contact tracing and related technology applications have created an urgent need for companies to provide greater clarity around how health data is used," said Dan Linton, Global Data Privacy Officer for W2O.

To see the full study, [click here](#).

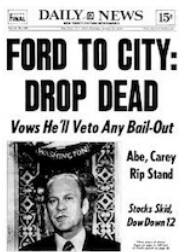
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS SHUTS NEWSROOM

Tribune Publishing is shutting down the *New York Daily News* newsroom, one of several newsroom closures that the company announced Aug. 12.

The Daily News will continue to publish, but Tribune says that it has no immediate plans to find a new physical location for the paper. The newsrooms of the *Morning Call* in Allentown, PA; the *Orlando Sentinel*; the *Carroll County Times* in Westminster, MD; and the *Capital Gazette* in Annapolis were also among those being shuttered.

While the Daily News once had the largest circulation of any newspaper in the U.S., it had fallen to 18th on the list by fall 2019. It was sold to Tribune Publishing (then known as Tronc) for \$1 by Mort Zuckerman in 2017, and has since seen major staff cutbacks.

Alden Global Capital, the hedge fund that owns over 30 percent of Tribune's publicly traded stock, has a history of aggressive cost-cutting measures at the papers it owns through its MediaNews Group chain.



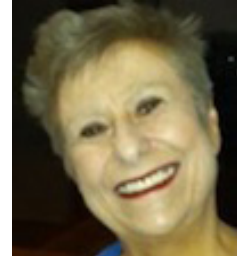
COVID COULD CHANGE COMMUNICATIONS

The silver lining in COVID-19 could be bold innovation in marketing.

And that's exactly what has been happening in the usually staid setting of Boston.

Boston Magazine reports that the Boston University student-run AdLab and PR Lab launched the totally cool F*ck It Won't Cut It (@fckitwontcutit) campaign. And, with the brass' approval.

The objective of the campaign is to catapult students returning to campus out of their generational indifference to the contagiousness of COVID-19. Like all good marketing memes, it mirrors the mindset and language of the target demographic. Gen Z seems to think in expletives.



Jane Genova

Those students are not alone in smirking about the COVID-19 threat.

After all, as [MessageMedia](#) observes, most people have become over-the-top weary of doing what it supposedly takes to prevent the virus from infecting them. Another lockdown? Likely the government won't be able to impose that again.

But these students aren't "most people." [BusinessInsider](#) documents that across the U.S. young adults are the group most affected by the pandemic.

Of course, this innovation is global news in the advertising and public relations media. There is bound to be plenty of chatter.

But the bottom line, as in all marketing, is: Will there be results and will those meet expectations?

It's tough to envision that members of Gen Z will compulsively maintain social distancing, wear masks and maintain hand hygiene. There are more important concerns at that phase of a long life. It could be that students at BU will become infected at the same rate as students on other campuses which didn't run such an amazing campaign.

But the even bigger issue is if BU will really reopen and if it does will it have to shut down very quickly? A number of schools at Harvard went on record early in the game to say they would conduct the fall semester's instruction totally remotely.

Meanwhile, what the traditional players in marketing and public relations should notice is the creativity of the students who came up with the approach. That could be the evolving model in mainstream marketing. BU is very buttoned-down.

Marketing and public relations firms not able to stretch into another dimension like that could find themselves bottom-feeders. [Hubspot](#) details the challenges marketers are struggling with globally. Well-known is the [research](#) from sources such as Spencer Stuart indicating the shrinking tenure for chief marketing officers. However, it's nothing new that the marketing department is one of the most vulnerable spots in an organization.

The students at the BU AdLab and PRLab might have quite a future ahead of them. BU is trademarking @fckitwontcutit. Great to have that on a resume.

Jane Genova (<http://janegenova.com>) provides strategy and ghostwriting for all mediums, all formats, all issues – janegenova374@gmail.com.

B2B FINTECH: IT'S THE CONTENT, STUPID!

It's a pretty good bet that if you're working with a recognizable fintech brand such as VISA, PayPal, Venmo or other top tier organizations, your press releases are being read and your calls are being returned by reporters at top business, financial technology and vertical trade media.



Henry Feintuch

But for the thousands of fintechs operating in the layers below, breaking through can be quite the task.

Couple that with a radically altered media environment with fewer outlets, a shrinking news hole and overworked journalists holding down more beats and responsible for far more than just reporting, and you wind up with a significant challenge. How can you break through, build your brand and create a conversation with critical audiences?

Here are three examples of ways to package creative content to reach your critical audiences.

Develop market awareness

When you think of online trading, foreign exchange trading or forex may not necessarily be the first thing that comes to mind. Yet, the global forex market is the largest financial market in the world—larger than stocks—with a daily volume greater than \$6 billion daily in 2019. The market trades 24 hours a day, six days a week. Our client, one of the first players to go public in the U.S., wanted help in educating investors and broadening out media coverage from the niche publications and newsletters covering the FX market.

We created a branded vehicle for the company to showcase its in-house research and expertise. “The Forex.com Quarterly Markets Outlook” launched in October 2009. The teleconference/webcast was designed for a sophisticated but broad media audience. More than 100 investors and a dozen reporters joined the first webcast—more over time—with hundreds of downloads on-demand. Articles appeared on Dow Jones, Businessweek, Forbes.com, CNBC, Business News Network and ForexTV. Requests for interviews followed and Forex.com was able to use the webcast as an educational and sales tool for its clients for the two-year duration of the campaign.

Utilize a consumer omnibus

In 2018, Klarna was preparing to introduce a “Try Before You Buy” payment option for its existing and prospective online clients.

Understanding the hesitancy many shoppers had in making online apparel purchases since they didn't have the chance to see or try on those items, we decided to field a broad omnibus survey. We asked more than 2,000 consumers about their attitudes and preferences towards a try now, pay later service that would not charge them anything for 30 days so they could receive, try on and return items they didn't want.

The findings were a blow-out:

74 percent of consumers said that having the ability to try on or try out goods before paying would remove a major drawback to their online shopping;

37 percent indicated a “Try Before You Buy” option would rank as their preferred payment option for buying apparel from an online retailer;

71 percent of respondents stated they would be moderately, very or completely likely to choose a retailer offering a “Try Before You Buy” option over one which did not offer this option; and

69 percent of consumers surveyed said they would be moderately, very or completely likely to buy more items from online merchants offering this payment option.

Key retail, fashion, fintech and business media picked up the story, and the coverage provided the launch boost our client sought.

Find an audience

Every fintech product or service has its own natural audience, however niche. Take the case of BasisCode Compliance, a leading provider of regulatory compliance and risk management solutions for the investment management sector.

Only a handful of financial services trades cover the compliance area, and then not on a frequent basis. So, how to promote the company's solutions and help generate sales leads? Our solution was a thought leadership webinar.

We approached the key industry association serving the market, the National Society of Compliance Professionals, and proposed a webinar on “How Best to Work with Compliance Consultants.”

The webinar would be designed to educate NSCP members on not only on the best ways to utilize compliance consultants, but also when not to and why not to.

But we didn't stop there. We proposed that the NSCP's key member publication, *Currents*, run a Q&A/abridged version of the webinar as a feature article.

Finally, we supported our client in sending out a marketing blast of the reprint to its client and prospect database. Triple impact to a finite and targeted audience

Content rules

Success in fintech and financial services relies heavily on content, understanding your key business objectives, knowing who you need to reach and a healthy dose of creativity. It's the challenge and joy of our industry.

In the final analysis—and with apologies to James Carville whose 1992 TV quip, helped elect Bill Clinton as President—in fintech and financial services, “it's the content, stupid.”

Henry Feintuch is President of Feintuch Communications and a past President of PRSA-NY.

DOXY.ME LOOKS FOR PR FIRM

Telemedicine company Doxy.me is looking for a PR firm to help increase its brand awareness among healthcare providers in order to attract more of them to its platform.

Doxy says its simple and secure video platform is the least expensive Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act compliant telemedicine solution.

Serving nearly 1M healthcare providers who support tens of millions of patients, Doxy wants to be the first option when providers think of remote care.

Doxy's audience includes single providers, small practices, clinics, hospitals, health insurers and governmental agencies.

It wants a firm that can generate impactful ideas and know-how to execute them. The PR partner will have a track record of making connections with experts, spokespeople and trusted advisors and the knack of getting Doxy in news articles, trade journals and case studies.

Responses are due Aug. 20. Send PDF replies to Liz Savery, PR manager, at liz@doxy.me.

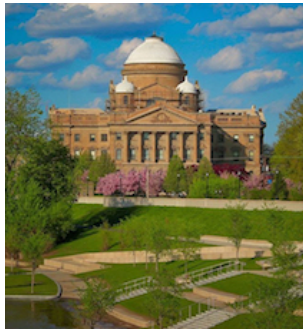
[Download RFP \(PDF\)](#).



doxy.me

PA COUNTY SEEKS MARKETING AGENCY

Luzerne County, Pennsylvania is looking for an agency that can develop marketing and advertising services for the Luzerne County Visitors Bureau.



Visit Luzerne County, the department tasked with marketing and overseeing tourism to the Northeastern PA county, wants an agency to develop a short-term marketing plan that promotes Luzerne County's tourism potential among area residents as well as potential visitors.

Scope of the work includes: creative content development,

web design, native advertising, video production (includes OTT video), ad design, and tradition and digital media placement.

Proposals are due by 4:00 p.m. (EST) on August 20. Proposals should be delivered to:

Luzerne County Purchasing Department
Attn: Mark Zulkoski
Penn Place Office Building
20 N Pennsylvania Ave
Suite 203
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711

All bidding agencies should submit one original and three copies of their proposals.

Questions should be directed to purchasing director Mark Zulkoski, mark.zulkoski@luzernecounty.org.

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

DRURY PORTER NOVELLI BUYS ITSELF BACK

The management of Ireland's Drury Porter Novelli has bought the firm back from Omnicom. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.



Anne-Marie Curran

Omnicom acquired Drury Communications, which launched in 1989, in 2000. It became part of Porter Novelli's network in 2015. Once the buyout is completed, the firm will revert to its original name.

Anne-Marie Curran, managing director, said her management team is keen to become independent again.

"Under management ownership, our team will be even more agile and innovative, exploiting the fast-moving evolution of communications consultancy," she said.

"The consequences of the pandemic have reinforced the critical role of effective communications for brands and businesses."

Billy Murphy, chairperson, Sinead Birt, finance director and Paddy Hughes, director, round out the management buyout group.

The *Irish Times* reports that Drury Porter Novelli, reported a 24 percent increase in turnover to \$5.2M for 2019, with pretax profit up 40 percent to \$980K. Net profit for 2019 rose by 40 percent to \$845K.

Amazon web services, UPS and Dentons are among new clients.

ON THE MOVE

Story Partners has brought on **Anton Becker** as assistant vice president. Becker comes to the agency from the Society for Human Resource Management, where he served as senior specialist of policy communications. Prior to his job at SHRM, Becker was communications director for Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. He also served as press secretary for Tammy Duckworth when she served in the House of Representatives.

Real estate advisory company **Senné** has hired **Frank Hwang** as chief marketing officer. Hwang was most recently vice president of marketing and communications for EF Pro Cycling, where he developed and executed the overall marketing strategy of the company's professional sports product. He has also served as senior director of digital marketing and public relations for Sperry and senior manager for digital marketing, advertising, and media at Timberland. In his new post, Hwang will lead Senné's creative team and manage marketing and brand strategy across the company.

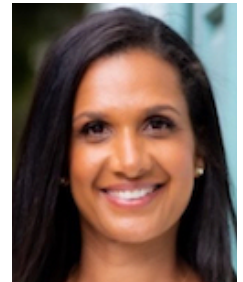


Frank Hwang

CBD Marketing has promoted **Bob Musinski** and **Mark Robinson** to senior vice president positions from their prior VP roles. Before coming to CBD Marketing in 2014, Musinski was vice president of client relations at KSA Public Relations and assistant city editor at the Daily Herald. Robinson joined CBD in 2018 from Noble Communications, where he served as director, digital strategy.

dna Communications has named **Mike Rosich** executive vice president, general manager, New York. Rosich comes to dna, which is part of Interpublic's Constituency Management Group, from Marina Maher Communications, where he served as executive director of creative strategy and storytelling. Before joining MMC, he held positions at Heartbeat Ideas and Rosetta. In his new role, he will lead strategy and operations for the New York office, reporting to Laura Schoen, chief healthcare officer at CMG and president, Global Healthcare, Weber Shandwick.

PBS Distribution, the home video distribution unit of PBS, has appointed **Tonya Harley** as vice president of marketing. Harley joins PBS Distribution from BCD Travel, where she was director of strategic marketing. She was previously a senior marketing strategist with business travel management consultancy Advito and served as manager, national advertising at Liberty Mutual Insurance. In her new post, Harley will lead marketing and communications, with a focus on customer acquisition and retention strategies for the company's direct-to-consumer subscription businesses.



Tonya Harley

Buffalo Wild Wings has hired **Rita Patel** as chief marketing officer, effective Sept. 14. Patel joins the company from Target, where she most recently served as vice president, brand management. She has also held executive marketing positions at MillerCoors, Beam Suntory and Wrigley.

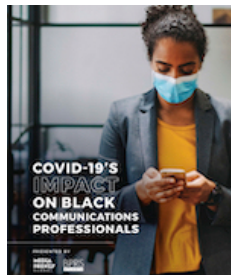
COVID TAKES TOLL ON BLACK PR PROS

COVID-19 is uniquely impacting Blacks in communications, according to a new survey from Media Frenzy Global and the National Black Public Relations Society.

“COVID-19’s Impact on Black Communications Professionals” examines the challenges that those professionals have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, and finds that the playing field has been far from equal.

More than half of the survey respondents (52 percent) said that they felt more pressure to perform at a higher level than their white counterparts during the pandemic.

That pressure is just one part of the heightened levels of stress that Black communications pros are experiencing. More than three-quarters of respondents (76 percent) said that their on-the-job stress has risen, resulting in a drop in productivity.



Stress is not just coming from the workplace, however, with 72 percent of those surveyed saying that stressors from the “outside community” were also having an effect on their job performance.

Many employers are not doing their part to lessen the effects of that stress, according to the survey. Fifty-four percent of respondents said that their organizations were either not offering more support in the wake of COVID-19—or were actually decreasing it.

A sizeable majority of those surveyed (77 percent) were women—many of whom cited the difficulties of balancing work in the “new normal” with such family responsibilities as homeschooling or childcare.

All of this comes on top of the CDC report that Blacks are five times more likely to be hospitalized by the virus than whites, and the continuing threat of job loss and insecurity.

“COVID-19 has a grave impact on the Black community, especially in the professional realm,” said Media Frenzy Global partner Katie Kern. “There is a clear need for data to be compartmentalized and addressed so that we can take the necessary steps to find and create resources to assist our most vulnerable communities.”

SACHS ROLLS ANTI-COVID PUSH IN SCHOOLS

Sachs Media Group has developed a campaign focused on encouraging students in Florida schools to practice simple behaviors that could stop the spread of COVID-19.



“COVID Health Heroes” includes flyers, posters and social media content featuring multi-ethnic superhero characters demonstrating six superpowers: staying home when sick; washing hands; wearing and cleaning superhero gear, especially masks; coughing into elbows instead of hands; maintaining a six-

foot “force field;” and avoiding touching one’s face.

The campaign utilizes two versions of the superheroes – one for younger students and one with more mature styling for middle and high school students.

Sachs donated its work on the campaign to the Leon County Schools, and the campaign will also be offered to other school districts around the state.

WARNERMEDIA CUTS PR CHIEF COCOZZA

Keith Coccozza, executive VP marketing & communications at WarnerMedia, is out as Jason Kilar, who became CEO on May 1, reorganizes the AT&T unit to simplify operations in order to better serve its customers.

Christy Haubegger, chief enterprise inclusion officer, will oversee the global marketing and communications team, including branding and corporate social responsibility.

Kilar thanked Coccozza for “not only helping me navigate these last few months at the company—and with the media—but more importantly for his 19 years at the company through its evolution. I have never met a kinder, more collaborative executive in my career.”

WarnerMedia is laying off about 800 staffers at its Warner Bros. and HBO operations.

Prior to WarnerMedia, Kilar was founding CEO of Hulu and senior VP at Amazon.



Keith Coccozza

ROKK SOLUTIONS PITCHES FOR GUATEMALA

Rokk Solutions has inked an agreement to pitch op-ed pieces from Guatemala’s former US ambassador Manuel Espina to the national news media.

The one-year agreement started Aug. 3 and is renewable on a monthly basis.

Rokk Solutions receives a monthly retainer of \$1,500 for pitching already-drafted op-eds and gets \$2,500 for writing and placing the commentaries.

The Hill published an op-ed from Espina, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and Arkansas Congressman Rick Crawford with the headline “[The Case for Renewed US Engagement in Latin America.](#)”

That June 25 article urged US policymakers to “counter the strategic and economic pursuits of China in Latin America” by investing in the “Northern Triangle” countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

Rokk Solutions partners Ron Bonjean and Rodell Molineau handle the op-ed effort.



Manuel Espina

SLOANE & CO. HELPS REVLON FEND OFF SUIT

Sloane & Co. represents Revlon as it battles a lawsuit by UMB Bank charging the cosmetics company wrongfully pledged key assets such as Elizabeth Arden and Almay as collateral in order to secure a \$1.8B loan in 2016.

Lenders that have resisted Revlon’s restructuring efforts, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, back the suit. Revlon calls the suit “baseless” and “directed by a group of desperate lenders seeking to enrich themselves by harming Revlon.”

The Journal notes that Revlon, which is backed by billionaire Ron Perelman’s MacAndrews & Forbes, “has been struggling with changing consumer tastes and the headwinds stemming from the coronavirus pandemic’s devastating impact on American retailing.”

Sloane & Co.’s Dan Zacchei and Joe Germani represent Revlon. Their firm is part of Stagwell Group’s SKDKnickerbocker operation.

COMMENTARY

McDonald's founder Ray Kroc must be rolling in his grave upon hearing the news that former CEO Greg Easterbrook allegedly hid information about sexual relationships with three employees.



Ray Kroc

One gets that impression after reading McDonald's August 10 Securities and Exchange Commission filing announcing its lawsuit against Easterbrook. The company laid it on pretty thick.

Calling itself one of the world's largest restaurant companies and an iconic brand, the company said it "strives to provide a wholesome, family-oriented, and affordable experience for its customers and a safe and respectful workplace for its employees." Integrity is said to be Job No. 1 in Ronald McDonald land.

From the 8-K statement: "As its founder, Ray Kroc said, 'The basis for our entire business is that we are ethical, truthful and dependable.' The Company's board of directors believes that as deeply today as Ray Kroc did in 1958."

McDonald's said the "ethical operation of its business is not just a legal imperative, but also a cherished value."

The company took a bow for "terminating Easterbrook and putting corporate culture first."

While McDonald's basks in the glory of its ethical behavior, the *New York Times* notes that the lawsuit raises questions about how diligent the company was in looking into Easterbrook's conduct before dismissing him with a compensation package worth more than \$40M.

Easterbrook's pay package could buy a lot of Big Macs.

The story of how Ted Turner, who was nicknamed "The Mouth of the South" and "Captain Outrageous," created CNN and the concept of 24/7 news is chronicled in the book "Up All Night," written by Lisa Napoli.

The ultimate irony of CNN: a guy who viewed news as a destructive force, worse than cigarettes, created the channel.

Turner initially made his mark in TV, launching Channel 17 superstation that featured sports, B-movies and re-runs.

He shied away from news because he felt it was evil, boring and depressing and just about the last thing that Americans wanted to watch each night.

Turner only got the news bug when saw it as a way to promote a variety of opinions that could make Americans better-informed citizens. Since he toyed with the idea of running for president, a news network could provide a political boost.

Still, Turner told potential financial bankers that he knew "diddly squat" about news.

Napoli tells how Turner and a collection of oddballs, network cast-offs, freshly minted college graduates and risk-takers helped launch CNN during the summer of 1980.

The day before the launch, Turner requested the armed services band that was slated to perform during the kick-off celebrations to play, "Nearer My God to Thee."

That's the tune the band on the Titanic played to calm passengers as the ship began to sink.

A CNN crew recorded the rendition and the ever-brash Turner ordered that it be put on the shelf because he expected CNN to continue broadcasting until the apocalypse.

Turner later summed up his founding of CNN. He likened himself to Columbus, who didn't know where he was going when he started, didn't know where he was when he got there and didn't know where he'd been when he got back.

Donald Trump says the Democrats want to give the Post Office \$25B because they want it to make it work better and be able to handle the anticipated torrent of mail-in voter ballots this fall from people who fear a trip to the voting booth could result in COVID-19.

The sweet irony: Had Trump taken the threat posed by COVID-19 seriously in the first place, there would have been no surge in mail-in voting.

While Trump makes it about himself, alleging a non-existent mail-in fraud scheme to deny him re-election, the Democrats want to give USPS money so it can continue to be one of the most respected parts of the government.

A Pew Research survey in April found that 91 percent of Americans have a favorable view of the USPS. Eight percent have an unfavorable opinion.

The Post Office handles 143B pieces of mail every year. That includes prescription medicines delivered every day to millions of Americans, many of them elderly and housebound. Does Trump want to deny them life-giving medicines?

The Post Office also plays an important part in the social life of rural America, often serving as the hub of the community. Those rural areas are prime Trump districts.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, mailmen & women were deemed "essential workers" and were cheered as heroes by quarantined Americans. Those postal workers are far more essential than some of the people at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

The cancellations of the Democratic and Republican conventions are just the tip of the iceberg for the beleaguered travel & hospitality sector.

The American Hotel & Lodging Association is tailoring its pitch for more federal COVID-19 relief to the axing of the Democratic and Republican conventions in Milwaukee and Charlotte, respectively.

Oxford Economics projects Wisconsin will take a \$186.5M economic hit, while North Carolina will be down \$289.2M.

Hotels, restaurants, retail, transportation and event venues are among the biggest losers.

Chip Rogers, CEO of the AH&LA, says the conventions represent just a small example of the negative impact that COVID-19 has had on the travel and hospitality business.

He anticipates state and local governments will lose nearly \$17B from the drop in travel this year and warns that the market won't recover until 2023, pushing hotels and convention markets to the brink of collapse.

"That's why it is vital that Republicans and Democrats come together to provide additional relief for industries impacted by this unprecedented health crisis," said Rogers.

—Kevin McCauley