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Editor-in-Chief

O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
PR and Marketing
Communications

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CAYMANS TOURISM ROLLS PR, AD REVIEW

The tourism entity for the Cayman Islands is planning a review of its tourism PR and creative advertising accounts.

The Cayman Islands Tourism Dept. wants to hear from agencies interested in pitching either or both pieces of business to promote the British territory in the Caribbean.



New York-based MFA, Ltd. is the incumbent on the PR account, while Chowder Inc. handles creative, including its "Caymankind" campaign.

Interested firms are asked to fill out an online survey to be reviewed by an outside firm conducting the agency search. PR firms are asked to demonstrate relationships with members of the media and travel industry across trade, consumer, digital and global outlets.

Deadline to complete the pre-qualification survey is Dec. 12. Link: <http://bit.ly/1yuUplN>.

A.T. KEARNEY REVIEWS PR

A.T. Kearney has released an RFP covering the estimated \$500K US/international PR budget of the management consultancy.

The company believes an appropriate PR firm and strategy will help ATK reach its full potential as subject matter expert in the firms and geographies in which it competes.



The communications effort includes brand-building activities for the Chicago-based firm's practices such as communications/media/technology, information technology and sales/marketing. It also will counsel ATK's think tank, Global Policy Council.

The firm will pitch stories, arrange interviews, handle byline positioning and placement and media train ATK partners.

Deadline to pitch is December 5. Meetings will be set the week of Dec. 8 for two or three firms.

Abby Klanecky, ATK's chief of Americas marketing & global communications, was not reached.

ATK's more than 3,500 professionals operate in 40-plus countries.

TRANSCANADA SPLITS WITH EDELMAN

TransCanada dropped Edelman following widespread reports that the independent PR firm is waging a "smear campaign" to win support for the controversial Energy East Pipeline project to transport western tar oil sands to Canadian refineries/export terminals in the east.

Greenpeace triggered the uproar after it obtained Edelman's PR blueprint to play up the economic benefits of the pipeline, while neutralizing political and environmental opponents. The media spun it as political campaign to neutralize opponents via "dirty tricks."

In its Nov. 26 statement, Edelman said since attention has moved away from the merits of the pipeline, both parties have agreed to end the contract when it expires at the end of the year.

Edelman stands by its program to "drive an active public discussion that gives Canadians reason to affirmatively support the project," calling it both "ethical and moral." The firm said the noise about its work has become a distraction "so loud in certain areas that it is impossible to have an open and honest conversation" about the pipeline. It said the project is "too important and a thoughtful, deliberative conversation is needed more than ever."



REYES ROLLS TO TESLA AS COMMS CHIEF

Corporate tech PR veteran Ricardo Reyes is returning to carmaker Tesla Motors to head communications.

He takes the PR wheel in Palo Alto after the October exit of Simon Sproule, the UK native who left to be chief marketing officer at Aston Martin.

Reyes will head PR, customer communications and digital, returning to Tesla after two years as brand lead at mobile payments service Square. His earlier stint as VP of global comms. and strategic marketing for Tesla spanned three years.



Reyes

Reyes also did stints as head of comms. and PA for YouTube and Google and managed crisis and litigation communications for powerhouse law firm Bracewell & Giuliani.

He was a press deputy for the US Trade Representative during President George W. Bush's first term.

GLOVER BAGS \$160K KAZAKHSTAN BUSINESS

Glover Park Group has picked up a three-month \$160K representation contract from energy-rich and human rights-poor Kazakhstan.

The firm handles legal matters for the central Asian country led by Near-sultan Nazerbayev that is being wooed by the US and Vladimir Putin's Russia.

The WPP unit reports to Kazakhstan's Ministry of Justice. It has assigned managing directors Jason Miner and Alex Mistri on the account.

Miner heads GPG's strategic communications group and is leader on its energy and sustainability practice.

As research director of the Democratic National Committee, he helped coordinate the Kerry/Edwards rapid response operation during the 2004 presidential campaign.

Prior to GPG, Mistri was special assistant to President George W. Bush. He served in the US Embassy in Baghdad and helped plan the Joint Campaign Plan, the blueprint for US military and civilian cooperation in Iraq. Mistri also worked with the chair of Iraq's National Investment Committee to drum foreign investment.

Prior to White House service, Mistri was chief of staff to former Republican Congressman Bill Shuster.



Nazerbayev

RASKY REPS VENEZUELA OIL INTERESTS

Rasky Baerlein Strategic Communications is representing Petroleos de Venezuela SA, the national oil company of the South American nation and owner of Citgo Petroleum. It will advise PDVSA on the potential of policy restrictions slapped upon it under the Congressional Venezuela Defense of Human Rights & Civil Society Act.

Plummeting oil prices and heavy debt have rocked PDVSA, which once again may put its Citgo operation on the auction block to fetch an estimated \$8B.

Under the rule of former Venezuela chief Hugo Chavez, PDVSA served as a propaganda tool to torment the US.

In 2011, it cut and heavily promoted a deal with former Massachusetts Congressman Joe Kennedy's Citizens Energy to distribute low-cost heating oil to poor Americans in Boston and New York.

Rasky has assigned senior VPs Bethany Basset and David Tamasi to handle PDVSA.

Basset was a key aide to the late Senator Ted Kennedy, who was uncle to Joe Kennedy.

Tamasi heads Rasky's DC outpost and was at Ogilvy PR Worldwide repping Citgo, Hess, Dept. of Homeland Security and Pakistan.



OLYMPIC MUSEUM MOUNTS BID FOR PR FIRM

The \$60M US Olympic Museum project slated for development in Colorado Springs is looking to add a PR firm to its team.

The museum project, which received a big boost last month with a \$10M donation from the El Pomar Foundation, is eyeing construction of a 60,000-square-foot facility on donated land to be opened by 2017, prior to the 2018 Olympic Winter Games.



It has cast an RFP for a six-month PR contract to develop a communications plan, website and social media content, conduct media relations and similar tasks.

Planners hope to build a facility to tell the stories and display the artifacts behind the US Olympic movement. "Through the use of compelling video and highly interactive experiences, visitors will be immersed in the drama and exhilaration of being at the Games -- in the pool, on the track, at the starting line, and on the podium," said the RFP.

Proposals are due Dec. 15. View the RFP at <http://bit.ly/1FJ4pv0>.

HOMELAND SECURITY PR HAND TO AIRBNB

Clark Stevens, assistant secretary of public affairs at the US Department of Homeland Security, has decamped for Airbnb in a new post overseeing safety initiatives.

Stevens takes the title of global head of strategic safety initiatives at Airbnb, as the San Francisco company tackles challenges on the legal, regulatory and safety front from the hotel industry and cities where it operates.

Stevens worked on the Obama presidential campaign in Virginia and took a press secretary post at the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2009. He spent two years at Homeland Security around two and a half years stationed at the White House as an assistant press secretary. He earlier worked on the agency front at Fenton Communications.

Airbnb critics often cite security concerns as a key sticking point against the service, which allows house and apartment owners to rent out their properties on a nightly basis.

A New York condo owner whose board has banned Airbnb argued in the *New York Post* Nov. 23 that the company's business model is a form of piracy that allows apartments to be rented to a "burglar or a pedophile ... without questions asked."

DKC works with Airbnb on the PR front.

\$2M+ RAISED AT CPJ DINNER IN NYC

A record \$1.9 million was raised Nov. 25 at a black-tie dinner of the Committee to Protect Journalists at the Waldorf-Astoria.

A special appeal at the dinner raised another \$235,635 via a white paper bag that is passed from table to table. The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation then matched the funds one-to-one.

Total amount raised for the event was more than \$2.7 million



L-R, International Press Freedom Awardees: Mikhail Zygar, Russia, editor-in-chief of the independent Russian TV channel Dpzhd; Siamak Ghaderi, Iran, freelance journalist, former editor and reporter for the Islamic Republic's official news agency IRNA; Nguyen Van Hai, Vietnam, 2013 CPJ Awardee. Released from prison 10/2014; Ferial Haffajee, South Africa, editor-in-chief of the privately owned weekly City Press in South Africa, and Aung Zaw, Burma, founder and editor-in-chief of The Irrawaddy, a Burmese news organization first established in 1993.

(Photo: Sharlene Spingler)

CPJ also announced a commitment of an additional \$858,000 from a "New Initiatives Fund," a newly created network of funders including the Knight Foundation.

About 1,000 attendees, including many from PR and publishing, paid \$1,000 each to attend the program honoring journalists hosted by Christiane Amanpour, anchor and chief international correspondent, CNN and a CPJ director. Albert Ibarguen, president of the Knight Foundation and former publisher of the *Miami Herald*, is chair of the event.

CPJ, which is mostly focused on violence and interference with reporters in countries outside the U.S., added to net assets that were \$14.8 million as of Dec. 31, 2013. This included investments of \$12.8M and pledges of \$2.3M.

Leaders of CPJ include Norman Pearlstine and Paul Steiger, both ex-*Wall Street Journal*, who are also active in another well-funded J organization -- ProPublica.

Last year Pearlstine, who also served as executive VP and chief content officer of Time Inc., presented Steiger with the Burton Benjamin Memorial Award for lifetime commitment to press freedom. Steiger was the founding editor-in-chief of ProPublica and former managing editor, WSJ.

ProPublica had revenues of \$13,765,467 in 2013 which included contributions and grants of \$13,678,241. Net assets were \$7,843,023.

AMANPOUR HAS ON-AIR DISPUTE WITH RT HOST

In the Know host Anissa Naouai appeared last week on Amanpour's CNN International nightly talk show to defend her network against accusations that it is part of Russian President Vladimir Putin's "propaganda war."

In the interview Naouai, a native New Yorker who graduated from Hunter College and who has been with the Russian news station since 2006, attacked Amanpour's personal connections to the U.S. Department of State. Amanpour's husband, James Rubin, was chief spokesperson for the State Dept. from August, 1997 to April 2000, when Bill Clinton was president. He is now a visiting scholar at the Rothermere American Institute at Oxford University.



Wilson

Amanpour informed Naouai that the most contentious parts of their exchange were unworthy of airtime and would certainly be edited out. In response to the edits, RT posted video of its half of Naouai's satellite feed, showing her answers that were omitted from the final product.

Naouai also commented on the exchange in her own program. CNN posted the full transcript to its website in the interest of transparency and RT did the same.

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NYT NAMES INNOVATION CZAR

The *New York Times* has named Kinsey Wilson editor for innovation and strategy, a new position. He will join the paper in February.

Wilson will be in charge of mobile strategy and creating new digital products based on the paper's reporting, similar to the recently launched NYT and NYT Cooking apps. He'll serve as newsroom liaison to the business side of the paper.

The 58-year-old exited NPR last month following a six-year stint. He handled global newsgathering, programming and digital operations.

At NPR, Wilson helped launch Planet Money, NPR Music and the Race Card Project.

In its press release, NYT lauds NPR as a "digital leader." Earlier, Wilson was executive editor at *USA Today*, overseeing daily news operations and digital. He also did stints at *Congressional Quarterly* and *Newsday*.

Dean Baquet, executive editor of the NYT, said Kinsey "is joining us at a crucial time as we accelerate our transformation into a news organization that delivers great journalism on all platforms."

NYT is in the process of shedding 100 staffers in an effort to restore profitability at the company.

It suffered a \$9M third-quarter operating loss vs. a year ago \$12.9M profit. Revenues inched ahead 0.8 percent to \$347.9M.



Wilson

COSBY AND THE NON-ANSWER

By Ronn Torossian

Bill Cosby is having a rough few weeks. After a mention in a comedy routine, suddenly his decade-old rape allegations are again front page news. The statute of limitations has expired on these cases, but Cosby's worries today are not about criminal prosecution. They are about public scorn and the collapse of the iconic image he had built over nearly six decades. His is a PR problem, and it is not only a threat to his present career, but to his legacy.

His brand is taking a beating, and his canned and stale arguments will no longer protect him. More than a decade ago, when the first allegations were made against Cosby, his PR team chose to simply refuse to answer any questions related to the matter. At the time it seemed the best course of action; stop answering and people will stop asking. Well, that's pretty much exactly what happened.

That was then, when he was riding high on the beloved image he had as America's Dad, and the media and world were a lot more forgiving and kinder. The media and the fickle public just moved on... but the Internet never forgot.

Over the past few years the Internet and the 24-hour news cycle have been critical in promoting the issues of sexual abuse and calling attention to the abusers. We saw beloved sports figures brought to public and even criminal justice. Actors, musicians, politicians and religious leaders have been exposed. And contrary to what we accepted or simply ignored just a decade ago, the public has almost no tolerance for this behavior anymore.

Yet now, Cosby has new projects he wants to promote and every producer searching his name and online reputation are finding the allegations. At first Cosby tried the old school "we don't answer that" routine. But the questions kept coming, churned up by endless online speculation and an online social and entertainment media. Then the other shoe dropped when Cosby did an AP interview in which he did the old "no comment" routine. He then proceeded to chastise the reporter for doing his job; almost reminiscent of the catastrophic failure of the one-time presidential candidate Gary Hart who, in 1988, dared the media to follow him.

The AP chose to air the entire conversation, and now even those who have been defending the man are forced to admit he looks guilty. Bad move. That brought about several accusers with credibility who felt the time was right to tell their stories. As the statute has run out on these allegations, seeking money from Cosby for these seems not to be a motive. That makes the accusations more credible.

Suddenly, an American icon of family values has become a tarnished brand – and there is a good chance he may never return. The allegations that could do very little to besmirch his reputation ten years ago now look clearer.

While there is nothing here that proves he is guilty, and he could be innocent, his handling of this make him appear guilty of something. Being that perception is reality in the world of public relations, rumored and confirmed can be one in the same.

If nothing else, the brand "Cosby" as a family values symbol is gone – and that will never come back.

Ronn Torossian is the founder of 5WPR, a crisis PR agency.

CLEANTECH IN ITS AWKWARD TEEN YEARS

By Matt Stewart

Now the pendulum has swung back. Today, cleantech is on steady footing with a slew of market exits unimaginable just a few years ago. After a thorny adolescence, cleantech is maturing through the creative destruction and unique challenges and entering the early stages of adulthood.

With that in mind, here's a look at what communications teams must consider while cleantech grows up.

Language mom and pop can understand. Jargon doesn't die overnight, but to go big, cleantech companies must be far clearer in describing themselves. Consider that to the average observer, a utility "demand response" program sounds downright rude, while PACE financing programs give the impression of an uncompetitive footrace. One early example of this mindshift is from Nest, which is rebranding utility time of use rates as "rush hour"— successfully communicating an awful time best avoided. Look for solar companies to continue eliminating complex ideas like PPAs and SRECs for simpler, universally understood terms like "leases," "bonuses" and "cash back."

More mediagenic spokespeople. Roll out the red carpet for a new breed of likeable cleantech ambassadors. Think Oprah's lovechild, or a clean energy-oriented Trump, ideally with better hair. A reality show awaits?

Making the rise of the corporate warriors less terrifying. Expect boards to increasingly cast out the friendly engineer founder-CEO for more merciless MBA managers. That's a good thing for market competitiveness. But it will put the onus on PR teams to cast their CEO as not just a brilliant leader, but a likeable and trustworthy human being.

Ingredient branding galore. Companies will increasingly promote nuanced eco-friendly aspects on unlikely products and processes. Look for tires promoting recyclable content, apartment buildings showcasing energy efficiency bona fides, even utilities promoting their solar capacity.

Managing killer expectations. With great successes come great shareholder expectations for future success. Executives will fall short, screw up, under-deliver. Somebody may even engage in white collar crime. Crisis planning and thoughtful management will be essential to minimize chaos and stave off a market backslide.

Eye-blearing growth. Many cleantech companies are expanding at a logarithmic scale. SolarCity went from 740 employees in late 2010 to more than 7,000 this year. Branding and communications programs must strategically scale their message and reach alongside their companies — or risk losing out on the conversation.

Some things will always be inside baseball. Selling the "Today Show" on a bio-based lubricant plant in Hong Kong will always be a long-shot, unless Oprah's lovechild is behind it.

As for any industry in transition, a few growing pains lie ahead for cleantech — with new technology, market failures can be an engineering oversight away. Yet it's safe to say that cleantech is quickly moving through adolescence and into a promising adulthood. Communications programs must adapt with them to flourish at the scale of other grown-up industries.

Matt Stewart is a Vice President at Antenna Group.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS

CITIZEN RELATIONS, NYAD TOP PR HONORS IN LA

Citizen Relations and client NYAD Swim for Relief took Best in Show honors at PRSA/Los Angeles' annual PRism Awards on Nov. 19 at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel.

CR worked with swimming icon Diana Nyad and Procter & Gamble to produce a 48-hour continuous swim in New York City to benefit Hurricane Sandy victims. The cause-related marketing PR project, organized in five weeks, raised more than \$100K and garnered global coverage.

Actor, TV host and former PR pro John O'Hurley emceed the sold-out awards event, the chapter's 50th annual incarnation of the city's top PR honors.



L-R: Emcee John O'Hurley; Chris Chamberlin, GM of US client services, Citizen Relations, and PRSA/LA president Erik Deutsch.

The chapter handed out 54 PRism Awards out of 200-plus entries and before 350 attendees.

SpaceX's push to establish Los Angeles as an aerospace center won PR Team of the Year honors, while Children's Hospital Los Angeles took home the President's Award for most awards won at the event – eight.

CicLAVia, the four-year-old event that closes streets in LA to encourage pedestrian and bike traffic, won Outstanding Achievement in Publicity.

PRSA/LA president Erik Deutsch of ExcelPR Group called the awards' golden anniversary a "huge milestone for PRSA-LA and the PR industry in Los Angeles."

Entertainment PR vet Howard Bragman was honored by the chapter as PR Professional of the Year, an award presented by Bragman Nyman Cafarelli co-founder Michael Nyman.

Steve Nissen, senior VP of legal and government affairs for NBCUniversal, won Outstanding Achievement in Public Affairs for a range of efforts in corporate responsibility, diversity programming and intellectual property. The chapter gave Disney its Corporate Citizen of the Year award, which was received by VP of corporate communications David Jefferson and presented by "High School Musical" star Corbin Bleu.

Former PRSA/LA president Denis Wolcott was presented the Joseph Roos Community Service Award, while KTLA-TV tech reporter Rich De Muro was named Outstanding News Professional by the chapter.

Full list of winners is at prsala.org.

NEW ACCOUNTS

New York Area

Feintuch Communications, New York/MECLABS, research institute behind publishers MarketingExperiments and MarketingSherpa, for a campaign to support its MarketingSherpa 2015 Email Summit, Feb. 23-26 in Las Vegas. The work includes media relations, media partnerships, and providing a platform for the marketers presenting at the summit to share their success stories.



The Brandman Agency, New York/Champalimaud, interior design firm, to "elevate" the company's presence in New York and gateway cities around the world.

Magrino, New York/Sri Panwa, all-villa luxury resort in Phuket, Thailand, for PR in the US. The 40-acre, Cape Panwa resort features views of the Andaman Sea.

Child's Play Communications, New York/Wunderkind and Technology Corp., for media relations, blogger management and integrated marketing in support of Peggie, a free app and social network for expectant and new moms.

East

Blueplate PR, Raleigh, N.C./The Raleigh Architecture Company, design-build firm, as AOR for PR focused on the local, state and national levels, including media relations, digital, social media and community outreach.

Southeast

Cheryl Andrews Marketing Communications, Coral Gables, Fla./Paradise Beach Nevis, boutique villa resort, to coordinate a launch campaign in North America and the UK surrounding its January opening date. CAMC is 10-year AOR for the Nevis Tourism Authority.

Midwest

P2R Associates, Livonia, Mich. Process Development Corp., Canton, Mich.-based manufacturing and automotive industry supplier, as AOR for PR. Work includes marketing communications support like PR, media outreach and brand-building activities in support of PDC's operations in the U.S., Mexico, Brazil, Canada and China.

Southwest

Amendola Communications, Scottsdale, Ariz./It's Never 2 Late, Colorado-based developer of adaptive computer systems for residents of senior living communities, for social media PR.

Preferred PR, Las Vegas/Urban Turban, New Zealand-based Indian eatery, as AOR for PR and promotional efforts for its Las Vegas location, its first in the US.

West

Movement PR, Los Angeles/LJL Designs, San Francisco interior design company of Lisa Lorino, for strategic PR counsel and media relations. LJL has worked for hospitality clients like St. Joe Company, Four Seasons Hotels, Hyatt Hotels, and Fairmont Hotels, in addition to prominent businesses and actors/actresses.

NEWS OF SERVICES**FINANCIAL WRITERS TWEAK CHRISTIE. POT**

The New York Financial Writers Association skewered Bank of America, Chris Christie, Pimco, the marijuana boom, and Herbalife, among other targets, at the group's annual Financial Follies Nov. 21 at Manhattan's Marriott Marquis.



Follies performers needle New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie on the Bridgegate scandal.

Photo: Christine Albano

Members including Carolyn Crapo, Kenneth Robert Marlo, Angelo McDonough, Sheila Mullan, Joseph Dietrich, David Graubard, Adam Ulrich, Kyle Patrick Guglielmo, Melissa Rose Hirsch, Sherry Hscieh, Heather White, Irene Weissman and Sarah Korenberg performed song-and-dance routines based on some of 2014's biggest headlines.



The marijuana economy is cheered.

Photo: Christine Albano

"Big Girls Don't Cry" was re-worked as "Big Guvs Don't Cry" to needle Christie on the Bridgegate scandal:

*Big guvs don't cry-yi-yi (they don't cry)
Big guvs don't cry (He's got an alibi)
Chris Christie won't lie-yi-yi (Wouldn't try)
He's got an alibi (He ate a pie).*

About 1,100 journalists, financial PR pros and other financial and media execs attended the event. The group awarded 10 scholarships to students from CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia Graduate School of Journalism and New York University.

PEOPLE**Joined**

Sarah Marshall, an agency alum of Waggener Edstrom and Citigate Cunningham, to Brodeur Partners, Boston, as senior VP of the Southwest region, based in Phoenix, as the firm plans an Austin outpost and considers a Nevada operation, as well.

Scott Beaver, A/D, Bateman Group, to Liberty Communications, London, as a VP and general manager to oversee its expansion to San Francisco. He spent five years at Sard Verbinen & Co.

Vic Beck and Faith Jennings to Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems, Redondo Beach, Calif., to head PR for its unmanned systems and military aircraft operations, respectively. Beck, a retired rear admiral, joins from Burson-Marseller, where he worked on global strategies for its multinational clients. The Iraq and Afghanistan veteran retired from the Navy in 2013 as vice chair of information. Jennings was corporate director/ international communications & PR at Raytheon. She has held positions at Boeing's defense, space & security arm in London and at APCO Worldwide.



Beck, Jennings

Jen Graves, VP of business development and marketing, Edelman, to Allison+Partners, Seattle, as senior VP of marketing and business development, a new position. She reports to chief creative officer Lisa Rosenberg. Previous stints included Cohn & Wolfe and Lippe Taylor.

Elizabeth Shaffer, communications director for Rep. Tom Reed (R-N.Y.), to the Curley Company, Washington, D.C., as an A/S.

Steve Goldberg, VP of global sales, Fuze and former enterprise sales leader for Salesforce.com, to W2O Group, San Francisco, to lead development and growth of its emerging software and services as a service business. W2O sees its S²aas model as an analytics-driven firm that creates software solutions, based on proven analytics products and models to "serve the consultant/client."

Deborah Radman, who ran her own shop, Radman Comms., after an agency career spanning Stanton Comms., CKPR, and KCA Worldwide, among others, to History Colorado, Denver, as PR director.

Promoted

Marisa Conway to VP, technology, MWW, New York. She joined in 2013 from Brodeur Partners.

Angela Buonocore, SVP and chief communications officer at water services and technology giant Xylem, is stepped down at the end of the year. Buonocore led internal and external communications work through Xylem's spinoff from ITT in 2011. The company is moving global PA and corporate citizenship work under the CMO and employee engagement communications under HR. **Kelly McAndrew**, who joined Xylem in October from the VP/corporate comms. slot at Cablevision, is VP of global PA while **Shani Reich** heads of employee engagement comms.

CRESTON SEES FIRST-HALF GAINS

London-based marketing conglomerate Creston reported last week half-year revenue rose five percent to £37.3M.

The parent to Cooney Waters Unlimited and Alem-bic Health said its communications/insight operations ticked up four percent during the first half ended Sept. 30, on key new business wins from Vertu, Arthritis Research, Sony Mobile, Allianz, Bentley, BSKyB and McCain, among others.

Creston hopes a newly inked partnership with Germany's Serviceplan will boost international work in the segment.

Health operations rose six percent to £10.3M with US wins like the National Meningitis Assn., Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy and CDC.

Profit for the period hit £3.1M.

SIPKINS EXITS SONY PICTURES

Charles Sipkins, executive VP/chief communications officer at Sony Pictures Entertainment, has stepped down.

CEO Michael Lynton, via an note to staffers, said Sipkins resigned to pursue other opportunities.

Sipkins joined Sony in September 2013 from crisis PR firm Sard Verbinnen. He also held positions at FleishmanHillard, Abernathy MacGregor Group and Hill & Knowlton. Sipkins had reported to Lynton and co-chairman Amy Pascal.

Sony Pictures expects its cost-cutting program to shave \$300M overhead be completed in March 2016.

Activist investor Daniel Loeb had pressured Sony Corp to restructure operations, but then he sold his shares.

JPMorgan Chase last week upgraded its ratings of Sony's American depository receipts.

That move from "neutral" to "overweight" follows last month's announcement of Sony's plan to increase revenues from its entertainment division 36 percent to \$10B-\$11B in three years.

HEALTHCARE NGO SEEKS PR HELP

Ahead of the Curve, a Los Angeles non-profit that promotes healthy living and preventative care programs in the US and Dominican Republic, is looking for a firm to work on a pro bono basis.

CEO Merrick Buckingham, founder My Brother's Keeper in Washington, is focused on targeting people in the African-American and Latino communities suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and HIV/AIDS.

The death of his mother from heart disease inspired the Navy veteran to enter the preventive care business.

ATC also raises money for HIV/AIDS awareness and preventive care in San Domingo. Buckingham considers the DR his adopted homeland.

Via an email, Buckingham told *O'Dwyer's* that ATC is "looking for new ways to develop non-profit/corporate hybrid mutually beneficial relationships."

He wants to attract "individuals, philanthropists,

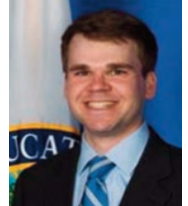
dreamers and socially conscious companies with budgets to invest in progressive ideas around providing services to our target population."

Buckingham can be reached at aheadofthe-curve@a@gmail.com.

RITSCH TO EXIT ED DEPT FOR TFA

Massie Ritsch, who leads communications for the US Department of Education, is leaving for a senior PR post with Teach for America in January.

Ritsch is acting assistant secretary for the Dept. of Ed's office of communications and outreach -- he has not yet been confirmed by the Senate -- and joined the department in April 2009, handling external affairs and outreach. He is a former education reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* and moved into PR with the Center for Responsive Politics.



Ritsch

Takirra Winfield, former press secretary to Maryland Gov. (and presidential hopeful) Martin O'Malley, currently heads national communications for Teach for America, which saw its PR strategy leaked and pored over last month.

The 24-year-old TFA places college grads in teaching posts in urban and rural jobs under a two-year commitment. Although it faces criticism over the relative inexperience of its participants, the program was expanded significantly under the Obama administration.

MOTORSPORTS PRO DARNELL DIES

Denny Darnell, an influential and long-time PR voice in the NASCAR circuit, died Nov. 22.

He began his media career as sportswriter for the *Kingsport (Tenn.) Times-Herald* and moved on to become general manager of Bristol Motor Speedway from 1982 to 1987.

Darnell, who also served as president of the National Hot Rod Assn., made his mark as head of motorsports PR at RJ Reynolds. It was there where he promoted the Winston cigarette brand and the NASCAR Winston Cup Series.

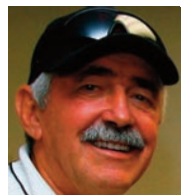
Darnell shifted to handle PR Dodge when its vehicles took first and second in the 2008 Daytona 500 and notched the championship in 2012.

He retired from the racing scene earlier this year.

Brett Jewkes, NASCAR senior VP and chief communications officer, issued a statement concerning Danell's passing:

"NASCAR offers its sincere condolences to the friends and family of Denny Darnell. For decades working with Bristol Motor Speedway, RJ Reynolds, NEXTEL and Dodge, Denny was a familiar and friendly face in media centers and NASCAR garages throughout the country.

"He approached his job seriously and professionally, but few could bring laughter like Denny. He was a public relations institution, and will be greatly missed."



Darnell

The Committee to Protect Journalists last week boosted its \$15 million kitty by \$2.7M while Fairness & Accuracy in Media Reporting said it faces extinction in 2015.

Oddly, CPJ, based at 330 Seventh ave. near 29th St., New York, is a block and a half from FAIR, based at 124 W. 30th St. near Seventh Ave.

But FAIR, founded in 1986 by media critic and lecturer Jeff Cohen, who now teaches at Ithaca College, is light years away financially from CPJ. Both are 501(c)(3) charitable/educational non-profits.

Revenues of FAIR were \$579,366 in the year to June 30, 2013 and net assets were \$98,489. CPJ's has net assets of \$14.8M—not counting new donations.

“FAIR's life is in danger,” says its web. It explains in an e-mail to subscribers titled, “The Fight of Our Lives,” that it lost two of its largest donors and is relying on gifts from readers to “pull us through.”

More than a million people visited its site this year, viewing more than two million pages of “hard-hitting, reader-supported media criticism,” says its website. The audience for FAIR TV segments doubled as did its reach with Facebook, the site adds. “Hundreds of thousands of people are hearing from FAIR every single month, but FAIR will not continue through 2015 without your help.”

Lost Ford Foundation

One donor it lost is the Ford Foundation which gave \$1.1 million to ProPublica in 2013, a jump from \$425,000 in 2011 and \$250,000 in 2010. CPJ's assets include \$1.5M from Ford.

Cohen stayed at FAIR until 2002 when he joined the Phil Donahue show. He was a Fox News Watch contributor from 1997-2002. He co-founded the online activist group www.rootsaction.org in 2011.

His works have appeared in the HuffingtonPost, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times* and dozens of other dailies.

Current staffers of FAIR include publisher Deborah Thomas, program director Janine Jackson, Extra! Editor Jim Naureckas and senior analyst Steven Rendell. Current articles include a critique of the Nov. 23 New York Times' examination of its coverage of Israel/Palestine and analysis of coverage unrest in Ferguson, Mo., by CBS.

Boneyard of PR/J Pubs Grows

Should FAIR fold, which includes its ten-issues-a-year print and digital *Extra! Magazine*, it would join the boneyard of PR/J publications/websites that includes *Bulldog Reporter*, which barked its last in October after a 35-year-run.

PR Reporter, a weekly NL published since 1958, was purchased by Ragan Communications in 2002 and changed to a monthly. It was folded later that year. The Ragan Report, previously a weekly NL, went online only in 2008. Ragan now does joint projects with PR Society of America.

Reputation Management magazine, a monthly published for most of the 1990s by Paul Holmes, folded after

the arrival of *PR Week/U.S.* in 1998. *PR Quarterly* was published for 52 years until 2009. The final 48-page issue in June 2009 had two ads.

PR Week/U.S. went monthly in June 2010 and its sister publication in the U.K. went monthly last year. PR Society of America is converting its two publications to online-only. New members, numbering about 5,500 yearly, no longer get the print versions. Print circulation of the monthly *Tactics* was 32,000 while *Strategist's* circulation was 22,000.

FAIR Must Reposition Itself

FAIR, in order to survive, must reposition itself in the marketplace. The big corporate money these days is going to publications and websites that honor people and campaigns.

The capstone of such programs is a \$400 and up banquet at which bows are taken by the donors. There are at least nine such programs, including two new “Halls of Fame” for PR leaders by [prnewsonline](http://prnewsonline.com) and *PR Week/U.S.*

Media criticism is needed but the media picture today is very different from what it was in 1986. Large amounts of ad revenues have moved from traditional media to online media such as Google AdWords which is raking in nearly \$50 billion.

Newspaper ad revenues have plummeted from \$47 billion in 2006 to \$21 billion in 2014. Only a small part of the lost revenue has been recouped via online editions of papers.

Finding flaws in media coverage is important but FAIR must also look at the PR part of the equation.

Much of the PR industry now works in close coordination with marketing, legal and financial, three occupations that are not used to being pushed around by anyone.

They have stiffened the backs of PR people when they are confronted with reporters who besiege them with questions.

FAIR needs to examine the prevalence of PR tactics that impede news coverage. The Center for Public Integrity in November created a blog to list officials in public and private institutions who refuse to comment.

“Lately—whether it's an investigative newsroom like us, an international outlet like the New York Times, or newer media like Politico or Buzz-feed—when journalists call, officials are choosing to comment less for stories on the record,” said CPI.

Media reporter David Carr of NYT spoke for all reporters when he wrote that, “The modern CEO lives behind a wall of communications operatives many of whom ladle out slop meant to obscure rather than reveal.”

Press conferences are a rarity both in business and government circles.

In the Court of Public Opinion, by lawyer/PR counselor James Haggerty, recommends against press conferences because specialist reporters will probe areas that the general press does not know about, opening up all sorts of cans of worms. Haggerty advises not to talk to reporters who call on the phone. Say you'll get back to them and then seek advice, he writes.

— Jack O'Dwyer