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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

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GLOVER PARK BIDS TO SCORE 2026 WORLD CUP

Glover Park Group represents the United Bid Committee of the US, Mexico and Canada in its effort to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup soccer championship.

The UBC is competing with Morocco for the tournament, which is being expanded from 32 to 48 teams.



Under FIFA rules, Europe and Asia couldn't bid for the 2026 Cup because Russia and Qatar will host the 2018 and 2022 tournaments, respectively. The South American and Oceania conferences decided not to bid.

The North American countries had considered separate bids, but decided to join forces last April.

If they land the Games, the US will host 60 games with Mexico and Canada getting 10 contests each.

Candidate cities will make their final pitch to the UBC in January and 20 to 25 venues will be included in the final pitch to FIFA, which will make its host selection in 2020.

GPG's push is to educate US government officials about the UBC's effort and to seek federal support for the drive.

WPP owns GPG.

AEROJET HIRES PENTAGON SPOKESPERSON

Steve Warren, 28-year Army veteran who handled communications and PA duties for the Pentagon before being pushed out this summer, has joined Aerojet Rocketdyne as chief communications officer.

He will handle internal/external communications, stakeholder outreach and serve as the top spokesperson for the El Segundo-based missile defense and aerospace company.

In his six-year run as Pentagon spokesperson, Warren served as coalition spokesperson for Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq, director of defense press operations and senior military advisor to the assistant secretary of defense for public affairs.



Steve Warren

Known for his blunt speaking style, Warren was bounced by the Pentagon in August and re-emerged in the media eye as an analyst at CNN.

Ellen Drake, AR CEO, said Warren is "a veteran warfighter and expert communicator" who will help the company enhance its partnership with its customers and employees.

B-M COUNSELS SCANDAL-PLAGUED KOBE STEEL

Japan's Kobe Steel, which in October acknowledged quality control problems on products shipped to auto, aviation, railroad and nuclear power companies for at least a decade, is relying on **Burson-Marsteller** for strategic communications counsel.

The WPP unit serves Kobe as subcontractor for its law firm, Paul Hastings LLP.

According to its contract, B-M's purpose is to "assist the attorneys regarding the various PR implications of pending and/or anticipated legal proceedings and to assist in relation to such legal proceedings at the direction of counsel."

B-M charges Hastings a guaranteed minimum retainer of \$75K with that amount to be re-evaluated on Jan. 31.

Its scope of work includes message development, media relations, digital/social media management, content creation, stakeholder communications, ally mobilization, opinion research and writing/editing of materials.

Kobe Steel, in November, issued a report that concluded that it "erred by elevating the pursuit of short-term profit over the maintenance of scrupulous quality standards," according to the Nov. 10 *New York Times*.

CEO Hiroya Kawasaki told a press conference there was a climate where employees didn't speak up, and if they did, it wouldn't have made a difference. "As long as the revenue was coming in, management wasn't interested," he said.

A second report on the Kobe scandal compiled by outside experts is slated for release this month.



'PLAIN PACKAGING' LAWS WILL CAUSE \$300B HIT

Food and beverage brands stand to lose almost \$300 billion if "plain packaging" laws similar to those recently enacted for tobacco products in several countries were applied to alcohol, sugary drinks, confectionery and savory snacks, according to a report from brand valuation consultancy **Brand Finance**.

The move to plain packaging, the report says, would limit the effectiveness of brands as marketing tools, and make it far more difficult for companies to differentiate their products. In addition to hurting the bottom line of the companies themselves, it would also have a strong effect on the advertising and PR industries that aid in the creation



(Continued on pg. 2)

'PLAIN PACKAGING' LAWS WILL CAUSE \$300B HIT

(Continued from pg. 1)

and implementation of brand strategies.

“To apply plain packaging in the food and drink sector would render some the world’s most iconic brands unrecognizable,” said Brand Finance CEO David Haigh. “Plain packaging also means losses in the creative industries, including design and advertising services.”

Brand Finance’s study looks at the potential effects that widening the scope of plain packaging laws would have on major companies including the Coca-Cola Company, PepsiCo, Heineken and Nestlé.

Among the eight companies studied, Brand Finance says that Coca-Cola and PepsiCo are the two that would have most value at risk, with the potential for \$47.3 billion and \$43.0 billion losses respectively. That would account for a 24 percent loss in total enterprise value for Coca-Cola and a 27 percent dip for PepsiCo.

For such brands as Heineken and Pernod Ricard, which specialize in alcoholic beverages, plain packaging laws could result in losses of \$10 billion and \$12.2 billion.

When the eight examined countries are considered together, the report finds a potential loss figure of \$186.7 billion. When extrapolating the data results to all major alcohol and sugary drinks brands, the study predicts a loss of \$293 billion for the beverage industry globally.

Australia, France, Hungary, Norway and the United Kingdom have already enacted plain packaging laws toward tobacco products, under which corporate logos are not allowed to be used, the Association for Tobacco-Free Kids says in an August 2017 report.

KEYSTONE INKS \$450K PACT WITH EASTERN LIBYA

Keystone Strategic Advisors has inked a \$450K one-year pact with the government of Eastern Libya, which is under the control of renegade General Khalifa Haftar and based in Benghazi.

Headed by Ari Mittleman, a former aide to Pennsylvania’s Democratic Senator Bob Casey, Keystone is to provide strategic political and communication counsel to Gov. Al Mair.

That advice will include developing policy and foreign policy goals and assistance in creating a democratic and multi-ethnic Libya.

Vladimir Petrovic, Serbia’s former ambassador to the US, handles Keystone push, which began Dec. 1. He also worked as political organizer and campaign consultant for Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm and Barack Obama’s Senate run.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met with Libyan prime minister Fayez al Sarraj on Dec. 1, and reaffirmed US support for Libya’s Government of National Accord, which is based in Tripoli.

He thanked the PM for his government’s support in fighting ISIS and conveyed America’s commitment to supporting the Libyan people’s efforts to build a unified and prosperous future.



Ari Mittleman

SITRICK REPS SILICON VALLEY HEAVYWEIGHT

Sitrick & Co. represents Andy Rubin, one of Silicon Valley’s top technologists, who has taken a leave of absence from his smartphone company Essential.

The leave follows a report that Rubin carried on an inappropriate relationship with a subordinate while he was at Google.

The Information technology website reported that Rubin, who is credited with helping to create the Android operating system for mobile phones/tablets, left Google after a nine-year run following an internal investigation triggered by an employee’s complaint.

Mike Sitrick said Rubin did no wrong and left Google for reasons unrelated to either the complaint or probe.

He told The Information that any relationship that Rubin may have had at Google was consensual and didn’t involve anybody who reported directly to him.

Essential said founder/CEO Rubin asked for a leave to “deal with personal matters.”

Niccolo DeMasi, president, will continue to run day-to-day operations at the Palo Alto-based company.



Andy Rubin

ASHCROFT TAPS HAWKSBILL FOR QATAR WORK

The Ashcroft Law Firm, which received a \$2.5M retainer from Qatar in June, has tapped The Hawksbill Group to strengthen the Gulf State’s anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism compliance programs.

THG will review documents, provide strategic communications counsel, conduct interviews and engage in outreach to US government officials and policy people on behalf of the Qataris.

Three top General Motors executives, who helped guide the No. 1 US automaker through bankruptcy, launched Hawksbill, which is named after an endangered sea turtle.

Bob Ferguson, who heads the firm, served as GM’s senior VP-global public policy. Tim Lee was the automaker’s executive VP-global manufacturing/China chairman, while Jaime Ardila held the South America president post.

TALF, which is the firm of former Attorney General and Missouri Senator John Ashcroft, pays THG \$165K for the six-month contract that went into effect Aug. 1.

Qatar, which has been under an economic boycott from its Arab neighbors since June, is the home of the US Central Command and 10K American troops.

The Gulf Cooperation Council imposed the boycott for Qatar’s close ties with Iran, with which it shares an offshore natural gas field, and alleged support of extremist groups.

Qatar denies ties to extremists.

THG donates a portion of its profit to the Florida Hawksbill Project.



Bob Ferguson

RACEPOINT LAUNCHES VIEWPOINT

Tech, healthcare and public affairs agency **Racepoint Global** has launched a thought leadership practice, titled **Viewpoint**, which aims to provide clients solutions for some of today's most pressing business and social issues.

The practice will be led by Jeff Grogan, Racepoint special advisor and EVP of thought leadership. He'll be joined by the agency's leadership team and other professionals from offices across the United States, China and Europe.

The core concept behind the new practice is to provide strategic context for client campaigns focusing on several current issues, including the role of ethics in healthcare and life sciences, the recapitalization of the U.S. economy by leading technology companies and the responsibility of technology and media firms in the information era. A fourth area, which the agency calls "China Gateway," addresses topics of interest concerning the international expansion efforts of both Chinese and U.S. companies.

"Our industry often uses the word 'strategy' to discuss the work we do — but we believe it is important to think beyond the traditional definition of what that means for a communications firm," Grogan told *O'Dwyer's*. "Increasingly, our clients are looking for the broader definition of strategy — not just as it relates to communications, but how to make their businesses better, how to help them sell more products and services, and how to engage with their various constituencies."

"This is about adding a strategic context to Racepoint Global's keen understanding of our clients' information consumption and expression needs, and it is also about providing thought leadership with them along the way on the key business and social issues of the day."

Boston-based Racepoint, which maintains additional offices in San Francisco, Washington D.C., Raleigh and Ann Arbor, MI, as well as outposts in London, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Beijing and Hong Kong, accounted for more than \$29 million in net fees last year.

WEBER SHANDWICK ADDS DIGITAL FIRM DUO

Weber Shandwick today announced the acquisition of a pair of New York-based digital marketing, data science and business intelligence firms to expand the Interpublic unit's technology/analytics capabilities.

Resolute Digital, which ranks among the first Google Analytics certified partners, helps marketers conceptualize and execute fully-integrated marketing campaigns that are grounded in data, according to its CEO Jarod Caporino.

Bomoda has built one of the most sophisticated social insights platforms focused on the China market based on artificial intelligence and natural language processing.

Andy Polansky, CEO of WS, said RD and Bomoda provide his firm leading competencies to allow it to innovate around the data and technology solutions that clients need.



VIEWPOINT



Andy Polansky

EDELMAN EXEC. VP SHAPIRO JOINS STIFEL

Stifel Financial has named Neil Shapiro to the newly created position of director and head of institutional group communications.

Shapiro joins Stifel from **Edelman**, where he was executive VP, financial communications and capital markets, working with asset managers, brokerages, investment banks and other capital markets participants. Before that, he was chief operating officer and managing partner at Intermarket Communications. He has worked with such clients as Charles Schwab, D.E. Shaw Group and Deutsche Bank.

Earlier in his career, he worked as a business journalist at CNN, CNBC and Fox News Channel. While Shapiro was at CNBC, TJFR Business News Reporter named him one of the top financial journalists in the country.

In his new role, Shapiro will be responsible for brand building, media relations and strategic communications advisory across Stifel's institutional platform, which includes investment banking, research, equity sales and trading, fixed income and equity capital markets, as well as communications oversight for several Stifel owned companies.

He will report directly to Victor Nesi, president of Stifel and director of the Stifel Institutional Group.

Stifel earned \$64.2M on third-quarter revenues of \$721M. The New York Stock Exchange-listed company trades at \$59.95, a tad off its 52-week high of \$60.92.



Neil Shapiro

WEINSTEIN PENS BOOK ON LIFE PLANNING

Lee Weinstein, president of PR Boutiques International and Weinstein PR, has written a book aimed at helping people get more out of their lives by making a plan and staying with it.

Weinstein's "**Write. Open. Act: An Intentional Life Planning Workbook**" provides a road map for readers to put their goals and hopes for the future down in writing. The book suggests applying the same strategies used to pursue success in the professional arena to building a more fulfilling personal life. "If life were a project like the kind you're asked to complete at work or school, and you knew you had a limited time to get it done, wouldn't it make sense to develop a plan?," Weinstein writes.

According to a newly released study from DHM Research, while respondents who had written a life plan said that plan helps them set goals and focus on what's important as they work to achieve their goals, 67 percent of those surveyed said they did not have such a plan. Of those who did have such a plan, 35 percent said that it helped them to set goals, 15 percent said it reminded them of priorities, and nine percent found it useful in financial and estate planning.

Even many of those who did not have a written life plan saw its benefits, with 48 percent of those respondents say-

(Continued on pg. 4)



WEINSTEIN PENS BOOK ON LIFE PLANNING

(Continued from pg. 3)

ing they thought that having such a plan would be beneficial.

“Write. Open. Act.” breaks the process of creating a life plan into four basic steps: Uncover Your Life’s Wishes, Build Your Timeline, Turn Your Timeline into an Actionable Plan and Keep to the Plan. The bulk of the work is done on what Weinstein terms the “Intentional Life Planning Day,” when the research done into personal goals and priorities gets turned into a physical timeline that can be put up on a wall somewhere in the planner’s home.

TRUMP IS PR’S BIGGEST WINNER, LOSER IN ‘17

Donald Trump is the biggest PR winner—and loser—of 2017 according to a survey of more than 1,000 U.S. adults commissioned from Propeller Insights by Bospar.

Of those surveyed, 28 percent chose Trump and his news dominance as the year’s biggest PR success. However, 37 percent picked Trump’s presidency as the top PR disaster of 2017.

Following the President in the success column were the Star Wars franchise and Disney’s #DreamBigPrincess campaign to inspire girls to study math and science. Right behind him in the ranks of PR disasters were Harvey Weinstein’s sexual assault scandal, Wells Fargo’s fake account scandal, Kevin Spacey’s sexual assault scandal and the Equifax hack.

Ninety-two percent of Democrats surveyed said they thought Trump should be impeached, but 90 percent of Republicans surveyed said they were open to the idea of a second term for the President.

A majority of respondents (59 percent)—including 81 percent of Democrats—called media coverage of Trump “fair.” Not surprisingly, 67 percent of Republicans say the reporting on the President has been “unfair.” But there seems to be some bipartisan agreement on at least one thing: More than half (56 percent) of Americans feel the reporting has been largely left-leaning, with an almost equal number of Republicans (55 percent) and Democrats (61 percent) making that claim.

As regards the “fake news” label, almost two-thirds (62 percent) of Republicans say that they agree with Trump when he calls a story fake, while 70 percent of Democrats say they’d be inclined to think the story is true. But 23 percent of respondents said a “fake news” declaration from the President does not influence their thinking.

When it comes to changing the hearts and minds of Americans, a good article in a trusted news outlet is seen at the most effective method by 33 percent of respondents. However, 31 percent of respondents say nothing could change their minds.

“For us, the most interesting statistic was that 70 percent of Americans would consider changing their convictions; the key is where to reach them,” said Curtis Sparrer, principal of Bospar PR. “The best way to reach people is through a news outlet that they trust.”

PR OPINION

“Phenomenal reporting” by “determined journalists” helped break the female sexual assault story that has dominated media in recent months.

The remark is by *Time* editor-in-chief Edward Felsenthal in the Dec. 18 *Time* showing five women as the magazine’s “Person of the Year.”

“The determined journalists picked up where so many human resources departments, government committees and district attorneys had clearly failed, proving the truth of rumors that had circulated across whisper networks for years,” he wrote.

Time’s cover featured Isabel Pascual, strawberry picker who spoke out against harassment; Adama Iwu, California lobbyist; actor Ashley Judd; Susan Fowler who exposed the “toxic culture” at Uber, and singer/composer Taylor Swift.



Streep Asks “50/50 by 20/20”

Meryl Streep, appearing in Boston Dec. 7 at the #metoo conference attended by 16,000 women, said women must seek “50/50 by 20/20” meaning equal numbers of women and men in board rooms by that date.

Streep, who **lauded the role journalists play** at the dinner of the Committee to Protect Journalists Nov. 15, said, “Equal means equal. It starts at the top.”

She appeared on a panel with Gloria Steinem, who called President Trump “harasser in chief.”

She said the usual board is “three women and 12 other people. Gender stereotypes are learned and normalized at an early age.” She called on MGM to release tapes that show Trump talking about the sexual harassment incidents. It might be the “tipping point” if they are released, she said.

Streep Stars in “The Post”

Streep plays *Washington Post* publisher Katherine Graham in “The Post,” a movie set in the President Nixon era when the Watergate scandal broke that led to his resignation. The Post played a key role in uncovering the scandal. Also covered is the paper’s role in publishing “The Pentagon Papers.”

Author Theodore White, quoted in the Dec. 11 *Time*, said journalism is “a form of public service: afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted, exposing incompetence and corruption wherever we find it.”

He said “critical stories are journalism; anything else is marketing. But a bias against the positive fuels cynicism in both public officials and voters,” he wrote.

“Journalists need to bring to the table people who would not otherwise be talking and ask the hardest questions we can, with nothing off limits,” he added.

— Jack O’Dwyer