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FINN PARTNERS PICKS UP MEDIKA.LIFE

[Finn Partners](#) is acquiring Medika.Life, an opinion and news platform that reaches more than 100K decision-makers and influencers in the healthcare community each month.



Gil Bashe, Noah Finn

Gil Bashe, Finn Partners' global health chair, and Noah Finn, managing partner-integrated marketing, will serve as co-publishers of Medika. Editors-in-chief Robert

Turner and Jeffrey Livingston will take on the new roles of founding editors-in-chief emeritus.

Medika hosts more than 40 authors creating content in general medicine, health policy, ecohealth, disease awareness and other issues of interest to patients, payers and providers.

Peter Finn, founding partner, said through its content and reach Medika seeks to tackle many of the same societal challenges that Finn Partners works to address for its clients.

Finn Partners on Dec. 1 acquired Pharmacy Podcast Network, which reaches more than 120K monthly listeners in the pharmacy sector. Medika and PPN form the core of Finn Partners' new omni-channel communications effort.

Finn Partners ranks [No. 4 in the healthcare category](#) with \$34.1M in 2020 fee income.

GOLIN'S TECH CHIEF LACKIE TO LEAD AXICOM

Matt Lackie, president of Golin's global technology practice, has joined AxiCom, which is the tech specialist of BCW Group, as CEO.



Matt Lackie

Prior to his nearly four-year stint at Golin, Lackie did a 10-year run at WE Communications as executive VP of the Asia-Pacific group responsible for operations in Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong, Singapore, Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai, Sydney and Melbourne.

He began his career at Text 100 and spent 11 years in London, Singapore, Shanghai and San Francisco.

Lackie reports to BCW CEO Donna Imperato, who said his expertise "in all aspects of technology, as well as his extensive global experience, will add a new dimension to the agency and deepen its capabilities in many regions."

*Happy Holidays to our readers!
This is the last issue of the year.
The next issue of the Newsletter will appear Jan.3, but
follow breaking news on odwyerpr.com.*

PUBLIC POLICY HOLDING CO. GOES PUBLIC

Public Policy Holding Co., a collection of US government affairs firms, has gone public on the London Stock Exchange's AIM market of small and medium-sized growth companies.

The DC-based parent of Crossroads Strategies, Seven Letter, Alpine Group, Forbes Tate Partners and O'Neill & Associates floated 22.7M shares on Dec. 13, raising more than \$40M.

UK, US and European institutional investors snapped up the shares due to PPHC's strong position in the \$17.6B strategic communications market.

PPHC firms serve more than 700 clients in the healthcare, pharma, financial services, energy, technology, telecommunications and transportation sectors.

About 75 of them are retainer-based clients. Nearly 300 of PPHC's clients generate revenues in excess of \$100K.



EDELMAN NY CHIEF LATOUR EXITS FOR MSG

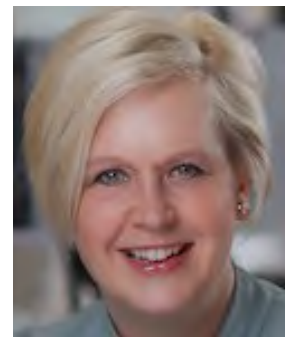
Deirdre Latour is leaving her post as president in Edelman's New York office to become executive vice president and chief communications officer at Madison Square Garden Entertainment, effective Jan. 3.

Before coming on board at Edelman, Latour was chief corporate affairs officer at learning content and publishing company Pearson and chief communications officer at GE.

She succeeds Kimberly Kerns, who made the decision to exit the role earlier this year. Kerns remains in the position until Dec. 31.

At MSG, Latour will be responsible for leading all communications functions. She will also be charged with directing the development and execution of strategies to advance MSG's key priorities and strengthen its brands.

"Her experience developing and executing successful communications strategies on a global stage will be an asset," said MSG Entertainment executive chairman and CEO Jim Dolan.



Deirdre Latour

WIKI EDUCATION NEEDS MEDIA RELS SUPPORT

Nonprofit organization Wiki Education is seeking a PR firm to develop a media campaign aimed at increasing its visibility in early 2022.

Wiki Education is looking for a firm that can lead a national media strategy and campaign aimed at increasing the organization's visibility among potential funders, course sponsors and participating instructors.

Scope of the work includes creating a media strategy to increase Wiki Education's visibility; identifying and developing appropriate stories to pitch; secure placement of op-eds from Wiki Education senior leadership; executing pitches about Wiki Education to specific publications and journalists; and ensuring an appropriate level of coverage of Wiki Education in various publications.

Budget for the work is between \$25,000 and \$30,000.

Proposals, due by Jan.3, go to lianna@wikiedu.org.

Questions should be directed to LiAnna Davis, deputy director and chief programs officer, lianna@wikiedu.org.

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

DELL'S THOMPSON TAKES KYNDRYL POST

Terrence Thompson, who was director of government relations at Dell Technologies, has joined Kyndryl, the spin-off of IBM's IT infrastructure unit, as VP-government affairs.



Terrence Thompson

He is responsible for Kyndryl's governmental outreach and regulatory strategy and will support its brand and reputation from his Washington base.

At Dell, Thompson advocated on behalf of its tax policy priorities in support of its financial services unit.

Prior to Dell, Thompson founded and ran C Street Advisory for three years. He also was policy director of Obama for America and director

of Congressional and PA at the US Chamber of Commerce. IBM retains a 19.9 percent stake in Kyndryl.

FORMER B-M CEO JIM DOWLING DIES AT 90

Jim Dowling, the former CEO of Burson-Marsteller who played a key role in handling Johnson & Johnson's Tylenol crisis, died Dec. 15. He was 90.



Jim Dowling

He began his career at *Newsweek* in 1958, took a reporter post at United Press International in 1959 and shifted to the Associated Press 1960.

Dowling entered the PR arena at Mobil Oil before joining B-M. He was general manager in New York and Chicago before rising to the executive VP post in 1974.

He became president in 1976, global COO in 1983, CEO in 1988, chairman in 1992, chairman emeritus in 1994, and retired in 1998.

The Public Relations Society of America awarded Dowling and B-M its Silver Anvil in 1984 for "out-of-the-ordinary crisis management" for its work for Tylenol.

NEWS OF FIRMS

Vested acquires **Red Lab Technologies**, a web design, development and digital marketing firm that partners with healthcare and finance companies looking to bolster their marketing teams. Red Lab will provide Vested clients with expertise in Wordpress design and development, search engine optimization and marketing, paid social advertising and marketing automation. Both firms will continue to operate under their current names, and there are no staffing changes planned.



Binna Kim

Havas Formula establishes a Midwest regional hub in Chicago. Initially, Havas Formula Midwest will encompass offices in Chicago and Denver (the agency's last US hub, established in April 2021). It will primarily focus on consumer, CPG, lifestyle, B-to-B and tech brands. The Chicago hub will be led by Tara Reid, who has been promoted from senior vice president to president. "Establishing a Midwest regional hub in this market will fuel the agency's growth strategy as we seek to expand into other flourishing markets in this area, like Austin, Minneapolis and Columbus," said Havas Formula CEO Michael Olguin.

Weber Shandwick introduces The Weber Shandwick Collective, a strategic communications and consulting network. In addition to Weber Shandwick, the agencies that will be a part of The Weber Shandwick Collective include Prime Weber Shandwick, United Minds, Powell Tate, Revive, Resolute Digital, Flipside, ThatLot, KRC Research and Cappuccino. The firm is also launching Weber Shandwick Futures, which will work to identify potential investments, partnerships or M&A opportunities that help shape future-forward offers to clients.

1905 New Media acquires **Arco + Associates**, which specializes in content creation, marketing strategy and public relations. The company will continue to operate under the Arco + Associates brand until March 31, 2022. Arco + Associates founder Andrea Arco-Mastro-michalis will remain affiliated as a 1905 New Media consultant, and the addition of Arco's 11 employees will bring the combined firm's headcount to 38.



The Darnell Works Agency principal Roger Darnell is publishing his second book, "The Communications Consultant's Master Plan," on Dec. 21. The book includes advice on the business of running a PR agency; such advanced practices as investor relations and strategic planning; and how to handle agency expansion, exit strategies and milestone achievements.

Bacchus opens its first GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) office in Dubai. The agency, which provides brand development services in such sectors as beauty, fashion, restaurants, hotels and wellness, also has offices in London and New York. It has already worked with several clients in the GCC region, including the Omani fragrance house and property developers LaMar. Bacchus GCC will be led by Fiona Wishart, who was previously business development director at Dubai-based Z7Communications.

DON'T BOYCOTT THE OLYMPICS

Years ago, the *New York Times* used to include something called a “Sports Section,” which reported on such newsworthy topics as basketball, baseball and football, often including high points from college and professional games. Its sports commentary—authored by such legendary journalists as Red Smith, Dave Anderson, George Vecsey and Harvey Araton—was often inspiring reading.



Fraser Seitel

Today, of course, the Times still claims to carry a “Sports Section,” but it really doesn’t. Gone are the daily reports on collegiate or professional sports, with the notable exception of the best American coverage of the ever-popular Italian and British soccer leagues.

Mostly, what passes as “sports” in the Times these days are columns by writers like Kurt Streeter, whose beat the paper tells us covers “the connection between sports and broader society, especially regarding issues of race, gender and social justice.”

In the wake of the Biden administration’s announcement that it wouldn’t send officials to the China Olympics, Mr. Streeter turned his critical eye to companies—such as Coca-Cola and Visa—that will be sponsoring the Olympics. Coke and its corporate cohorts should be called out, he argued, for supporting a country where human rights atrocities include mistreating Muslim minorities.

Presumably, many public relations professionals agree with Mr. Streeter. Why shouldn’t Coca-Cola and the other corporate sponsors boycott the China Olympics?

Here’s why.

Corporate “profits” benefit lots of people.

Coke and its independent bottling partners employ 700,000 people, operating in more than 200 countries. When Coke sponsors global events like the Olympics, it makes more money, and some portion of that money finds its way into the pockets of those 700,000 people.

So, the greater the profits of Coca-Cola, the better the outcome for hundreds of thousands of families around the world.

Without sponsors, Olympic participants would enjoy little recognition.

Celebrity Olympians, like gymnast Simone Biles or swimmer Michael Phelps, are clearly outliers.

Most Olympians scrimp and save to fulfill their passion, longing for the moment when they can compete on the world stage once every four years.

Their ability to take that world stage and be seen and recognized and perhaps even attain fame and fortune is a direct result of the willingness of corporations to spend millions of dollars to sponsor the Olympics around the world.

Corporate “morality” is essential, but every corporation must determine for itself how that morality should be manifest.

Not every corporation needs to be a Patagonia or Ben & Jerry’s that embraces every environmental or social justice cause. The publics of many public companies are hugely diverse in political and social preferences; and so before taking a public stand on a particular issue, a business must first consider the risks in terms of alienating a key constituency on whom it depends for support or income.

There are many ways for companies to exhibit their moral indignation.

Finally, just because a company supports the Olympics doesn’t mean it can’t also support organizations opposed to human rights abuses.

The fact is, a large company today would be stupid not to take advantage of any opportunity to reinforce its respect of and support for human rights.

Coca-Cola has donated more than \$1 billion “creating a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion” in the communities in which it operates.

That’s clearly not nearly enough to appease its critics. It’s a lot easier to bellow “boycott!” when you bear no responsibility for people’s lives or livelihoods.

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

ISLAND HEALTH SEEKS ENGAGEMENT PARTNER

Vancouver Island Health Authority is looking for a partner to handle public engagement in order to understand the mental health needs of patients, families, community organizations and decision-makers in Victoria, BC. The public engagement effort will help Island Health officials determine whether it is meeting the needs of stakeholders.

Island Health’s partner will have healthcare experience and the in-house resources to execute a multi-platform engagement strategy. The public engagement push is required to include “adequate representation from Indigenous, LGBTQ2+S individuals and young adults.”

The work is expected to run for eight months and is budgeted at \$70K. Proposals are due Dec. 23.

They may be sent to: Kylie Jacobson, Contract Coordinator; Contract Policy & Standards; Vancouver Island Health Authority; Nanaimo Regional General Hospital; 1200 Dufferin Crescent; Nanaimo, BC V9S 2B7

Island Health also is accepting electronic submissions at [the BC Bid portal](#).

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

TENEO’S HOTMIRE SHIFTS TO FGH/SVC

Erik Hotmire, senior managing director at Teneo, has joined the Finsbury Glover Hering/Sard Verbinnen & Co combination as managing director.

The former Brunswick Group partner, who co-led its financial institutions group, and Clark & Weinstock director has handled issues surrounding mergers/acquisitions, litigation, regulatory matters, corporate positioning, leadership positioning and crisis management.

He has worked with clients in the banking, insurance, asset management, fintech, energy, health care, industrials and technology sectors.

Hotmire also served as senior advisor to the both the chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission and its enforcement division, and special assistant to president George W. Bush.



Erik Hotmire

COVID-19 IMPACTS FOOD NEWS

The influence of food-related news on consumers is on the rise in a COVID-impacted marketplace, according to a new study from Hunter.



Close to two-thirds (62 percent) of the 1,002 Americans that the agency surveyed between Oct. 15 and 21 of this year said that their opinions had been at least somewhat changed by media coverage of issues surrounding food. That's up from the 58 percent who said that in the previous edition of Hunter's Food News Study, which was conducted in 2019.

While consumers haven't cut back on the amount of food news they get, they are going to fewer sources to get that information, the study says. For example, while 90 percent of the survey respondents said they had searched for recipes in both 2021 and 2019, the average number of sources they used dropped from 3.9 to 3.4. Similar trends can also be seen for general food news and news about nutrition.

Top platforms for food news include websites (#1 for those searching out recipes or nutrition info), social media (#2 for both of those groups and #3 for general food-news consumers), television (#1 for general consumers) and YouTube.

When it comes to what topics are attracting the attention of consumers, COVID-related concerns come out on top. Half (50 percent) of those surveyed said they had seen coverage of mask mandates in restaurants, followed closely (45 percent) by coverage of the labor shortages that restaurants are facing.

Other topics registering high on consumers' radar are inflation and higher food prices (39 percent), the Tyson chicken recall this past July (36 percent) and recipes that use air fryers (25 percent).

Part of the robust interest in food-related issues may stem from the fact that, according to the study, more Americans think of themselves as "foodies" than ever. The number of respondents who call themselves "creative cooks" rose from 20 percent in 2019 to 25 percent in 2021.

Hunter's study was conducted in partnership with Libran Research.

Stagwell owns Hunter.

ICR WALKS WITH FOOTPRINT

[ICR Inc.](#) represents Footprint, the material sciences company that has developed plant-based materials to replace plastic packaging, as it plans to go public via a merger with Gores Holding VIII SPAC in a transaction valued at \$1.6B.

"Our mission is to create a healthier planet and step one is to design, develop and manufacture plant-based fiber solutions as an alternative to single-use plastics," said Troy

Swope, co-founder & CEO of Footprint.



The Gilbert, AZ-based company's customer base includes General Mills, Tyson, Quaker, McDonald's, Procter & Gamble, Nestle, Unilever and Conagra.

It envisions a \$315B annual market opportunity as companies step up sustainability drives and shed plastic and foam packaging for their products.

Launched in 2014, Footprint will trade on the NASDAQ.

ICR's Reed Anderson works the investment community for Footprint, while Cory Ziskind handles media.

[Sard Verbinnen & Co.](#)'s John Christiansen and Cassandra Bujarski represent Gores Group.

WHO SEEKS COVID PR FOR WESTERN PACIFIC

The World Health Organization is looking to hire a strategic communications partner to educate the 2B people living in its 37-country western Pacific region about health risks posed by COVID-19 and the vaccines that fight the virus.

The effort will raise awareness of and build confidence in available vaccines to thwart the virus, and mobilize partner resources to support roll-out of the shots.

Headquartered in Manila, WHO's western Pacific group includes Mongolia, Singapore, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

The desired firm has knowledge of the rapidly changing COVID-19 situation, experience in running vaccine-preventable disease outbreak campaigns, and a track record of working with WHO or other major institutions in the field of public health, strategic communications and PR.

The COVID-19 PR effort will run throughout 2022 and be carried out remotely.

Proposals are due Dec. 27 at wproungm@who.int.

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



BGR BOLSTERS QATAR'S OUTREACH

BGR Government Affairs has inked a \$30K monthly contract to provide strategic counsel and outreach to officials, decision-makers, non-government organizations and media in the US, specifically in Texas, for Qatar.

Walker Roberts, co-head of both BGR's international and trade practice and defense group, handles the effort with PR principal Jo Maney.

Roberts served as deputy staff director of the International Relations Committee under Republican Henry Hyde of Illinois. Maney was communications director of the House Rules Committee when it was chaired by David Dreier (R-CA).

BGR's contract with Qatar, which has emerged from an economic blockade launched by its Arab neighbors, went into effect Dec. 1 and runs through May 31.

The DC-based firm reports to Hamad Al-Muftah, deputy chief of mission at Qatar's embassy.

LHS PICKS BERRY TO LEAD MEDIA RELATIONS

UMass Memorial Health senior director, media and public relations Tony Berry joins LaVoieHealthScience as vice president of media relations.

At UMass Memorial Health, an academic medical center and hospital system in Worcester, MA, Berry helped to expand the organization's public profile by increasing its regional and national media coverage. He previously served as director of communications at Global Strategy Group.

Earlier in his career, he was deputy press secretary to former Sen. Max Cleland (D-GA), a public affairs NCO in the US Army, and communications manager for the American Heart Association.

In his new post, Berry will lead a media relations team including account manager Shani Lewis and senior account executive Howard Matzner, both of whom have joined LHS this year.



Tony Berry

FTI CONSULTING MAKES BOLD MOVE

FTI Consulting has acquired Bold, a restructuring, transactions, digital advisory firm in the Netherlands with 31 billable staffers.

They will join FTI's corporate finance & restructuring group.

FTI CEO Steven Gunby is pleased "to attract a powerful team with a great reputation in the Netherlands, a geography where we have not historically had a substantial presence."

Klaas Wagenaar, who founded Bold in 2013 with Gerrit van Munster, called FTI an ideal partner that will allow his firm "to harness the expertise and coverage of an international player that shares our entrepreneurial approach to provide a more hands-on service for clients in the Netherlands."

FTI expects to close the deal during the first quarter of 2022.

LEAVITT LOBBIES FOR LONG-COVID PATIENTS

Leavitt Partners is lobbying Congress on behalf of the estimated three to nine million Americans who may have ongoing symptoms after an acute infection of COVID-19, which may impact their return to work or their normal lives.

Former Utah governor & US Health and Human Services secretary Mike Leavitt and Nancy-Ann DeParle, who was deputy chief of policy for president Barack Obama, unveiled the COVID Patient Recovery Alliance in April to help members of the healthcare community and decision-makers meet the challenges presented by long-COVID.



Mike Leavitt

The most commonly reported symptoms of long-COVID are fatigue, muscle aches, shortness of breath, difficulty in breathing, coughing, brain fog and chest pain.

Leavitt Partners is pressing Congress for policies related to developing national solutions that coordinate diverse data sources, inform the development of models of care, and ensure adequate payment for long-COVID patients, with a focus on the most vulnerable.

WHITE HOUSE VET JOINS NBCU

Former White House deputy press secretary Jen Friedman is moving to NBCUniversal, where she will assume the executive vice president communications role on Jan. 10.

Friedman was most recently managing director, global public affairs at The Blackstone Group. Before coming to Blackstone, she was senior director, corporate reputation at GE.

In addition to serving as a senior advisor at both the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of the Treasury, she has held communications positions at the Commerce and Homeland Security departments.



Jen Friedman

Friedman succeeds Hilary Smith, who moved from the corporate communications position in October to take on oversight of NBCU's corporate social responsibility unit.

She will report to Adam Miller, NBCU executive vice president and chief administration officer of its parent company, Comcast.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Marino is selected by construction and development company **Skanska USA** as its agency of record for the New York/New Jersey metro region. Marino will work with key regional executives across the company's building construction and civil infrastructure business units, as well as its in-house communications team, to develop a strategic communications program targeting key stakeholders. The program will highlight Skanska's core company values—a commitment to safety, sustainability, D&I, innovation and community investment. The company's projects in the region include the LaGuardia Airport Central Terminal B Redevelopment, James A. Farley Building Redevelopment at Moynihan Train Hall, and the rehabilitation of George Washington Bridge.



PHG Consulting is named agency of record for the **Cayman Islands**. As part of a three-year agreement, PHG will focus on raising awareness for the destination among audiences in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico through public relations, trade, marketing and promotional initiatives to support the "Dream In Cayman" campaign.

Rubenstein Public Relations is retained as agency of record by **Marc Roberts**, entrepreneur and partner in Downtown Miami's E11EVEN Hotel & Residences, to introduce E11EVEN Residences Beyond, the development's second phase. The agency will work to bolster brand awareness for E11EVEN and engage audiences across the real estate, hospitality, and business sectors. The 65-story complex will have 461 residences. Roberts is also co-founder of Miami Worldcenter, the largest mixed-use project under development in the United States.

Red Lorry Yellow Lorry signs on as public relations agency of record for **Blockchain Intelligence Group**, a global cryptocurrency compliance and intelligence company and subsidiary of BIGG Digital Assets Inc. RLYL will build and execute a media and influencer relations campaign to raise awareness of Blockchain Intelligence Group's expertise, and its risk-scoring, compliance and forensics software. The PR program, run out of the lorry's Boston office, will work to drive media attention for Blockchain Intelligence Group's news, events, resources and customer and partner stories, as well as highlight its executive thought leadership on cryptocurrency compliance, investigations and conducting better business with cryptocurrency.

360PR+ lands grocery distributor **United Natural Foods**. The agency's work with UNFI is focused on supporting a variety of company initiatives, among them elevating UNFI as an employer of choice and raising awareness of UNFI's Brands+ product portfolio, comprised of over 15 different brands and more than 5,000 products spanning 250 grocery and household categories.



Pietryla PR & Marketing signs on to represent **Swap.com**, one of the largest online consignment retailers in the US. Launched in 2012, Swap offers clothes for babies, children, women and men and says that its service will handle millions of units over the next few years. It also touts its ability to allow retailers and manufacturers to jump into the circular economy and generate online sales quickly.

COMMENTARY



2021 is shaping up as a terrible year for journalists but a great year for autocrats as they tossed reporters into gulags at a record-shattering clip. And it ain't over yet.

The Committee to Protect Journalists reports that 293 reporters were tossed in jail for their work, which is up from 280 in 2020. Twenty four were killed because of their coverage. Another 18 died under mysterious circumstances.

China topped the list as the No. 1 jailer of reporters for the third year in a row. Myanmar, Egypt, Vietnam and Belarus round out the Top 5.

The Committee says the rise of autocrats, who flout international norms to stay in power, is a key reason for the crack-down on independent reporting. ([The Atlantic has a terrific December cover story](#) about Autocracy Inc. and its network of political, financial, propaganda and military support).

Turkey, once the worst jailer of journalists, fell to No. 6 because president Recep Tayyip Erdogan effectively eradicated the mainstream media following a failed 2016 coup attempt.

Saudi Arabia, following the murder and dismemberment of Jamal Khashoggi in 2018, silenced many journalists. The Kingdom also has stepped up the surveillance of reporters.

Autocrats also benefited as the global preoccupation with COVID-19 took the world's focus off the crackdown of journalists in repressive nations.

The Committee noted that Hong Kong made its list due to the implementation of China's draconian 2020 National Security Law that was put into place following the pro-democracy demonstrations.

Eight Hong Kong media figures including Jimmy Lai, founder of *Apple Daily* and Next Digital were thrown into prison.

The Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong ran a full-page ad in the *New York Times* on Dec. 10 calling for Lai's release.

It praised Lai for giving voice to the powerless; talking about ideas with leaders, media and students; advocating for the rule of law, free markets and democracy; and for risking his life to protect the human rights of millions of others in a great global city.

The 74-year-old Lai has been sentenced to 13 months in prison for attending a 2020 vigil to mark the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing.

On the homefront, the US Press Freedom Tracker counted 56 reporters arrested here. Eighty-six percent of them were put into custody during the wave of social justice protests.

How can the US preach the need for freedom of speech to other countries while its police forces are rounding up journalists covering their rights of expression?

Sen. Elizabeth Warren has put PR firms making environmental claims for their clients on notice. Watch what you promise and junk the hype.

She wrote to SEC chairman Gary Gensler on Dec. 14, informing him that more than half of the S&P 500 companies use environmental, social and governance metrics as part of executive compensation.

In her letter, the Massachusetts Democrat accuses Marathon Petroleum, Chevron and Occidental Petroleum of manipulating metrics and shifting goalposts to guarantee high bonuses for executives even when their companies cause environmental damage.

Warren wants the SEC to probe environmentally-friendly PR that is presented by companies and the promises to maintain stringent green quality standards.

If the SEC finds companies fail to live up to their environmental promises, Warren says they are in violation of the Securities Act of 1933, which bars corporations from making any untrue statement of a material fact or to omit to state a material fact.

Environmental PR people have been warned.

Trust tops science when it comes to leading the FDA.

Healthcare and life sciences executives rate trustworthiness (71 percent) as the most important characteristic for the next Food and Drug Administration commissioner, far surpassing scientific knowledge (48 percent), according to a survey conducted by FTI Consulting's strategic communications group.

That result may be a reaction to the Trump administration's botched handling and politicalization of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stephen Hahn, Trump's FDA commissioner, came under fire for his misstatements about the benefits of blood plasma treatment for COVID-19, a bogus remedy touted by Trump.

President Joe Biden has nominated Robert Catliff, who served as FDA commissioner in the Obama administration, for the FDA post.

Sen. Bernie Sanders announced Dec. 14 his opposition to Catliff due to his ties to the pharma industry. The cardiologist collected consulting fees from Biogen, Merck and Eli Lilly after leaving his federal post.

The Vermont Independent joins Sens. Joe Manchin and Richard Blumenthal in opposing Catliff.

Catliff's nomination is in serious peril as the Democrats control the Senate by a sliver.

Peloton can't catch a PR break. The stationary bike maker yanked the video featuring Chris Noth from its social media accounts after sexual assault allegations were lodged against the actor.

It created that video after Noth's character, Mr. Big on HBO's "Sex in the City" sequel called "And Just Like That," dropped dead from a heart attack while riding his Peloton.

The scene walloped Peloton's stock.

Peloton shot a funny 40-second video of Noth and the fitness company's instructor showing him very much alive. That post earned widespread positive media coverage. That spot is now history.

Noth has denied the assault allegations, but a Peloton spokesperson said the company takes every sex charge seriously. That person added that Peloton was unaware of the charges when it featured Noth in the crisis response to the HBO reboot.

Duh!

—Kevin McCauley