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O'Dwyer's Newsletter



The Inside News of
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PUBLICIS' Q4 REVENUES SLIP 3.1%

Publicis Groupe reported a 3.1 percent decline in Q4 growth to \$3.2M, which the French ad/PR combine blames on negative exchange rates.

At constant rates, revenues advanced 2.7 percent.

Organic growth during the period rose 2.2 percent, sparked by a robust 4.5 percent rise in the US, which generates more than 50 percent of overall revenues.



Noting that Publicis is “in the midst of its own transformation,” CEO **Arthur Sadoun** said “the quality of our results demonstrates Publicis Groupe’s strength and our ability to adapt to the deep changes affecting our industry.”

Sadoun said US business grew in Q4 due to the ramp-up of accounts awarded since the summer of 2016 (Lowe’s, Wal-Mart, Synergy Pharmaceuticals and USAA), plus the addition of wins in early 2017 (Molson Coors and FirstNet).

Europe was flat in Q4. Publicis gained in the UK (+5.5 percent), Italy (+4.0 percent) and France (+1.1 percent) but crashed in Germany (-6.9 percent).

Sadoun will announce growth and margin objectives at the March 20 investor day.

He promised to “shed more light” on the firm’s “ambition to become the leader in marketing and business transformation, including the strategy and the means to reach these objectives.”

WOLIN SUCCEEDS GILCHRIST AS BRUNSWICK CEO

Brunswick Group named senior counselor Neal Wolin CEO, succeeding Susan Gilchrist, who slides into the global clients chair slot. He’ll be based in DC.

Wolin, who joined Brunswick in 2015, served in the Clinton and Obama Administrations. Under Obama, he was deputy secretary in the Treasury Dept., handling issues surrounding the global financial meltdown.



Neal Wolin

Wolin also was president/COO of The Hartford Financial Services Group.

Brunswick also named Helen James COO. She was CEO of Investis Ltd., the international digital communications shop.

James takes over for Rob Pinker, who shifts to emerging markets chair.

Boost New Biz Efforts, Join O’Dwyer’s Rankings

Your ranking will be [posted on odwyerpr.com](http://www.odwyerpr.com) and you can use it in new business pitches. Clients have come to rely on firms in the O’Dwyer rankings. [Download ranking instructions PDF.](#)

RICELAND RELEASES MARKETING SERVICES RFP

Farmer-owned agricultural marketing coop Riceland Foods has issued a request for proposal for marketing services.



Riceland, which was founded in 1921, is the world’s largest miller and marketer of rice as well as a major soybean processor, and provides marketing services for rice, soybeans and wheat grown by its 5,500 family-farm owners in mills across Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Texas.

The Stuttgart, AR-based coop is seeking an agency to support its marketing and retail business initiatives in light of a recent reorganization at the company to provide more focus on its branded consumer products.

Riceland projects the campaign to commence in early April and end in July.

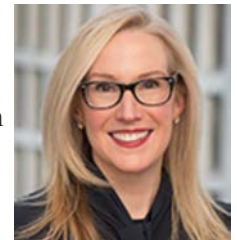
Proposals are due no later than 5:00 p.m. CST on Friday, March 2. Questions may be sent before 5:00 p.m. CST on Monday, February 26.

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

SKDKNICK HIRES WILSON FOR LA

SKDKnickerbocker has recruited Heather Wilson as managing director in its Los Angeles office. She’ll handle corporate/financial communications, crisis, litigation, PA and media strategy.

The former reporter for CBS MarketWatch had been serving as volunteer communications/media advisor for Project Include, the Silicon Valley-based non-profit that works to improve diversity at start-ups and inclusion at venture capital firms and start-ups.



Heather Wilson

She took that post following a nine-month run at MWWPR, where she was managing director, national strategic communications and crisis management on the west coast.

Wilson also headed Abernathy MacGregor’s San Francisco office and held the executive VP-corporate affairs post at Weber Shandwick during her eight-year stint.

JOELE FRANK PLAYS DEFENSE FOR NEWELL

Joelle Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher is working for Newell Brands as the Hoboken-based consumer products company faces a potential proxy fight with activist investor Starboard Value.

Newell today advised shareholders to sit tight as “no action is required at this time” concerning Starboard’s plan to nominate ten directors to replace its entire board. Newell promised to review the qualifications of “validly submitted proposed director nominees.”



The company expressed support for its “highly qualified and experienced directors” who possess the global leadership, finance, brand management and manufacturing savvy that is critical to its success.

Newell assured investors that its “accelerated transformation plan” announced Jan. 25 will improve operational performance and enhance shareholder value.

That program called for exploring strategic options for Rubbermaid’s commercial unit, Waddington, Rawlings, Goody, US Playing Cards and other units to focus on more “consumer-facing categories” with a combined \$11B revenue base.

JFWBK’s Ed Trissel represents Newell.

GUNSTER MAKES DC ROUNDS WITH BHUTTO

Gunster Strategies Worldwide handled Pakistan politician Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari’s trip to Washington this week to meet with the city’s movers & shakers.

The 29-year-old chairman of the Pakistan People’s Party is the son of his country’s former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated a decade ago, and president Asif Ali Zardari.

Bhutto addressed the Woodrow Wilson Institute and National Prayer Breakfast, where he highlighted the spread of democracy as the best way to defeat extremism.



**Bilawal
Bhutto-Zardari**

He also talked about how globalization forces nations to unite to face the challenges of terrorism, inequality and climate change.

President Trump via Twitter last month criticized Pakistan, which has received \$33B in US aid during the past 15 years, for providing a “safe haven for terrorists.”

Bhutto called Trump’s tweet “deeply hurtful to the people of Pakistan.”

GSW charged a \$100K fee for its work under an agreement that runs until March 2.

The firm, which has offices in DC, London and Cairo, rebranded in December from Goddard Gunster. It named Jim Hoffmann managing director, Indo, Asia-Pacific on Jan. 22.

ALLIANCE FOR DOWNTOWN NY ISSUES RFP

Alliance for Downtown New York, which manages lower Manhattan’s business improvement district south of Chambers Street, is looking for a social media partner

The non-profit provides neighborhood services that supplement safety/sanitation, commercial real estate research, economic development and marketing.

It foresees a two-year social media push to support the region’s positioning as “the premier location for businesses and destination for visitors,” according to its RFP.

Outreach will focus on residents, workers, property owners and tourists.

The Alliance also wants recommendations that tie social media to existing programming, such as the “Dine Around Downtown” food festival in May, GET LOW promotional campaign from June through August and future neighborhood improvement initiatives.

Currently, the non-profit has audiences on YouTube (81K views), Twitter (24.1K), Instagram (13.6K) and Facebook (10.3K).

Proposals are due Feb. 23. They go to Alliance for Downtown New York, Inc.; 120 Broadway, Ste. 3340; New York, NY 10271; Attn. Elizabeth Lutz, VP-communications & marketing (elutz@downtownNY.com).



LB PROMOTES CIVIL SOCIETY IN MIDDLE EAST

LB International Solutions has inked a \$12,500-per-month contract with Syrian-British businessman Ayman Asfari to support education for refugees and civil society in the Middle East.

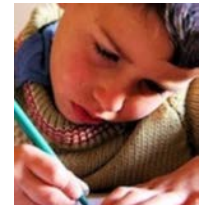
Asfari, who heads Petrofac Ltd. oil services provider, launched the Asfari Foundation in 2006 to provide scholarships for students in the Middle East, especially from Syria. It also backs fellowships for journalists.

Asfari told *Forbes* in 2016 that Syria’s future “depends on moving from an imposed order of government to a sustained order, which can only be achieved by a flourishing and robust civil society.”

Lydia Borland, president of LB, has more than 30 years of government relations experience. She has consulted for the Gephardt Group and Livingston Group and worked as lobbyist for Turkey’s DC embassy.

Borland will advise, advocate and set up meetings on behalf of Asfari and work Capitol Hill.

LB’s contract runs through April 30.



BRIEF: PRSA-NY is now accepting nominations for the 2018 PRSA-NY Big Apple Awards, to be handed out in June. Led by DS Simon Media CEO and PRSA-NY president-elect Doug Simon, the Big Apple Awards have expanded their scope this year, with new awards being presented in such categories as Diversity & Inclusion, Media Relations & Content Marketing and Reputation & Brand Management. **Early Bird registration for the awards** is open through Friday, Feb. 16 and all entries must be received by Friday, March 16.

TRUMP SUPPORTERS SHARE MOST FAKE NEWS

Supporters of President Trump and hard-right conservatives are far more likely to share unreliable news items via social media than any other political group in the U.S., according to a new study published as part of Oxford University's "[Computational Propaganda Research Project](#)."

Oxford's researchers conducted analysis on more than 13,000 "politically active" Twitter users and nearly 48,000 Facebook pages in the three months leading up to Trump's Jan. 30 State of the Union Address. Based on the data they sampled, social media users were separated into groups based on ideology; categories included "Democratic party," "Republican Party," "Progressive Movement," "conspiracy," "resistance," "hard conservatives" and "Trump support."

Researchers also separately identified more than 90 media sources providing content they described as "junk," or online publishers that "deliberately publish misleading, deceptive or incorrect information purporting to be real news about politics, economics or culture." Junk news sources included both right- and left-leaning sites such as Breitbart News, mediaite.com, newsmax.com, occupydemocrats.com and InfoWars.

Examining how that content was distributed across social media, Oxford's study discovered that sharing "junk" political news is a practice uniquely concentrated among Trump supporters, with that group and "hard conservatives" on Facebook responsible for sharing more fake news stories than all other political groups combined.

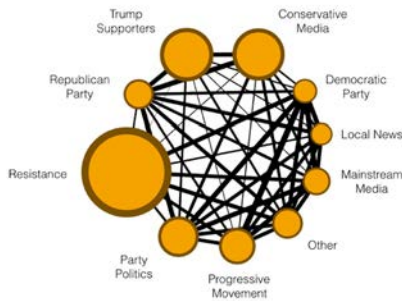
In its sample of Twitter data, the study revealed that 55 percent of all junk news traffic came from users falling under the "Trump support" category. Trump supporters on Twitter were responsible for sharing 95 percent of the study's "junk" stories, with 96 percent of Trump supporters sharing a junk news link via Twitter in the days leading up to the State of the Union.

On Facebook, 91 percent of the "hard conservatives" group shared junk news — even topping members of the study's "conspiracy" category — and accounted for 58 percent of all junk news traffic.

By contrast, the "Democratic Party" group on Facebook accounted for just 12 percent of junk news traffic on Facebook. Together, "Democratic Party" and "Progressive Movement" groups accounted for only one-percent of junk news traffic on Twitter, according to the study.

The study concluded that political polarization is both driving and could also be the result of social media news consumption patterns, as a "limited overlap" of news sources existed between the content shared by Democrats and Republicans online, with Democrats engaging primarily with mainstream media sources and Republicans interacting mostly with conservative media groups.

Figure 1: US Audience Groups on Twitter



B-M DIVES INTO AQUATICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

The International Swimming Federation has selected [Burson-Marsteller](#) to handle its 2019 World Aquatics Championships slated for Gwangju, South Korea.

The event will carry the "Dive into Peace" theme and run from July 12-28.

The WPP unit will provide strategic communication counsel, international media outreach and social/digital media services.

Cho Young-Teck, VP at the Gwangju 2019 organizing committee, expects B-M will "provide the global reach and stature" that the aquatics event deserves.

More than 15,000 athletes are expected to participate in the aquatics competition and the World Masters Championships that follow in the same city. More than 200 countries plan to broadcast the events.



KAUFMAN TO LEAD FP PREK-12 PRACTICE

Dan Kaufman, a managing partner in [Finn Partners](#)' preK-12 education client practice, has now been appointed to lead that operation, the global independent agency reported Feb. 7.

Kaufman joined FP from Washington, D.C.-based education specialists Widmeyer Communications, where he served as senior partner and helped lead that agency's preK-12 practice. Widmeyer was acquired by Finn Partners in 2013.

Kaufman will now oversee FP's 20-member preK-12 education team, which is stationed across the agency's offices in Washington, D.C., New York, Boston and San Francisco.

Kaufman was previously a communications director for the Maryland State Education Association and a senior press officer to the National Education Association.



Dan Kaufman

Finn Partners' preK-12 clients include ExxonMobil, the National Center on Education and the Economy, the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

"I feel very fortunate to work with a diverse group of clients striving to give all children, regardless of their background or zip code, the opportunity to receive a high-quality education," Kaufman told *O'Dwyer's*. "And it's gratifying to show them how smart, strategic communications can help them advance their goals, whether through building awareness, engaging influencers and stakeholders, driving traffic, or all of the above."

BRIEF: The Int'l Assn. of Business Communicators and the UK's PRCA have signed an agreement to work together across the EMENA region. The arrangement calls for co-promotion of events, participation in each other's events, and discounts for meetings, according to their statement. Alex Malouf, regional chair of IABC EMENA, credited PRCA for promoting "the importance of communications as a strategic function globally."

SHOW YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE SOME LOVE

By Lindsey Perkins Wade, founder & president, LP Media Group



It's okay to admit you've neglected your LinkedIn profile for an undisclosed period of time. We all know what our profiles would look like in a perfect world, but we live in the real one, with client emergencies and other distractions that can turn our days upside down.

The good news is that it doesn't take much time to bring that sparkle back to your profile. Here are five things to do so your LinkedIn profile becomes more like something you'd show off rather than shove in a drawer when you have company.

Update your profile photo and cover photo

How old is your profile photo? Do you even have one? Time flies and before you know it, your profile photo is seven years old. If you want to treat yourself and have a polished head shot, consider hiring a professional photographer to take new portraits. Otherwise, make an appointment on your calendar to remind yourself that a coworker needs to take your photo at work.

Besides your lovely headshot that shows people you're human, LinkedIn added what they call a **background photo**, which is similar to the cover photos on Facebook and Twitter. The current recommended dimensions for this photo are 1,584 pixels wide by 396 pixels tall.

You can use this area to highlight company products/services, awards you've won, a quote that motivates you or a call to action, whether that be urging visitors to connect with you or sending people to a specific landing page to sign up for a newsletter, download a whitepaper, etc. If you don't have access to a graphic artist or social media pro, give **Canva** a whirl to finish the task.

Update your current headline

This prominent area is a great place to leverage for your current goals. In the old days, your job title would appear in this area. Now, the social media platform gives you the freedom to write anything you want.

Tell people what you do, that you're looking for certain opportunities or what drives you to do your job well. Include keywords if you're hoping to show up in LinkedIn search results for certain queries.

If you're stuck, ask yourself: What do I want people to know about me if they only look at my headline?

Add contacts you've met in the last six months

Adding connections as you go is the ideal process, but sometimes work gets in the way. If you've been distracted, think back about the new people you've met this year. Scroll through your inbox to jog your memory. Then, look up these people on LinkedIn. Personal notes accompanying the invitations help, and they could restart a conversation you had months ago.

If you've never **synced your contacts with your email**, you could also do that now, instead of adding contacts one at a time. In this process, LinkedIn imports and stores your contacts and gives you full control of who you ask to connect with.

For more information about the various ways to connect with people, visit [LinkedIn's Help page on the topic](#).

Grab your custom URL (or update it)

Did you know you can now include your name in your profile's URL? These individualized URLs are handed out on a first-come, first-served basis. If you have a common name, you may want to add a keyword to your URL that describes what you do, such as public relations, or the industry you specialize in.

You may already have a customized URL, but you should check to see if it's up to date and doesn't have any extra characters that don't serve a purpose.

As of right now, LinkedIn allows you to change your URL up to five times within six months. For more information about how to do it and the latest rules, check out [LinkedIn's Customize Your Public Profile URL](#).

Ask yourself, "what's missing?"

Did you join a board this past year? What about volunteering pro bono for a nonprofit? Is there a professional organization you became a member of?

Add those things to the appropriate areas of your profile and brag about your accomplishments. If you got promoted, say so. If a campaign you worked on increased sales, write that in your job description. People won't know how wonderful you are if you don't tell them the results you garner.

Did your company win an award for a project? Add a picture of the award to the appropriate job in the Experience section. LinkedIn allows you to **add rich visuals**, like PDFs, JPGs, PowerPoints and more. Take advantage of it.

GMMB ALUMS ARE MIGHTY GOOD

A trio of communications strategists from political consulting firm GMMB have launched a new venture, a social impact agency titled Mighty Good.

The D.C.-based shop was co-founded by former GMMB creative and brand strategy managing director John Gundlach; former GMMB senior VP Nicole Harburger; and former GMMB VP Aimee Freund, who were stationed together at the pioneering social impact agency for more than a decade.

They bill the new venture as a boutique brand strategy and communications agency that will help brands with a social mission tell their story, through services related to brand research, development and activation.

Co-founder Gundlach told *O'Dwyer's* that opening their own operation gave them a chance to focus on their favorite kind of work with people "dedicated to making the world a better place."

"Today, a wide-range of organizations — from foundations and non-profits to early-stage startups and mature companies — want to make a positive impact on the world and connect with consumers who are looking for organizations with a conscience," Gundlach said.

