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DC LOOKS FOR SPORTS/EVENTS PR

Washington Convention and Sports Authority is looking for one or more firms to help enhance its effort to attract international and national sporting and entertainment events to DC. It also wants to bolster global awareness of its ability to host big events.



The Authority's Events DC arm manages and/or operates the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Carnegie Library at Mt. Vernon Square,

Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium and its surrounding campus, non-military portions of the District of Columbia Armory, Gateway DC, R.I.S.E. Demonstration Center, Nationals Park and the Entertainment and Sports Arena.

DC Events seeks partners to provide full-scale international destination marketing services, which includes communications and logistical services, according to the RFP.

They will have 10 years of experience in promoting international and national sports and entertainment industries.

Staffers will have worked on events such as FIFA World Cup, Olympics, MLB All-Star Game, NFL Draft, NBA All-Star Game, NCAA Final Four and Major League Soccer All-Star Game during the past four years.

Proposals are due Feb. 8

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

MUÑOZ TAKES HELM OF LLYC US

Juan Felipe Muñoz, who served in the cabinet of Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos, joins LLYC as its CEO in the U.S.



Juan Felipe Muñoz

Muñoz was most recently a partner at Britten Co., a Bogotá-based management consulting firm that serves clients in the U.S., Canada and Latin America.

In the Santos cabinet, Muñoz was an image advisor and media consultant, designing digital strategies for the president, his government and the peace process with the FARC, a guerrilla group that battled the Colombian government.

He has also worked with the Mexican Ministry of Tourism on solutions to help the country deal with the negative reputational impacts of the Swine Flu pandemic and drug trafficking crisis.

At LLYC, Muñoz will lead the firm's offices in Miami, Washington D.C., and New York, with the remit of helping the firm grow in the U.S.

BGR GROUP ENLISTS RETIRED GENERAL LUTE

BGR Group has recruited Douglas Lute, retired US Army general, to chair its international and defense practices.

The 45-year military veteran served in both Obama administrations (co-ordinator for South Asia, US NATO ambassador) and the George W. Bush White House (deputy national security advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan).

Bob Wood, BGR Group CEO, said the addition of Lute "adds Democratic heft to our already robust international and defense teams."



Douglas Lute

Lute's wife, Jane Holl Lute, was undersecretary general at the United Nations and deputy security at the Dept. of Homeland Security from 2009 to 2013.

WPP FORGES TIE WITH TIKTOK

WPP has forged what it calls a "first-of-a-kind global agency partnership" with China's TikTok, short-form mobile video platform.

The partnership gives WPP shops early access to advertising products under development at TikTok to ensure they remain at the forefront of innovation as the platform develops a suite of products for brands, according to the ad/PR holding company.

TikTok has agreed to develop a training program for WPP agencies to help them create best-in-class content for the video platform.

WPP owns BCW, Hill+Knowlton Strategies, Finsbury Glover Hering, and Ogilvy.

PRECISION'S WILLIAMS MOVES TO PATAGONIA

Eric Hollister Williams, managing principal at Precision Strategies, has joined Patagonia, the outdoor apparel company with a long record of social responsibility and environmental activism. He will focus on brand, equity and justice issues.

At Precision Strategies, Williams focused on healthcare, energy innovation, climate change and gun violence prevention issues.

Williams also was special projects director at the Hillary for America campaign, foreign policy advisor to California Congresswoman Karen Bass, senior policy associate at Physicians for Human Rights and began his career at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.



Eric Hollister Williams

'CANCEL CULTURE' HITS BRAND TRUST

With “cancel culture” affecting an increasing number of brands, [a new study from Porter Novelli](#) looks at what consumers are trying to achieve when they cancel a brand, and at what companies can do to come back from being canceled.



Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of the 1,004 consumers that PN polled in December said they feel “more empowered than ever before” to share their opinions about a

company’s actions, leadership or spokespeople.

The quality of a brand’s products or services does not protect it from being canceled, the study finds. Two-thirds (66 percent) of survey respondents said that if a company does something wrong or offensive, they would cancel it despite loving its products.

As regards the outcome that consumers hope their cancellation of a company will have, the goal cited the most often is that the company would “change its ways” (38 percent). More than a quarter (27 percent) want to see the canceled company “change policies/stances surrounding political involvement.”

A significant number are also looking for such immediate company actions as firing the person responsible for an offensive statement (26 percent) or dissociating itself from a celebrity or spokesperson who said or did something offensive (22 percent). Only 14 percent said that their aim was for the canceled company to “go away” completely.

Also, despite the continuing growth of cancel culture, more than half of respondents (56 percent) said they had refrained from participating in the practice.

For companies trying to bounce back from being canceled, the survey respondents had a few suggestions. Making a public statement of apology (43 percent) was the top strategy named, with clarifying the situation (41 percent) coming close behind. Just 17 percent thought that making a donation to an associated nonprofit would do any good.

PORT OF SF WANTS MICRO, DIVERSE FIRMS

The Port of San Francisco is seeking qualifications from firms interested in supplying PR, communications, media and other related professional services on an as-needed basis.

Established in 1850, the Port consists of 7½ miles of property along the western side of San Francisco Bay.

The RFQ is restricted to San Francisco-based firms that are certified as micro, local, and diverse business entities.

The Port encourages participation of businesses and residents from the “most disadvantaged communities including Bayview/Hunter’s Point, Chinatown, Mission, South of Market, Tenderloin, Visitacion Valley and Western Addition neighborhoods,” according to the RFP.

Interested firms should “consider the composition of teams in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and race, and utilize teams that include a mix of staff at all organizational levels.”

The Port intends to award up to two contracts with terms of three years and options to extend for an added year.

Qualifications are due Feb. 9. They must be submitted to the city’s portal at <https://sfcitypartner.sfgov.org/>.

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



NEWS OF FIRMS

JConnelly acquires **AdvisorPR**, a Las Vegas-based public relations and marketing company that specializes in working with wealth management firms. AdvisorPR founder Alana Kohl and her team will operate AdvisorPR as a division within JConnelly’s financial practice group. Founded in 2003, JConnelly represents brands in sectors including financial services, technology, entertainment, health and wellness, and food and beverage. “AdvisorPR’s passion for results and innovation fits in well with our overall mission and vision,” said JConnelly president and CEO Ray Hennessey.

Connex, a communications consultancy, joins AMF Media Group, effective Feb. 1. Connex Services will become an offering of AMF. Connex founder and CEO René Siegel will be a partner at AMF Media Group and Shandy Dunn, currently president of Connex, will be president of the Connex Services division of AMF. AMF’s Connex Services will offer B2B and B2C expertise in the tech, healthcare and medical device industries, complementing AMF’s existing focus areas of healthcare, professional services, tourism, nonprofits, education, real estate and government.



Propel of Tel Aviv launches Propel Monitoring 2.0, a platform focused on letting agency PR teams measure share of voice, sentiment, volume over time, volume by tier, and volume by media type. Users of the platform can monitor their brands, competitors or keywords across Twitter, Instagram and Facebook as well as online news sites, blogs, forums, TV channels and radio stations around the world.

GCI Health expands into Japan and India, complementing the agency’s current Asia-Pacific presence in Singapore and Hong Kong. GCI’s Japan offering is being led by Chitose Yamada, who serves as managing director, GCI Japan. She was most recently executive vice president, client experience, healthcare at Weber Shandwick. The agency’s expansion into India is being done via Genesis BCW’s pharma, health & wellness practice, which will become GCI Health India. Current Genesis BCW senior director Hemali Bhutani will be managing director of the unit.

Brodeur Partners CEO Andrea Coville writes “Creating Relevance in a Time of Uncertainty,” which uses new quantitative data, as well as practical cases from Brodeur clients, to shed light on the attitudes and behaviors that are taking shape to solve the nation’s pressing problems. The book looks at customer mindsets, clusters of relevance, multicultural tribes, Gen Z perspectives and social media’s influence, as well as examining business leaders’ confidence in the Biden presidency. To pre-order the book, [click here](#).

R&CPMK acquires brand experience and sponsorship agency **Advantage**. Advantage’s creative, production, experiential, sponsorship consulting and event marketing divisions will now operate under the R&CPMK name. The move will also bring together R&CPMK’s existing creative services division with Advantage’s Creative Studio. Executive creative director and senior vice president Jaime Cabrera will oversee R&CPMK’s new Creative Studio. Victoria Greene, executive vice president, brand growth and experiential, will lead the agency’s brand experience team, which will focus on sponsorship consulting and experiential marketing.



CSR: A NEW FRONTIER FOR CRISIS COMMS

As the past year has made abundantly clear, the public is increasingly looking to companies and organizations to speak out on critical social, political and environmental issues.



Lucy O'Brien

The Black Lives Matter protests last summer showed how a thoughtful statement can go a long way, while remaining silent can turn out to be a statement in and of itself. At the same time, the COVID-19 crisis reinforced the importance of community stewardship, with organizations of all kinds expected to be public-facing and compassionate as their stakeholders face moments of extraordinary hardship.

All of this demonstrates that having a plan in place to decide when and how to communicate company values and commitments is a matter of crisis communications risk management.

Such a policy fits well into the rapidly growing area of Corporate Social Responsibility, broadly defined as the way companies integrate social, environmental and economic concerns into their values, culture, strategy and operations.

As companies are increasingly recognized as members of the communities in which they operate, they must see that their long-term success depends on continued good relationships with these communities. It's not just about shareholder value and short-term profits anymore.

Statements can't be released on a whim but must instead be rooted in a sturdy foundation of company culture. Companies should adopt a CSR policy that serves as a framework for conduct and communication within the company and the many communities it serves.

To those in the crisis communications field, this should sound very familiar. The core of any effective crisis communication program lies in anticipating possible crises and preparing a plan for an efficient, effective response so that a company can avoid having a situation grow out of control.

Just like other areas of crisis communications planning, it's crucial to have a communications plan in place with an efficient approval process for statements and other media activity. Therefore, a CSR policy must not only make a company's values explicit and concrete, but also guide when and how the company speaks out when a social issue is grabbing headlines.

That means knowing the answers to these key questions ahead of time:

Who decides when an issue has escalated to the point that a statement is needed?

Who drafts the statement?

Whose approval is needed before releasing the statement?

As with any good crisis communications plan, a CSR policy should be supported by representatives from many different areas of a company, from senior leadership to corporate communications to the legal team. This ensures that the policy will have the resources it needs to succeed and that the words in the policy are backed by substance.

Finally, as with a good crisis communications plan, a good CSR policy must be flexible and open to constant improvement. This means an ongoing cycle of assessing current CSR activities and identifying new targets and goals, creating a plan to efficiently and effectively improve and then evaluating to ensure that the policy is working.

Crisis communications plans are often in danger of being forgotten in a binder that collects dust on the shelf, leaving companies vulnerable to chaos and confusion when the inevitable crisis hits. Similarly, CSR policies that don't go beyond an empty mission statement drafted and forgotten will be weak and ineffective.

As the public looks to companies to speak on fast-paced current events, a streamlined crisis communications-style approach must be incorporated to make sure that companies say the right thing at the right time. If no such plan is in place, companies risk reputational damage for tone-deaf comments, empty statements or radio silence.

Lucy O'Brien is a Senior Account Executive at PRCG | Haggerty LLC, a leading crisis and litigation communications firm headquartered in New York.

DIGITAL MEDIA USE SURGED IN 2020

U.S. adults last year spent an additional hour more per day on digital devices than they did in 2019, [according to a recent forecast](#) by digital market research company eMarketer.

eMarketer's forecast, which analyzed current digital media penetration time in the U.S., found that U.S. adults spent an average of seven hours and fifty minutes consuming digital media per day in 2020, up 59 minutes from the time they spent consuming digital media in 2019.

The average amount of time Americans spent consuming digital media daily in 2020 accounted for more than half (57.5 percent) of the time they spent consuming all media per day.

The findings shouldn't be surprising, considering the COVID-19 pandemic drove a media consumption surge in the U.S., as more Americans found themselves isolating at home in light of social distancing measures and turning to media—particularly, digital news outlets and social media platforms—for coronavirus-related updates. eMarketer's latest findings now contradict [a previous, pre-pandemic eMarketer report](#) released in 2019 which suggested that the total amount of time Americans spend with media had essentially plateaued.



Average time spent by U.S. adults on social networks in 2020 was an hour and five minutes, according to eMarketer, up from 56 minutes in 2019. Americans spent most of their time on Facebook, followed by Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and Twitter.

Average digital video time stood at two hours and thirteen minutes, up from an hour and forty-six minutes the year prior. As in years past, a majority of this time was spent on Netflix, followed by YouTube, Hulu, Amazon Prime and Disney+.

Americans' digital audio time on Internet music providers like Spotify and Pandora accounted for an hour and twenty-nine minutes in 2020, up from 2019's one hour and twenty-two minutes.

eMarketer predicts that Americans' total digital device time is on track to add an additional seven minutes this year (to 7:57) and will surpass eight hours (8:02) for the first time by the end of 2022, accounting for more than 60 percent of adults' daily media time.

Research for eMarketer's forecast was provided by the company's company information service unit Insider Intelligence.

JERSEY GOV'S DIGITAL GURU GABEL TO KIVVIT

Kivvit has hired Pearl Gabel, Jersey Governor Phil Murphy's digital maven, as director of brand strategy and integration.



Pearl Gabel

She is known for an innovative and witty approach to social media. After kicking off New Jersey's official Twitter site in 2019, Gabel responded to the question, "Who let New Jersey have a Twitter?," with, "Your Mom." That tweet generated 475K likes and global media attention.

"Pearl Gabel has worked tirelessly to transform our social media and digital presence — making it more accessible, more engaging, and more Jersey," said Murphy in a statement.

Before crossing the Hudson, Gabel was New York mayor Bill DeBlasio's director of video. She has worked as writer, photographer and video producer for the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Daily News*, NBC News, and Reuters.

[Kivvit ranked No. 15 on O'Dwyer's rankings](#) of independent PR firms with \$33M fees in 2019.

FINN READIES FOR POST-COVID TRAVEL PR

[Finn Partners](#) has established a travel practice advisory board to marshal its global health, tech, sustainability and PA resources to support travel clients as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The independent firm has recruited Taleb Rifai and David Scowsill as the founding advisors.

Rifai was secretary general of the World Tourism Organization from 2009 to 2018. He also led Jordan's first economic mission to the US, fostering trade and investments, and went on to become the country's Minister of Information.

Scowsill did a seven-year stint as president/CEO of the World Travel & Tourism Council after posts at British Airways, American Airlines and Hilton.

Peter Finn said Rifai and Scowsill will provide invaluable insights for the firm and its clients "as we navigate our way through one of the most challenging periods in our history."

[Finn Partners is No. 2 in O'Dwyer's rankings](#) of travel & economic development PR with fees of \$12.5M in 2019.

APCO SNAGS BCW'S LICY DO CANTO

[APCO Worldwide](#) has tabbed Licy Do Canto to serve as managing director of its Washington, D.C. office. Do Canto comes to APCO from BCW, where he served as executive vice president and managing director in the agency's public affairs and crisis practice.



Licy Do Canto

Before that, he was founder and president of The Do Canto Group, a bipartisan public affairs and communications firm. Do Canto succeeds Evan Kraus, who will continue to serve as APCO's global president and managing director of operations, as well as lead for the Mid-Atlantic region.

"Licy is a strategic leader with a proven track record—at the national, state and local levels—of developing and executing integrated campaigns," said APCO North America president Kelly Williamson.

MARYLAND SEEKS DIABETES AWARENESS PR

Maryland's Dept. of Health is looking for a firm to design a logo and conduct a digital media campaign for its Diabetes Action Plan to reduce the disease's prevalence in the state.

The Dept. looks to generate awareness of programs designed to manage diabetes. It wants to encourage behavior changes such as adopting a healthy lifestyle, taking an online screening test for type 2 diabetes and talking to a doctor.

The Dept. plans to spend \$50K for the diabetes outreach campaign, which begins Feb. 15 and runs through June.

Proposals are due Feb. 4. They go to: Robert Bruce; Chief Operations Officer; Prevention and Health Promotion Administration; 201 W. Preston Street, Room 320B; Baltimore, MD 21201; robert.bruce@maryland.gov

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

E. BRUCE HARRISON DIES AT 88

E. Bruce Harrison, who co-founded with his wife, Patricia, one of the most successful PR firms dedicated to environmental communications, died Jan. 16.

The "Dean of Green PR," whom the late Harold Burson praised as "among the most able of PA counselors specializing in the environment," was 88.

Harrison made his mark in 1962 as PR director of the Chemical Manufacturers of America when he spearheaded a counterattack on Rachel Carson's classic, "Silent Spring," which outlined the harmful effects that pesticides, especially DDT, have on the environment.

In 1973, Harrison helped launch E. Bruce Harrison & Co. to counsel corporate clients about environmental issues.

He sold E. Bruce Harrison & Co. to Ruder Finn in 1997. At the time of sale, E. Bruce Harrison & Co.'s client list included General Motors, BP America, and Monsanto.

Harrison wrote the ground-breaking "Going Green" book in 1992, an early title on sustainable business communications. He followed up with "Corporate Greening 2.0" in 2008.

He also contributed to the [O'Dwyer publications](#).



E. Bruce Harrison

DKC'S CANNING RETURNS TO OPM

Chris Canning, who did a five-year stint at DKC Public Affairs, has returned to the Office of Personnel Management as chief of staff.

As executive VP at DKC, Canning handled clients in policy communications, advocacy, community engagement and crisis management.

At OPM, he will be responsible for day-to-day management of its workforce, operations and external affairs.

Prior to joining DKC, he was a senior advisor at the OPM, focusing on human capital management policy, background investigations, and the administration of employee benefits for the federal government.

Earlier, he held senior roles at the Democratic National Committee, worked on president Barack Obama's reelection campaign and was director of scheduling for former DC mayor Anthony Williams.



Chris Canning

ULSTER COUNTY SEEKS PR FOR 'GREEN DEAL'

New York's Ulster County has issued an RFP to promote its "Green Deal Initiative," a partnership with solar power facilities to provide electricity to its residents.



The PR firm will "foster public understanding and trust in the community distributed generation model, provide transparent pricing and agreement terms to residents, and support development of locally sited, renewable electricity generation sites" as part of Ulster's green push, according to the RFP.

It will work closely with the County to coordinate messaging, events and activities and will implement a community marketing and education campaign. The 12-week push will begin in April.

Proposals for the "Community Solar Campaign Partnership (RFP-UC21-005) are due Feb. 12. They go to: Ulster County Purchasing Dept.; Ulster County Office Building; 244 Fair St. 3rd Floor; PO Box 1800; Kingston, NY 12402

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

AIG RECRUITS RIPLEY

American International Group hires Dana Ripley as vice president, global head of media & external communications, a newly created role. Ripley joins AIG from 12A Consulting, where he was founder and chief communications officer.



Dana Ripley

He was previously chief communications officer at U.S. Bank; senior vice president, corporate communications at Voya Financial; and director of media relations at Jackson National Life Distributors.

In his new post, Ripley focus on articulating and communicating AIG's strategy and value proposition to external stakeholders. "He will play a critical role in all aspects of our strategic communications efforts," said AIG executive vice president, general counsel & global head of communications and government affairs Lucy Fato.

BLUELIGHT SAYS 'SHALOM' TO SHALOM CORPS

Bluelight Strategies is supplying strategic communications services to Israel-based Shalom Corps, which aims to provide COVID-19 vaccines to Holocaust survivors.

The DC firm's agreement calls for raising the awareness of the Shalom Corps among "liberal and institutionally-disconnected North American Jews under the age of 40."

It will connect Shalom Corps with professional fundraisers "who will appeal to appropriate Jewish family foundations and to conduct high-dollar fundraising, as well as lower-dollar fundraising through electronic appeals and direct mail" with the goal of generating \$10M in donations.

Shalom Corps is a project of the Ministry of the Diaspora of the Government of Israel, the Jewish Agency for Israel, and Mosaic United.

Its mission is to recruit volunteers for social responsibility work to help them connect with their Jewish identity.

Bluelight's one-month contract kicked off Jan. 12. It will receive a fee of \$15K and an additional \$15K outlay for development, fundraising and liaison to foundations.

MEDIA MANEUVERS

Marty Baron announces that he is retiring from the executive editor slot at the *Washington Post*, effective Feb. 28. Baron has presided over a period of both critical acclaim and financial growth for the paper. Under his management, the Post has won 10 Pulitzers, the number of news staffers has grown from 580 to over 1,000, and its digital-only subscriber base has jumped by close to a million over the past year, currently coming in at more than 3 million. Baron joined the Post in 2013 after a decade-plus tenure as executive editor at the *Boston Globe*, where he oversaw its Pulitzer-winning coverage of the Roman Catholic Church's sexual abuse scandal.



Marty Baron

Joe Ricketts, who owned news sites DNAinfo and Gothamist, is getting back into the journalism business. Ricketts, the founder of TD Ameritrade, is starting up Straight Arrow News, an Omaha-based outlet that says it will produce bias-free coverage. A longtime contributor to Republican candidates, Ricketts says he thinks there's a "business opportunity" for news with no professed slant.

WGN America is also jumping on the "fact-based and unbiased" news bandwagon with its rebrand as NewsNation. Set to relaunch on March 1, NewsNation will be available in 75 million homes, thanks to new carriage deals that increased its reach by 8.5 million households. NewsNation will also add two hours of live programming to its Monday-to-Friday broadcast schedule. WGN America was acquired by local TV station chain Nexstar in 2019 as part of its \$4.1 billion purchase of Tribune Media.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Coyne Public Relations lands **MDLIVE**, a national telehealth provider. Coyne PR will support MDLIVE with consumer awareness, media relations, thought leadership, corporate communications and social media. The collaboration kicked off in November 2020. MDLIVE serves over 60 million members nationwide through major health plans, hospitals and employers.

Xhibition signs up **Penderyn Distillery** in Wales, UK. Xhibition will oversee Penderyn's releases of single malt whiskies in the USA, launch a new distillery in Llandudno this spring, and publicize the company's "coming of age" 21st anniversary in the American market. Production at Penderyn Distillery commenced in September of 2000, launching the rebirth of the whisky industry in Wales, which had been dormant for more than 100 years.

Pazanga Healthcare Communications adds **Cytovale**, **Epica Human Health**, **Eyenovia** and **Viz.ai** to its client roster. The agency will support the clients with programming elements ranging from brand positioning and messaging and brand design to content development, digital marketing, and traditional and social media. The clients' market areas include life sciences for early Sepsis detection (Cytovale), high-definition multi-modality mobile imaging (Epica Human Health), ophthalmic biopharmaceuticals (Eyenovia) and AI-driven synchronized stroke detection and care coordination (Viz.ai).



COMMENTARY



President Biden has hit the ground running on the trust front, according to an Axios/Ipsos poll conducted Jan. 22-25.

Fifty percent of Americans now have a great or fair amount of trust that the federal government will provide accurate information about the COVID-19 virus.

That's up 40 percent from the waning weeks of the Trump administration.

More specifically, 58 percent trust Biden for accurate information compared to 27 percent who believe Trump.

Biden has now upped the ante, saying he expects to vaccinate 1.5M Americans per day, up from his original 1M goal. He is promising "herd immunity" by the summer. How about shooting for the Fourth of July?

89-year-old media mogul Rupert Murdoch has been quiet of late, laying low at his Cotswold estate in England during the raging pandemic.

But Roaring Rupert re-emerged via video on Jan. 23, attacking "cancel culture," which is a pet subject.

He said the media must confront "a wave of censorship that seeks to silence conversation to stifle debate, to ultimately stop individuals and societies from realizing their full potential."

Murdoch went on to say social media is creating a "rigidly enforced conformity," which serves as a "straitjacket on sensibility." He said, "freedom of speech is being suppressed by this awful woke orthodoxy."

On cue, Rupert's *New York Post* published a front-page op-ed by Missouri Senator Josh Hawley, who tried to "cancel" the election, urging readers to "take a stand on the muzzling of America."

Give us a break.

Hawley is far from a freedom-of-speech warrior. He's a rank opportunist who used the fantasy of a "stolen election" in an effort to disenfranchise fellow Americans and advance his political dream of moving into the White House.

Forget about cancelling Hawley; the Post should not have given the Senator a high-profile platform in the first place.

McKinsey & Co. could use a good consultant... Vladimir Putin's decision to jail Alexei Navalny, his top political opponent, triggered demonstrations throughout Russia by people upset with the regime's massive corruption and theft.

There was one oasis of calm in Moscow, which was Ground Zero of the protests. That was the office of management consultant McKinsey & Co.

Vitaly Klintsov, Russia managing partner at McKinsey, warned staffers ahead of the demonstration "to stay away from public areas of gathering" and to "refrain from making related posts in any media."

The *Financial Times* took McKinsey to task for kowtowing before Putin. Klintsov's note could have been written by Kremlin propagandists or the security services, wrote Henry Foy in the FT on Jan. 27.

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) wrote a Jan. 24 letter to Kevin

Sneader, McKinsey's global managing partner, saying the Russia episode "raises questions about McKinsey's core values and corporate culture."

McKinsey has walked back Klintsov's note, saying employees have the right to participate "legally" in civic and political activities.

But that's not good enough for Rubio, who wrote that the initial guidance sent to Russian staffers "suggests the company is little more than a tool for authoritarian repression."

Rubio wrote that "by siding with, and enabling, brutal authoritarian regimes that suppress the most basic rights of its people, McKinsey continues to fall short of its stated purpose 'to help create positive, enduring change in the world.'"

The Senator is concerned about McKinsey's work for the US government.

He wrote: "It is unclear why the US Government or any democratic government with whom your firm works, should accept that McKinsey's work maintains the high standards that you claim."

Rubio awaits a response.

Rudy Giuliani also has authoritarianism on his mind. YouTube has suspended former president Donald Trump's personal lawyer from its ad revenue sharing program for his role in pushing the fantasy that the presidential election was stolen.

Once known as "America's Mayor," Rudy now hawks dietary supplements, online fraud prevention services and video gems such as "The Biden Crime Family's Payoff Scheme," and "Election Theft of the Century" on YouTube.

The one-month suspension cuts Rudy off from any revenues from ads that YouTube places before his videos.

Rudy blasted YouTube's move as predatory and noted: "It's a very, very seductive road to authoritarianism."

Giuliani probably could use the YouTube cash after Trump reportedly stiffed him on his legal fees and Dominion Voting Systems filed a \$1.3B lawsuit against him for making damaging claims that it manipulated the election.

COVID-19 may sack enthusiasm for the Super Bowl, according to the Seton Hall Sports Poll released Jan. 27.

Nearly half (47 percent) of respondents agree that COVID-19 restrictions on players, gameplay and restricted fan attendance will make the upcoming game less exciting than in previous contests. Twenty-eight percent disagree and the rest have no opinion.

COVID-19 has killed Super Bowl watch parties as only a quarter of fans plan to view the game outside their home, according to the survey. Sixty-four percent will watch from home.

"Viewership may be down because social gatherings bring out even the least casual fans," predicted professor Charles Grantham, director of Seton Hall's Center for Sports Management.

He does believe the Super Bowl "remains a vital part of the American experience."

Go Chiefs! Beat Tom Brady.

—Kevin McCauley