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# O'Dwyer's

The Inside News of Public Relations  
& Marketing Communications [odwyerpr.com](http://odwyerpr.com)

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## **LINCOLN CENTER'S TIMMS TO LEAD BRUNSWICK**

Brunswick Group has announced that Henry Timms, CEO of New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, will succeed CEO Neal Wolin, who held the post since 2018.



**Henry Timms**

Brunswick credits Timms for guiding Lincoln Center through a period of transformation, re-vamping its campus and making programming more accessible to diverse audiences.

He stepped up and completed fundraising for the \$550M David Geffen Hall project.

Prior to Lincoln Center, Timms was president/CEO of the 92nd Street Y, a cultural hub in Manhattan; and co-founder of the "Giving Tuesday" philanthropic movement that raised \$13B worldwide since its 2012 launch.

Wolin will remain at the helm until the summer when he transitions to the vice chairman post to focus on boosting client relationships via a perch in Washington.

Brunswick also upped UK managing partner Tom Burns to the COO post. He takes over for Helen James who has decided to quit after a handover period to Burns.

## **PR STILL LAGS AT OMNICOM**

Omnicom's PR group posted another down quarter as organic revenues slipped 2.9 percent to \$417M during Q4.

The Ketchum, Marina Maher Communications, Portland, Porter Novelli and [FleishmanHillard](http://FleishmanHillard.com) group declined 5.5 percent organically during Q3 and 0.2 percent for all of 2023.



**John Wren**

In a sharp contrast to PR, the advertising & media group chalked up 9.3 percent in Q4 organic growth to \$2.3B and a 6.5 percent advance for the full year.

Overall, OMC CEO John Wren reported a 4.4 percent spurt in Q4 organic growth to \$4.1B and a 4.1 percent jump to \$14.7B for 2023.

Continental Europe, which generated 20.4 percent of Q4 revenues, was OMC's star regional performer as it rose 14.1 percent to \$829M on an organic basis.

The US (47.8 percent of revenues) grew 0.6 percent (on a reported and organic basis) to \$1.9B during the quarter. Asia Pacific (12.9 percent of revenues) was up 10.9 percent. The UK (10.4 percent of revenues) grew 5.8 percent.

## **DISNEY WORLD GOVERNMENT SEEKS PR**

The Central Florida Tourism Oversight District, which was created by governor Ron DeSantis in 2023 as the governing body for Walt Disney World, is collecting proposals for strategic communications work.

Florida's legislature approved the set-up of CFTOD on Feb. 23 to supersede the Reedy Creek Improvement District, which had a board that was controlled by Disney's board.

CFTOD, which covers nearly 40 square miles, is an outgrowth of Disney's high-profile spat with DeSantis over its opposition to Florida's "Don't Say Gay" law.

The RFP calls for a firm to increase CFTOD's brand awareness and share its messaging with community stakeholders, new potential partnerships, governmental officials, and the media.

The selected communications partner will develop a high-impact PR strategy based upon the task assigned, departmental needs, and cost-saving tools, and media opportunities available, according to the RFP.

Proposals are due Feb. 15 at the [PlanetBids](http://PlanetBids.com) [electronic portal](http://PlanetBids.com).

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



## **H&K'S GLOBAL PA CHAIR SHIFTS TO TENEO**

Phillipe Maze-Sancier, who is global public affairs chair at Hill & Knowlton, will join Teneo in France as president on April 2.

Based in Brussels, Maze-Sancier has counseled H&K clients across Europe, Asia and North America, and launched its geopolitical advisory.

He exits H&K ahead of its merger with BCW to create Burson.

Prior to H&K, Maze-Sancier was managing director with McLarty Associates in Washington and Brussels, focused on EU and transatlantic affairs. He also was executive director for government relations at [APCO Worldwide](http://APCOWorldwide.com).

At Teneo, Maze-Sancier succeeds Olivier Jay, who will remain honorary chair and senior managing director.



**Phillippe Maze-Sancier**

## CHARLOTTE WANTS TO PROMOTE ITS TREES

Charlotte, known as “The City of Trees,” wants to promote the work of its landscape management unit and educate residents about the benefits stemming from an urban forest. The city views its tree canopy as its most recognized and treasured natural resource, according to the RFP.



The selected firm will boost the profile and brand awareness of the City of Trees and network with partners to advance

Charlotte’s urban forestry efforts.

Charlotte wants messaging across media channels to create emotional connections to its landscape.

The communications partner will educate people about trees in their neighborhoods so they can extend that knowledge to care for the trees in their own green spaces.

Charlotte plans to issue a three-year contract with options to renew for two one-year periods.

Responses are due Feb. 19 at the [bonfire e-portal](#).

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

## INTERPUBLIC POSTS 1.3% Q4 GROWTH

Interpublic CEO Philippe Krakowsky reported Q4 total revenues rose 1.3 percent to \$3B, while operating income soared 36.5 percent to \$606.8M.

He said IPG’s robust performance in its healthcare, specialty marketing services and media group was tempered by uncertainties and challenges faced by its technology clients.



**Philippe Krakowsky**

He projects full-year 1-2 percent organic growth, which would top the 0.1 percent decline in 2023.

IPG’s specialized communications, sports, entertainment & experiential solutions division showed 3.8 percent Q4 growth to \$370M, up 2.9 percent on an organic basis.

For the full-year, the specialized communications group registered

\$1.4B revenues, which was up 3.9 percent on a reported basis and 4.1 percent organically.

## FGS, COLLECTED STRATEGIES REP DOOR DEAL

FGS Global represents Owens Corning as it announced a \$3.9B deal to acquire Masonite International, a leading supplier of doors for the remodeling and new construction markets.

Founded in 1925, Masonite, which uses Collected Strategies for financial PR, operates 64 manufacturing and distribution facilities, primarily in North America.



Owens Corning views Masonite as “a new growth platform” that strengthens its position in the residential building materials arena.

Howard Heckes, CEO of Masonite, said the deal “brings together two storied companies with a common focus on innovation.”

Owens Corning’s \$133 per share offer for Masonite shows a 38 percent premium from its Feb. 8 closing stock price.

FGS Global has Jared Levy, Niel Golightly and Dan Goldstein representing Owens Corning.

Collected Strategies’ Masonite team includes Jude Gorman, Tali Epstein and Jim Golden.

## NEWS OF FIRMS

**Real Chemistry** acquires **Avant Healthcare**, a medical communications company that provides solutions spanning engagement across the entire drug commercialization lifecycle, including medical affairs, promotional medical education, scientific strategy and consulting and speaker development and management. Financial terms of the acquisition, which closed on Feb. 1, were not disclosed. Avant’s team will become part of Real Chemistry’s Medical group. Its current leadership team will remain with the firm, with Avant chief customer officer and president Trina Stonner, RN, MSN, co-leading Real Chemistry’s Medical group with Suzanne Jacobs, who leads Real Chemistry’s current medical team and is based in London.



**Berk Communications** launches its inaugural Pro Bono program. Berk will invest \$100,000 in public relations services for this year’s program, which will emphasize public relations services for emerging companies and entrepreneurs, including those from under-represented groups as well as those giving back and positively contributing to the communities they serve. Agency executives will work with the participants to create a tailored public relations program. The five-month program, led by VP of consumer lifestyle & sports Laura Kepus and senior account director of entertainment & social justice Arianne Antonio, will formally kick off in April.

**Chris Willard Communications**, a San Francisco-based strategic communications consulting firm offering hourly consulting, narrative development, launch campaigns, media training and crisis communications services, is being started up by former Warner Bros. Discovery SVP, streaming communications Chris Willard. Before his post at Warner Bros. Discovery, Willard was SVP, communications, direct-to-consumer at HBO Max and he served as director of corporate affairs for HBO.

**NP Digital** finalizes its acquisition of creative and branding agency **REBL House**. REBL House, which was founded in 2014, will now be the in-house creative division of NP Digital, providing brand development, influencer marketing, creative strategy and full-service video, photo, audio, and graphic & motion production. NP Digital Canada led the acquisition from Quebec, further positioning it for growth in the Quebec market.



**MINERBA Comunicacion Corporativa**, a corporate communications firm headquartered in Buenos Aires, Argentina, is elected to partnership in PROI Worldwide, a consortium of communications agencies with 90 partners in 65 countries. MINERBA, which also operates in Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay, offers services including crisis and issues management, corporate reputation, internal communications, influencer relations and focus groups.

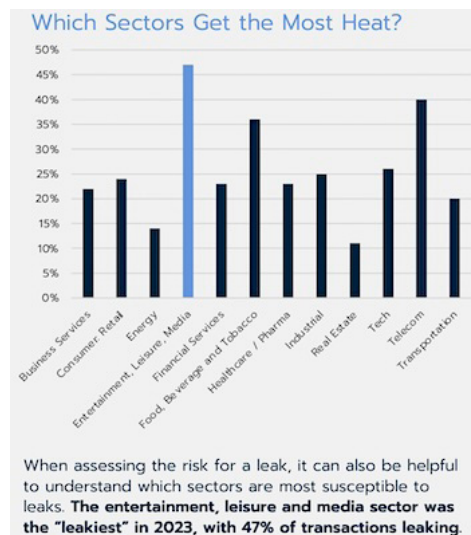
**The Museum of Public Relations** elects Jano Cabrera, was previously SVP of corporate relations for McDonald’s and worldwide vice president of Burson Cohn and Wolfe; Juan-Carlos Molleda, dean of the School of Journalism and Communications at the University of Oregon; and Art Stevens, managing partner of [The Stevens Group](#), to its board of directors, bringing the number of board members to 21.



## M&A DEALS SHOW SIGNS OF LIFE

While the number of M&A deals fell considerably overall in 2023, the number of those deals—and the leaks having to do with them—started an upward climb in the second half of the year, according to a report just released by H/Advisors Abernathy.

The H/Advisors Abernathy 2024 M&A Leaks Report found that 405 deals valued at \$1 billion or more were announced in 2023—an 18.5 percent drop from the 497 that took place in 2022. However, the report says that 25 percent more deals were announced in the second half of the year



leak-prone than others. Almost half (47 percent) of the deals valued at \$5 billion or more reported a leak last year, which the report says represents a 21 percent jump from 2022.

An increase in divestitures and spin-offs was accompanied by a higher incidence of leaks as well. Nearly a third (30 percent) of divestitures leaked in 2023, as opposed to 22 percent for transactions that involved the sale of an entire company.

Private equity deals were also slightly more likely to leak than the overall number—27 percent, compared to the overall 24 percent figure.

When it comes to where the most leaks show up, social media was the biggest source, accounting for 74 percent of what the report’s authors call “total reach” (an estimate of how many individuals may have seen a piece of content). Social media was also responsible for half of all online mentions.

The most leak-likely sector? Entertainment, leisure and media, where 47 percent of transactions leaked. Telecom and food, beverage and tobacco were the next most likely to experience a leak, and real estate was the sector least likely to experience one.

The report has some advice for how stakeholders can control a leak. One, getting out ahead of any media leak is essential. “It’s critical to plan for a potential leak well in advance of due diligence and announcement day,” the report says. “Comprehensive preparation and close coordination coupled with a strong narrative and plan for communicating with key stakeholders continues to be the best way to position dealmakers for a successful announcement.”

The H/Advisors Abernathy study looked at deals where at least one of the parties to the deal is based in the US. A “leak” was defined as a deal-related media mention of bidder and/or target company names prior to company disclosure of deal negotiations.

## O'DWYER'S RANKINGS DEADLINE IS MAR. 11

The deadline for O'Dwyer's 2024 rankings of PR firms, a benchmark study of the growth of the industry annually since 1970, is Mon., Mar. 11, 2024.

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

New this year is a separate ranking for agencies specializing in public affairs, which O'Dwyer's defines as work done for a client to affect legislation on either the federal, state or local level.

Previously, public affairs fees was combined with the “environmental” specialty ranking.

“We’re answering the call of many firms interested in showcasing their increasing volume of public affairs counseling,” publisher John O'Dwyer said.

Show your expertise in areas such as [healthcare](#), [technology](#), [finance](#), [environmental](#), [professional services](#) and [purpose/CSR](#), to name a few of the now 21 specialties tracked. Only O'Dwyer's does such rankings, which are usually at or near the top in Google searches for those specialties.

Rankings are also tabulated by 15 cities and regions, including [New York](#), [San Francisco](#), [Chicago](#) and [Washington, D.C.](#) Regional rankings showcase firms in the [west](#), [south-east](#) and [midwest](#).

A total of 148 firms took part in last year's rankings.

### Rankings Rules

PR firms have distinctive financials—at least half of income is used for staff pay. Therefore, O'Dwyer's requires the top page of the latest corporate income tax return and W-3 to verify legitimate PR firms rather than ad agencies or other types of businesses. The ranking measures counseling and media contact services, not advertising or production expenses.

“Even if the tax return is on a cash basis and financials on accrual, we like to see the return as an added check that a CPA has been used,” O'Dwyer stressed.

Net fee income by location and specialties should have been accumulated all year, by month and presented to a CPA.

The CPA firm should have minimal work to do, just a top-side review. Ranking instructions disclaim responsibility for the numbers by the CPA firm.

“PR firms looking to reach out to prospects who visit O'Dwyer's website every day to research outside PR counsel should consider joining the rankings,” O'Dwyer said.

[Rank Your Firm with O'Dwyer's -- Instructions \(PDF\)](#)

## WEBER WRAPS UP BAHAMAS TOURISM WORK

Weber Shandwick wrapped up its work for the Ministry of Bahamas at the end of 2023. The account was worth about \$950K for the Interpublic unit during the past year.

For the Ministry, the firm responded to media requests, monitored trends affecting international travel, drafted press releases/statements, handled crisis situations and arranged fam trips for reporters and social influencers.

The US State Dept. on Jan. 26 issued a Level 2 (exercise increased caution) travel advisory for The Bahamas due to violent crime and gang-on-gang violence.

It also advised tourists against renting recreational watercraft because jet skis and water vessels are poorly maintained and not regulated.



## TEXAS A&M SEEKS PR FOR PERFORMING ARTS

Texas A&M University is seeking communications, marketing, and advertising pitches for its OPAS organization that supports performing arts programming.



# OPAS

Based in College Station, Texas A&M has more than 70K students.

Founded in 1972, the OPAS is a very dynamic and diverse organization that includes approximately 300 student and community volunteers.

Texas A&M requires marketing support to insure that OPAS, its programs and their combined message are reaching the greatest potential audience, thus providing the highest potential ticket sales, according to the RFP.

It is looking for PR to cover image-building, branding, content development, media relations, outreach to target audiences, social media activity and website maintenance. Texas A&M wants its OPAS communications partner to be in place by next month.

Proposals are due Feb. 19. They go to: Texas A&M University; Procurement Services; P. O. Box 30013; College Station, TX 77842-3013

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

## COGENT STRATEGIES FILES \$300K IRAQ PACT

Cogent Strategies has filed a one-year \$300K to provide PR services to Iraq's US embassy. The pact, which went into effect Jan. 10, replaces an earlier contract that was pegged at \$200K per-annum.



Cogent, which was launched by [Podesta Group chief Kimberley Fritts in November 2017 after that firm imploded](#), promotes the embassy's priorities in the policy community and conducts outreach to think tanks.

The firm also monitors the US press, handles social media activities and works to boost the profile of Iraq's ambassador Nazar Al Khirullah.

He presided over a Jan. 22 seminar entitled "Twenty Years of Challenge and Achievement: The Iraqis' Journey Toward Democracy."

## RNC CHIEF OF STAFF REED TO CORNERSTONE

Mike Reed, who has been chief of staff at the RNC since February 2022 and was termed a "calm and steady hand" by RNC chairwoman Ronna McDaniel, is bailing out of the organization to join the public affairs practice of Cornerstone, a bipartisan government relations and public affairs firm.



Mike Reed

Cornerstone also brought on former DNC chief of staff Hyma Moore in November 2023.

At the RNC, Reed oversaw the digital, data, fundraising, political, legal and communications departments of the organization.

He previously served as communications director for former Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal and founded River Delta Strategies, a communications and research firm.

McDaniel has offered to step down from her post, but Reed says that did not affect his decision to leave the RNC. He wrote in a memo to staff obtained by the *New York Times* that "it is just time for a change."

## ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

**Allied Global Marketing** boards **Holland America Line**. The firm will work with HAL to secure partnerships and collaborations focused on enhancing connections to the brand's audience. The first two partnerships of the agency relationship launched in Fall 2023—HAL's naming of Allied Global Marketing client, Chef Masaharu Morimoto, as "Fresh Fish Ambassador" for its Global Fresh Fish Program and a partnership with Vital Choice, which offers wild caught fish & seafood. "We found their industry expertise, innovative approach, and creative insights to be the perfect fit for us," said HAL CMO Kacy Cole.



**Ditto PR** forms new partnerships with crypto companies **Upshot** and **Core DAO**. Ditto will be leading the communications strategy for Upshot, a decentralized AI platform that is employing crowdsourcing infrastructure and machine learning models to establish a scalable and self-improving network of collective machine intelligence. For Core DAO, which is working on a Bitcoin-powered Layer 1 blockchain, Ditto will leverage its media relationships to highlight the company's advancements and milestones, further establishing it as a technological frontrunner in the blockchain space. "Our partnerships with Upshot and Core DAO exemplify our dedication to elevating the voices of those at the cutting edge of technology," said Ditto PR VP and head of crypto Molly Glennon.

**W Communications** is appointed agency of record in North America for media brand Secret Media Network. W's team will drive exposure for the brand across the US trade and consumer markets, with a regional focus on SecretNYC, an online guide to going out in New York City. Its efforts will include brand-building campaigns, partnerships and media relations. The appointment follows W's extended work with the live-entertainment discovery platform Fever.

**IMAGINE PR** lands North American PR duties for Stanley Safaris, a luxury tour operator offering safaris in Africa. The agency will be providing integrated public relations, digital marketing and brand partnerships. Specific areas include: strategic communications counsel, media relations, event planning and execution, and social media content and strategy. Imagine will also lead media familiarization trips and tours. Partnering with personally vetted, independently owned boutique safari camps, lodges, hotels, and villas, Stanley Safaris also has a strong commitment to local community and conservation projects.



**Leach Advisors**, a brand management and strategic communications firm, is selected by **North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives** to produce the not-for-profit organization's annual Economic Impact Report. Leach Advisors' services include research, content creation and creative design to produce the organization's first annual reporting on economic development. Leach Advisors brand strategist Liz Savery and art director Finn Winterson will lead project management and creative services for this assignment, respectively. North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives support the state's 26 local electric cooperatives.



## **FIREARMS POLICY COALITION SEEKS PR**

The Firearms Policy Coalition, Las Vegas-based “next-generation” advocacy group that works to restore the essential right to keep and bear arms in the US, wants proposals from PR/media relations firms.



According to its website, FPC wants to “eliminate bans on the acquisition, possession, moral use, and disposition of firearms and parts necessary to an essential scope and capability of the right to keep and bear arms.”

FPC plans to award a one-year contract to a PR partner that can capture opportunity by being the first-mover of information and media engagement.

The selected firm will draft and distribute FPC-approved press releases with appropriate messaging and stakeholder quotes to promote awareness of FPC’s values, policy positions, work products and significant events and developments in litigation, legislative/regulatory actions or other significant news.

Proposals are due Feb. 21 at [corporate@fpchq.org](mailto:corporate@fpchq.org).  
[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

## **ZENO GROUP LANDS ALIBABA UNIT**

[Zeno Group](#) has signed a one-year contract to provide PR strategy and counsel to the Singapore e-commerce platform of China’s Alibaba Group, the multinational retail, internet and technology behemoth.



The pact, which went into effect on Jan. 15, is worth \$10K a month.

Zeno’s agreement calls for PR that is “private and nonpolitical in nature, and intended exclusively to further the bona fide trade or commerce purposes of Alibaba.”

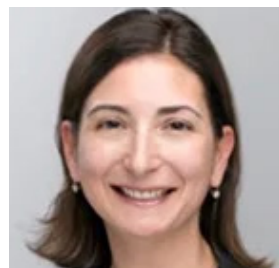
Zeno’s Alibaba team includes managing director Todd Irwin; senior VP Brittany Frank; VPs Eden May and Wan Zhaoli; and senior account supervisor Torri Santander.

Alibaba’s Singapore platform operates under the <http://www.aliexpress.com> URL.

## **USAID’S TRITTER RE-JOINS FSG GLOBAL**

[FGS Global](#) brings back Beth Tritter, who was most recently director of the COVID-19 Response Team at USAID, as partner in its government affairs division.

Tritter served from 2007 to 2015 as managing director in the international affairs practice at the Glover Park Group, one of FGS Global’s legacy companies. She has also served as executive director at the Primary Health Care Performance Initiative, a Gates Foundation-funded initiative.



**Beth Tritter**

At USAID, Tritter led the team responsible for designing and implementing a significant portion of the US government’s global COVID response, including vaccine and therapeutic dose donations, supply chain and cold chain assistance, and last-mile service delivery for vaccinations, testing, treatment and COVID care.

In her new position at FGS Global, Tritter will focus on advocacy and stakeholder engagement across markets on significant global issues, while building out the firm’s business where these issues intersect.

## **ON THE MOVE**

**Burson**, the outgrowth of Hill & Knowlton and BCW, has made its initial round of leadership appointments. BCW CEO, Americas **Kristine Boyden** will take the same spot with Burson, and Hill & Knowlton US CEO **Craig Buchholz** will now be Burson’s US CEO. Hill & Knowlton CEO, UK **Simon Whitehead** and BCW CEO, EMEA **Scott Wilson** are also transitioning to the same positions at the newly formed firm. **Bashar AlKadhi**, currently CEO of EMEA at H&K, becomes Burson’s CEO, Middle East, Turkey, India and Africa; H&K president, Asia-Pacific **HS Chung** will be CEO, North Asia-Pacific at Burson; BCW president, Asia-Pacific **Matt Stafford** will be CEO, South Asia-Pacific for Burson; and **Brian Burlingame**, H&K CEO, Latin America retains that post at the new firm.

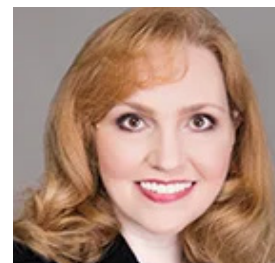


[LaVoieHealthScience](#) hires **Katie Dodge** as SVP and general manager of its Boston headquarters. Dodge comes to LHS from Ruder Finn, where she was a VP. She has also worked at SaluTem, JPA Health, Weber Shandwick, KYNE and Edelman. In her new role, Dodge is responsible for agency and client excellence in LHS’ commercial and emerging communication practices with a focus on growth, people and best practices.

**Aperture Investors**, a \$3.67B alternative asset manager, hires **Louis Molinari** as CMO. Molinari joins Aperture from Barclays Capital, where he most recently served as global head of capital introductions and hedge fund consulting, playing a key role in expanding the firm’s institutional investor base. At Aperture, Molinari will be responsible for overseeing the company’s fund-raising efforts across its strategies globally.

**Red Door Interactive** promotes **Stephanie Ranson** to chief client officer. Ranson has been with the agency since 2010, most recently serving as VP of client services. In her new role, Ranson will enhance the agency’s productization strategies while helping strengthen long-standing relationships with its clients across multiple regions.

**Millwright Holdings**, which includes Warner Communications, Actual Agency and Bolt PR, promotes **Erin Vadala** to group president and chief client officer, a newly created role. Vadala has been president at Warner Communications since 2018 and was previously SVP at the agency. Reporting to Millwright founder & CEO Michael Young, she will oversee Actual and Bolt as well as Warner, with responsibility for guiding senior agency leadership, strategic planning, employee engagement, creative campaign development, and agency growth.



**Erin Vadala**

**Colossal Biosciences**, which develops technologies focused on extinct species restoration, critically endangered species protection and the repopulation of ecosystems, hires **Emily Castel** as CMO. Castel comes to Colossal from omnichannel entertainment company Teton Ridge, where she was president and chief brand officer. She also founded creative consultancies FIVE33 and Castel Creative. In her new post, she will lead global efforts to scale Colossal’s brand, experiences, consumer products and emerging media properties.

## COMMENTARY

**Teneo's lips are sealed...** The self-described "global CEO advisory firm" says it is "a proud American company with great respect for Congress," but its lips are sealed when the US Senate asks questions about its work for the Saudis.

That was the message from co-founder Paul Keary who testified Feb. 6 before the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.



That panel is probing the work that Teneo, McKinsey & Co., BCG and dealmaker Michael Klein do for the Kingdom's \$700B Public Investment Fund and its foray into US sports.

The PIF hired Teneo to handle communications surrounding its investment in US professional golf.

A Saudi court has sued the firms in Saudi Arabia to prevent them from handing over PIF-related documents to the US lawmakers. It claims those documents are classified.

Keary said he understood the Senate's frustration about not receiving the requested documents. "We are firmly committed to finding a path forward in which we continue to work cooperatively and in good faith with the Subcommittee and the PIF to meet your oversight interests," he testified.

Senator Richard Blumenthal, chair of the Subcommittee, summed it up nicely: "You say you are between a rock and hard place but you have chosen sides: you have chosen the Saudi side, not the American side."

The PIF will pay Teneo \$4.1M in 2024 fees, according to its renewed one-year contract that went into effect on Jan. 1.

**Muzzling the Palestinian media.** The Israel Defense Force has a novel way of censoring the Arab media. Since the horrific Oct. 7 attack by Hamas, Israel has arrested 38 Palestinian journalists, most of them without any charge, according to Reporters Without Borders.

Thirty four of the journalists have been arrested in the West Bank. They are being held in locations in Israel.

RTF says the arrests of journalists is a way to silence the Palestinian media.

A story that Israel may want to silence is the upswing in settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.

From Oct. 7 to Jan. 30, 299 Palestinians were killed in the West Bank, compared to 507 for all of 2023, according to the United Nations.

From an Israeli viewpoint, that's a story that is best swept under the rug.

**Thumbs down from Il Duce II...** Donald Trump is against the Border Act of 2024 because he thinks he can ride the immigration crisis to the White House. That's typical for a narcissist like Trump, who puts his own priorities over the good of the nation.

The National Border Patrol Council, which represents more than 18K agents, supports the Border Act of 2014.

The bill "would drop illegal border crossings nationwide and will allow our agents to get back to detecting and ap-

prehending those who want to cross our border illegally and evade apprehension," it said in a statement.

The border guard union supported Trump in the 2020 presidential campaign. It is the latest victim of the former president backstabbing a former ally.

Brandon Judd, president of the Council, said the Act is not perfect but far better than the current status quo.

But the phony Republican Party just loves that status quo.

**Bank of America makes a big withdrawal.** The big bank has caved to the "anti-woke" crowd which wants to put an end to ESG pledges.

In 2022, BoA said it would not finance coal mines, coal-fired power plants and drilling for oil in the Arctic due to their negative impacts on the environment.

It now updated its policy, saying transactions that "carry heightened risks will continue to go through an enhanced due diligence process involving senior level risk review."

A review by top BoA officials is a far cry from outright banning environmental unfriendly projects.

**ExxonMobil gets rapped on shareholder rights.** The CEO of Norway's \$1.5T oil fund criticized ExxonMobil for suing two shareholders who wanted to sponsor a climate change proposal at its annual meeting.

"It's a worrisome development," Nicolai Tangen told the *Financial Times*. "We think it's very aggressive and we are concerned about the implications for shareholders' rights."

Tangen has every right to worry about rights of investors.

He is in charge of Norges Bank Investment Bank, which is the world's biggest sovereign wealth fund. Norges Bank is a top-ten shareholder of ExxonMobil.

The two activist funds, Follow This and Arjuna, withdrew their proposal earlier this month.

ExxonMobil's heavy-handed attack of the proposal apparently paid off. The oil giant is still suing.

**Glutton for punishment.** Adam Neumann, the former CEO of WeWork, wants to buy the bankrupt company because he feels the office-sharing company could thrive in today's hybrid work world.

He is off-base.

Today's hybrid world is a combination of working from home for two or three days and showing up at the office for the balance of the work week.

CEOs want to see the faces of their employees. Those faces need to be attached to bodies at corporate desks, or in meetings.

PR giant Edelman just renewed its lease on its Manhattan headquarters for 15 years. CEO Richard Edelman didn't re-up because he wants employees to work at WeWork facilities rather than the firm's Hudson Street headquarters.

The novelty of WeWork struck a chord with workers in pre-pandemic America.

Does Neumann expect WeWork to get a bounce from the thousands of employees who were or are being laid off from technology companies?

That's a very dicey proposition.

—Kevin McCauley