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SPAIN'S LLYC ACQUIRES LAMBERT GLOBAL

LLYC has acquired a 70 percent stake in [Lambert Global](#) for an initial payment of \$18.2M with the balance due in two years based on the EBITDA performance of the corporate communications/IR firm.



**Alejandro Romero &
Jeffrey Lambert**

The Spanish firm says Lambert Global will add \$35.1M to its annual revenue base and a triple its US presence. The acquisition is LLYC's biggest-ever.

CEO Jeffrey Lambert and president Mike Houston will lead the recast Lambert by LLYC and serve on the Spanish firm's US executive committee.

Alejandro Romero CEO of LLYC, called Lambert Global "a perfect partner, and its integrated communications platform is an ideal fit for LLYC's philosophy, enabling the company to make the quantitative leap it has been seeking."

LLYC now has 130 staffers in the US, which is its second largest market.

[Lambert Global took the No. 37 spot in the 2023 O'Dwyer's rankings](#) of independent firms with fees of \$20.2M, which was up 21.4 percent from the previous year.

EDELMAN VET ALMAN MOVES TO BCW

Lee Alman, who was with Edelman for almost 12 years in several risk and reputation management roles, has moved to BCW Global, where he is now an executive vice president in the agency's North America corporate affairs practice.

Based in Los Angeles, he will be responsible for leading BCW's issues and crisis specialty across the US.



Lee Alman

At Edelman, Alman most recently served as EVP, US crisis and risk practice.

Before joining Edelman, Alman was director of external affairs for The Doe Fund, which works to help homeless and formerly incarcerated people achieve permanent self-sufficiency.

A bar-admitted attorney, he has more than two decades of corporate communications, public affairs and policy experience.

"Clients need strategic experts like Lee who have guided clients across industries through issues with a clear eye and sound judgment," said BCW, Americas CEO Kristine Boyden.

VIRGINIA BEACH SEEKS ECODEV SUPPORT

Virginia Beach's Dept of Economic Development is looking for a firm to serve as "agency of record" for advertising, marketing and public relations services.

The resort destination has a suburban feel and a population of about 500K, making it the largest city in the Old Dominion. More than 11.5M people visit Virginia Beach each year.

The selected firm will perform content creation and distribution on an "as needed" basis. It may be asked to handle projects for other city agencies.

The RFP lists possible PR duties such as supporting/maintaining brand development, messaging, fam trips, online pressroom, and marketing research.

Virginia Beach plans to award a one-year contract with four optional one-year renewal periods.

Proposals are due March 5 at the Dept's e-portal.

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



CRISIS PRO LANNY DAVIS JOINS ACTUM

Lanny Davis, the noted crisis manager, media strategist and attorney who advised presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, has joined Actum LLC in Washington as co-chair.

The 78-year-old heads Lanny J. Davis Associates, DC-based law firm that he launched in 2010.

He spent 25 years as a partner at Patton Boggs & Blow, and six years at Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe. Davis co-founded Trident DMG strategic communications firm in 2016.

The counselor has handled high-profile legal cases, representing Martha Stewart, Republican Senator Trent Lott, Penn State's board of trustees, and Whole Foods.

Actum managing partner Fabian Nunez said Davis "is the person you call in times of crisis because he's known as a rational presence who sees the whole picture."

Davis joins Actum's other co-chairs Barbara Boxer, ex-California Democratic Senator, and Mick Mulvaney, former South Carolina Congressman and Donald Trump's chief of staff.



Lanny Davis

WPP REPORTS FLAT Q4 REVENUES

WPP reported Q4 revenues inched ahead 0.3 percent to \$4.1B as CEO Mark Read wrapped up a year that he said was more challenging than expected due to cutbacks, mainly by technology clients.



Mark Read

The tech and digital services sector, which accounts for 17.5 percent of WPP revenues, tumbled 6.9 percent during 2023.

WPP's PR group showed 2.4 percent growth in Q4 and a 1.4 percent rise for the full year. FGS Global grew strongly in 2023, while Hill & Knowlton posted "modest growth," and BCW had a "weaker year."

Read said WPP is poised to carry through on the "innovating to lead" strategy that it unveiled at its "Capital Markets Day" in January. Completion of the July merger of BCW and H&K to create Burson is part of that plan.

For 2024, WPP is projecting 0-1 percent growth.

EDELMAN'S '23 REVENUES FALL 3.7%

Edelman reports 2023 revenues declined 3.7 percent to \$1.04B as its flagship US region was off 9.1 percent to \$639M. The EMEA sector rebounded during 2023, rising 7.1 percent to \$229M.



Edelman

Latin America showed solid growth (+29.7 percent to \$35M) while the APAC region inched ahead by 1.7 percent to \$103M.

Canada was off 2.3 percent to \$32M.

Edelman's healthcare and technology practices were down 12 percent and eight percent, respectively.

On the plus side: public affairs was up 19.5 percent, business-to-business rose 19 percent, food & beverage jumped 15.6 percent, and crisis increased 4.2 percent.

Edelman released six Trust Barometer Reports in 2023 in the areas of healthcare equity, workplace trust, climate change, racial justice and consumer trust in brands.

The Edelman Trust Institute launched a monthly newsletter, "The Trust Report," that has more than 3,000 subscribers who receive information, context and applications for trust in business and society.

FGS GLOBAL WORKS VIZIO'S \$2.3B DEAL

FGS Global represents Vizio as Walmart acquires the digital TV maker for \$2.3B.

Vizio's SmartCast operating system, which has more than 18M active accounts, will provide Walmart more space to place ads and viewership data to help advertisers better connect with their customers.

Seth Dallaire, Walmart's EVP and chief revenue officer, said



Vizio's "customer-centric operating system provides great viewing experiences at attractive price points" and is a "profitable advertising business that is rapidly scaling."

The Vizio platform has more than 500 advertisers, including many of the Fortune 500 companies. Advertising generates a majority of Vizio's profit.

FGS Global has Kelsey Markovich and Leah Polito handling the Vizio account.

ON THE MOVE

Reevemark promotes **Pamela Greene** and **Nicholas Leasure** to partner. Greene has been a managing director at the agency since January 2020, leveraging her strategic insights and deep understanding of corporate transactions and positioning, litigation communications, investor relations, and crisis management to provide high-quality, senior-level counsel to a wide variety of the firm's clients. Before joining Reevemark, she was a managing director at Sard Verbinen. Leasure joined Reevemark in April 2019, and has specialized in shareholder activism, corporate transactions, crisis management and marketing. He previously served as a director at both Finsbury and Joele Frank.

Cornerstone Government Affairs adds **Dr. Wendy Sammons-Jackson**, former deputy principal assistant for research and technology at the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command, to its federal government relations team. Prior to her retirement as a Colonel from the U.S. Army, Sammons-Jackson was director of the Military Infectious Diseases Research Program.



Wendy Sammons-Jackson

Antenna Group hires **Chad Krulicki** as SVP, executive creative director. Krulicki was most recently executive creative director at multidisciplinary design studio Him & Her Inc. He has worked with brands including Oracle, eBay, IBM, Citi Financial, Sun Life, Penguin Random House and Symantec. In his new role, Krulicki will lead Antenna's creative team and help shape client brands, inspire compelling campaigns, and ensure that the impact of creative products is felt across owned, earned, paid and social media.

Whataburger, which operates over 1,000 restaurants in 15 states, hires **Scott Hudler** as SVP and chief marketing officer. Hudler comes to the company from Cotton Patch Cafe, a Dallas-based restaurant chain, where he was president and chief growth officer. He previously served as CMO at both Dick's Sporting Goods and Torchy's Tacos, SVP/chief digital officer at Dunkin' Donuts and director of corporate communications at Popeye's.

Real Chemistry has added **Laurenn Wolpoff** to its integrated communications team as account director. Wolpoff was most recently director, PR, AR & media relations at Bospar, and she has also held positions at Hot Paper Lantern, Prosek Partners, Peppercomm and Edelman. In her new post, Wolpoff will provide support and develop strategic communications for top



Laurenn Wolpoff

global oncology drugs in the areas of women's cancers and hematology as well as helping to oversee new assets.

LegalShield, a platform that provides legal, identity and reputation management services, names **Robert Toevs** chief communications officer. Toevs has served as head of corporate communications at DISH Network Corporation and director of internal communications at Qwest Communications. He was most recently an advisor on communications and strategy issues for research platform Tava Discovery.

CSR ISSUES MUST IMPACT BOTTOM LINE

Consumers continue to place a premium on corporate responsibility, but they increasingly want to see that responsibility directed toward issues that affect the bottom line, according to a new study from Mission North.

The agency's [2024 Brand Expectations Index](#), which asked



1,000 adults in the US to weigh in on what factors add to a brand's value and which detract from it, found that when companies focus on issues that are tied to their core business, they

are seen more positively by consumers.

The top thing that consumers expect from a brand: security. More than seven in 10 of those surveyed (71 percent) said they want brands to put an emphasis on customer security. Coming right behind was making customer privacy a priority (70 percent). Product innovation was also high on the list, at 66 percent.

When it comes to social responsibility, consumers expect brands to keep things close to home, with 61 percent saying they want companies to give back to their communities. Almost as many (59 percent) expect companies to improve their diversity and pay equity policies.

Responsibility initiatives that look beyond the brand's core business and its employees are not nearly so well regarded for the most part. Only 39 percent of respondents expect a company to take public stances on larger social issues, with slightly fewer (38 percent) thinking that taking bold actions on such issues is to be expected.

The one exception—six out of 10 respondents (60 percent) said they expect brands to “take strides to become more sustainable and environmentally friendly.”

Also, while respondents may not be gung-ho about a brand taking a stance on broader social issues, about two-thirds (66 percent) are in favor of supporting employees who do so.

The study also looks at what consumers expect from brands as regards the use of AI. Almost half (47 percent) think that AI will create “a more dangerous future,” with only 32 saying it will result in “a better future.” A considerable majority (62 percent) say companies should not “dramatically change their staffing levels” in response to AI, with only 22 percent agreeing that those who heavily invest in AI can stay relevant “even if that means a reduction in staff or layoffs at their company as a result.”

AI ranks rather low in the overall list of actions that made respondents say they would be more likely to trust a brand. Only 34 percent said that “companies that use AI to automate their internal process or operations” or “companies that use AI to improve how customers think about them” would seem more trustworthy.

That compares rather unfavorably with “companies that cut through corporate red tape” (48 percent), “companies that are future-focused” (67 percent) and “companies that own up to their mistakes. (74 percent).”

APCO REBRANDS TO MARK 40TH ANNIVERSARY

APCO has launched a new brand identity to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Washington-based firm.

Since APCO has evolved from a single-person shop run by now executive chairman Margery Kraus into a global enterprise with 32 offices, it is dropping “worldwide” from its name and logo.

It also has introduced “The Uncommon A” symbol to accompany its logo to symbolize the uniqueness of its services. APCO's uncommon A is missing part of its right leg.

The left side of the traditional A stands for where the APCO came from and where it heading, along with the stability and sound counsel that it has historically offered clients, according to the firm.

The right side symbolizes the current uncertain times and the search for creative solutions to empower transformational change for clients.



DELAWARE NEEDS HELP TO FIGHT SMOKING

Delaware's Dept. of Health and Social Services is gathering proposals to support its community outreach for tobacco prevention and control program.

The goal is to create an environment in which the people of the state can reach their full potential for healthier lives.

The Dept. runs cessation services such as Delaware QuitLine and QuitSupport.com, which are promoted by social marketing and PR activities to raise the awareness of the dangers of tobacco use.

The Dept. will prioritize proposals that involve community agencies through collaboration or subcontracts to include 1) ethnically diverse communities and organizations; 2) disparate populations affected by tobacco use; 3) populations that are specifically vulnerable to tobacco use and promotion; 4) complement the work being done by statewide and local tobacco prevention and control efforts; 5) aid the statewide program in reducing tobacco use in Delaware, and 6) provide a strong evaluation component for all activities.

Responses are due March 7 at the Dept.'s [bonfire portal](#). [Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).



EX-REP PERLMUTTER PUSHES CANNABIS BILL

Former Congressman Ed Perlmutter is spearheading the National Cannabis Roundtable's push for passage of the Secure and Fair Enforcement Regulation Act, which would provide state-sanctioned weed purveyors access to financial services.

The Holland and Knight attorney signed on as a policy advisor to NCR on Feb. 5. Perlmutter was a leading advocate for the cannabis banking bill when the Democrat represented Colorado in Congress.

Due to the federal classification of cannabis as an illegal drug under the Controlled Substances Act, banks are reluctant to do business with cannabis companies.

Former House Speaker John Boehner and ex-Kansas governor & Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius are honorary co-chairs of NCR.



Ed Perlmutter

UNION SQUARE SEEKS EVENTS PRODUCER

Manhattan's Union Square Partnership is looking for an events producer to provide logistical support for its Summer in the Square program.



The six-week series comprises diverse events that showcase the Union Square area as an exciting place to live, work, play and learn, according to the RFP.

The selected partner will collaborate with USP to ensure the smooth execution of the production for six event days, from 6 am to 11 pm, including setup and breakdown.

USP wants a firm that has experience in producing outdoor events, preferably in NYC, with an understanding of the rules and regulations of the Dept. of Parks and Recreation., Dept. of Buildings and other applicable agencies.

It has budgeted \$30K for the base fee for the event producer, and plans to keep the total expenditure for the six events under \$100K.

Proposals, due March 1, go to Victoria Ortiz, USP director of marketing & events, at vortiz@unionsquarenyc.org.

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

WATERMARK LAUCHES DATA-FOCUSED FIRM

Watermark Strategies, a corporate affairs consulting firm designed to deploy the latest data and technology in support of comprehensive stakeholder advisory and engagement services, is founded by industry veterans Zack Condry and Erik Hotmire.



Condry founded corporate digital firm Echo and is a veteran of digital campaigns at Brunswick Group and Edelman. Hotmire has counseled senior executives and boards on business-critical issues for the past 13 years as a partner at Brunswick Group, senior managing director at Teneo, and partner at FGS Global. Watermark's service offerings include corporate positioning, special situations, digital advisory and execution, and research and insights.

"We guide our clients' communications and public affairs efforts with precision, equipping them to productively engage a diverse set of stakeholders," said Condry.

IRAQ TAPS VALCOUR FOR OUTREACH

The Embassy of Iraq has issued a one-year \$540K contract with Washington-based Valcour global public strategy firm for outreach to US and state government officials to improve the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Valcour president Matt Mowers handles the Iraqi work. He advised on issues related to the Global Coalition to Defeat



ISIS, North Korea and immigration reform. The firm reports to Iraq's US ambassador, Nazar Al Khirullah, who took the post last June.



He hosted an "evening dialogue" event on Feb. 11 with key journalists from the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, Bloomberg, Politico, Foreign Policy and "News Hour" to pitch the role that Iraq plays in supporting peace and stability in the Middle East.

Valcour's contract calls for it to be available for regular in-person meetings with the Embassy, upon request.

The firm's \$45K monthly retainer is payable by check quarterly in advance.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

[Coyne Public Relations](#) is named agency of record for the **Scenic Group**, which includes Emerald Cruises and Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours. Coyne PR will collaborate with its Worldcom PR Group partners, Communications CASA-COM, Inc. in Canada and Arvizu Comunicación Corporativa in LATAM, to amplify consumer awareness and affinity for Scenic Group's luxury cruise and tour experiences in the US, Canada, and LATAM regions. The scope of work will include media relations, brand positioning, and digital storytelling.

[Violet PR](#) has been selected to represent the **Sugar Land Office of Economic Development**. The agency will develop and execute an integrated marketing program, leveraging media relations, digital media and site selection expertise, to raise the profile of Sugar Land, TX, as a location for business investment. The effort will highlight Sugar Land's new developments and key sectors, including life sciences and manufacturing. The city, 20 minutes southwest of downtown Houston, boasts 8.9 million square feet of industrial property, 8 million square feet of retail and 7.9 million square feet of office real estate.



Kindred PR signs on as official agency of record for **Empower Your Mind Therapy**, a private psychotherapy practice dedicated to supporting teen and adult mental health. The collaboration will focus on building brand awareness, fostering community engagement and showcasing the practice's evidence-based approach to mental health care. Kindred PR's services will include targeted media outreach, strategic online marketing campaigns and impactful storytelling.

Fenton represents **Science Moms**, a nonpartisan group of mothers who are also climate scientists, on a \$2 million dollar campaign highlighting the links between pollution and children's health. The agency is providing public relations support for Science Moms' new air pollution campaign, which features two creative spots produced in-house by Potential Energy, the organization that powers the Science Moms campaign. The spots emphasize the harms of pollution and wildfire smoke on young children's developing bodies, and encourage parents to take action on climate change.

[Xhibition International Public Relations](#) adds **Lemala Camps & Lodges**, which owns and operates luxury safari accommodations in Tanzania and Uganda. The agency will oversee PR for Lemala's current roster of eight camps and lodges, as well as the launch of the Lemala Osonjoi Lodge on the Ngorongoro Crater, Tanzania, which is set to open on March 1, 2025. In addition to year-round game viewing, Lemala is known for eliminating single-use plastics from its operations, upcycling waste in desk supplies for local schools.



[The HOW Agency](#), a digital unit of [5WPR](#), picks up cookware brand **OrGreenic**. HOW will leverage its in-house creative studio as well as its network of content creators to provide end-to-end programming across creative, strategy, channel management and performance marketing, layering in influencer campaigns to grow OrGreenic's brand footprint. OrGreenic's diamond granite, non-stick cookware is suitable for all stove types, dishwasher-safe, and usable with metal utensils.

SAN LUIS OBISPO LOOKS FOR TOURISM PR

San Luis Obispo, which is located halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco, wants a firm to handle its \$1.2M annual marketing and branding effort.



The city's Tourism Business Improvement District "is looking for a passionate, entrepreneurial and committed agency of people with big ideas who possess the ability to execute those ideas effectively on behalf of the destination," according to the RFP.

Interested firms should have a background in marketing travel destinations and/or lifestyle brands and prior experience in serving as an agency-of-record.

About 1.5M people visit San Luis Obispo annually. The area also serves as a home base for day trips to nearby beaches and wineries.

The TBID plans to issue a two-year contract with work beginning on July 1. The pact may be extended for another two-year period.

Responses are due March 4. They go to the [BidSync portal](#). [Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

MAGRINO'S DOYLE TAKES APARIUM POST

Mary Doyle has exited [Magrino Public Relations](#) for the director of PR and communications position at Chicago-based Aparium Hotel Group.

She heads strategic PR initiatives for the collection of 11 distinctively styled hotels, and 20 restaurants and bars.

Aparium is dedicated to the idea of "translocal hospitality,"



Mary Doyle

which means experiences should be fueled by the poetics of their surroundings, according to Doyle.

Its network includes The Pontchartrain Hotel (New Orleans), Detroit Foundation Hotel, Clayton Hotel & Members Club (Denver), Hewing Hotel (Minneapolis), and Haya Hotel (Tampa).

Four new properties will open this year.

Prior to joining Magrino, Doyle was director of marketing & PR at Heisler Hospitality, and account supervisor at [Zap-water Communications](#).

TAIWAN BUSINESS GROUP TAPS CROSSRIVER

Taiwan's Metal Industries Research & Development Center has hired Crossriver Inc. to help build relations with private and public sector audiences in the US.



Crossriver will help carry out an economic diplomacy effort designed to introduce the commercial, trade/investment and development priorities of Taiwan's Pingtung County with an emphasis on the satellite and space industry sectors.

The DC-based firm will tab key stakeholders in the satellite/space community across the US, government, businesses, think tanks, academia and media for sectors.

It will arrange commercial/economic development dinners and forums in Washington and Houston, and pitch reporters who cover the satellite/space beat for MIRDC officials

Crossriver's three-month agreement with MIRDC went into effect Feb. 7. It is worth about \$100K.

NEWS OF FIRMS

N6 Powered by KRMA, an AI-powered digital marketing and communications agency, acquires boutique digital marketing agency **West of Fairfax**. Headquartered in Los Angeles, West of Fairfax works with such clients as Selena Gomez, Bliss, Cincoro, COOLA and Dee Ocleppo. Founded six years ago by Courtney Lopez, Ryan Good and Ray Lee, West of Fairfax is now led by Lopez, who serves as the agency's CEO, leading an all-female-powered team. West of Fairfax offers services including content creation, platform management, platform strategy, influencer programming, paid advertising and customized analytics & reporting.



Courtney Lopez

Signal AI, which delivers AI-driven reputation and risk insights services, acquires reputation intelligence monitoring company **Social 360**. The acquisition will integrate the traditional, social, regulatory and alternative data sources of the two companies into one unified platform. It will complement Signal AI's premium media data with Social 360's source list, which delivers more than 2.3 million articles of reputational relevance from over 185,000 individual sources per month. It will also add a corporate influencer monitoring tool and capitalize on Social 360's pharmacovigilance expertise, giving pharmaceutical businesses proactive monitoring and reporting of adverse events.

The PR Council and Canadian Council of Public Relations Firms announce a strategic merger. The partnership represents the first North American expansion of the PR Council, bringing 19 Canadian agencies and Canadian offices of global firms into the network. After more than 16 years as a volunteer-run organization, CCPRF will cease operations. As part of its concluding year, CCPRF has instituted the Champions of Public Relations Excellence awards, which will be open to graduating students at Humber, Centennial College, and Durham College, with each school managing the administration process.

Stagwell acquires **Sidekick**, a group of specialist agencies focused on experiential, digital storytelling and branded content. Sidekick will join Allison, the global marketing and communications consultancy within Stagwell. Sidekick co-founders Duncan McCaslin and Ollie Burgoyne will remain as managing directors of their respective teams and both will join Allison's European management team. The addition of Sidekick will further expand Allison's footprint, supplementing its existing core competencies of strategic communications, influencer marketing, digital, performance marketing and data analytics.

Markets EQ, which fuses voice tones with language in a generative AI platform for corporate communications, launches an AI-generated scorecard based entirely on voice analysis. EQ MarketScore has the ability to discern 58 unique emotions, scoring speakers on tone, confidence, clarity, and the intricacy of their messages. Among the features included are bottom line up front (a summary of the conversation); emotional sentiment (a description of the tone of the speaker and message) and clarity rank: (a measure of how difficult it was to follow the conversation).

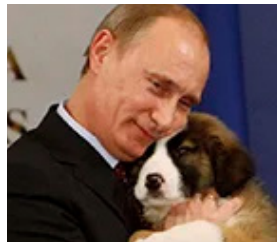


COMMENTARY

Former UK prime minister Tony Blair could never live down the “Bush’s poodle” nickname that he so deservedly earned for backing George W. Bush’s misguided invasion of Iraq. It was an onslaught justified by the bogus intelligence that Saddam Hussein had a store of weapons of mass destruction.

Will Donald Trump, Tucker Carlson, JD Vance and the rest of the MAGA misfits suffer a similar fate for their backing of Russia’s psychopathic strongman Vladimir Putin?

Trump appears set to sell out America’s NATO allies by green lighting an attack on them by Putin, in the event they don’t cough up enough cash to satisfy the Mango Mussolini.



Carlson lobbed so many softballs during his interview with Putin that the Russian’s arms grew tired from hitting them out of the park.

Following the interview, Putin wondered why Carlson made the trek to Moscow, unless his real intention was to shop at its super-cheap supermarket and ride its immaculate subway.

The despicable Republican Ohio Senator Vance, who is dead set against funding Ukraine’s fight for freedom, chickened out of a meeting with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky at the Munich Security Conference.

He punked out because he said he wouldn’t learn anything new. Wrong, JD. You might have learned something about integrity, courage, guts, and fighting oppression.

You could have found out how many Ukrainian civilians will die because you and your GOP ilk refused to approve money for air defenses that could have shot down Russian missiles aimed at apartment complexes.

Or, how about the number of children who will be kidnapped and sent to Russia to replenish the country’s declining population.

Trump, Carlson and Vance are vying for their master’s attention. What bone will Putin throw them?

The good news is that the vast majority of America hasn’t hopped into Putin’s kennel and snuggled up to the madman.

An Economist/YouGov poll conducted Feb. 20-21 of American 2020 voters shows across-the-board unfavorable ratings for the Russian.

Putin gets unfavorable scores from 79 percent of Democrats, 78 percent of Republicans, and 64 percent of Independents. His favorable numbers are 15 percent, 15 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

Seventy-one of men and 76 percent of women are down on Putin. Eighteen percent of men and nine percent of women like him.

Putin scores highest among the young, who apparently are not aware of his thuggish ways. Nearly a quarter (24 percent) of the 18-29 age bracket have a favorable opinion of Putin. That drops to 18 percent (ages 30-44), nine percent (45-64) and four percent (65+).

Putin’s unfavorable numbers are 63 percent (18-29), 59

percent (30-44), 78 percent (45-64) and 92 percent (65+).

That high unfavorable rating of Putin among the most senior group shows that wisdom truly comes with age.

That begs the question: What is 77-year-old Trump’s problem?

Time correspondent Simon Shuster’s “The Showman” shows how Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky’s masterful knowledge of PR tactics and the power of propaganda transformed him from comedian into a respected world leader.

Zelensky recognized that wars are fought in the minds of men and women long before the shooting starts.

“He knew the power and the danger of persuasion, and he knew that long before the Russian tanks crossed the borders of Ukraine, the Kremlin had waged its war through propaganda,” wrote Shuster.

It was a repeat of Soviet propaganda that Joseph Stalin used during the 1930s that enabled the Kremlin to murder millions of Ukrainians by stealing their harvests.

Though Putin’s propaganda machine churned out sheer madness, the lies that it repeated began to take hold.

Complete control over the media channels enabled Putin to send tens of thousands of Russian men into the Ukrainian meat grinder.

They killed and died in Ukraine without triggering major backlash from families and citizens back home.

To counter Putin, Zelensky stuck to his strengths: mass media, foreign affairs, global pitchman for military aid and serving as cheerleader who urged Ukrainians to resist the Russian invasion.

Early in the war, he left military matters up to his generals and focused his attention on appearing on Ukrainian state TV.

As Zelensky began to feel more comfortable with the trappings of the presidency, he began to assert himself in military affairs, often to the detriment of Ukraine’s armed forces.

He ruthlessly restricted the actions of parliament, instituted curfews, cracked down on domestic political opponents, and shut down hostile media outlets.

Shuster believes Zelensky will face the ultimate challenge once the war ends, or a prolonged stalemate sets in.

He’s unsure how the president will handle the “return to life in a constitutional democracy.”

Shuster, who is of Russian and Ukrainian descent, began covering Ukraine in 2014 after Russia took over Crimea. He first met Zelensky in 2019 for a profile on his presidential campaign.

The Time writer traveled with Zelensky to the war zone in 2019 and was embedded with his team during the first year of the war with Russia.

The Showman includes a quote from Wagner Group founder Yevgeny Prigozhin, which offers high praise for Ukraine’s leader.

“Even though Zelensky is the president of a country hostile to Russia at the moment, he is still a strong, confident, pragmatic and likable guy,” said Prigozhin, a crazed killer of thousands of Ukrainian troops who ultimately was murdered by Putin.

Shuster has written an insider look at Ukraine’s president that is a great read for PR people.

—Kevin McCauley