



Jack O'Dwyer,
Editor-in-Chief

O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
PR and Marketing
Communications

271 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016
212/679-2471. Fax: 212/683-2750
www.odwyerpr.com; jobs.odwyerpr.com

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REELING CHIPOTLE SPLITS WITH EDELMAN

Chipotle, which was decimated in the fourth quarter over a norovirus outbreak that followed an E. coli incident earlier in the fall, has parted ways with Edelman amid a conflict.

The fast-food chain said in a Jan. 6 SEC filing that national media attention surrounding the norovirus incident in Massachusetts, along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's ongoing probe of its earlier E. coli outbreaks, sparked a sales drop of 30% for the month of December.

The separation follows Edelman, along with CAA, and Chipotle's win of the PR Grand Prix award in Cannes in 2014 for "The Scarecrow" campaign.

Chipotle said it is currently considering agency proposals for PR as a new Edelman client conflicted with the relationship.

In the SEC filing, it also acknowledged a federal subpoena in a criminal probe related to an August 2015 norovirus incident at a Simi Valley, Calif., Chipotle restaurant.

The company said it will spend another \$300M to repurchase shares, on top of \$300M previously allocated. Its stock has plummeted from an August 2015 high of \$758 to \$416 today.



STAGWELL BUYS DIGITAL SHOP C&T

The Stagwell Group, the private equity fund of pollster Mark Penn, has acquired New York-based digital agency Code and Theory.

The 14-year-old firm has 300 staffers in New York, Atlanta, London, San Francisco and Manila, the Philippines. It has conducted major digital overhauls for Bloomberg and the *Los Angeles Times*, in addition to brand work for Dr. Pepper, Burger King and Maybelline, among others.

The acquisition follows Stagwell's buy of SKD-Knickerbocker in October and Nielsen NRG in November. Penn has said the firm could use its \$250M in capital to leverage and build a marketing holding company.

Like its previous acquisitions, C&T will continue to operate under current management as an independent entity.

"We're looking forward to working with Stagwell to take our company to the next level," said partner, Brandon Ralph, who co-founded the firm with Dan Gardner.

WEBER SHANDWICK ACQUIRES REVIVEHEALTH

Weber Shandwick has acquired Nashville-based ReviveHealth, a top independent healthcare PR and marketing shop.

ReviveHealth, which has offices in Minneapolis and Santa Barbara, was founded in 2009 and staffs about 50. It was ranked sixth largest healthcare agency in the country last year by *O'Dwyer's*, with healthcare net fees of \$8.78 million.

The deal effectively joins Weber Shandwick's science and pharma expertise with

ReviveHealth's nuanced insight into



the B2B world of healthcare systems and services. Inter-public unit Weber has seen healthcare become one of the agency's fastest growing practice areas in recent years as it now staffs a specialized scientific communications team comprised of MDs, science writers, medical editors and 14 full-time PhDs who translate data and complex healthcare-related issues into formats that can educate and engage stakeholders and consumers.

Laura Schoen, president of Weber Shandwick's global healthcare practice, said the deal creates "a powerful consumer-and-business-facing healthcare offering for our clients."

A Weber Shandwick spokesperson told *O'Dwyer's* that ReviveHealth CEO Brandon Edwards will remain in his current position and will report to Schoen. No further staffing changes were reported.

Revive's Minneapolis staff will move into Weber's offices in that city at a later date, the spokesperson said. Revive's Nashville and Santa Barbara locations will remain.

Edwards said recent, historic changes in the U.S. healthcare landscape have resulted in a renewed urgency among healthcare communicators to offer clients updated offerings and specialized expertise. "Consolidations in the hospital health plan and pharmaceutical sectors are driving massive change in the industry, and the convergence of healthcare financing and healthcare delivery has accelerated since the Affordable Care Act became law," he said. "Bigger and more sophisticated healthcare companies require more sophisticated marketing communication strategies, combined with the expertise to navigate the intersection of regulation, business, mission and social change."

Edwards said the deal "accelerates" Revive's transformation and brings new capabilities into the mix, like branding, digital strategy, content marketing, and public affairs.

NEVADA EYES CHINA TOURISM

Nevada is searching for proposals to handle tourism PR and travel trade representation in China.

The state's Division of Tourism released an RFP on Dec. 22 to handle the work. The state was the first in the US to be granted a license to open an official tourism promotion office in China, which it did in 2004. But the office closed "due to a number of factors" in 2015, although the DOT contends Nevada "retains a high level of commitment to the Chinese market."

The firm must have a strong understanding of working with the Chinese government and its travel and tour agencies, as well as ability to operate in markets including Beijing, Shanghai, Guanzhou, Chengdu, Xian and Hong Kong.

Proposals are due Jan. 21, 2016.

RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1Zl1W7w>.



SLOANE, SARD IN ALLY BOARD BATTLE

Ally Financial and Lion Point Capital have engaged PR counsel as the hedge fund makes a bid for two seats on the board of the former auto-lending unit of General Motors.

Sloane & Company reps New York-based Lion Point, which is pressing Ally's board over a perceived "gap between the company's intrinsic value and its stock price." Lion



Point has pushed for "strategic alternatives" in addition to its nomination of two unnamed directors.

Ally, which has engaged Sard Verbinnen & Co., went public with Lion Point's previously undisclosed overtures on Jan. 4, contending stockholder value would not be enhanced by pursuing alternatives like a sale. The company called Lion Point's actions over the past two months "particularly disappointing."

Chairman Franklin Hobbs said: "Although we are troubled by Lion Point's tactics, our fundamental disagreement is with Lion Point's clear agenda to force a sale of Ally."

Ally, bailed out by the government to the tune of \$17.2B in the financial crisis in 2008, went public in April 2014 in a disappointing IPO. The *New York Times* noted Lion Point faces an uphill climb to earn shareholder support of its agenda as it owns less than one percent of Ally. In a statement, Lion Point said its goal is "to ensure that the voices of Ally's shareholders are heard and that policies are in place to address the significant undervaluation of the Company should such undervaluation persist."

Sloane's Elliot Sloane and Dan Zacchei rep Lion Point. Sard chairman and CEO George Sard and managing director Denise DesChenes are advising Ally in support of Gina Proia, chief communications officer at the Detroit-based company.

Ally's annual meeting is slated for May 3.

ABMAC MOVES KEY LA EXECS TO SAN FRAN

Abernathy MacGregor has tapped LA-based Heather Wilson as managing director of its San Francisco outpost.

The firm also moved EVP Amy Feng from LA to San Francisco as the tech hotbed presents a bevy of financial, M&A and other PR opportunities.

Newly minted CEO Tom Johnson said the Bay Area includes a large portfolio for the firm and represents "highly attractive growth opportunities." He said the firm is "investing heavily" in the region to grow its presence.

Wilson is a Weber Shandwick alum and former journalist for CBS Marketwatch. Feng is a former Wall Street analyst who joined AbMac in 2008.



Wilson

LEVINE JOINS JEFFREYGROUP

International marketing and corporate communications agency JeffreyGroup has hired Asher Levine as managing director, that agency's top account management position for US operations.

Prior to joining JeffreyGroup, Levine was a journalist with Thomson Reuters, which he joined in 2011 and served as a correspondent in São Paulo, covering corporate and political news in Latin America. Previously, Levine held stints at Omnicom property Interbrand and ABC News, both in New York.

At JeffreyGroup, Levine will be responsible for overseeing the firm's pan-regional team, which manages multi-market communications programs. He will work out of the firm's Miami headquarters, and will report to JeffreyGroup CEO Brian Burlingame.

Burlingame in a statement called Asher a "well-known and widely-respected journalist with deep connections to the region's top influencers."

Miami-headquartered JeffreyGroup, which specializes in marketing, communications and PR for multinational brands throughout Latin America, was founded in 1993. The agency holds offices in New York, Miami, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Buenos Aires, and last year opened its newest office in Brasilia. JeffreyGroup clients include Amazon, American Airlines, Facebook, Hilton, Johnson & Johnson and Xerox.



Levine

REGAN TO DKC IN LA

Chris Regan, an entertainment PR pro with Ginsberg/Libby and B|W|R, has moved to DKC PR in Los Angeles as a senior VP.

Regan has specialized in film and corporate entertainment work with clients including major studios, production houses, and other industry players like Netflix.

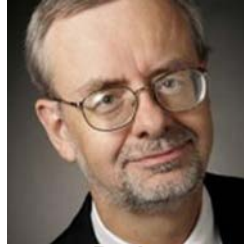
He started out at Fredell Pogodin & Associates before moving to B|W|R, where he developed the firm's film department.

DKC also added Regan's G/L colleague Karina Vladimirov.

REVIEW-JOURNAL NAMES INTERIM EDITOR

The *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, the beleaguered daily newspaper that has been the focus of a PR crisis since its controversial December sale to casino magnate Sheldon Adelson, has brought in a new interim editor as management continues its search for a permanent replacement.

Dave Butler, executive editor and senior vice president of news and audience development at *Providence Journal*, will assume the role of temporary editor-in-chief. The news was first reported this afternoon by Politico Media.

**Butler**

Providence Journal is owned by GateHouse Media subsidiary New Media Investment Group, the same company that continues to manage the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* after its December sale to Adelson for \$140 million.

Butler, who has held top newsroom management positions at Digital First Media, MediaNews Group, the *New Haven Register* and the *Rocky Mountain News*, assumed the executive editor position at the *Providence Journal* only in October. Politico reported that it's "unclear" how Butler's current role at the *Providence Journal* will be affected as he takes the helm at the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

Butler succeeds editor Mike Hengel, who resigned after Adelson's purchase of the paper was revealed, citing an "adversarial" relationship with the casino owner.

Adelson's December acquisition of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* resulted in a firestorm of criticism due to its secretive nature: Adelson's identity as buyer was revealed only after the deal was complete, as the transaction was carried out by an Adelson-backed shell company, News + Media Capital Group.

Of particular concern was the notion that Adelson, a high-profile Republican donor who is also founder, chairman and CEO of Las Vegas Sands, could use his ownership of Nevada's largest newspaper to further his own financial or political agenda. Allegations later surfaced that *Review-Journal* reporters had been ordered by management to track three Clark County judges, one of whom allegedly is overseeing a lawsuit against Adelson.

As a result of the fallout, News + Media Capital Group in December hired crisis manager Mark Fabiani to navigate its controversial purchase of the paper. Fabiani's previous clients include Goldman Sachs, the San Diego Chargers, Gov. Rick Perry and Lance Armstrong.

NBC CASTS RAWLINGS FOR PR

Allison Rawlings, who led PR for DreamWorks Animation, has plugged into NBC Entertainment as senior VP, corporate communications.

She reports to EVP Chip Sullivan. Executive Vice President, who calls her a "top-notch communications strategist ... extremely intelli-

**Rawlings**

gent, is quick on her feet and is an exceptional team player."

Rawlings led all communications efforts for the DWA, including branding, corporate communications and film publicity.

She was previously director of communications at the Geffen Playhouse and led account teams at Cohn & Wolfe on clients like Hilton Hotels, Air New Zealand, Corner Bakery and the Actors Fund.

METRO CORP. CUTS STAFF, ADDS NATIVE ADS

Philadelphia-based media company Metro Corp., which publishes magazines such as *Boston* and *Philadelphia*, announced yesterday that it is cutting staff as part of a larger corporate restructuring plan "to address the changing media environment and position the company for future growth."

Announcing the news on *bostonmagazine.com*, the publisher said seven full-time positions would be eliminated. (The company holds a total staff of 134.) A similar statement posted on *phillymag.com* confirmed that three of those cuts would come from Metro Corp.'s Philadelphia office.

Poynter yesterday reported that *Boston* magazine senior editor S.I. Rosenbaum was among those affected by the cuts.

As part of the reorganization, the publisher also said it would unveil a new custom publishing and native advertising platform, CityStudio. That property is expected to debut during the first quarter of 2016.

"Metro Corp. has responded boldly to the changing media landscape in the last few years, particularly with the growth of our digital and events businesses," Metro Corp. chairman and CEO David Lipson said in the announcement. "As the world evolves, it is essential that we evolve with it. I strongly believe the changes we're making will allow us to thrive going forward."

Patrick Kerkstra, who joined Philadelphia as deputy editor in 2014, has been promoted to editor. Philadelphia editor Tom McGrath has been promoted to Metro Corp.'s chief content and strategy officer, and will aid with CityStudio's launch.

TEGNA HIRES NEW CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER

TEGNA Inc., the broadcast and digital company consisting of media properties formerly owned by Gannett Co., has hired Nicholas Lehman as chief strategy officer.

As a member of TEGNA's leadership team, Lehman will identify and develop new business opportunities for the company's line of media properties. He'll also be responsible for cultivating strategic partnerships, implementing innovation initiatives and guiding the company's overall vision and strategy.

He'll report to TEGNA president and CEO Gracia Martore.

Lehman was previously digital president for NBCUniversal, where he oversaw digital M&A strategies and was responsible for that company's portfolio of native digital businesses.

(Continued on page 4)

PR & SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS & VIEWS

TEGNA HIRES LEHMAN (Cont'd from pg. 3)

Prior to joining NBCUniversal, Lehman was CEO of Plum TV and programming COO for IAC, and held executive roles at MTV Networks. In 2009 he also founded email newsletter Uncommon Media.

Martore called Lehman “a multi-platform leader with a proven track record of building innovative media and technology businesses.”

TEGNA, whose media properties include 46 television stations in 38 markets, reaches more than 90 million U.S. residents nationwide.

The McLean, VA-based company, which also owns digital properties such as Cars.com and CareerBuilder.com, was created earlier this year when newspaper giant Gannett Co. spun off its digital and broadcast properties into an independent division separate from its newspaper and publishing division.

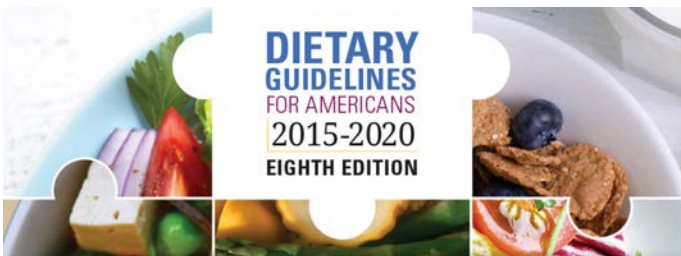


Lehman

NEW GUIDELINES FOCUS ON EATING PATTERNS

The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans report was released on Jan. 7, the latest government policy statement outlining proposed recommendations for a healthy diet.

Jointly administered by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and Secretary of the USDA, the report, issued every five years, influences nutrition policy for everything from federal assistance programs, to school lunches and prison meals, to national food labels.



As it turns out, an analysis of DGA reports since its inception in 1980 also reveals an ongoing evolution by policy makers in their quest to encourage and promote healthy eating habits among Americans.

Case in point: For the first time in its history, the DGA now sets limits on sugar, suggesting sugar should comprise only 10 percent of daily caloric intake. On the other hand, previous recommendations on dietary cholesterol — a target of no more than 300 milligrams a day — have been scaled back; foods such as eggs and shellfish are now recognized as part of a healthy diet. The report also emphasized protein — specifically, proteins from seafood, poultry and lean meats — and suggested that Americans eat more whole fruits, vegetables and grains.

According to Bill Layden, partner and co-founder of food, nutrition, and wellness agency FoodMinds, the most significant change this year involves a shift in the DGA's overall focus, from listing the foods that Americans should avoid or eat more of, to an increased focus on an individual's eating patterns.

“It's an important differentiation. In the early days,

the DGAs were mostly focused on specific nutrients. Now they've begun talking about not just foods, but suggesting their patterns in an overall context, and the synergy those healthy eating patterns have on an individual over the course of a day, or a week, or a lifespan,” Layden told O'Dwyer's. “As it turns out, one size does not fit all, and this shift recognizes a need to tailor and apply an individual's needs in order to achieve overall healthy eating patterns.”

“In my opinion, this provides a rich and fantastic blueprint for manufacturers, retailers and even software producers. The DGA document offers a great opportunity for nutrition marketers to help support consumers in adopting healthier eating patterns,” Layden said.

Also of note: the literal size of the DGA's policy document has increased. According to FoodMinds, which conducted a word content analysis of all eight editions of the DGAs to yield insight into its evolution, the report's word-count has increased by more than 1,500 percent since its first edition in 1980, currently clocking in at about 50,000 words, compared to the first edition's word-count of about 3,000 words.

“First, we have to realize that when it comes down to it, the scientific basis and substantiation for arriving at those conclusions are complex, and there's a need to explain that,” Layden said. “Second, if we understand that we live in a dynamic environment, we understand that these aren't guidelines merely for individuals, but guidelines for society.”

THREE-WAY MEDIA MERGER BOILS

Three major broadcasters are at a merger impasse as Nexstar Broadcasting Group and Media General announced an agreement last week, but a previous Media General target, Meredith Corp. has put up a roadblock.

Media General in September forged a \$2.4B bid to acquire Meredith, before Nextstar stepped in to buy Media General.

Meredith had been seeking cash compensation and discounted buying rights to Media General assets but last week proffered a new merger proposal with Media General aimed to woo MG's shareholders with an upfront cash payment.

Nextar, which is offering more cash in its Media General Deal than Meredith, said in finalizing its terms last week that, “because the Meredith-Media General merger agreement has not been terminated, there can be no assurance that any transaction with Nexstar will result (or the terms or timing thereof).”

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that also looming over the deals is a federal spectrum auction in March that could delay any merger submitted to the FCC, as well as the activist hedge fund Starboard Value, which has a nearly 5% stake in Media General.

MG noted that under the terms of the Company's agreement with Meredith MG may not enter into an agreement with Nexstar unless and until the Meredith Agreement has been terminated. MG said it has made several proposals to Meredith to terminate the agreement, and to date (Jan. 7), Meredith has been unwilling to accept the overtures.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS

PASCALE POWERS GLOBAL PR UNIT

Healthcare agency Pascale Communications has officially moved into global waters, with the formation of an international business unit designed to assist multi-market clients and their campaigns by connecting the world's healthcare community.

PCGlobal, which officially launched in December, will offer opportunities for agency teams to partner and assist international clients with a range of healthcare PR and communications services.

In a statement, the New York-based agency said PC-Global's formation "recognizes the growing importance of multinational communication efforts and coordinated strategic thinking that can be filtered down to local needs."

As part of the initiative, Pascale has inked a strategic partnership with London-based independent agency Say Communications to expand the unit's capabilities.

To lead PCGlobal, Pascale has hired London-based PR and marketing consultant Laura Cameron as its global executive. Cameron will head client relations and business development efforts for the newly formed unit.

According to Pascale Communications founder and CEO Georgette Pascale, the launch follows years of collaborative work with the agency's network of international partners.

"After more than a decade working alongside some of the smartest, most exciting clients in the industry, and with the sharpest, most passionate PR team I have ever been a part of, we are thrilled to carve out a global presence and continue to contribute to the success of our clients," Pascale said.

LIFESTYLE PR PRO LAUNCHES NEW SHOP

Lifestyle publicist Jessica Del Guercio has launched a new agency, Evoke Marketing.

The boutique New York shop will focus on food/beverage, travel and lifestyle PR and social media services, with an emphasis on hotels and restaurant openings.

Evoke Founder Del Guercio, who also serves as Managing Partner, was previously Director at Current, which she joined in 2014.

At Current Del Guercio handled accounts such as the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, The Setai Miami Beach and Azamara Club Cruises.

Prior to Current, Del Guercio was senior account supervisor of travel at Magrino, where she worked with Le Meridien Hotels & Resorts, The Ranch at Live Oak/Malibu, Philadelphia's Rittenhouse, and the Castle Hill Inn in Newport, RI. She also did stints at Alison Brod PR and J PR.

Evoke recently signed on two clients: Mochidoki, a New York-based Japanese ice cream company; and Cooperstown Distillery, an Upstate New York micro-distillery that offers handcrafted spirits.

The agency also works with Upstate camping retreat Orenda, and the Adirondack Brewery, a microbrewery located in Lake George, New York.

Evoke's new headquarters is located in New York City's Murray Hill neighborhood.

NEW ACCOUNTS

New York Area

Feintuch Communications, New York/AptoVision, Montreal based chipset maker, as AOR. AV provides chipsets for AV/KVM signal extension, matrix switching, IP-based switching and multi-view applications. Feintuch will help build awareness of its products with an integrated PR campaign in North America and will also coordinate PR efforts in global markets. It is the company's first AOR.

Exposure America, New York/Herschel Supply, fashion accessories brand, as AOR. HS, which designs bags, backpacks, luggage and accessories, was founded in 2009 and is based in Vancouver. Exposure will head a comprehensive North American PR strategy, establishing a communications program including media relations, partnerships and celebrity engagement.

Midwest

Current, Chicago/Radio Flyer, iconic wagon and bicycle maker, as AOR for PR. The company, best known for childhood mainstay product Little Red Wagon, also manufactures scooters, tricycles and bicycles. The famous toy company, which was founded in 1917, marks its centennial anniversary next year. Current will execute communications programs for Radio Flyer, focusing on new product launches, brand awareness and ongoing media relations work. The account will be managed out of the Interpublic unit's Chicago office, under the leadership of executive VP Amy Colton. "Brands don't get more iconic than Radio Flyer — everyone has a personal wagon story," Current president Virginia Devlin said in a statement. "We're looking forward to celebrating those memories while also showing how Radio Flyer plans to stay relevant and exciting for families for decades to come." Current, which was founded in 2006 and holds additional offices in New York, Dallas, Los Angeles and San Francisco, specializes in consumer products, food and beverage, home, travel and wellness.

Bianchi PR, Troy, Mich./SRG Global, maker of chrome plated plastic parts for the automotive and commercial truck industries, and consumer goods sectors, such as household appliances, for PR and media relations to promote SRG's brand globally, particularly highlighting its commitment to sustainability and environmental issues. The company is headquartered in Warren, MI, and has manufacturing operations in Europe and Asia. SRG is a wholly owned subsidiary of Guardian Industries Corp.

West

JMPR Public Relations, Woodland Hills, Calif./Los Angeles Modern Auctions, auction house founded by curator Peter Loughrey, for media relations and strategic brand building counsel as LAMA auctions off the George D. Sturges residence in Brentwood, Calif., designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright and the art collection found within the home on Feb. 21.

Zapwater Communications, Chicago/Visit Finland, state-run tourism agency for the Scandinavian country, as AOR for the US.

NEWS OF SERVICES**GTCR ACQUIRES ONVOY**

GTCR, the private equity firm that owns PR services and software giant Cision, announced today that it has inked an agreement to acquire telecommunications provider company Onvoy, LLC.

The deal is expected to close during the year's first quarter.

Minneapolis-based Onvoy provides wholesale voice and messaging communications services for national telecom service providers and carriers. It was founded in 1991 and is a subsidiary of Communications Infrastructure Investments, LLC.

GTCR currently holds a minority share in Onvoy and has a representative on its board. In a statement, Onvoy CEO Fritz Hendricks said GTCR has "played a leadership role in support of Onvoy's vision to expand network reach and enable communications for the evolving voice, messaging, and wireless market."

"Fritz and his team have built a platform that is well-positioned to power the next generation of telecommunications providers," GTCR principal Lawrence Fey said in a statement. "We believe a streamlined ownership structure will help the team continue to pursue product innovation and strategic acquisitions."

Chicago-based GTCR has invested more than \$12 billion in more than 200 companies specializing in finance, technology, healthcare, media and telecommunications since its founding in 1980. After taking PR software firm Vocus private last year in a \$447 million cash transaction through affiliate GTCR Canyon Holdings, the private equity firm two months later oversaw the merger of Vocus with powerhouse PR services property Cision.

Cision in December purchased PR Newswire for \$841 million.

DIDIT BUYS DIRECT MAIL FACILITY

Long Island-based marketing agency Didit has acquired printing and direct mail company Laser Image Corporation, as part of a strategic venture to streamline its marketing, PR and digital services efforts in the area.

Didit, which owns digital marketing shop Didit Communications, as well as agencies LVMGroup, Bridge Global Strategies and JBCumberlandPR, is headquartered in Mineola, Long Island, and holds additional offices in New York City and Waltham, MA.

Laser Image Corp. is located in Plainview, NY. The facility services domestic and global mailings for B2B, consumer and non-profit organizations.

According to a company statement, Didit plans to combine the facility with its existing partnership with Long Island printing company Cherry Lane Printing, effectively creating the largest direct marketing entity in the area that will offer a broader suite of services to clients.

Laser Image Corporation is the ninth business Didit has acquired in four years. The marketing shop, which was founded in 1996, last year acquired New York-based boutique PR firm LVM Group and in February bought New York's Bridge Global Strategies, followed by its July purchase of New York-based JB Cumberland PR.

PEOPLE**Joined**

Marcy Graham, VP of IR and corporate comms. for aTyr Pharma, has moved to publicly traded San Diego-based Mirati Therapeutics, in that same title. Graham handled two major financing and an IPO at aTyr, which went public last May in a \$75M public offering. Graham previously led IR and corporate comms. at Ambit Biosciences through its acquisition by Daichi Sankyo in late 2014. She also did stints at biopharma companies Sequenom and Genoptix.

**Graham**

Sasa Nikolic, VP of media at BrandLink Communications, to Parasol, New York-based lifestyle and hospitality agency, as VP. He was a senior publicist at Fingerprint Communications and senior A/E at Magrino. For Parason, he's in charge of guiding its expanded brand marketing division, including PR, marketing and creative services efforts.

Joan Khoury, chief marketing officer, LPL Financial, to Oppenheimer & Co., New York, as managing director and CMO, a new post. She previously led marketing for Merrill Lynch Wealth Management and Wachovia Evergreen Investments, among other posts.

**Khoury**

Jeff Crater, VP of government relations, The Babcock & Wilcox Company, to Agenda, Washington, D.C., as senior energy advisor. He was at McDermott International, Cauthen and Associates and served in the Clinton-era Dept. of Energy.

Doug Richter, director of partnership marketing, Karlitz & Company, to Time Inc.'s inVNT brand communications shop in New York as managing director, global partnerships. He was director of online marketing for Warehouse Music.

**Richter**

Eva Pickens to Texas Southern University, Houston, as VP for university advancement and media relations. The former journalist has been with the school for 25 non-consecutive years. She previously directed comms. for the Gulf Coast Community Services Assn.

Jon Orcutt, policy director for the New York City Dept. of Transportation, to TransitCenter, as director of communications and advocacy for the policy non-profit focused on urban "mobility."

**Scalese****Promoted**

Sarah Scalese, to associate VP for university communications, Syracuse University's College of Arts and Sciences. She is a veteran of Racepoint Global and Schneider Associates.

Laura Pegg to senior A/E, Falls Communications, Cleveland. She joined in 2013 after PR and marketing stints at Northeast Ohio Medical University and Havas.

BOCA RATON FIRM LAUNCHES TALENT WING

TransMedia Group, Boca Raton, Fla., founded in 1981 by Tom Madden, former VP and assistant to NBC president Fred Silverman, has opened www.transmediamodels.com representing models.

“Representing models is a natural extension of a PR firm,” said Madden. “In our business, we’re constantly looking for faces



and figures to associate with products. So why not represent those assets? It makes sense to me.”

TransMedia Group lists 14 employees and more than 30 clients in the O’Dwyer database including those in health, fitness, biotech, law, tech, real estate, fashion and education. Fees were \$1,197,102 in 2014.

The PR side of the business is “surging,” says Madden, particularly internationally. “We’re serving clients throughout South America.” He has supplied references and has been bonded and fingerprinted in order to become licensed to represent models.

Heading TransMedia Modeling is Adrienne Mazzone, Madden’s daughter, who has also become president of the firm.

“We’ve matched models with products that went on to become faces and figures of products,” said Mazzone, who operated a modeling agency in New York City.

The division has signed up a number of models and is reaching out for both male and female models. It conducted an “open-toe” audition Dec. 28 for models at Heels ‘N More, Orlando. It is searching for “the most beautiful and talented hopefuls.”

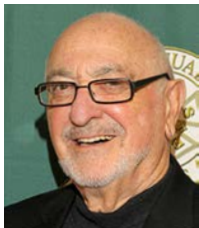
It has partnered with MyJamTV, 24-hour music channel that will feature some of TransMedia’s models.

A graduate of the Annenberg School at the University of Pennsylvania, Madden was a reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* early in his career.

HOLLYWOOD PUBLICIST WEISSMAN DIES AT 90

Murray Weissman, a partner in Weissman/Markovitz Communications, Los Angeles, a leading publicist for many years, died Dec. 28 at his home in Los Angeles. He was 90.

Variety called him “a trailblazer in the field of awards campaigning” whose clients included Frank Sinatra, the Television Academy, Miramax, Judy Garland, Danny Kaye, Red Skelton, Dick Van Dyke, the Smothers Brothers and hit series including “The Twilight Zone,” “Gunsmoke,” “Route 66,” “Wyatt Earp” and “Hogan’s Heroes.”



Weissman

He worked on Oscar-winning campaigns for Best Picture winners “The Sting,” “Kramer vs. Kramer,” “Dances with Wolves,” and “The English Patient,” among others.

More recently, he worked as a publicist for the “Mad Men” TV series. Matt Weiner, creator of the series, called him an essential part of the “Mad Men” team, praising

his cleverness and patience.

Weissman/Markovitz is currently handling “The Big Short” which analyzes the 2007-08 financial collapse.

Started at ABC and CBS

A native of Brooklyn who moved to L.A. in 1936 with his family, Weissman graduated from the University of California’s School of Journalism. He served as a Navy radio operator during World War II in 1944-45 aboard the attack transport USS Clearfield.

Weissman started his career with ABC and CBS TV networks, moving in 1966 to Universal Pictures where he was chief of the motion picture publicity department for ten years. He opened his own firm in 1981 after working for Lorimar Productions and Columbia Pictures. Weissman/Markovitz was formed in 2006 with his son-in-law Rick Markovitz.

He is survived by his wife, Kay Friedman, children Benjamin and Julie, and three grandchildren.

EPA PROMOTES NATIONAL RADON MONTH

Warning that radon gas is the second biggest cause of lung cancer after smoking, the Environmental Protection Agency is promoting January as “National Radon Action Month.” One in 15 homes is affected.

Homes with even a minimal amount of radon gas subject occupants to the equivalent of smoking eight cigarettes a day or having 200 chest X-rays a year, says Indoor Air Health Adviser.

The minimal amount is described by Indoor Health Air Advisor as four picocuries per liter of air (4pCi/L).

The risk of radon is multiplied in the winter in homes without ventilation fans because doors and windows are kept closed and furnaces suction even more of the gas from the ground.

EPA has distributed a press release via PR Newswire offering free radon test kits that are available from Swat Environmental via 800/420-3881 or SWAT-Radon.com. The company installs 10,000 radon mitigation systems yearly.

Radon is described as “a toxic colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that occurs naturally in the soil.” EPA is urging that all homes, schools and other buildings be tested for radon. It says there is no safe level of radon gas.



VASS JOINS JACKSON

Greenville, SC-based agency Jackson Marketing Group has hired Kathy Vass as public relations director.

In her new position, Vass will oversee project management for the agency’s clients, and will aid in developing and executing PR projects, as well as overall brand positioning and key messaging.

Vass brings more than 25 years of PR, marketing and events experience in corporate, business, media and government settings. Prior to joining Jackson, Vass served as manager of development and marketing for Greenlink/Greenville, SC.

The stock market had its worst start ever to a New Year last week but that went unnoticed by the 11 p.m. Friday Jan. 8 TV network newscasts. Local crime and the weather got big play as usual. The market slide, if it continues will impact all of business... **“The Big Short,”** a litany of Wall Street abuses that will not increase confidence in the Street, racked up \$40 million+ in box office, making it No. 7 on Fandango’s list.

Jennifer Lawrence, who has served as a delightful guest to at least a half dozen TV interview shows, was the highest paid actress in 2015 at \$52M, says *Forbes*. The star of “Hunger Games” movies and “Joy,” she tells embarrassing stories about herself and is termed “down to earth,” “humble and real,” and “breath of fresh air” by viewers. Where is the CEO or PR exec who can win such terms?...**we watched the more than a dozen J Law interviews while waiting** two hours for our flight to D.C. to take off Tuesday, Dec. 22 from LaGuardia. There were fewer than a half dozen passengers when we arrived for the 3 p.m. flight which made us nervous. Sure enough, it was announced that “equipment problems” had cancelled the flight. When the plane took off at 5 p.m., every seat was filled. This has happened several times to us. The pilot apologized profusely for the “equipment problem” while some passengers snickered.

Centers for Disease Control and NY Times both ducked Jan. 2 on the dangers posed by cellphones. CDC reversed its recent advice urging “caution” with cellphones and again says it just doesn’t know about them. Cellphone companies are among NYT’s biggest advertisers. NYT’s long, meandering story fails to note copious evidence that cellphones are a longterm danger, particularly to children.

Apple itself, in small type near the end of its instructions, tells users never to carry cellphone in a pocket. It should be on “Airplane Mode” or completely off (hold down off key for several seconds) when not in use. Holding a cellphone close to your head is the same as sticking your head in an operating microwave oven. Use speaker option when possible. Stay at least ten feet away from a microwave that’s on... **“My cellphone made me a terrible parent,”** *New York Post* columnist Stephanie Thompson wrote Jan. 7. She lost her iPhone and found it made an improvement in her relationships with her children and friends. She now tells them to put their cellphones away and is keeping her own use to a minimum...**Oculus, owned by Facebook, is marketing a new virtual reality headpiece** at \$599. The device, which envelops most of the upper head and impacts the brain with electromagnetic waves, are not to be used by anyone under 13 years of age. Other health hazards are covered in an Oculus PDF.

Radon gas, the second biggest cause of lung cancer after smoking, is a problem in one of 15 homes. There is no safe level of radon, says the Environmental Protection Agency which is promoting January as “Na-

tional Radon Action Month.” Homes with even a minimal amount of radon subject occupants to the equivalent of smoking eight cigarettes a day or having 200 chest X-rays a year.

President Obama, who has averaged the fewest press conferences since President Reagan (20 per year vs. 5.75 for Reagan, 26 yearly for President George W. Bush and 24 yearly for President Clinton) has recently opted for a series of “conversations” with prominent figures in the arts, letters and entertainment. It’s a way to avoid the grilling of a press conference.

In the same ballpark is Obama’s use of a single-topic appearance such as his Jan. 7 “Town Hall” that was confined to gun control.

The interviews with prominent figures are “slow-paced, personal, divorced from the news of the day,” writes AP’s Kathleen Hennessey in describing Obama’s “new media strategy.”

The Federal Trade Commission on Aug. 13, 2015 issued a “Statement of Enforcement Principles” that steps up its ability to “take action against unfair methods of competition.” FTC says it could use its “standalone authority” to look into any practice that “must cause or be likely to cause, harm to the competition or the competitive process...” **That certainly describes the boycott that PR Society of America enforces** against the O’Dwyer Co. which blocks us from exhibiting our five news and informational products to its annual conference attended by some 3,000 regular and student members. Somehow we are considered objectionable although the Society sold at least 50,000 copies of O’Dwyer articles for its info pack service from 1978-94.

New York Financial Writers Assn. and PRSA have the same prickly attitude to the press as though being unhelpful is the way to deal with reporters. NYFWA, without consulting members or yet providing a PDF, has just killed its printed directory of members. PRSA did the same thing in 2005.

Membership was 20,874 in 2005 and only 22,000 now.

We think there’s a connection. PRSA’s directory was its single most useful product but a bone in the throat to the staff because of the time and money required for it.

Staff prefers members to be in the dark and divided. Members would print their own directory if they had a PDF but PRSA won’t provide it. NYFWA, with cash, savings and investments of \$500,635 as of Jan. 31, 2015, is raising its dues from \$50 to \$60. It can’t afford a single press ticket to its “Follies” and puts reporters who buy tickets at the last possible table.

A check of the 2011-12 and 2013-14 directories shows 28 “Active” members dropped out among the first 116 names, a renewal rate of 74%. Listing of members by employers was dropped in 2013-14 when the previous directory showed 100 of the members were “freelancers.”

– Jack O’Dwyer