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# O'Dwyer's

The Inside News of PR & Marketing Communications



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## WACO WANTS TOURISM PR SUPPORT

Waco Convention & Visitors Bureau wants to hire a firm to provide marketing services support to stimulate leisure travel, resulting in overnight stays at hotels/motels in the city.



CITY OF WACO

The 25th largest city in Texas (population of 140K), located between Dallas and Austin, boasts a diverse set of attractions including the Dr Pepper Museum, Texas Ranger Hall of Fame, Magnolia Market and Homestead Heritage.

Waco is a popular convention and meeting destination for smaller to mid-size meetings (400 to 1,000 attendees) due to a large convention center (e.g., Waco Convention Center features 144K sq. ft. of meeting space) for a town of its size, according to the RFP.

The C&VB is offering a one-year contract, with an option to renew, to kick off on April 1. The budget is pegged at \$300K. Responses are due Jan. 15. They should be labeled "RFP 2020-073 Agency of Record" and mailed to: City of Waco Purchasing Services; Attn. Victor Benegas, Purchasing Agent; P.O. Box 2570; Waco, TX 76702-2570.

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

## STAGWELL, MDC SHOOT FOR \$3B IN REVENUES

Stagwell Group and MDC Partners have ironed out a definitive merger agreement to form what CEO Mark Penn calls a \$2B "transformative" marketing services company with 8,600 employees in 23 countries.

The merger creates a roster of PR/PA firms that includes [Finn Partners](#), [KWT Global](#), [Hunter](#), [Allison + Partners](#), [Sloane & Co](#) and SKDKnickerbocker. That group generates about 16 percent (\$320M) in overall revenues.

Advertising (37 percent) is the largest component of the enlarged operation followed by digital services (32 percent), research (six percent), "other" (six percent) and media (four percent).



**Mark Penn**

Penn, who helms both firms, is shooting for \$3B annual revenues by 2025. That goal is based on achieving \$2.6B in revenues via five percent plus annual organic growth and a 10 to 15 percent boost in digital marketing business; \$325M in revenues from M&A activities and the addition of \$75M in "new digital revenue streams."

Stagwell and MDC, which announced a non-binding deal in October, expect the merger will be completed during the first half of 2021.

## RECAPPING 2020 IN THE WORLD OF PR

2020 rocked the communications community as the COVID-19 crisis triggered cuts in client spending, restructuring of PR/ad firms, layoffs and the shift to working from home.

In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, many firms enlisted in the battle against racial inequality by rolling out or strengthening their diversity, equity and inclusion programs.

The hotly contested presidential election and the never-ending tweets and taunts of Donald Trump provided the soundtrack to the tumultuous year.

Here are some of the highlights and lowlights covered by *O'Dwyer's* in 2020:

**Niel Golightly, Global Communications Officer** at Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, joins Boeing on Jan. 1 as senior VP-communications. The former US Navy fighter pilot held top PR jobs at Royal Dutch Shell, Ford Motor. He resigned in July due to an employee complaint about an article that he wrote in 1987 as a Navy pilot questioning the ability of women to serve in combat.



**Niel Golightly**

**Fiat Chrysler Automobiles names Simon Sproule** chief communications officer effective Feb. 3 to succeed Golightly. He was VP-marketing and communications at Tesla and corporate VP at Nissan and Microsoft.

**Harold Burson, co-founder of Burson-Marsteller** and one of the most influential figures in PR history, dies at 98. BCW CEO Donna Imperato said Burson lived a giant life as a master of influence and was a true pioneer of PR and strategic communications. "He was the wisest person I knew, with the highest level of integrity, humility and kindness," she said.



**Harold Burson**

**W2O acquires 21GRAMS**, New York-based healthcare advertising firm, to "accelerate its vision of becoming the premier analytics-driven, technology-enabled healthcare marketing and communications company of the future, according to CEO/founder Jim Weiss.

**Carol Wilson joins BCW** as executive VP-inclusion and diversity for North American operations as it pushes for a more open and collaborative workplace. At the Diversity Best Practices advisory firm, Wilson counseled more than 200

*Continued on page 5*

## **BGR REPS BULGARIA'S TOP OLIGARCH**

BGR Government Affairs is representing a Bulgarian oligarch and member of parliament who is accused of undermining democracy in the Eastern European nation.



**Delyan Peevski**

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty reports that Delyan Peevski is viewed as Bulgarian prime minister Boyko Borisov's "oligarch in chief" and the "ultimate puppet master" in the country. He controls 80 percent of the country's print media and a private TV network.

Hired by Peevski's law firm, BGR is to "engage and facilitate communications with relevant officials and decision-makers in the US in an effort to help Mr. Peevski with issues in the

US," according to its letter of agreement signed by BGR chairman Ed Rogers.

BGR managing director and former FBI agent Tom Locke, who headed the Bureau's worldwide investigation of the 9/11 terror attacks, oversees government affairs efforts for Peevski. Jeff Birnbaum (former *Time*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Fortune* and *Washington Post* staffer) works the PR front.

BGR's six-month contract is worth \$180K.

## **CT HIRES MCDOWELL FOR COVID-19 PR**



**DUBY McDowell**

Connecticut has awarded McDowell Communications Group a three-month \$250K contract to handle COVID-19 education and PR surrounding the rollout of the vaccines, according to the *Hartford Courant*.

The strategic communications firm, which is headed by DUBY McDowell, has close ties with Connecticut Democrats. It handled the campaigns of Gov. Ned Lamont and Sen. Chris Murphy.

Hartford-based MCG will augment the COVID-19 communication efforts conducted by state agencies that have limited press teams, said Max Reiss, Lamont's chief spokesperson.

## **BROOKS-LASURE SPEAKS FOR RWJ**

Allyn Brooks-LaSure has joined the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as VP of communications.

Brooks-LaSure comes to RWJF from the Leadership



**Allyn Brooks-LaSure**

Council on Civil and Human Rights, where he served as executive vice president for communications. He was previously a State Department foreign service officer, and was on the communications staff of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Before that, Brooks-LaSure was Washington press secretary for Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ), and served as deputy press secretary for New Jersey governor Jon Corzine.

In his new position, he leads the RWJF's communications department and is responsible for implementing strategy to support initiatives that address health equity and the social determinants of health.

## **ON THE MOVE**

**Brunswick Group** adds **Tom Deegan** as a partner based in Hong Kong. Deegan previously served as general counsel of the Public Investment Fund, the sovereign wealth fund of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Before that, he was a senior partner and led the M&A and energy & infrastructure practices in the Asia Pacific region for Sidley Austin LLP.

At Brunswick, Deegan will work to strengthen the firm's M&A capabilities in Asia and bring his international legal and regulatory expertise to bear for clients globally.

**FNK IR**, an investor relations consultancy focused on small and micro-cap companies, has named **Matt Chesler** a partner. Chesler comes to FNK IR from MDC Partners, where he was head of investor relations and SVP finance. Before coming to MDC, he was a sellside equity research analyst at Deutsche Bank, covering media and internet stocks. "Matt understands firsthand the challenges that smaller-market caps face as well as the ways that investors identify and evaluate these types of companies," said FNK IR founder and managing partner Rob Fink.

**The InterMedia Group of Companies** has named **Michael Walters** as vice president marketing & sales at its InterMedia Advertising unit. Walters was most recently at iSpot.tv as vice president West Coast sales, offering TV attribution analytics and ID-based solutions to brands and agencies. He has also served as director of platform partnerships at both Quantcast and AOL. In his new post, Walters will connect advertisers with InterMedia's bench of data scientists, modeling and custom-client dashboard tools, proprietary media networks and performance-based media offerings.

**LLYC** hires **Francisco Marquez** as office director in its new Washington D.C. location. Marquez has served as political counselor to the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington D.C., chief of staff of the Mayor of El Hatillo (Caracas, Venezuela), and senior director of strategic partnerships at UFacilitate. In his new post, he will work closely with the global partnership of Finsbury, Hering Schuppener, and Glover Park Group, which LLYC joined as an associate partner in 2019.

**Ogilvy Health** recruits W2O Group's **Andrew Thorn** as EVP, head of planning. Thorn had been managing director, strategy at W2O since 2018, and before that he held executive strategy positions at FCB's Trio healthcare shop and Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare. At Ogilvy Health, he will oversee and manage planning, strategy, analytics and experience teams.

**Entercom** names **Ashok Sinha** as senior VP, head of corporate communications and PR. Sinha comes to Entercom from WarnerMedia, where he served as VP, communications lead, heading internal/external communications strategy for the company's technology organization. He was previously senior VP, corporate communications at Publicis Media. In his new role, Sinha will handle, media and press relations, corporate messaging, crisis communications and issues management and executive thought leadership management.



**Tom Deegan**



**Andrew Thorn**



## WORKING FOR HOWARD RUBENSTEIN

Every week all of us account executives at Howard J. Rubenstein Associates had to fill out a triplicate report about each client. It would indicate the actions we took and any media results—or hits—that we managed to deliver.



**Bob Brody**

And every week Howard Rubenstein, who died Dec. 29 at the age of 88, himself reviewed every report that came through from all 100 account executives on all 400 or so clients at his firm. He wrote his feedback at the top, usually a single word: “weak” or “needs improvement” or, in rare cases, “strong,” “creative” or “outstanding.”

We who worked for Howard lived and died by his responses to our reports. If his reaction was favorable, you felt entitled to resume breathing. Otherwise you operated on pins and needles until your hopes arose anew the following week. So it went at Howard J. Rubenstein Associates, where I served as a senior vice president from 1994 to 1998.

The bottom line with Howard was getting hits. The clients basically paid you for hits. Get me a hit, they barked, any hit. If not a quick hit then a late hit, and if not a big hit then a small hit, a quote, a mention at least, any mention.

Get a hit, that’s what it was all about, that’s all it was ever about, any and all excuses strictly the opiate of the loser. This was a hit factory, and no one-hit wonders need apply. Whichever client needed a hit most was supposed to get a hit first. It was just that simple. The hit was nothing less than holy writ. You got your clients hits or you might land out on your ass.



**Howard Rubenstein**

Call till you fall. That was more or less the drill at Howard J. Rubenstein Associates. Pitch yourself hoarse. Except on those rare occasions you really had the goods, a nugget of Real News, the media tried to shoo you away as if you were some kind of kamikaze mosquito that kept dive-bombing into

its skin looking for fresh blood.

But what a kick! Karl Wallenda, the high-wire artist, was right. To be on the wire is life. The rest is waiting. That’s how I felt about pitching. To be on the phone was life. The rest was waiting.

And what an office! The firm occupied an entire floor of about 40,000 square feet. All around you, the agency would be going full tilt. Secretaries scanned in hits, more politely known as media placements, on computer screens and faxed tip sheets to assignment editors. In private offices along the halls, account executives worked the phones, doing the old smile and dial. And oh, how they could all talk! Big talk and small talk, fast talk and smooth talk, straight talk and sweet talk, jive talk and doubletalk.

In those four years of boot camp, I learned the Rubenstein style. Quick and dirty, that’s how our clients liked it, and so that’s how it had to be. I had to synchronize your metabolism accordingly and slice time fine.

But let me tell you my favorite moment of all, the moment that revealed the real Howard Rubenstein to me, a mensch among mensches. It happened on one of those occasions

when I got to operate alongside Howard rather than merely in his employ. We visited a client of his, the CEO of a large business, who was about to serve a sentence in jail.

We gathered in a conference room with the CEO and his inner circle to hash out a succession strategy for the company. And toward the end, the CEO turned to Howard to ask him a question about his impending imprisonment. “Howard,” he said, “what should I say to my son? How do I explain this?”

Now Howard could have recommended any number of answers. He could have said, “Everything will turn out all right.” Or “I’m sorry for my mistakes.” Or “I’ll be home soon.” But no. Instead, Howard placed his hand on the CEO’s hand. And then he softly said, “Just tell him you love him.”

*Bob Brody is an independent public relations consultant in New York City. A frequent essayist for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post, he is author of the memoir “Playing Catch with Strangers: A Family Guy (Reluctantly) Comes of Age.”*

## MEDIA MANEUVERS

**Media Matters** has named **Fox News** its Misinformers of the Year for 2020. The network takes the baton from Fox contributor and founder of JusttheNews.com founder John Solomon, who won in 2019. Fox employees and executives who have received the prize in the past include Lachlan Murdoch (2017), Sean Hannity (2008) and Bill O’Reilly (2004). The main reason that Fox News as a whole won the award this year was its coverage of the COVID pandemic. “The right-wing network has promoted coronavirus misinformation an estimated 13,551 times on its weekday programs over the course of the pandemic,” according to Media Matters.

**Politico** has acquired **E&E News**, a news organization that covers energy and the environment. E&E News, which employs more than 65 reporters and editors in cities including Washington, New York City and Los Angeles, will continue to operate under its own name. E&E News principal founder and owner Michael Witt will remain with the company for the time being. Politico says that the acquisition will allow it to grow its footprint in the energy news space. Witt said that the combined company “will provide unparalleled and unique coverage of energy and environmental issues.”



**Vice Media**’s Dominique Delpoit is stepping down as president of international and global chief revenue officer. He is also leaving his posts as a director at Vice’s Pulse Films unit and its agency Edition Worldwide. He is expected to remain on Vice’s board in an advisory capacity, and is also said to be starting up a new consultancy company, Arduina, which will include Vice on its client roster. Before joining Vice in 2018, Delpoit held leadership positions at Vivendi and Havas. At Vice, he is credited with working alongside Vice CEO Nancy Dubuc to help the company transform what was alleged to be a toxic work culture.

**Amazon** has signed an agreement to acquire podcast creator and producer **Wondery**. Reports in the *Wall Street Journal* and Bloomberg put the deal in the \$300 million range. Wondery will still operate independently under its own name. Amazon Music launched podcasts in September, and the acquisition sets the company up to compete with Spotify, which acquired podcast advertising and publishing platform Megaphone in November.

## **DISINFORMATION MAY SINK BIDEN AGENDA**

Disinformation is an “ubiquitous and foundational impediment” to the incoming Biden/Harris administration’s ability to deal with the deadly COVID-19 pandemic and reverse the decay of America’s democratic institutions, according to a diverse coalition of advocacy groups.

“From the politicization of masks to virial conspiracy theories about the vaccines, our toxic information infrastructure is undermining the pandemic response and every American is paying the price,” said the nearly 50 organizations that signed an open letter to Biden/Harris.



They blasted the “deluge of election lies” that sow chaos and division; racist and misogynist disinformation that incites domestic terrorism, threatens

women, thwarts police reform and justifies cruel immigration policies; and blatant lies about abortion designed to roll back reproductive rights.

The groups say Team Biden will find it hard to pass its agenda when the American people “are not merely polarized, but living in disparate realities with warring sets of facts.”

In their view, there needs to be a government-wide strategy to repair the broken information ecosystem.

The groups’ proposals to Biden include 1) appointing a disinformation expert to the COVID-19 task force and empowering the panel to brief the public and coordinate a whole-of-society response to the infodemic, 2) launching a website to serve as a hub for real-time debunking of viral disinformation, 3) directing the Dept. of Education to develop digital and media literacy programming, 4) advancing anti-trust cases against the major platforms, 5) elevating the State Dept.’s Global Engagement Center to counter disinformation that threatens US democracy and that of our allies, and 6) launching a White House “Social Media for Social Good” effort to showcase innovative platform tools, algorithmic options, etc. to foster healthier public discourse.

Center for Media and Democracy, Generation Justice, Common Cause, Center for American Progress, Greenpeace, Government Accountability Project, Public Citizen, Friends of the Earth, NARAL Pro-Choice America, Jewish Women International, Guns Down America and MoveOn are among the groups to signed the Dec. 21 letter.

## **HAITI HIRES LATIN AMERICA ADVISORY GROUP**

Haiti has hired the Latin America Advisory Group to provide PR, Congressional outreach and international media relations services. The Miami-based shop will prepare talking points for Haitian officials and identify “champions” in Congress to promote various humanitarian/economic assistance programs.



**Damian Merlo**

The one-year contract calls for LAAG to develop a messaging strategy, provide background and sometimes “off the record” information to journalists and draft/place OpEd pieces in “reputable” news outlets.

LAAG partner Damian Merlo, who was special assistant to Haiti’s former president Michel Martelly and prime minister Laurent Lamothe, oversees the \$96K account.

## **MT. CLEMENS SEEKS BRANDING PARTNER**

Mount Clemens, a city of about 17K people that is 25 miles northeast of Detroit, wants to hire a firm to forge a brand identity that highlights its assets to attract businesses, residents and visitors.

Once known as the “Bath City” tourist spot for its mineral baths, Mount Clemens has a creative history spawned by the many bath houses that opened during the late 19th century.



At the peak of the boom in tourism centered on the healing arts, the city featured 23 major hotels and bath houses, restaurants and cultural sites.

The city serves as the seat for Macomb County, which has 880K residents and is the regional hub for healthcare and social service industries. Mount Clemens would like to be positioned as “The UpTown of Macomb County,” a center of art, culture, food and entertainment,” according to the RFP.

It wants a partner to develop a brand positioning statement, tagline, logo, flag and mascot that will appear in costume at parades, public events and before school groups.

Proposals are due Jan. 6 and must be uploaded to [BidNet](#). [Download RFP \(PDF\)](#).

## **FINSBURY WORKS THOMA BRAVO DEAL**

Finsbury handles private equity firm Thoma Bravo’s \$10.2B deal to acquire RealPage Inc. a real estate software/data analytics company, in one of the biggest leveraged buy-outs of the year.

The private equity firm is offering \$88.75 for each of NASDAQ-listed RealPage shares, which is a 30.8 percent premium over its Dec. 18 closing stock price.

RealPage CEO Steve Winn will continue to operate the company from its headquarters in Richardson, TX when the deal closes during the second quarter of 2021.

Finsbury’s Andrew Johnson represents Thoma Bravo, which has offices in Chicago and San Francisco.

WPP owns Finsbury, which will merge with Glover Park Group and Hering Schuppener early next year.

## **ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT**

**Weber Shandwick** lands **Explore Minnesota**, the state’s tourism promotion office. Weber Shandwick will work with Minneapolis-based Adventure Creative and True Media, which has served as the organization’s creative agency of record and media-buying partner since 2018. Weber’s two-year contract runs through Nov. 2022. Belmont Partners was previously Explore Minnesota’s agency of record.



**V2 Communications** adds **TCP** (TimeClock Plus) to its roster of HR technology and employee benefit solutions clients. V2 will work to build the company’s profile across target markets, from education and government, to manufacturing and healthcare, as well as raising TCP’s brand awareness and positioning its executives as thought leaders. Austin, TX-based TCP provides workforce management and time and labor solutions. “V2’s industry knowledge, sound communications counsel and creative thinking make them a true extension of our internal team,” said TCP chief marketing and product officer Leslie Bodnar.



## RECAPPING 2020 IN THE WORLD OF PR

*Continued from page 1*

member organizations on diversity and sustainable change programs.

**Teneo lands an \$840,000 six-month contract** to manage the communications department of Neom, the \$500 billion mega-city that is supposed to be the centerpiece of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's plan to diversify the economic base of Saudi Arabia.



**Edelman's 20th annual Trust Barometer** shows growing inequality is killing the dreams of people throughout the world as they feel the economic system is rigged against them. More than half (56 percent) say capitalism is doing more harm than good.

**Climate change is the greatest issue facing brands today**, according to a "Brand Pressure Index" report by High Lantern Group that analyzed 300 social topics. Labor insecurity, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, data security, trade barriers, racial inequality and misinformation also scored high on the list.



**Jennifer Cunningham, one of the most powerful women in New York politics**, quits SKDKnickerbocker to travel and explore new opportunities. The SKDKnickerbocker partner is former political director of the powerful 1199 SEIU union and a long-time friend of Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

**Jennifer Cunningham**

**Hope Hicks returns to the White House** as counselor to the president, reporting to first son-in-law Jared Kushner. "There is no more move devoted to president Trump's gendy than Hope Hicks," said Kushner. She was chief communications officer at FOX Corp.

**SKDKnickerbocker acquires Sloane & Co from MDC Partners** to give the public affairs shop a robust financial PR capability. Both entities are affiliated by Mark Penn's Stagwell Group.



**Craig Bucholtz**

**Craig Bucholtz joins General Motors** as senior VP-global communications. The Procter & Gamble chief communications and VP-communications, personal health and oral care, took over for Tony Cervone, who retired April 1.

**UK-based Huntworth goes private via a \$520 million deal** engineered by American private equity firm Clayton Dubilier & Rice. The private equity

firm said healthcare-oriented Huntworth is well positioned to capitalize on "demographic/economic growth, an increase in product launches, development of more specialized drugs and the emergence of new marketing channels."

**Porter Novelli recruits McKinsey & Co.'s David Bentley** in March for the CEO slot. Bentley, who was VP-digital at the management consultant, takes over for Brad MacAfee, who left the Omnicom unit in December.



**COVID-19 takes toll on Interpublic's financial targets** as CEO Michael Roth yanked full-year financial projection of

three percent organic growth for 2020. "In light of significant microeconomic uncertainty resulting from the severity of the COVID-19 crisis, and the unknown magnitude and duration of its impact, it is appropriate to withdraw the company's previously issued financial performance targets for full-year 2020," IPG said in a SEC filing.

**Publicis Group rolls out a \$550 million cost reduction program** as CEO Arthur Sadoun predicts the COVID-19 crisis will trigger the "greatest recession in living memory." The cuts are designed to help the ad/PR combine "to adapt to the new context and be recovery-ready."

**Chevron's Dave Samson joined Edelman** as global corporate affairs vice-chair on May 1. It's a new position. Samson was GM-PA at the oil giant and an alum of Oracle, Ketchum, Levi Strauss and IBM.



**Arthur Sadoun**

**Weber Shandwick cuts and furloughs staff** due to across-the-board client spending cuts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The cutbacks follow moves to slash expenses, freeze salaries and trim executive pay. CEO Gail Heimann said of the layoffs: "It is something I hoped I would not have to do; it is a wrenchingly hard decision to make. And I know it is indescribably hard for those to whom we are saying good-bye."

**Rubenstein readies for New York City's reopening** as it develops messaging for the Coalition for NYC Hospitality & Tourism Recovery as it launched in May to promote the Big Apple when it opens for business in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. The launch was a bit premature.

**Environmentalists score a major victory** at Chevron's May 27 annual meeting as 53 percent of shareholders voted in support of a resolution requiring the energy giant to issue a report on its climate change-related lobbying efforts. The board urged stockholders to reject the measure.

**Edelman cuts 390 people**, which represents seven percent of its global staff, and ordered pay cuts from five to 20 percent to deal with the impact of COVID-19. CEO Richard Edelman called the cuts "gut-wrenching," especially in light of his March statement that there would be no job losses due to the virus. That pledge was based on Edelman's willingness to take the firm down to zero profit, but the company in June was "beyond the threshold of loss-making."

**WPP launches \$30 million three-year program to combat racism** and invest in Black and ethnic talent. The money will flow to external organizations and internal inclusion efforts. WPP also pledged to only participate in industry events or panels where people of color are represented.

**Ray Jordan, who held top PR jobs at Amgen, Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer**, joins biotech firm Moderna in June as it develops the first COVID-19 vaccine to post positive



**Richard Edelman**

*Continued on page 6*

## RECAPPING 2020 IN THE WORLD OF PR

*Continued from page 5*

post-trial results. He is Moderna's chief corporate affairs officer.



**Barri Rafferty**

**Ketchum CEO Barri Rafferty** leaves the Omnicom unit to head the corporate communications department of Wells Fargo & Co. The 25-year Ketchum veteran was the first woman to head a Top 5 PR firm.

**Ruder Finn signs a \$1.7 million one-year contract** to develop a website and social media campaign for Saudi Arabia's Neom mega-city. The contract has RF stationing staff in Saudi Arabia. It includes a COVID-19 provision calling for RF "to use all reasonable endeavors to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among its personnel, the employer's worksite and any person at the employer's worksite."

**WPP revamps its PA offering** and sells a 49.99 percent stake to management of Finsbury, Glover Park Group and Hering Schuppener. The new entity Finsbury Glover Hering debuts in 2021 with 700 staffers in 18 countries.



**Hill+Knowlton Strategies works with the World Health Organization** to make certain its science and public health messaging is credible to ensure there is trust in the Switzerland-based groups' advice and that its guidance is followed. President Trump, a critic of the WHO, vowed to pull the US out of the group.

**Edelman helps Kodak** deal with its PR crisis triggered by its internal communications team sending out a media advisory without an embargo time about the following day announcement of a \$765 million loan from the US to launch Kodak Pharmaceuticals, a COVID-19 initiative backed by president Trump.

**Michael Caputo takes a leave of absence** from his top spokesperson job at the Dept. of Health and Human Services following an unhinged rant on Facebook Live, in which he lambasted career government scientists for acting as a "resistance unit" to Trump.

**Former New York Governor David Paterson** joins Kivvit, the PA and strategic communications shop. Paterson said he worked with lots of PA firms during his time in government but none of them impressed him more than Kivvit.

**PR pro Harris Diamond** steps down as COO of Interpublic's flagship McCann Worldgroup ad agency after an eight-year run. He helmed Weber Shandwick for nearly 17 years.

**Interpublic rebrands the Constituency Management Group**, a global group of 28 marketing services firms and brands anchored by Weber Shandwick, Golin, Octagon, Futurebrand and Jack Morton, as IPG DXTRA. CEO Andy Polansky called IPG DXTRA a symbol of how "we work across our best-in-class agency brands to intentionally bring forward highly relevant, specialized services to our clients."

**Finn Partners lands a \$25,000 monthly retainer con-**

**tract** to supply PR and social media services to The Hong Kong Tourism Board as the city looks to rebuild its tourist trade after China tightened control over the former British colony in July.

**Edelman joins Team Neom** as the independent firm scoops up a \$75,000 monthly pact to provide strategic counsel, media relations, stakeholder engagement and content development to the Saudi Arabia mega-city.

**Current Global launches "Accessible by Design" initiative**, ensuring that all content and campaign be crafted to be inclusive to people of all abilities, such as those with sight, hearing, speech and cognitive impairments.

**Doug Band, President/co-founder of Teneo** and ex-confidante to President Clinton, steps down to spend more time with his family and pursue other interests including teaching and investing. The departure of the 48-year-old follows a devastating article in Vanity Fair called "Confessions of a Clintonworld Exile" that outlined his messy split with the former president and his family.

**The California Dept of Public Health** plans to award a \$40 million contract for a COVID-19 vaccine media campaign. The campaign, slated for mid-January, is to provide Californians and key groups with timely, accurate and actionable information about the vaccination.

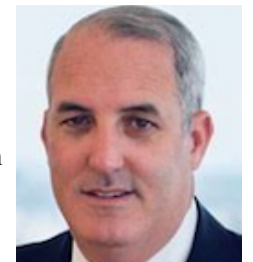
**Finsbury hires Vickee Jordan Adams**, Wells Fargo's senior VP, consumer banking, stakeholder relations. She joins the firm as a Partner and co-lead of the financial services sector in January when it becomes Finsbury Glover Hering.

**Omnicom names Emily Graham, chief equity and impact officer** and senior VP, diversity and inclusion Communications to oversee its OPEN 2.0 plan to achieve systemic equity across its agencies. She was chief diversity officer at OMC's FleishmanHillard and earlier held posts at MWWPR and Burson-Marsteller.

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**Howard Rubenstein**, founding Chairman and President of PR powerhouse Rubenstein Associates and a crisis strategist who managed the reputations of everyone from Abe Beame to George Steinbrenner to Donald Trump, died on Dec. 29 at the age of 88.



**Doug Band**



**Emily Graham**