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# O'Dwyer's Newsletter



The Inside News of  
PR and Marketing  
Communications

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## WEBER ROLLS KETCHUM FROM MICHELIN BIZ

Weber Shandwick is replacing Ketchum on the Michelin North America account on July 1 following a competitive review that included the incumbent Omnicom shop.



Paul Jensen, president of Weber's NA corporate practice will run the account from New York with input from across the Interpublic unit's network, including its Detroit automotive group.

Eric Bruner, external communications director at Michelin, praised Weber's team for its creativity and "enthusiasm for Michelin's vision to give people everywhere a better way forward."

He thanked Ketchum for its "award-winning and market leading support" since 2011.

## LEVINSON REPS US WOMEN SOCCER PLAYERS

The Levinson Group is representing the 28 members of the US women's soccer team as they press their case for pay equity against the US Soccer Federation.

The defending World Cup champions filed a lawsuit in March, charging the Federation denies them equal compensation, training, playing and travel conditions with the men's team. The suit also alleges the Federation promotes their games less than the men's matches.

Both sides have agreed to enter mediation following the end of the current World Cup competition.

Molly Levinson, who launched her firm in 2014 after stints at CNN and CBS, serves as spokesperson for the players.



She told the June 27 *Wall Street Journal* "the world is looking to the Federation for leadership—not only to benefit from the successes of women players, but also, finally, provide women players with equitable playing conditions and compensation."

Levinson was senior elections consultant at CNN and political director at CNN and CBS. She worked the elections from 2002 to 2012 and also covered the Sept. 11 terror attacks and the ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Her firm, which has offices in New York and Washington, specializes in high-profile crisis communications, issues management and litigation PR.

## WISCONSIN ISSUES TRAVEL MARCOMM RFP

The Wisconsin Dept. of Tourism has issued an RFP to handle its integrated marketing communications budget geared to positioning the Badger State as the "premier destination of choice for the traveler."

Tourism represented a \$21.6B business in 2018, powered by 112M visitors who supported 200K jobs.

The state typically spends \$12M for advertising, PR and website development.

The DOT has divided the RFP into three lots: PR/media relations, marketing/advertising and website development/hosting/maintenance. Interested firms may submit proposals for one, two or three lots.

The PR component of the RFP includes development of a campaign that "will potentially include messaging to both consumer and industry audiences, media relations, digital communications channels and industry website content, as well as traditional outlets."

The selected firm will create, implement and manage Travel Wisconsin's brand/reputation, target media outreach, place stores, arrange events and "liaise with industry stakeholders and partners to generate buzz and exposure for the statewide tourism industry," according to the RFP.

Proposals are due July 11.

Respondents must register with the Wisconsin eSupplier Portal at [https://esupplier.wi.gov/psp/esupplier/SUPPLIER/ERP/h/?tab=WI\\_GUEST&wimsg=Logo](https://esupplier.wi.gov/psp/esupplier/SUPPLIER/ERP/h/?tab=WI_GUEST&wimsg=Logo).

Click [here](#) for the RFP.

## GRISHAM NAMED WH PRESS SECRETARY

Stephanie Grisham, who has been on Team Trump since 2015, most recently as Melania Trump's communications director, will be taking over the role of press secretary at the White House from Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

The announcement was made via a Tweet from Mrs. Trump.

Grisham will also be White House communications director, filling in the gap that was left by former Fox News exec Bill Shine when he left that position in March.

Grisham has been known as a staunch supporter of Mrs. Trump. When former deputy national security advisor Mira Ricardel was fired at the instigation of Melania Trump, Grisham issued a statement that Ricardel "no longer deserved the honor of serving in this White House."

Mrs. Trump's Tweet said that she could "think of no better person to serve the Administration & our country."



Stephanie  
Grisham

## NORTH MIAMI BEACH SEEKS CRISIS PR HELP

The City of North Miami Beach is looking to hire a firm to “administer reputation enhancement, PR and crisis communications support,” according to its RFP.



Recognizing that “media relations and communication of public affairs are key to our residents, business and visitors,” the city wants a “seasoned, energetic and innovative PR firm/individual with a proven record.”

North Miami Beach, which celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2016, is primarily a residential and shopping community.

It seeks to expand its economy based on healthcare/social services, tourism/hospitality and transportation/logistics.

The city is improving commercial corridors for public transit, pedestrians and bicyclists and creating “distinctive outdoor gathering spaces to enhance the desirability of adjacent neighborhoods.”

Proposals are due by July 17. Send the original, four copies and flash drive to:

City of North Miami Beach  
Procurement Management Division  
Attn: Purchasing Supervisor Meghan Cianelli Bennett  
17011 N.E. 19th Avenue, 3rd Floor  
North Miami Beach, FL 33162.

The outside package must be marked “RFP No. 2019-070-MC Public Relations and Crisis Communications.”

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

## NRA SEVERS TIES WITH ACKERMAN MCQUEEN

The National Rifle Assn. has officially cut ties with long-time PR firm Ackerman McQueen and dropped its top DC lobbyist Chris Cox, who was once tipped as successor to CEO Wayne LaPierre.

The NRA and AM have been embroiled in a lawsuit over billings and the release of financial documentation.



**Wayne LaPierre**

During its 38-year run, AM was responsible for the classic “From my cold, dead hands” messaging from the late actor Charlton Heston and for NRA-TV.

In a statement on the NRA website, LaPierre said the TV operation is being turned off due to the required investment to keep it on and for concerns that its programs were “becoming too far removed from our core mission: defending the Second Amendment.” The NRA will now focus on messaging via social media and its own website.

AM charged NRA is trying to run away from its financial commitments by closing of NRA-TV.

“When given the opportunity to do the right thing, the NRA once again has taken action that we believe is intended to harm our company even at the expense of the NRA itself,” AM said in a statement.

The Oklahoma City shop believes “it’s time to move on to a new chapter without the chaos that has enveloped the NRA,” though it pledged to continue the court fight.

## ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

**BackBay Communications** was selected as PR agency for The Economist Events’ inaugural **Climate Risk Summi** on July 2 in London. The agency has worked work to raise awareness of the event and its speakers among key target media across a range of industries, as well as in climate risk, environmental, social and governance (ESG) investment communities. BackBay has also worked with The Economist Events on summits including the Finance Disrupted events in New York and London and the Investing for Impact conference in New York.

**The Pollack PR Marketing Group** has been selected by **Frontline Wildfire Defense System** to support its entry into the Southern California marketplace. Pollack’s LAB186 digital marketing and content creation team will focus on upgrading the design and functionality of Frontline’s web presence to meet the needs of consumers while improving the user experience (UX) and user interface (UI) to increase organic search rankings.

**SRW** has been named agency of record for snack food manufacturer **Calbee North**

**America**. The agency will lead marketing efforts for all Calbee NA brands, including Harvest Snaps and Popper Duos. “We partnered with SRW because they are the experts in natural, better-for-you CPG marketing, said Paul Laubscher, Director of Marketing Calbee North America director of marketing Paul Laubscher.



**Version 2.0 Communications** has added **Ciprun Global**, the U.S. subsidiary of China-based Ciprun Group, to its client roster. To launch Ciprun Global in the U.S. market, Version 2.0 is helping Ciprun to solidify its messaging, create a website and begin brand building and awareness campaigns. Version 2.0 is working to create buzz on a local and national level among technology and business media, reaching inventors and law firms that require support securing IP protection in China.

**Lou Hammond Group** has added **Nexton, Travel Marquette and Brookgreen Gardens** to its client roster. LHG will provide public relations, digital marketing and positioning services for all three clients. Nexton is a 5,000-acre mixed-use community near Charleston, S.C., Travel Marquette promotes the Michigan city and South Carolina’s Brookgreen Gardens contains over 2,000 species of native plants and contains the largest and most comprehensive collection of American figurative sculpture in the country. LHG will also continue to represent Sonoma County’s Tourism, Vintners and Winegrowers.

**IMAGINE PR** has been named North American PR agency for **Mandapa, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve** in Ubud, Bali. The agency will be handling general media relations services for the property, including media outreach, press releases and desk sides. Mandapa opened in September 2015 as the third resort in the Ritz-Carlton Reserve collection. It offers individually tailored spiritual, wellness and health programs as well as activities to suit travelers of all ages. The property has 35 suites, 25 private pool villas, a fitness center and a restorative spa offering a wide variety of treatments.

## **DO EXECS KNOW WHAT PR IS?**

A recent article in PRWeek highlights research that shows many corporate executives don't fully understand what PR is, and they CERTAINLY don't know how much value it brings to an organization. This isn't particularly shocking if you work in communications or PR; we live this truth every day. In fact, this has been the bane of our entire industry and all of earned media for decades.



**Kevin Akeroyd**

While marketing and advertising have enjoyed all-time high investment levels, PR and comms are struggling, and in many corporations, being radically under-funded. But it doesn't have to be this way.

So how can you increase the visibility and perceived value of your comms team in your organization?

Here are a few ideas.

### **1. Show just how much value PR brings**

What kind of reporting do you do in your organization now? How do you communicate your results to leadership or clients? One way to demonstrate how much value PR brings to an organization is to use the language of executives—data and charts.

First, make sure you have a regular reporting cadence set up, and that you're reporting on the right kinds of metrics. Report on more than just the estimated reach of your earned media. While share of voice, sentiment, competitive benchmarks for these and the rest of our age-old metrics are okay, it's not enough. We need to report on:

- **Actual validated reach.** Down to the individual who reads your PR, comms, blog, or other content.
- **Audience data.** What are the demographics, firmographics, lifestyle, and other audience data? You need to know exactly who you've reached.
- **Behavior data.** What actions did each audience take after consuming your earned media content? Both immediately, and over time.
- **Business results conversion data.** Whether it's e-commerce, pipeline, web traffic, downloads, registrations, trials... whatever the business metrics your organization measures, you need to show your impact on those, the exact same way that marketing and advertising do, with the exact same metrics.

Report regularly and report often; remind everyone frequently what you're doing and what kind of results you're getting.

### **2. Do your own PR**

You know the old saying—"The PR pro's children have no publicity." We spend so much time doing the work of PR for our clients or brands that there isn't a lot of time for our own PR. We're doing ourselves a huge disservice here, because it means a lot of people—including the execs who make and approve budgets—don't always know what it is we do and all the effort involved. Think about ways you can do internal PR for PR. Are there awareness campaigns or announcements you could run internally? See if you can find time to think as cre-

atively about your own PR as you do your client's or brand's.

3. Make it easy for others to amplify earned media success

When you get a good piece of coverage, share it where the rest of your organization can see it. Don't expect that everyone else is tracking your media coverage like you are. Share it across all your company's social accounts, and work with your digital marketing team to put some paid spend behind it to amplify it. Make sure as many people in your company know when you get good press as know when the sales team closes a big deal. If it's easy for your co-workers to spread the word, many of them will, so make it easy for people to share.

Do the executives in your organization know what PR is and what it does? If they don't, maybe some of these ideas will help increase awareness and understanding. Hopefully we'll start to see some of these numbers on the rise. And in case any of those execs who didn't know what "PR" stands for are reading this, it's "public relations" and it's incredibly important to the success of your business.

*Kevin Akeroyd is the CEO of Cision, a leading global provider of software that empowers marketing communications professionals to identify key influencers, craft and distribute strategic content, and measure meaningful impact.*

## **RIPP, BRUNSWICK, SVC TOP LEGAL PR ROSTER**

Ripp Media, Brunswick Group and Sard Verbinnen & Co. have been cited as the top PR firms offering legal and litigation support work in the US by Chambers and Partners, a legal rankings service based in London.

The three firms were placed in Band 1, the highest category in the Chambers rankings. Chambers rates both firms and individual practitioners by such criteria as technical legal ability, client service, diligence, commercial vision, business understanding and value for money.

Ripp was cited by one lawyer client as being "excellent in terms of counseling, planning and knowing the best places to go with stories." Brunswick was singled out for its skill in corporate reputation management and Sard Verbinnen was praised for its "exceptional financial PR and crisis management capabilities."

Edelman, Infinite Global, PRCG Haggerty, Sitrick and Company, and Trident DMG all were placed in the second-highest category, Band 2. Finsbury, FTI Consulting, Hellerman Communications and Kekst CNC were in Band 3 and KARV Communications, Levick and Rubenstein were in Band 4. The Chambers website stresses that "being ranked in any band is a significant achievement."

The individual advisors who received Band 1 rankings were Ripp Media's Allan Ripp, Ellen Moskowitz of Brunswick Group, Trident DMG's Lanny Davis and Michael Sitrick of Sitrick and Company.

To see the complete list of ranked firms and lawyers, [click here](#).



## **FTI TAKES ON BOY SCOUTS**

FTI Government Affairs is representing the Boy Scouts of America, which House Democrats say has been lobbying about stricter sexual abuse laws.



**BOY SCOUTS  
OF AMERICA**

California Congresswoman Jackie Speier and 11 Democrats sent a letter to BSA last month to “clarify the extent to which BSA has directly or indirectly engaged in lobbying efforts, including retaining or compensating lobbyists, to advocate against legislation to extend statutes of limitations.” That letter followed reports that more than 12,500 scouts were abused by leaders from 1944 to 2016,” according to The Hill.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported May 30 that BSA is considering bankruptcy protection due to an “expected rush” of sexual misconduct lawsuits.

FTI is advising BSA on “issues related to child protection in youth organizations.”

## **MICHELLE OBAMA'S PRESS SEC. TO PRECISION**

Katie McCormick Lelyveld, press secretary to First Lady Michelle Obama, has joined Precision Strategies.

During her White House tour, Lelyveld helped craft Obama’s image, traveled overseas and launched initiatives such as “Let’s Move” physical fitness program. Earlier, she was communications director for Obama during the presidential campaign.

Most recently, Lelyveld was VP-head of communications and PA for Human Longevity Inc. and director of communications at the Joyce Foundation.

Lelyveld also worked for Glover Park Group, Edelman, John Kerry for President (deputy communications director) and First Lady Hillary Clinton (assistant to director of communications.)

Stephanie Cutter, deputy campaign manager for President Obama’s 2012 re-election campaign, and Jen O’Malley Dillon, former executive director of the Democratic National Committee, co-founded Precision Strategies.

## **LEAN FACTOR LANDS 5G RESEARCH GROUP**

Lean Factor has won the competitive pitch for 5Tonic, which is committed to a global open environment to promote research and projects related to the development of 5G technologies.

Formed by Spain’s Telefonica and IMDEA Networks, 5Tonic members include Intel, Ericsson, CommScope, InterDigital, Altran and University Carlos III (Madrid). Nokia Bell Labs is a 5Tonic collaborator.

5TONIC will showcase the capabilities and interoperation of equipment, services and applications of global companies in the 5G space.

Lean Factor, a global digital strategy and communications shop in Madrid, is to develop a PR program for 5Tonic and liaison with the staffs of the member companies.

It will draft articles, editorials, press releases and white papers; produce videos, organize briefings, conduct media outreach and handle events.



**5TONIC**

## **BRUNSWICK FINDS CHINESE AVOID US GOODS**

Chinese consumers are avoiding American products to support for their country in the tariff war with the US, according to a survey released by Brunswick Group.

Though more than three-quarters (77 percent) of Chinese say they often buy American goods, 56 percent have boycotted a US-made product because of the trade battle. Nearly seven-in-ten (68 percent) of the 1,000 Chinese consumers polled by Brunswick say their opinion of US companies has gotten worse due to the trade dispute.

While most of Chinese consumers recognize the importance of bilateral trade between the two countries, few believe the dispute will be settled in the next three months.

The strategic communications firm also surveyed 1,000 Americans and found that trust in Chinese companies fell 12 points to 44 percent during the past eight months.

That finding, according to Brunswick, shows the need for Chinese enterprises needs to be “mitigating US regulatory and reputational risk.”

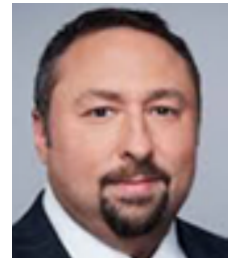
## **TWITTER RAGE SIDELINES TENEO’S MILLER**

Jason Miller, managing director at Teneo, is out after he posted obscenity-laden Tweets directed at House Judiciary Committee chairman Jerry Nadler following the testimony of Hope Hicks, ex-White House communications director, before the panel, according to the Daily Beast. Miller has also deleted his Twitter account.

The former Trump campaign aide called the New York Congressman a “fat f---” who should “take a long walk off a short pier” for being “obsessed with attacking innocent Hope Hicks.”

Miller is a dear friend of the now Fox executive VP-communications and chief communications officer. He was also senior communications advisor for Ted Cruz’s presidential run before joining Team Trump.

Trump has long called Nadler “Fat Jerry.” The Congressman has long been an adversary of Trump, dating back to his real estate development days in New York.



**Jason Miller**

## **POLANSKY EARNS PRSA/NY'S TOP HONOR**

Weber Shandwick CEO Andy Polansky accepted the John W. Hill Award, PRSA/New York’s top honor, at the Big Apple Awards gala on June 24.

The Hill Award recognizes personal achievement in PR based on attaining the highest standards of excellence and integrity, leadership in the development of PR, fostering/promoting understanding among people, service beyond a nominee’s regular duties and promoting communication through education and the exchange of ideas.

Polansky took the helm of Weber Shandwick in 2012, after an eight-year run as global president

He led the development of Weber Shandwick’s Client Relationship Leader program and spearheaded the creation of its pro bono “Making an Impact” community outreach program that operates globally.

Polansky is a director of the Ad Council and trustee at VNA Health Group, a nonprofit provider of home health, hospice and community-based

## HAWAII TOURISM WANTS CHINA PR BOOST

The Hawaii Tourism Authority is looking to hire a PR firm for representation in China to lure travelers to the Aloha State.

The number of Chinese visitors to Hawaii dipped 9.9 percent to 136,276 during 2018. They spent \$370.2M, which was off 2.6 percent from 2017.

HTA is looking for a partner to help it deliver on its "brand promise" of offering distinctive natural resources, culture and a multi-ethnic society.

The Authority said a visitor to Hawaii "seeks experiences that are 'foreign yet familiar' – a safe adventure in an exotic locale that is different enough to be interesting, familiar enough to be easy to navigate."

Proposals for the "inbound destination marketing management services in the China major market area" are due August 15.

Interested firms must file for a Hawaii certificate of vendor compliance at <https://vendors.ehawaii.gov> to pitch the China business.

## GHAZAI EXITS MWWPR'S CORPCOMM POST

Sara Ghazaii has exited her VP-corporate communications & marketing post at MWWPR, after an eight-month stint. She's now an associate director in Novartis' oncology unit.



**Sara Ghazaii**

Ghazaii joined the Jersey-based firm from the PR Council, where she helped its rebranding and developed diversity and inclusion programming. Earlier, she was director of communications and events at the New York Genome Center.

Upon joining MWWPR's New York office, CEO Michael Kempner called Ghazaii "one of the brightest and most dynamic people in marketing today." He expected she'd be an "invaluable team leader as we continue to position ourselves for accelerated growth."

Kempner told O'Dwyer's his firm has reorganized its marketing department and distributed Ghazaii's duties to several current employees.

MWWPR is O'Dwyer's ninth largest independent firm with 2018 fees of \$42.6M.

## US CHAMBER INVESTS IN DOYLE

The US Chamber of Commerce has hired PR veteran Tim Doyle as VP-communications.

He joins from Subject Matter after holding corporate/PR jobs at Discovery Communications, Glover Park Group and Consumer Technology Assn.

Doyle also worked as a reporter at *Forbes* and Bloomberg.

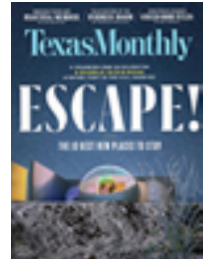
Michelle Russo, chief communications officer, said the CoC tapped Doyle due to his "deep understanding of how to advocate for policies that drive American businesses forward."

The CoC, which has been bulking up its communications team, added Sabrina Fang, eight-year veteran of the American Petroleum Institute and 15-year broadcast journalist, in May as senior director of media relations.

## MEDIA MANEUVERS

**Ken Lerer**, a founder of strategic communications powerhouse Robinson Lake Lerer & Montgomery, has stepped down as chairman of **BuzzFeed**. He had been at the digital news platform for more than 10 years. Along with Arianna Huffington, Andrew Breitbart and BuzzFeed co-founder and CEO Jonah Peretti, Lerer was one of the founders of the Huffington Post (now HuffPost). Lerer's resignation follows a string of financial difficulties at BuzzFeed. The company had planned a public offering in late 2018, but it was postponed and a *New York Times* report says that it may be seeking a sale instead. There was also a 15 percent staff cut earlier this year.

**Texas Monthly**, which was acquired for \$25 million by private equity firm Genesis Park in 2016, has been purchased by Randa Duncan Williams, chairman of Enterprise Products Company, the oil pipeline company founded by her late father, Dan Duncan, in 1968. Dan Goodgame, who came on as editor-in-chief of the publication earlier this year, will stay on, as will Texas Monthly president Scott Brown. According to the Texas Monthly website, the print magazine has a paid circulation of 300,000 and is read monthly by 2.1 million people.



The deal to sell **Condé Nast's W magazine**, which had been rumored for over a month, has closed. Future Media Group, a new company that will also include *Surface* and *Watch Journal*, is picking up the title. Editor-in-chief Stefano Tonchi, who had been actively involved in the search for a new owner, will be exiting and is filing a breach of contract suit against Condé Nast. Replacing him will be Sara Moonves, who has been serving as the magazine's style director. Moonves is also the daughter of former CBS chief executive officer Les Moonves.

## EYE ON PR SERVICES

**PRSA-NY** is combining baseball and a chance to network and socialize with industry peers at a July 18 summer social at Yankee Stadium. The price, including the game and buffet, is \$75, and the rate for groups of six is \$420. A portion of the proceeds will go to the PRSA-NY programming fund. Online registration is open until July 17. For more information, [click here](#).

**North 6th Agency** has introduced Outcome Relations, a service which gives clients the opportunity to sync up the PR services they are offered with the specific business outcomes that are most important to them. Clients can choose from more than 20 types of outcomes across six categories. The agency then develops a custom Outcome Dashboard that lets clients target specific personas, align on KPIs and track the performance of their campaigns in real-time against the chosen outcomes.

Social media listening and web monitoring platform **Mention** has introduced Publish, a feature that will let users schedule and publish posts directly from their social channels. Publish leverages social and web monitoring insights already available in the platform to help users create more informed content decisions, before they post on social media.

## COMMENTARY

### TIME TO SHOW THEIR FAANGS

Sure he's the richest man in the world, at a pre-divorce net worth of \$154 billion.

But when you're public enemy number-one in the eyes of both Donald Trump and Alexandria Occasio-Cortez, you need all the prayers you can muster.



Fraser Seitel

Bezos and the company he founded, Amazon, along with Facebook, Apple and Google, find themselves the current favorite whipping boys of Washington politicians.

Indeed, as the Presidential campaign season rolls into high gear, Big Tech has become the Dominican Republic of industries. And Congress is taking dead aim at breaking up the "Big Four" tech companies that comprise the dreaded FAANGs, with only Netflix spared from current scrutiny.

Here are the combatants.

In one corner are the "bad guys," the four tech giants who together employ 750,000 Americans, earn \$700 billion annually and enjoy an aggregate stock market value of \$3 trillion benefitting millions of American shareholders (Full disclosure, including me!).

They also supply an irreplaceable daily service on which hundreds of millions of Americans have come to depend, in most cases charging users \$0 for the privilege.

In the other corner are the "good guys," a motley collection of publicity-seeking politicians, egghead academics and crusading anti-business journalists, hell bent on destroying these four tech titans, primarily because they've been too dominant and successful.

With the ominous specter of driverless cars, delivery drones and artificial intelligence around the corner, the Big Tech Four stand squarely in the antitrust crosshairs. So what kind of public relations strategy should these four notoriously closed-mouthed companies adopt?

Here's the three-part plan I'd recommend:

#### Be seen

Ever since its Cambridge Analytica data mining debacle, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his more loquacious COO Sheryl Sandberg have become gun-shy to go public. The same has generally been true about executives at the other three firms.

This is a losing strategy. What Big Tech needs now is for its highest executives to become more willing to go on television, give speeches and appear before an admittedly hostile and showboating Congress.

One CEO who recognizes this is Apple's Tim Cook, whose recent commencement speech at Stanford provides a perfect example of what all his fellow CEOs should be doing. After citing the many innovations to advance society for which Silicon Valley should be given credit, Cook acknowledged that companies like his should take "re-

sponsibility" for fixing problems in areas like privacy.

The Apple CEO demonstrated that standing up to critics by going on offense is a much better strategy.

#### Be heard

For many years, the standard for antitrust in this country, developed principally by Judge Robert Bork, has been one based on the welfare of the consumer. If companies got too large and anti-competitive, this thinking went, they could charge oppressive prices that consumers would be forced to pay.

But for consumers, Google, Facebook and Amazon are essentially free, and Apple charges a competitive price for its hardware and nominally for its apps. The fact is, consumers adore the services provided by the Big Four, and this argument should be broadcast loudly and frequently by every Big Tech executive.

#### Be strong

Finally, the Big Tech Four must remain strong in the face of supercilious critics who would dismantle them.

That means continuing to innovate and announce new products. By contrast, last week's New York City Code Conference, usually a showplace for Big Tech innovation, instead became a piling-on exercise for criticism, led by conference organizer Kara Swisher, who ironically owes her journalistic success to access to tech executives but has become the industry's biggest turncoat.

The tech companies' best PR response to the Swishers of the world is to keep on keepin' on.

That's what Facebook did last week in introducing its new crypto currency, Libra. The immediate response from Maxine Waters, Chair of the House Financial Services Committee, was typically "upbeat and optimistic." Said the gentle congresswoman from California, "It's very important for them to stop right now what they're doing so that we can get a handle on this."

Facebook and the others must stand strong against such naysayers, introducing products but also contributing to the public good and letting people know. Last week, for instance, Google pledged \$1 billion in land and money to work with local governments to build affordable housing. Exactly the right course!

Such public displays of goodwill will remind people that Facebook, Apple, Amazon and Google are the best businesses our nation has and the envy of the world. Should they be free of scrutiny? No. Should they be subject to increased regulation in certain areas? Sure.

But the last thing we should do is kill America's four golden geese by dismantling them. And the worst thing these companies can do is sit back and take the abuse of politicians and regulators. Alternatively, they must seek to win public opinion by showing their FAANGs.

*Fraser P. Seitel has been a communications consultant, author and teacher for 40 years. He may be reached directly at [yusake@aol.com](mailto:yusake@aol.com).*