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# O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of  
PR and Marketing  
Communications

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## IDA IRELAND LOOKS FOR PR FIRM

IDA Ireland, the investment arm of the Irish government, is looking for pitches to handle its U.S./U.K. account. It wants to reach executives in the information technology, cleantech, pharmaceutical, media, consumer goods and business services sectors.

IDA worries that its competitive 12.5 percent corporate tax rate is sometimes perceived as a "tax haven" negative by the media and Washington lawmakers who are concerned about shipping jobs overseas during a time of high unemployment here.

According to its RFP, the U.S. accounts for more than 70 percent of investment in Ireland, exceeding the combined value of American outlays in Brazil, India, Russia and China.

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## EDELMAN HIRES EX-BLAIR AIDE

Edelman has hired Angela (Anji) Hunter, who was former U.K. prime minister Tony Blair's director of government relations, as senior counsel in its London office.

Hunter, according to a report in the *London Evening Standard*, is a "heavy-hitting hire" for the firm.

She will provide guidance to Edelman U.K. CEO Ed Williams and general manager Alex Bigg.

Following a 15-year stint with Blair, Hunter became director of communications for global energy powerhouse BP and director of external affairs for mining and minerals giant Anglo American. She's married to Adam Boulton, political editor for Sky News.

## REIHL EXITS WS FOR KETCHUM

Bill Reihl, executive VP of Weber Shandwick's North American consumer marketing practice, has decamped for Ketchum for a global CM role.

Reihl will be based in New York as managing director, global brand marketing practice, for the Omnicom firm, working with Chicago-based Ketchum partner and practice director Kelley Skoloda.

He was Los Angeles and New York GM at Weber Shandwick, which followed stints with Ogilvy PR and Edelman. His client stripes include Samsung, MasterCard and General Motors, among others.

Ketchum CEO Rob Flaherty said Reihl is known for "cross-channel integrated planning" and said he will lead the firm's global brand marketing unit.



Reihl

## OMNICOM, PUBLICIS TO MERGE

Omnicom and Publicis have agreed to merge in a deal to create the largest global advertising, marketing and PR conglomerate with annual revenues topping \$20B.

The deal would put Publicis' global PR giant MSLGroup under the same roof as OMC's global PR units like Fleishman-Hillard, Porter Novelli and Ketchum, among others.

Subcommittees are being formed to hash out the integration of various disciplines, including PR, within Publicis and Omnicom.

The merged company has been dubbed Publicis Omnicom Group and will carry a market cap topping \$35B with 130K employees.

John Wren, CEO of New York-based Omnicom, and Maurice Levy, who leads Paris-based Publicis, will head the combined holding company as co-CEOs over the next 30 months, after which Wren will take the sole reins as Levy slides into a non-executive chairman's role.

Levy noted the rise of new media giants like Google and Facebook, as well as reliance on Big Data have forced dramatic changes in the communication and marketing landscape.

"John [Wren] and I have conceived this merger to benefit our clients by bringing together the most comprehensive offering of analog and digital services," he said.

The *Financial Times* noted the three largest challenges of the merger will be antitrust review, client conflicts, and culture clash.

The new holding company will own three of the world's five largest media agencies. On the conflict front, agencies of the combined company will rep Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Nissan, Toyota, Google and Microsoft, among others.

Publicis Omnicom will have a 16-member board, including Wren, Levy and seven non-executive directors from each company. Management said they hope to close the deal by Q4 of 2013 or first quarter of 2014.

Regulators in 45 countries must sign off on the merger, in addition to shareholders of both companies.

Ketchum (OMC) and Kekst and Company (Publicis) are assisting their respective holding companies with communications on the deal, which sees the two holding companies leapfrog WPP as the largest of the lot.



Levy, Wren

## **PALM OIL INDUSTRY SEEKS PR HELP**

A trade group for embattled palm oil producers and sellers is looking for PR help for a global outreach campaign targeting influential journalists, bloggers, NGOs and activists.

Environmental campaigns have targeted palm oil -- used for cooking and as an ingredient in myriad products ranging from candy and soap to biofuel -- because most of the global yield comes from land cleared of rainforest in Indonesia and Malaysia.

The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, founded in 2004 and based in Zurich, is circulating an RFP for a communications campaign targeting Europe, the U.S., and Australia over the next year.

The group, which also has offices in Malaysia and Indonesia, counts 1,300 members from 50 countries and certifies about 15% of global palm oil shipments as "sustainable" with its RSPO brand, a designation criticized by some green groups.

Hill+Knowlton Strategies currently works with the RSPO abroad. Prism Public Affairs advises The American Palm Oil Council, a D.C.-based offshoot of the Malaysian Palm Oil Council.

The Roundtable feels the global debate on palm oil is gaining traction, particularly in Europe, making consumers uneasy. "[Consumers] get the general feeling that something is not right about palm oil but are not well informed of the specific details," reads the RFP.

Targets of the PR push include environmental and food bloggers, mainstream and online consumer media, academics, NGOs and other groups. The industry wants to position its RSPO trademark among consumers, pitch the sustainability story, and "convert" influencers.

Proposals are due Aug. 12. RFP: <http://bit.ly/1c6By7P>.



## **MORRIS + KING SPLIT AFTER 12 YEARS**

New York agency heads Judith King and Andy Morris have parted ways after 12 years as The Morris + King Company, a \$3M firm with clients like Visiting Nurse Service of New York and Heifer International.

King, lead partner of the firm, told O'Dwyer's that she and Morris had a fruitful partnership but that the time came to pursue their different specialties in the PR space. "We have different interests," she said. "My areas are healthcare, life sciences and luxury goods, while Andy is into technology, social media and digital PR."

Morris, who held top roles at LaForce & Stevens and DKC before founding M+K in 2001, is setting up Open Communications on W. 30th Street in New York. He has not yet been reached about the new venture.

King said the partners were able to split with their respective client rosters without any conflict.

King will remain in M+K's 101 Fifth Avenue offices as King + Company with around 18 staffers, she said.

The move follows a robust 2012 for M+K, which saw an 18% increase over 2011 and billings approaching \$3.2M.

## **WEST HOLLYWOOD WANTS PR PLAN**

West Hollywood, Calif., home to the Sunset Strip, Santa Monica Boulevard and a large LGBT population, has cast a net for a communications and civic engagement plan as it pursues a strategic plan for 2020.

The city has a bustling nightlife and arts scene and benefits from its surroundings -- Los Angeles and Beverly Hills. An estimated 41% of its 35,000 residents are in the LGBT community. It has released an RFP for a firm or consultant to conduct a communication and civic engagement audit of its current PR and outreach activities and develop a plan -- including for crisis communications -- moving forward.

Proposals are due Aug. 6. RFP: <http://bit.ly/19sQ092>.

## **7-ELEVEN KEEPS EYE ON IMMIG REFORM**

Convenience store operator 7-Eleven, an Immigration and Customs Enforcement target, has hired Republican lobbying powerhouse Mehlman Vogel Castagnetti to monitor the Washington debate over immigration reform.

In June, ICE agents raided and seized 14 7-Eleven stores in Virginia and Long Island and charged owners of employing and supplying false U.S. citizen documents to more than 50 illegal immigrants, mainly from Pakistan and the Philippines. That included identities of dead people.

The raid was part of a federal probe into 40 other 7-Elevens, an action that is part of one of the Justice and Homeland Security Dept.'s biggest criminal immigrant investigation, according to a report in the *New York Times*. Scott Matter, spokesperson for Dallas-based 7-Eleven, says the Dallas-based company is cooperating with federal investigators and promised that it's taking "aggressive actions" to audit worker status of all its franchisees' employees.

Bruce Mehlman, David Castagnetti and Alex Vogel spearhead the 11-member lobbying team for 7-Eleven.

## **SARD CONTINUES PR DEFENSE OF SAC**

Sard Verbinnen & Co continues to advise and represent longtime client SAC Capital as the hedge fund last week was hit by criminal charges and has faced probes for years.

Sard managing director Jonathan Gasthalter, a former press hand for the New York State attorney general, has led the SAC account for several years.

The FBI on July 2 announced insider-trading charges against four SAC companies and portfolio manager Richard Lee, who pled guilty on July 23 to conspiracy and fraud charges.

"SAC has never encouraged, promoted or tolerated insider trading and takes its compliance and management obligations seriously," said a statement released by Gasthalter. "The handful of men who admit they broke the law does not reflect the honesty, integrity and character of the thousands of men and women who have worked at SAC over the past 21 years. SAC will continue to operate as we work through these matters."

Earlier insider trading cases against seven SAC executives going back three and four years have resulted in five guilty pleas, the FBI said.

## AVIATION WEEK FLIES TO PENTON

McGraw Hill Financial has sold *Aviation Week* to Penton Group, a move that creates a new leading player in the global commercial aerospace business.

AW's flagship magazine, website, live events and information technology/research units reach more than 1.2M professionals.

Penton's aviation assets include *Air Transport World*, *SpeedNews*, *Aircraft Bluebook* and *Air Charter Guide*.

The combined units will have more than 140 staffers in New York, Washington, D.C., Massachusetts, California, England, France, Germany and China.

David Kieselstein, CEO of Penton, said in a statement that AW is "the clear leader in global aviation information with exceptional assets including: a growing maintenance/repair/overhaul event platform with shows in North America, Europe and Asia; the leading digital information service in Aviation Week Intelligence Network and, the most respected content engine in the industry."

He sees a "huge opportunity to unlock additional growth by overlaying Penton's formula of centralized centers of excellence in marketing services, digital community, insights and data product development to spur further growth."

Kieselstein called Penton a "next generation information services company with over 75% of our profits driven by digital, event and marketing services profit streams at exceptional margins."

Penton is owned by MidOcean Partners and U.S. Equity Partners II, an investment fund sponsored by Wasserstein & Co., LP.



## O'BRIAN TO HELM EDITORIAL OF AL JAZ USA

Kate O'Brian, a 30-year ABC News veteran, will guide editorial direction of Al Jazeera America when it debuts Aug. 20.

As ABC's senior VP-news, O'Brian was responsible for newsgathering at the network's bureaus and business, law, medical and investigative units.

That editorial oversight included ABC News Radio and affiliate relations. She will be based in New York.

Mostefa Souag, interim head of AJA, said O'Brian "understands what Americans want to see and hear when they watch the news."

Her arrival "speaks volumes about what we intend to do and how we intend to do it," according to his statement.

Arab language Al Jazeera, which is based in Qatar, has come under criticism for its alleged bias coverage of



O'Brian



the political uprising in Egypt.

That coverage was perceived as slanted toward the Muslim Brotherhood-backed government of the recently deposed president Mohamed Morsi.

Qatar funneled billions of dollars to keep the government of Morsi, who was Egypt's first democratically elected president, afloat.

It now supports Egyptian Army-installed leadership.

AJA also has named CNN's David Dross senior VP for news programming, Stony Brook University School of Journalism associate dean Marcy McGinnis senior VP for newsgathering and CNN's Sharon High-Bassalik senior VP for documentaries.

It will kick off with a dozen bureaus in the U.S.

## FINANCIAL PRO TAKES TIME INC. HELM

Time Warner has named Joe Ripp, a financial executive, as CEO of Time Inc., which is being spun off from the media combine.

He will take charge of the parent of Time, *Sports Illustrated*, *Fortune*, *People*, *InStyle* and *Real Simple* in September.

The one-time Time Inc. treasurer succeeds Laura Lang, who opted to depart on news of the corporate split-up.

Ripp is leaving the helm of OneSource Information Services, a business and information services company.

His career includes stints at Time Warner (CFO), America Online (vice chairman), Dendrite International (COO), and Journal Register Co. (chairman).

Jeff Bewkes, CEO of Time Warner, called Ripp a "seasoned executive who has been immersed in the intersection of digital, advertising and publishing for the past decade."

He "also happens to have a thorough understanding of Time Inc.'s business," said a statement from Bewkes.

## WORLD LEADERS HOOKED ON TWITTER

More than three-quarters of world leaders have a Twitter account and two-thirds of them are connected to their leadership peers, according to the "twiplomacy" poll from Burson-Marsteller.

The WPP unit looked at the government accounts in 153 countries.

Barack Obama is the most followed leader with more than 33M followers. That following includes about a third of government leaders. [The most leader connected official—with 44—is Sweden's Carl Bildt.]

Pope Francis has the second biggest following with more than 7M Twitter users.

His Spanish language tweets are the most re-tweeted, making him the "most influential leader on Twitter," according to B-M.

The Pope tweets are re-tweeted an average of 11K-plus times. That compares to an average 2,309 re-tweets for Obama's musings.

Jeremy Galbraith, CEO of B-M Europe, Middle East and Africa, said the twiplomacy report "illustrates how Twitter and social media in general have become part and parcel of any integrated government communications."

**MEDIA NEWS****COMMS DIR. SUES MAYOR FOR HARASSMENT**

Irene McCormack Jackson, former press secretary and communications director to San Diego Mayor Bob Filner, sued Filner on July 22 for sexual harassment alleging the embattled mayor asked her to "get naked" and on a handful of occasions to kiss him.

Filner, a former Democratic congressman, is in hot water after allegations from other women about his alleged inappropriate behavior. Jackson is the first to go public and hired powerhouse lawyer Gloria Allred to pursue the case.



**Jackson**

McCormack, a former journalist and VP of public policy and external relations for the Port of San Diego, signed on to the \$125K-a-year PR post for Filner in January. In her complaint, she details several instances of Filner's behavior, including in June when the mayor was reading a proposed press release: "As Defendant Mayor Filner got up to leave, with the door to her office open, he said in sum or substance, 'you are so beautiful. I am infatuated with you. When are you going to get naked? Come on, give me a kiss.'"

**Mayor to Fight Suit**

Commenting on the suit, Filner said he doesn't believe the claims are valid. "I intend to defend myself vigorously and I know that justice will prevail," he said.

Filner publicly apologized in a video statement July 11, saying he "diminished" the mayor's office and is seeking professional help.

"As someone who has spent a lifetime fighting for equality for all people, I am embarrassed to admit that I have failed to fully respect the women who work for me and with me, and that at times I have intimidated them," he said.

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department has set up an anonymous tip line to field complaints about Filner.

Jackson is seeking damages in state court for San Diego County. Allred held a press conference with McCormack after filing the complaint on July 22.

McCormack was an editor and reporter for the *San Diego Union-Tribune* before entering the political PR arena.

**PR, Political Consultants Quit**

San Diego media reported July 25 that three staffers at a PR and a public affairs consulting firm that works with Filner, Public Policy Strategies, left the firm after a top executive met with the embattled mayor July 21.

The exiting staff includes Rachel Laing, former press secretary to SD Mayor Jerry Sanders and ex-PR manager for Sempra Energy, president Phil Rath, and VP Kimberly Hale, a former director of community relations for the San Diego Film Commission.

The resignations came after PPC founder Thomas Shepard has reportedly met with Filner, whom he has advised in the past. NBC-7 San Diego reported Shepard has been heavily criticized for continuing to support Filner.

**ESPN LURES DATA GURU SILVER**

ESPN, with an assist from sister unit ABC News, has lured stat guru, blogger and journalist Nate Silver from the *New York Times*.

Silver, who pens the FiveThirtyEight blog and draws a huge following at NYTimes.com, will serve as editor-in-chief of the FiveThirtyEight site at ESPN with a team of writers and contributors, ESPN said, in the vein of the sports networks Bill Simmons and his long-form sports-writing site Grantland.com.

The former managing partner of baseball news and analysis site Baseball Prospectus will remain based in New York City with Bristol, Conn.-based ESPN.

ESPN president John Skipper said Silver's coverage will expand beyond sports to include politics and other topics. "Our expectation is he will determine the content of that site," he said. "Politics remains at the core of what he does, so politics is going to be important there. ... But I think that the range of topics will be quite wide, again that will be determined exactly by Nate."

Silver's three-year pact with the Times expires at the end of August.

"Obviously I have a background in sports, and that would be a big focus here, but it's not just going to be a politics site or a sports site," said Silver. "There's lots of potential in business and economics and weather and health and education and technology and culture."

Skipper said Silver would likely be involved with ABC News during election cycles and could possibly have a role with ABC's coverage of the Oscars. Silver's accurate forecast of President Obama's re-election in the face of established polls showing a dead heat significantly raised his profile last year.

New York Times public editor Margaret Sullivan praised Silver and his work in a piece Monday, but noted that Silver's work rankled some political journalists in the newsroom. "I don't think Nate Silver ever really fit into the Times culture and I think he was aware of that. He was, in a word, disruptive," wrote Sullivan.

Silver dismissed talk of a poor "cultural" fit with the Times in an ESPN conference call July 22. "Look, I'm interested in running a website and building out a business here and having my opinion to weigh in on different topics," he said. ]

**NYT UPS PURDY, LACEY**

The *New York Times* has promoted Matt Purdy to assistant managing editor and Marc Lacey to the associate managing editor slot.

Purdy, investigations editor, will have new duties that "span across all desks and sections," according to a memo from executive editor Jill Abramson.

His job is to focus on the NYT's priority of pushing "stories behind the story, exclusive investigative pieces and long-term enterprise projects."

He joined the paper ten years ago from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Lacey takes charge of the weekend report, succeeding Alison Mitchell, who was promoted to national editor.

Earlier, Lacey was White House correspondent, and NYT reporter in Kenya, Mexico and Iraq.

**NEWS OF PR FIRMS****PSB TO ACQUIRE CRT/TANAKA**

Minneapolis-based Padilla Speer Beardsley has moved to acquire Virginia-based CRT/tanaka to create a 200-staffer firm with revenues topping \$30M.

The firms, which have collaborated in the past, will be renamed PadillaCRT with offices in New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., in addition to their respective home cities. PSB CEO Lynn Casey will lead the agency as chair and CEO while CRT chief Mark Raper takes a president role.

“We know each other well,” said Raper, who called the deal the formation of a “great next-generation agency.”

Clients include Land O’Lakes, Girls Scouts of the USA, Hass Avocado Board and Merck.

PSB is the slightly larger firm with nearly \$17M in revenue last year, compared with CRT’s \$13M.

CRT/tanaka is the former Carter Ryley Thomas PR, formed in 1996 out of an ad agency and merged in 2005 with Patrice Tanaka & Co., which also broke away from an ad agency in 1990.

The principals said they hope to close the deal in late August. With the addition of CRT employees to PSB’s employee stock ownership program, the firms said the combined entity will be one of the largest employee-owned agencies in the country.

**GEORGIA DOT ROLLS RFP FOR PR**

The Georgia Department of Transportation wants to get more social media savvy and leverage PR to build trust in the state agency.

The \$800M a year GDOT released an RFP this month for experience communications and PR firms and is taking proposals through Aug. 7.

The department wants to educate the public on its core functions and services available, as well as conduct strategic community outreach to “further engage and build trust of the organization,” according to the RFP.

Georgia’s State Road and Tollway Authority, which operates independently from the GDOT, last month tapped Porter Novelli and Creative Outhouse for a multi-million-dollar pact to educate drivers about the expansion of toll roads in the state.

RFP: <http://bit.ly/1bBM9bt>.

**MINI USA DRIVES WITH PEPPERCOMM**

BMW’s MINI USA car unit has parked a three-year PR account with Peppercomm, following a competitive pitch.

The account is Peppercomm’s first agency of record assignment with a car brand, which partner Maggie O’Neill called a milestone for the New York-based independent firm.

Peppercomm has hired Weber Shandwick account director Rob Duda to work on-site at MINI’s Woodcliff Lake, N.J., headquarters.

Product publicity, trade show support, new model launches, as well as brand and marketing campaigns are covered in the agency of record mandate.

Independent Peppercomm bested two other agencies to nab the account.

**NEW ACCOUNTS****West**

**Allison+Partners**, San Francisco/Bullova, 138-year-old watch and timepiece brand, as AOR for PR in the U.S. A+P kicked off the work supporting the company’s presence at the BaselWorld trade show in Switzerland.

**MWW**, Los Angeles/Air New Zealand, for North American PR, following a competitive pitch. The firm will focus on the West Coast hubs of Los Angeles, San Francisco and Vancouver. International media outreach, trade and trade rels., and leveraging sponsorship of the second “Hobbit” film are among upcoming tasks. CRT/tanaka had the account.

**Southwest**

**Zion & Zion**, Tempe, Ariz./Barro’s Pizza, for a 30-month extension of its AOR relationship, including social media, PR and marketing.

**Southeast**

**Brandware PR**, Atlanta/RKM Collector Car Auctions, for brand and event media communications for the company, which held its first auction in May. Next event is set for Nov. 1-3 in Charlotte.

**Vine Communications**, Miami/Beach Park (Brazil), amusement park and resort, as AOR for PR in the U.S.

**Uproar PR**, Orlando/P-Squared Gallery, online art site for digital prints by Latin American and Latino artists, for PR.

**Insider Media Management**, Boca Raton/Athlete Connections, which helps student athletes transition to the “non-sports professional world,” for PR. AC was founded by Univ. of Florida Hall of Fame basketball player Dan Cross.

**East**

**ab+c**, Wilmington, Del./American Nurses Association, trade group for 3.1M registered nurses, for marketing and PR, following a national search.

**Envionics Communications**, Washington, D.C./BlueOSS, cloud billing and provisioning management software and services, for national PR, including marketing strategy and traditional/social media relations.

**Sage Communications**, McLean, Va./H3 Solutions, SharePoint mobility applications; Talent Curve, career and education strategies for government, military and other employees; LaserLock Technologies, security technologies; Alarm.com, home and business security systems, and the 2013 Fashion of Goodwill Runway Show and Gala (Sept. 24, Rosslyn), for PR.

**New York Area**

**Weber Shandwick**, New York/OneRoof Energy, solar technology, to promote its solar leasing options for consumers to the business and consumer segments, with a particular focus on solar power growth states like California and Arizona.

**R&J PR**, Bridgewater, N.J./Coffee Bean Direct, gourmet coffee and tea seller, as AOR for PR.

**International**

**Value 360 Communications**, New Delhi/GROHE India, bathroom fittings, appliances, for PR in India. Value 360 is part of Huntsworth.

**NEWS OF SERVICES****MDC SEES Q2 GAINS, UPS DIVIDEND**

PR and advertising group MDC Partners reported second quarter revenue climbed 5.3% to \$288.1M and raised forecasts for the rest of 2013. Net income jumped to \$11.3M after an \$18.3M loss in Q2 of 2012.

Chairman and CEO Miles Nadal called the Q2 results "very strong" and said the company, which owns PR units Allison & Partners, Kwittken & Co. and Sloane & Co., will return to paying quarterly dividends, to be increased to \$0.17 per share, a 21.4% hike.

Added CFO David Doft: "While we will certainly utilize the cash on our balance sheet to invest in the growth of the business, we also believe that it is prudent to return cash to shareholders in the form of a dividend."

Strategic marketing services, the division that contains PR and advertising, posted revenue of \$200.9M for the quarter, up 9.3% from \$183.8M in Q2 of 2012. Its data and analytics operation, known as performance marketing services, was down 3.4% to \$87.3M over 2012.

MDC also revised upward its growth forecast for 2013 to 8 to 10%.

**RUTGERS TO OFFER PR CERTIFICATE**

Rutgers University has created an online public relations certificate program through its School of Communication and Information.

The six-month program covers creation of PR plans, social media, measurement, crisis comms. and other disciplines within PR. Two required courses and five electives encompass the certificate.

New Brunswick, N.J.-based RU noted forecasts of PR job growth of 16 percent.

RU plans a kickoff event in September with a keynote speech by Taylor's Mark Beal titled "The State of the Industry." Former AT&T EVP of PR and brand management Richard Martin will discuss PR ethics.

**MW ADVISES IR PROS ON SOCIAL**

Marketwired has published "A Social Media Playbook for the IRO" to capitalize on growing interest in SM use by investor relations pros.

The newswire and content delivery company pitches the free paper as a step-by-step guide to help investor relations pros better understand the ways social media can be used.

The SEC said in April that an investigation confirmed that Regulation FD applies to social media and other emerging means of communication used by public companies the same way it applies to company websites.

Kurt Heinemann, CMO of MW, said the publication will "help them build an actionable game plan to get started." Download a copy at <http://mwne.ws/13hbfHf>.

**BRIEF:** The Caribbean Electric Utility Services Corporation tapped Miami Public Speakers Inc. to find a social media speaker for the 2013 CARILEC Chief Executive Officers and Corporate Communications Symposium held last month in Jamaica. Jeff Zelaya, president of MPS, recommended Casandra Roache, also known as "Coach Cass," for the gig.

**PEOPLE****Joined**

**Lex Suvanto**, managing director, Abernathy MacGregor Group, to Edelman, as managing director for its financial communications operation. The tech-savvy Suvanto handled M&A, IPOs, litigation and other finance-related PR assignments for clients like Walmart, PepsiCo and Comcast in nine years at Abernathy. He was with Abernathy parent Havas in the U.K. and France prior to joining that agency and after a stint at Hearst Magazines.

**Suvanto**

**Desiree Fish**, VP of corporate affairs and communications at American Express, to TripAdvisor, as VP/global comms. She is based in New York for the Newton, Mass.-headquartered company and reports to chief marketing officer Barbara Messing. The hire follows the appointment last week of MDC Partners' **Anne Bologna** as VP-brand strategy. She was previously an A/S at Hunter PR in New York.

**Fish**

**Jason Roth**, a music and tech PR alum of Apple, Capitol Records and Inside.com, to streaming music service Spotify as comms. director for the U.S., based in San Francisco. He reports to U.S. communications chief Graham James, former VP of corporate communications for AOL who joined Spotify in New York in 2012. Roth, recently VP/comms. at mobile video app Tout, was senior PR manager at Apple in four years at the tech giant, following stints as senior director of publicity at Capitol Records and dir. of comms. at Inside.com. Earlier stints included *Spin Magazine* (PR dir.) and Chicago entertainment PR shop Tom Doody & Associates.

**Joe Quinn**, VP at Edelman, to The Aluminum Association, Arlington, Va., as VP of public affairs. He was previously a managing director at Xenophon Strategies. He counsels Association president Heidi Brock and member companies on policy goals and strategies, and serves as the Association's liaison to Congress, federal agencies and other stakeholder groups.

**Tod MacKenzie**, senior VP, comms. and PA, DineEquity, to Aramark, Philadelphia, as senior VP, comms. He is a former senior VP/corporate comms. for PepsiCo. Aramark chief Eric Foss previously helmed PepsiCo.

**Promoted**

**Jason Rzepka** to senior VP, brand communications and public affairs, MTV, New York. The expanded role oversees all corporate comms., external and internal, as well as his existing purview of PA and "pro-social" campaigns. **Jennifer Solari**, director of comms., CBS Television Studios, joins as VP for program publicity and comms., based in Santa Monica.

Also, **Janice Gatti** was promoted to VP of MTV/MTV2/MTVU communications, and **Noopur Agarwal** to VP, MTV public affairs. MTV is owned by Viacom.

## **LEVICK SUES PAKISTANI FIRM FOR \$400K**

Levick Strategic Communications has sued a large Pakistani fertilizer producer, seeking \$400K in damages for breach of contract after the firm said it gave months of PR counsel without payment as Fatima sought state backing for a factory in Indiana amid concerns that its fertilizer is a key ingredient for improvised explosive devices in Afghanistan.

In a complaint filed July 18 in federal court in Washington, Levick claims it was hired in February to provide strategic communications counsel for the company as it sought a \$1.3B state bond offering in Indiana to build a fertilizer plant under its Midwest Fertilizer Corp. unit.



Concerns over the use of Fatima fertilizer in IEDs killing and maiming U.S. troops abroad surfaced during review of the Indiana project and Gov. Mike Pence pulled the plug on state funding for the project in May. Pence has allowed Posey County to pursue a \$1.3B bond offering to finance the plant, however.

Levick said the company took the benefits of its advice on how to proceed in Indiana without paying the firm after an initial \$78,600 retainer payment. A June 4 invoice for nearly \$400K has gone unpaid.

Fatima in a statement said the suit is without merit and reserved the right to sue Levick in return. "Levick has not provided the support that was expected from them and has sent us excessive and duplicate billing which is unacceptable," the company said. "We look forward to continuing with the fertilizer plant project in Indiana."

Levick declined to comment on the suit.

In the complaint, Levick said Fatima sought its counsel to "manage public scrutiny related to the plant construction and to educate the public on their efforts to make a less explosive product that would alleviate the safety concerns and save lives."

Levick wants Fatima to pay fees, expenses and interest totaling more than \$406K.

One of Fatima's key critics in the Pentagon, Lt. Gen. Michael Barbero, eased his criticism somewhat in April, saying he was "encouraged" that the company showed positive steps like halting sales of its calcium ammonium nitrate fertilizer in areas near the Afghan-Pakistani border.

## **CITI, MERRILL PRO TRIES ON BLUE SHIRT**

James Samford, a veteran of Citigroup and Merrill Lynch, has joined The Blueshirt Group financial communications shop.

He served as Citi's senior equity research analyst, covering the business services and education sectors.

At Merrill, Samford was part of its Internet practice group. Earlier, He was doing management consultant work at KPMG.

Blueshirt, a provider of IPO advisory services, IR, financial media relations and crisis management, is based in San Francisco with an office in New York.

## **EXTENDED STAY BOOKS FINANCIAL PR**

Extended Stay America, the hotel chain which is three years out of bankruptcy, is relying on financial PR support as it plans an initial public offering.

The 18-year-old Charlotte, N.C.-based chain of 684 hotels said it could raise up to \$100M in the IPO, although a share price or number of shares has not yet been set. It has engaged ICR for PR counsel and media relations related to the IPO. Managing director Phil Denning, a RLM Finsbury alum, leads that effort.

The Zimmerman Agency continues to handle its consumer and corporate PR account.

Three private equity firms bought the company off the Chapter 11 pile in 2010 for \$3.9B after it took a hit from a decline in business travel amid the financial crisis. It has about \$3.6B in debt and \$1B in annual revenues.

ESA's owners include Paulson & Co., Blackstone Group and Centerbridge Partners.

Terry Atkins joined ESA in February from Kellogg Company as senior director of marketing communications.

## **JOELE FRANK AIDS CANDY RECALL**

Ferrara Candy Company, the hundred-year-old maker of iconic candy like Atomic Fireballs and Jaw Busters, is leaning on PR support as it recalls large packages of Brach's Malted Milk Balls because they may contain undeclared nuts, an allergy hazard.

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher is providing PR support, including media relations, for the national recall of the six-pound bags of the candy.

The Oakbrook Terrace, Ill.-based company said the milk balls may contain tree nuts like Brazil nuts or peanuts and it warns that people with an allergy or sensitivity run the risk of serious or life-threatening injury.

Joele Frank managing director Andrea Rose is handling the recall at the firm.

## **GORSUCH PRESCRIBES BLUE SHIELD'S PR**

Kirsten Gorsuch, an agency and corporate pro who was previously VP of corporate communications for medical device giant Medtronic, has moved to Blue Shield of California in its top comms. role as the insurer navigates massive changes flowing from the Affordable Care Act.

Gorsuch, who left Medtronic in 2012 after seven years, will head corporate comms., government relations and community relations, among similar disciplines, reporting to BSC president/CEO Paul Markovish.

Markovish noted the appointment comes "at a time of unprecedented change and opportunity" in the health-care sector, adding that Gorsuch will help the three million-member insurer "navigate and influence" a broad range of constituencies.

Blue Shield California, with annual revenue of \$10.5B, is one of the top three health insurers in California, along with Anthem Blue Cross and Kaiser Permanente. All will offer plans under the state's Affordable Care Act-mandated health insurance exchange.

Gorsuch was a senior VP for GCI Group and Ketchum focused on healthcare and earlier worked PA at Bank of America.

**PR Society of America has posted the specs for a VP-PR** to replace Arthur Yann, who died suddenly at 48 in that post on June 13.

President and COO Bill Murray says Yann had “one of the toughest jobs in PR.” The new VP-PR is to report to Murray.

That runs counter to a main goal of PR practitioners who seek a direct report to the CEO.

Candidates should insist they report to current CEO Mickey Nall of Ogilvy PR and 2014 CEO Joe Cohen of MWW Group.

Cohen, who works in the New Jersey office of MWW, is the best hope members have for a return to sanity by this organization. Nall has shown acceptance of staff domination.

He and his firm are under obligation to the Society which just gave Ogilvy PR client DuPont its “Anvil of Anvils” for its “Food Security” PR program.

Ogilvy/DuPont bested 143 other finalists and an initial 846 other contestants. “Food Security” means the public should accept genetically-modified foods and organisms and not demand that such foods be labeled. It is a controversial topic.

They must also note the obsession of staff with what is “legal” as opposed to what is right and wrong. Society legal bills for the eight latest available years totaled \$558,264. The latest hire for PR is Stephanie Cegielski, a 2006 law grad of the University of Denver, who joined last August.

#### **Hiding From Press, Members Must Stop**

The new VP-PR can’t possibly do PR for either the Society or the industry by being holed up downtown at 33 Maiden lane. He or she and Murray should face the PR press which is based in midtown at least once a month.

Candidates should contact PR staffers who have left it since 1996 including Steve Erickson, Richard George, Joseph DeRupo, Janet Troy, Cedric Bess, Libby Roberge, Keith Trivitt and Diane Gomez.

Issues the new VP-PR will have to face include the claim by the Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, Melbourne, that “PR Is Dead.” We agree that corporate/institutional PR is just about dead but agency PR is thriving.

Another issue is dealing with an in-depth look at the industry by the *New York Observer*.

Mike Kaminer, longtime PR practitioner who is now a full-time journalist, is working on a piece to be published in October.

The Observer is owned by Jared Kushner, son of New Jersey developer Charles Kushner and husband of Ivanka Trump, daughter of Donald Trump.

The Observer is known for its independence. Trump addressed the Society’s last conference in New York in 2004. He will not be pleased with the Society’s elimination of New York as a conference city until at least 2019.

In the 2004 speech, laced with blunt terms that shocked the audience, he urged businesspeople to hire the best people but watch them. He said that if anyone

crosses you, get even by “hitting them back 15 times harder.” The harder you work, the luckier you get,” he said. He called Wall Streeters “scum.” Trump toured the country giving much the same speech and charging \$499. One occasion was May 1, 2005, when 46,000 heard him including a live audience of 15,000 in L.A.

#### **NYT Has Fumbled the PR Ball**

The Observer could do for PR what the *New York Times* has failed to do for decades—cover it.

Ad columnist Stuart Elliott’s two recent forays into PR have just scratched its surface. One was on 2012 PR Society chair Rosanna Fiske’s quest for a definition of PR that ran Nov. 30, 2011, and the latest was on April 29, 2013 when Elliott described the re-branding of FleishmanHillard.

The O’Dwyer Co. handed NYT a major PR/media story in 1993 when we covered Dean Rotbart’s speech to the 1993 conference of the Society in which he described the influence of ads and news tips on reporters. He also had many negative things to say about media in general and mentioned several reporters by name.

Rotbart sued the O’Dwyer Co. for \$21 million on copyright violation and other charges.

NYT, which had been so interested in the story that it sent a photographer to Rotbart’s home in New Jersey, never wrote a word about the lawsuit nor the O’Dwyer victory that was the lead story in the *New York Law Journal*. NYT has ignored “The Tylenol Mafia,” 736-pages of evidence that the poisoning of Tylenol capsules took place in Johnson & Johnson’s distributional and packaging channels and was not the work of someone going from store to store.

Rape charges in 2011 against baseball star Garrett Wittels of Florida Int’l University and two other students were virtually ignored by NYT although it had written tens of thousands of words when three Duke athletes were accused of rape in 2006.

Also issues for the new VP-PR are the 2000-01 study of Society ethics by the Ethics Resource Center for which it paid \$50,554. ERC itself and polled members urged the Society to keep enforcement in the Code but were ignored.

VP-PR candidates should ask for a copy of the study. One of those who has it is Kathy Fitzpatrick, a PR professor at Quinnipiac University, Hamden, Conn. Fitzpatrick, a member of the Board of Ethics who helped rewrite the Code, wrote 46 pages about the history and revision of the Code for the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*.

She should also give a copy to Laura Freebairn-Smith of the Organizational Performance Group, also of Hamden, which has been retained to refurbish the accreditation program on its 50th anniversary next year.

A current PR issue for the Society is the Society’s apparent intention to name Kathy Barbour of Baptist Health South Florida as its 2014 national chair-elect.

That would put a hospital and religion in favor of Society policies and practices.

— Jack O’Dwyer