



**Kevin McCauley**  
Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's

The Inside News of **Public Relations**  
& **Marketing Communications** [odwyerpr.com](http://odwyerpr.com)

271 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016  
212/679-2471. Fax: 212/683-2750  
[www.odwyerpr.com](http://www.odwyerpr.com); [jobs.odwyerpr.com](mailto:jobs.odwyerpr.com)

July 24, 2023 Vol. 56 No. 29

## **IPG RECORDS 2% DIP IN 2Q REVENUES**

Interpublic CEO Philippe Krakowsky reports 2Q net revenues fell 2.0 percent to \$2.3B as the lagging tech sector and revenue shortfalls in the US and European markets hurt IPG's financial results.



**Philippe Krakowsky**

Organic net revenues fell 1.7 percent from last year's period, which enjoyed a 7.9 percent increase.

Krakowsky called IPG's organic revenue performance "inconsistent with our expectations and our long-term track record of strong growth."

He reduced full-year organic revenue growth guidance to between 1.0 percent and 2.0 percent compared with the prior 2.0 percent to 4.0 percent projection.

IPG saw "solid growth" in the PR and experiential solutions offerings, according to Krakowsky.

That unit, which includes [Weber Shandwick](#), Golin, Current Global, R&CPMK, DeVries Global, Jack Morton, Momentum, and DXTRA Health, posted 3.1 percent growth to \$359M. It was up 3.7 percent on an organic basis.

Despite IPG's lackluster financial showing, Krakowsky said the company enjoyed an "exceptionally strong" new business performance."

He expects those wins "will provide strong tailwinds as we move into the back half of this year and even more so in 2024."

## **PEDIATRICIAN CECCHINI TO FINN HEALTH UNIT**

Dr. Cherilyn Cecchini, a pediatrician, author and influencer, has joined [Finn Partners](#)' New York health group.

She did a five-year stint at LifeSci Communications, serving as its medical director and exiting as VP-account manager.

Cecchini's therapeutics expertise includes oncology, neurology, women's health, cardiology and gene therapy.



**Cherilyn Cecchini**

She has contributed to *Good Housekeeping*; *Parents Magazine*; *Business Insider*; *Eat This, Not That!*; *What to Expect*; *the Strategist*; *Romper* and *Babygaga*.

Cecchini reports to Tom Jones, head of the New York health and pharma sector.

Finn Partners took [the No. 6 slot in O'Dwyer's healthcare rankings](#) with 2022 fees of \$52.6M.

## **GM PICKS DEGREVE TO LEAD MARKETING**

Norm de Greve, who has been CMO at CVS Health since 2015, is taking the top marketing job at General Motors. Effective July 31, de Greve will be senior VP and chief marketing officer at the automaker.



**Norm de Greve**

He succeeds Deborah Wahl, who retired in March.

During de Greve's tenure at CVS, the company grew to be the largest consumer health care company in the country, hitting the No. 6 spot on the Fortune 500.

Before that, he held a variety of senior positions at Digitas, serving as president of the Boston and Detroit offices, and chief solutions officer. While there, he worked to advance GM's digital marketing.

De Greve previously worked in investment management and management consulting.

"Norm is an experienced marketing leader with a proven track record of building brands and supporting business growth in a digital world," said GM President Mark Reuss.

## **OMNICOM POSTS 1.2% 2Q GROWTH**

Omnicom CEO John Wren reports 2Q revenues inched ahead by 1.2 percent to \$3.6B. Operating income rose 1.7 percent to \$550.7M.

He highlighted OMG's 3.4 percent jump in 2Q organic growth and 4.3 percent advance for the 1H.

That performance "places us comfortably within our expected range and driving strong growth in earnings per share," he said.

Though the economic outlook for the remainder of the year remains uncertain, Wren said the holding company is entering a dynamic and exciting new era.

He noted that OMC has "secured leading positions in generative AI technology and partnerships."

On the PR front, Marina Mather Communications, Portland, Mercury, Ketchum and Porter Novelli posted flat 2Q revenues of \$393.6M, on both a reported and organic basis.

For the 1H, PR revenues rose 1.7 percent to \$769.1M and 2.9 percent organically.



**John Wren**

## MANY CEOS SKIP SOCIAL MEDIA

Having an effective presence on digital media can play a big role in helping CEOs manage their companies' reputations and connect with their employees, a new study from



H/Advisors Abernathy finds, but many corporate leaders are failing to take full advantage of the reputational benefits that digital media offers.

Almost a third of the Fortune 100 CEOs in the study (30 percent) do not have any presence on social media. For those who are on social media, LinkedIn is the most popular platform. Almost two-thirds of the CEOs in the study (64 percent) have a profile there. Twitter lags behind with just 32 percent. (The study pre-dates the introduction of Meta's Threads.)

However, the study says that simply having a profile on a digital platform is not enough. Noting such threats as the possibility of online impersonation, it stresses the importance of verifying and optimizing digital profiles. On LinkedIn, for example, an optimized profile results in a 37 percent jump in likes, shares, clicks and comments.

But once again, it appears that the CEOs have a bit of catching up to do. Fewer than half of those on LinkedIn (48 percent) have optimized their profiles for discovery, while over at Twitter only 12 percent have done so.

It is also key for those who have a social media profile to not just stand on the sidelines. "Our research found that active leaders posted at least once-per-week on social media channels," the study notes. The benefit: the most active CEOs have engagement rates exceeding that of their peers by "at least two percentage points."

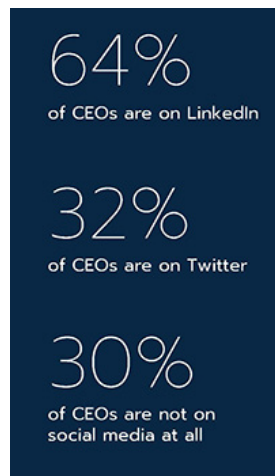
Other strategies to boost effectiveness include bringing a CEO's personality into their social media profile and expanding the topics addressed beyond company news.

The study also names the most active CEOs on social media. Coming out on top on both LinkedIn and Twitter was Ford CEO Jim Farley, with an average of 125 posts per month—85 percent of those on Twitter. Farley's Twitter account also includes a clickable company logo, which directs users to the official Ford Twitter account, helping to "establish and bolster brand reputation."

The most followed CEO on LinkedIn is Microsoft's Satya Nadella, with an audience of over 10 million. Twitter's most followed CEO should come as no surprise: Elon Musk, with a follower base of over 124 million.

The best engagement rate on LinkedIn was achieved by Procter & Gamble's Jon Moeller, with Disney's Bob Iger having the best engagement rate on Twitter.

The H/Advisors Abernathy study analyzed more than 55,000 posts, focusing on content published between January 1 and November 30 of last year.



## NEWS OF FIRMS

**Stagwell** acquires **Tinsel Experiential Design**, a marketing and design studio focused on immersive customer experiences and experiential engagement. The studio will be part of Stagwell's Constellation Network of agencies. Tinsel will retain its brand, and its founders – Adette C. Contreras, Liz Castelli, and Erica Taylor Haskins – will remain in leadership roles. The terms of the deal were not disclosed. Tinsel's offerings include environmental design, 3D renderings, and conference and corporate events experience.

**Goldman Communications Group** president Sherry Goldman launches "Let's Talk PR & More!", a weekly radio show. Each half-hour show features a conversation with an industry leader about a PR-centric topic. Topics addressed include PR best practices, recent industry trends, case studies, the media, marketing, strategy, career development and profiles of PR pros. Let's Talk PR & More! airs every Monday at 5pm EDT on WRHU-FM (in the greater New York City area) and is available nationally on the station's livestream online and on most streaming devices.



**Real Chemistry** forms a strategic partnership with **Writer**, a generative AI platform for enterprises. Through this partnership, all Real Chemistry team members will have access to Writer. The companies will also work together to build proprietary and custom-trained generative AI functionality specific to the needs and complexities of the regulated healthcare environment. Real Chemistry's AI products and services portfolio also includes its proprietary Insights System with ChatGPT, advanced prompt engineering, data integration and automation capabilities.

**Collected Strategies**, an independent advisory firm, is launched by five Joele Frank veterans, along with Ed Hammond, a business journalist who has worked for Bloomberg and the *Financial Times*. In addition to Hammond, the founding partners are former Joele Frank partners Scott Bisang, Jim Golden, Nick Lamplough and Dan Moore, and Jude Gorman, who was the agency's COO. Collected will be working with clients in practice areas including media relations and corporate reputation management; investor relations; transaction communications; shareholder activism defense and corporate governance; corporate communications; financial and operational crisis; and bankruptcy and restructuring.



A new study from **D S Simon Media** says that the top item on the list of things that annoy TV producers about PR people is being "bombarded." Almost half (48 percent) of the 49 journalists surveyed for the study said they see that as a problem. Coming in second was PR people who "are not doing research and lack awareness about their show," with "overpromising and underdelivering" coming in a distant third (5 percent). On the positive side, 18 percent of those surveyed said they were not annoyed.

**Lippe Taylor** founder and chairman Maureen Lippe releases "Radical Reinvention: Reimagine, Reset, Reinvent in a Disruptive World," a book that walks readers through the process of reimagining and transforming their lives and careers. In the book, Lippe shares the story of how she reinvented her life following the loss of her husband to Covid, as well as how she reinvented Lippe Taylor Group.

## **IN PUBLIC RELATIONS, YA' GOTTA BELIEVE**

Because I don't have permission, I'll disguise the names.

After two decades of distinguished service at a major pharmaceutical company, a seasoned and competent public relations professional—let's call him "Greg"—grabbed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get rich by joining an upstart pharma company, founded by an unpredictable but brilliant former hedge fund manager we'll just call "Bro."

Bro's new company focused on buying licenses of out-of-patent medicines for rare diseases, with the aim of rapidly raising prices for quick profits. One such product the company purchased was a drug for AIDS patients that cost \$13.50 per dose.



**Fraser Seitel**

Late one night a month after Greg had joined the fledgling drug company, he received a frantic call from CEO Bro, summoning him to a meeting at headquarters. When Greg arrived, Bro told him he planned to raise the price of the AIDS medication by a factor of 56 times, to a whopping \$750 per pill. Bro reasoned that this would be big news and instructed his new PR director to begin preparing a news release for the next morning.

Greg tried to talk his new boss out of such a suicidal decision that would surely lead to national outrage. Bro tersely reminded Greg that he was the CEO, and if Greg wouldn't write the release, he'd find somebody else who would.

So, 30 days into his "dream" job, Greg quit.

Three months later, CEO Bro was arrested and ultimately sent to prison. But that's not the point. The point is that in public relations—unlike marketing or finance or legal or any other internal function—you are the "public face" of the organization. And if you don't agree with or believe in those policies, programs and philosophy—as Greg clearly didn't—then you can't credibly do your job.

That's what President Gerald Ford's White House Press Secretary Gerald terHorst decided when he stepped down in 1974 after the President asked him to announce Ford's pardon of former President Richard Nixon. Ter Horst, a veteran newspaperman, disagreed strongly with Ford's decision, so he too quit on the spot.

Alienating the CEO is the last thing an employee desires. It's not easy telling your boss that he or she is making a mistake but as public relations advisor, that is precisely, at least occasionally, exactly what you must do.

The last thing a CEO wants from his public relations chief is to be a "yes man" or "yes woman." Ironically, that's exactly what many people have always believed public relations people to be. In the first movie made about public relations, "The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit," a young Gregory Peck balks when his boss offers him a position in public relations.

"But I don't know anything about public relations," says Peck.

"You've got a clean shirt, and you bathe every day. What more is there to know?" answers his boss.

Today, of course, while you still should bathe regularly, a good public relations advisor must counsel "no" as much as "yes." Good CEOs need honest advice, which is often in short supply among the executives who surround them. An "emperor's clothes" environment is the last thing a CEO needs.

So how do you preach honesty and build trust in a commu-

nications world increasingly dominated by misinformation, irrationality and descending standards?

It starts, as it always has, with believing in the people you work for.

That means that if you sincerely believe that Joe Biden, feeble at 80-plus years-old, would still make the best next President, then go to work for him. If you believe that Exxon and its fossil fuel ilk are the scourge of mankind's future, then sign up to work for Greenpeace. And if you believe that despite all the bullying and falsifying and sour grapes, Donald Trump deserves another term in the saddle, then sign up with him.

As the great relief pitcher Tug McGraw once famously said about the perpetually hapless New York Mets, "Ya' gotta believe!" The same is true if you wish to succeed in the practice of public relations.

*Fraser P. Seitel has been a communications consultant, author and teacher for 40 years. He is the author of the Pearson text "The Practice of Public Relations," now in its 14th edition, and co-author of "Rethinking Reputation" and "Idea Wise." He may be reached directly at yusake@aol.com.*

## **ALABAMA NEEDS PR FOR SAVINGS PLAN**

The state of Alabama is requesting proposals from agencies that can develop and implement a comprehensive marketing program for the Alabama ABLE Savings Plan.

ABLE Accounts are tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities and their families.



Scope of work includes identifying target audiences, developing specific strategies, promoting awareness, educating the general public and educating advocacy partners.

The contract resulting from this RFP is expected to run for a five-year period.

Proposals are due by 4:00 p.m. (CT) on August 4, and should be emailed to the Treasurer's Office, [Brittany.matthews@treasury.alabama.gov](mailto:Brittany.matthews@treasury.alabama.gov).

Questions should be directed to Anita Kelley, [anita.kelley@treasury.alabama.gov](mailto:anita.kelley@treasury.alabama.gov), by 4:00 p.m. (CT) on July 27.

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

## **BALLARD TAPS EX-JACKSONVILLE MAYOR**

Ballard Partners has hired former Jacksonville mayor Lenny Curry as a partner. The former head of Florida's biggest city will advocate for Ballard's clients in its Jacksonville, Tallahassee and Washington offices.

Curry was Jacksonville mayor from 2015 to 2023. Earlier, he was chairman and vice chairman of the Sunshine State's Republican Party.

He also was a board member of Jacksonville's Housing Commission and commissioner of the Florida State Boxing Commission.

Prior to entering politics, Curry was a CPA at PricewaterhouseCoopers from 1994 to 2002 and founder of the ICX Group professional services firm.



**Lenny Curry**

Brian Ballard said Curry's "exemplary stature as a leader in our state and nation is rare and we are especially honored to have him join our firm."

## JOELE FRANK, FGS TOP MERGERMARKET LIST

[Joele Frank](#) and [FGS Global](#) are at the top of the heap in [Mergermarket's global rankings of PR advisors for 1H 2023](#).



Joele Frank took the top spot as regards deal value (\$255.3 billion), with FGS Global in the #2 spot (\$175.3 billion). When it comes to deal count, FGS Global was the leader (116), and Joele Frank was in second place (103).

The top five in deal value was rounded out by Brunswick Group (\$66.4 billion), [H/Advisors Abernathy](#) (\$63.9 billion) and [Kekst CNC](#) (\$59.9 billion). For deal count, Kekst CNC was at #3 (102), [Prosek Partners](#) at #4 (83) and Greenbrook Communications at #5 (67).

In the US, Joele Frank was in first place in both categories, with 100 deals, accounting for \$220.8 billion in deal value. FGS took the #2 spot in both deal count (83) and value (\$154.8 billion).

The top EMEA PR advisor for deal count was Greenbrook Communications (66), followed by FGS Global (54) and Kekst CNC (52). FGS was #1 for EMEA in deal value (\$74.2 billion), with Joele Frank (18) and Teneo (21) taking the next two spots.

Joele Frank led the pack for –deal value in the Asia Pacific (excl. Japan) region, with \$22.1 billion; and Citadel Magnus was in first place for deal count (23).

The data is based on Mergermarket's M&A deals database, using transactions over five percent or USD \$50 million. The cutoff date was June 30.

## FGS GLOBAL REPS TARGETED SOFTWAREONE

[FGS Global](#) represents SoftwareOne as the Swiss technology company receives its second unsolicited takeover offer from private equity firm Bain Capital.

The \$3.7B bid represents a 48 percent premium to SoftwareOne's closing price on May 30, which was the last trading day before Bain's first offer.

SoftwareOne's board unanimously rejected Bain's initial bid and will now assess the revised proposal and make a recommendation that is in the best interest of all shareholders.

Bloomberg reports that Bain has been seeking a deal for a European technology company after it exited the race for Germany's Software AG.

[Stanton](#) CEO Alex Stanton handles media for Bain Capital.



### Global Rankings

PR advisor rankings by value



Ranking	Company Name	Value (USDm)	Deal Count
1	Joele Frank Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher	255,308	103
2	FGS Global	175,328	116
3	Brunswick Group	66,425	48
4	H/Advisors Abernathy	63,931	37
5	Kekst CNC (Publicis)	59,928	102
6	Edelman	29,063	25
7	ICR (C1)	28,551	53
8	Teneo	27,227	24
9	Prosek Partners	25,808	83
10	LLYC	25,531	24
11	GRACosway	23,481	7
12	Image Building	17,802	24
13	FTI Consulting Group	16,493	56
14	Greenbrook Communications	14,992	67
15	Reveemark	13,977	5
16	Community Group	13,367	30
17	Headland Consultancy	12,691	18
18	Primatice Consell	11,936	12
19	August	9,350	1
20	DrivePath Advisors	7,514	4

## ON THE MOVE

[rbb Communications](#) hires [Julie Coulton](#) as senior VP for its digital division and [Adam Kirschner](#) as senior content supervisor. Coulton was previously senior VP, managing director at Craft Worldwide. She has also held leadership positions at eBay and her agency work includes Major League Baseball, Citizens Bank, Dicks Sporting Goods and Staples. Coulton is tasked with spearheading rbb's digital, social, content and influencer marketing efforts. Kirschner was most recently senior director of content marketing at Bullseye Strategy. He will lead strategic storytelling campaigns and digital content direction.

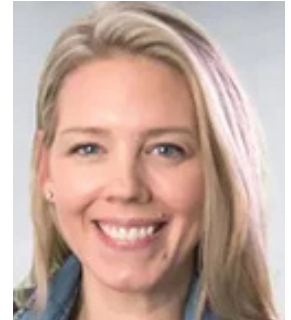
[Strategic Objectives](#) promotes [Claire Gatti](#) to VP. Gatti joined the agency as a senior director last year. Before that she was a director at Paradigm Public Relations and has worked at Republic, Narrative PR and Veritas Communications. In her new post, Gatti will focus on areas including new business development and mentoring talent, as well as contributing to accounts in sectors ranging from automotive to health and wellness, food, CPG and non-for-profit.

[Assemble](#), an agency led by Mark Skidmore, who ran media for Joe Biden's Super PAC, hires [Lacie Newton](#) as managing director of strategic communications. Newton was most recently an NYC-based consultant for corporations and organizations across a wide-range of sectors. She was previously director of communications for the City of Chattanooga and a senior advisor to the city's mayor.

[Evins Communications](#) promotes [Jacqueline Long](#) to president. Long has served as chief operating officer and chief communications officer at the agency since February 2022. She was also a VP at Evins from 2013 to 2015. Before returning to the agency, Long was head of public relations & communications at Time Out Group and VP public relations & consumer engagement at LVMH/Moët Hennessy. She will now be responsible for Evins' management and growth as well as for evolving its positioning, vision for the future and driving strategic client campaigns.

[Hill+Knowlton Strategies](#) hires [Jenna Goldberg](#) as director, energy + industrials, working out of its London office. Goldberg comes to H+K from London Communications Agency, where she was managing director of insight. At H+K, she is tasked with leading accounts across the team's portfolio and advising clients on facilitating growth, protecting reputation and mitigating risk.

[Pattern](#), a global ecommerce and marketplace acceleration platform, hires former Amazon executive [Carolyn Sarnoff](#) as CMO. At Amazon, Sarnoff served as a director and general manager over several key business units. She was chief of staff to the CMO at Salesforce at Salesforce. At Pattern, she will oversee the company's worldwide marketing efforts across 24 offices, studios and fulfillment centers.



Claire Gatti



Jacqueline Long

## **PUBLICIS GROUPE POSTS 5.4% 2Q GROWTH**

Publicis Groupe CEO Arthur Sadoun reports 5.2 percent 2Q net revenue growth to \$3.5B as the French combine shifted its orientation from a “communications to transformation partner” for its clients.



**Arthur Sadoun**

Organic growth was up 7.1 percent, which outpaced expectations.

Publicis enjoyed 14.1 percent growth to \$890M in Europe during the quarter. Central & eastern Europe grew 17.1 percent organically, driven by double-digit growth in Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic and the resumption of activity in Ukraine. North America was up 2.2 percent to \$2.2B.

Sadoun upgraded organic growth guidance for 2023. Publicis now expects to grow five percent vs. the earlier three to five percent range forecast.

## **GOLIN'S MORGAN MOVES TO FTI CONSULTING**

Jane Morgan, who was managing director of Golin Hong Kong and head of client services for the APAC region, has joined FTI Consulting. Based in Singapore, Morgan takes the senior managing director position in [FTI's strategic communications unit](#).



**Jane Morgan**

At Interpublic's Golin unit, Morgan supported clients in India, Taiwan, Singapore, People's Republic of China, United Arab Emirates, UK and US.

She previously worked in Hong Kong as Edelman's director of consumer marketing and VP in Ketchum's corporate practice.

Mark McCall, who leads FTI's global stratcom practice, said Morgan's leadership and on-the-ground experience helping clients deal with pressing corporate communications challenges will be a valuable asset for its southeast Asia team.

## **BGR COVERS DC FOR UK AI LEADER**

BGR Government Affairs has signed on to provide DC coverage for Adarga, a top British AI software company.

Founded in 2016 by Robert Bassett Cross, a British Army veteran, Adarga's AI analytics are geared to the military and national security sectors. The London-headquartered company counts the British Army, Royal Air Force, UK Ministry of Defence and Royal Navy as customers.



It raised \$20M in May via a new funding round that was led by BOKA Group, a US holding company.

BGR will provide counsel to Adarga on issues related to AI and software and target the Pentagon for development.

President Erskine Wells, who heads BGR's defense and aerospace practice, leads the outreach for Adarga.

Pete Landrum, defense policy advisor for Sen. Jeff Sessions; Joel Bailey, chief of staff for Rep. Jimmy Panetta; and Dan Greenwood, head of Congressional affairs for the Marine Corps and veteran of President Trump's legislative affairs shop, round out the Adarga team.

## **PHILLY CITY COUNCIL SEEKS PR BOOST**

Philadelphia's City Council is in the market for a PR consultant to communicate its priorities, goals and constituent information in the ever-increasingly complex media environment.

The selected consultant will provide the Council with ongoing advice regarding communications, PR and outreach strategies; draft press releases, coordinate special events; manage social media, and maintain regular contact with reporters.

The RFP notes that Philadelphia values diversity, equity and inclusion and seeks to provide increased access to contracting opportunities to local, minority-, women-, and disable-owned businesses.

The Council has budgeted \$50K for the one-year PR post with work beginning Sept. 2.

It retains the option to renew the pact for three additional one-year periods.

Responses are due August 3 at eContractPhilly at <https://philawx.phila.gov/econtract>.

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



## **ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT**

[Hemsworth Communications](#) is engaged to craft a PR strategy for **Bernoulli | Locke**, which is launching FAN-VEST.io, a platform that gives fans the opportunity to invest and have a stake in the ownership of various sports and entertainment properties. The agency's efforts will include media relations and promotion for the first-ever fan-owned professional sports team, a new Fan Owned SailGP Team. Hemsworth will initially focus on the upcoming Oracle Los Angeles Sail Grand Prix event, facilitating on-the-ground activities that showcase the team to lifestyle, sports business and financial/cryptocurrency media, as well as the investment and sailing communities. Ownership of the team will take the form of token sales, representing the stake of investment powered by the NEAR Blockchain Protocol.

[5WPR](#) is selected as public relations AOR for car rental company **Advantage**. The agency will lead Advantage's US public relations efforts through a strategic media relation program combining B2B and B2C outreach. 5W will work to build brand awareness and position the company as an industry leader by sharing its unique origin story and impact on the rental car industry, while using its previous success record to inform the company's growth trajectory.

**APO Group**, a pan-African communications consultancy and press release distribution service, is appointed as official PR agency for the **World Football Summit** in Africa. The multi-year agreement will see APO Group coordinate all media activity for WFS in Africa, including the distribution of press releases for WFS events, online press conferences, interviews and placements in prominent African media. Since its inception in 2016, WFS, the flagship event in the African football industry calendar, has attracted over 22,000 attendees across 17 events and has built a global community of 90,000+ sports industry executives throughout its platforms.



# COMMENTARY



Ron DeSantis

**Wake up, Ron.** Does Florida governor Ron DeSantis really think the Trump cultists are going to abandon their guy and vote for him in the GOP primaries?

DeSantis has to stop pussyfooting around and go on the attack against the ex-president. He missed a golden opportunity on July 18 after news broke that the former president received a “target letter” from Jack Smith regarding his role in inciting the Capitol Hill riot.

Trump “should have come out more forcefully” on Jan. 6 said the guy who is running one of the worst presidential campaigns later. That’s it?

Things only got worse. DeSantis wound up later defending Trump against the “weaponized” Justice Dept. and FBI during a rally in South Carolina?

If DeSantis is serious about competing in the GOP primaries he should follow the lead of former Arkansas governor Asa Hutchinson.

“As a former federal prosecutor, I understand the severity of Grand Jury investigations and what it means to be targeted by such an investigation.

“While Donald Trump would like the American people to believe that he is the victim in this situation, the truth is that the real victims of January 6th were our democracy, our rule of law, and those Capitol Police officers who worked valiantly to protect our Capitol.

“Anyone who truly loves this country and is willing to put the country over themselves would suspend their campaign for President of the United States immediately. It is disappointing that Donald Trump refuses to do so.”

Bravo. Asa minces no words. Neither should Ron.

Since hardly anyone is paying attention to Hutchinson’s super long-shot presidential campaign, DeSantis should crib his statement on Trump’s indictment.

Let the bomb-throwing begin.

**Jack Smith hits the big time.** Milwaukee’s National Bobblehead Hall of Fame has [issued a limited edition bobblehead](#) of the special counsel probing Donald Trump’s role in the Capitol Hill riot and mishandling of classified materials.

Trump paid the New York native, who began his career in the Brooklyn DA’s office, the ultimate compliment, calling him a “deranged lunatic.”

Phil Sklar, co-founder/CEO of the museum, said he received many requests for a bobblehead of Smith. “The special counsel’s investigations are unprecedented and a bobblehead is one fun and unique way for people to commemorate these unique historic events,” he said.

**Go figure.** BlackRock CEO Larry Fink, who was Wall Street’s biggest ESG champion, has named Amin Nasser, CEO of Saudi Aramco, to his board of directors.

Adding the head of the world’s largest fossil fuels company isn’t exactly a page out of the ESG playbook.

Fink maintains that BlackRock will benefit from Nasser’s four-decade career at Aramco.

He credits Nasser for establishing Aramco as a “leader in the global energy transition, investing in cutting-edge technologies to address the challenges of balancing energy security and sustainability.”

That sure sounds swell but the reality is that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia owns a 90 percent stake in Aramco.

You can bet that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman isn’t exactly a big fan of global transitioning from oil and gas to solar and wind power.

Aramco produced 13.6M barrels of oil equivalents each day in 2022. That output added to global warming.

The company is engaged in some greenwashing. It has announced a \$1.5B sustainability fund to invest in technology that can support a stable and inclusive energy transition.

That fund may score Aramco PR points but the it represents chump change for a company that earned \$161B in 2022 and announced a fourth quarter dividend of \$19.5B.

Nasser is going full speed ahead on the fossil fuels front. He has warned of the risk of underinvestment and unveiled the largest capital spending program ever in the aftermath of boosting capex outlays of \$37.6B.

Does Fink expect Aramco to invest in offshore wind energy development.

**Sustainability amplifiers...** [Edelman](#) and the NYU Stern Center for Sustainability Business [produced a study](#) that claims effective sustainability messaging increases brand reach and relevance between 24 to 33 percent points compared to high-performance messages alone.

Researchers identified the top performing claims across nine brands and extracted trends to create data-informed best practices that marketers can use to unlock the potential of action-backed sustainability messaging to drive growth.

The report found that consumers react favorably to simple, jargon-free sustainability messages that connect directly to them, their family and the world immediately surrounding them.

Best performing claims are those that directly impact people and their families. People just don’t want to hear about the scientific reasons behind a brand’s sustainability.

Health claims perform very well. Consumers will buy products that are made without harmful ingredients to human health and claims such as “grown without harmful ingredients” or “made without chemicals harmful to humans/the environment.”

“Every leader thinking twice about sustainability on the grounds of it being ‘divisive’ needs to know this: If you communicate sustainability the right way, it will appeal across political affiliation, income, gender, education levels, and age groups,” said Richard Edelman. “Sustainability is an amplifier and if brands embrace it, we can exponentially increase growth and trust.”

—Kevin McCauley