



Kevin McCauley
Editor-in-Chief

O'Dwyer's

The Inside News of Public Relations
& Marketing Communications odwyerpr.com

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

June 12, 2023 Vol. 56 No. 24

ICR ACQUIRES BULLFROG + BAUM

ICR has acquired Bullfrog + Baum, the 23-year-old PR shop focused on the hospitality, lifestyle, travel and consumer marketing sectors.

B+B represents clients such as Singapore Tourism Board, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, Black Tap Craft Burgers & Beer and chefs Bobby Flay and Laurent Tourondel.

The deal expands financial-oriented ICR's consumer offerings in the health & wellness, restaurant and retail sectors.



Jennifer Baum

ICR plans to merge B+B with its consumer business and create a new branded group with about 60 staffers.

Jennifer Baum, founder/CEO of B+B, and Seth Grugle, ICR partner and head of its lifestyle business, will head the new operation.

Tom Ryan, CEO of ICR, said the addition of B+B allows his firm to establish a new and distinct brand with significant scale, expertise and strong leadership so it can focus on its core corporate business.

ICR ranks No. 6 on O'Dwyer's rankings of independent firms with 2022 fee income of \$160.9M.

CNN BOUNCES CEO LIGHT

Chris Licht, the embattled chairman/CEO of CNN, was fired June 7.

His exit follows the June 2 publication of a hard-hitting 15,000-word article that ran in *The Atlantic*, chronicling the meltdown at CNN and last month's disastrous Donald Trump town hall meeting.



Chris Licht

Licht had apologized to staffers for the distraction caused by *The Atlantic* piece.

Warner Bros. Discovery CEO David Zaslav told staffers during a network editorial meeting that Licht was leaving CNN.

In the interim, executive VPs Virginia Moseley (editorial), Eric Sherling (US programming), Amy Entelis (talent & content development); and COO David Leavy, a top aide to Zaslav, will be responsible for leading CNN.

NYCEDC SEEKS MARKETING REPRESENTATIVE

New York City's Economic Development Corporation, the government agency that works to promote economic growth across the Big Apple's five boroughs, has issued a request for proposals for marketing agencies.



NYCEDC is looking for a marketing firm that can support its leasing and branding endeavors, primarily for its Sunset Park, Brooklyn-area properties, as well as other properties deemed a priority for the agency.

Scope of the work includes: creating and marketing materials and visual concepts; developing advertising marketing plans; developing content for use in digital, print and out-of-home advertising outlets; developing media planning for NYCEDC's marketing efforts across both traditional and digital channels; copywriting/editing; social media; video production; conducting market research to identify the most effective channels for reaching NYCEDC's target audience; developing a media-spend budget; account management; and providing guidance to external vendors or partners.

Proposals are due by 11:59 p.m. (ET) on June 20.

Respondents should submit their proposals electronically by [uploading them here](#).

All Proposals should be labeled "NYCEDC Properties Marketing Consultant RFP Response- [RESPONDENT NAME]" and should be uploaded as a single zip file. The Chrome Browser is the preferred method for uploading.

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

NOTRE DAME'S CURRAN EXITS FOR USC

The University of Southern California has hired Joel Curran, a former managing director at MSLGROUP, as SVP and CCO, effective July 10.

Curran is currently VP of PA and communications at Notre Dame and before that he was vice chancellor of communications at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Joel Curran

In his new role, Curran will promote USC's researchers, students and faculty in addition to driving engagement between the university, the Los Angeles community and the world. "In Joel Curran, we have a nationally respected higher education communications innovator," said USC president Carol Folt. Curran worked for Folt when he was at UNC-Chapel Hill.

TWITTER AD SALES TANK

Twitter's troubles under the ownership of Elon Musk continue. The social media giant's advertising revenues in the U.S. from the beginning of April to May were down 59 percent from the \$88 million the platform earned in ad sales during the same period a year prior.



Those findings, [published June 5 in the New York Times](#), were based on an "internal presentation" the Times reported it had obtained.

That internal document also allegedly reported that weekly sales projections at the social site have regularly fallen short, sometimes by as much as 30 percent. The Times further reported that internal documents obtained by the paper forecast that Twitter's U.S. ad revenues in June would continue declining "at least 56 percent each week compared with a year ago."

Twitter's 2023 global ad revenues are expected to be about 28 percent lower than they were in 2022, or around \$3 billion compared to the \$4.14 billion it accounted for last year, [according to findings by research firm Insider Intelligence](#). Insider Intelligence cited "brand safety issues, confusing policies, and broken technology" as reasons for the decline.

Advertisers are spending markedly less on the site this year ever since Musk took the reins. Vox in March [reported](#) that more than half of Twitter's top 1,000 advertisers have now ceased publishing ads on the site, with many citing an alleged uptick in hate speech as the reason for limiting or outright pulling their ad campaigns from the platform.

Musk purchased Twitter for \$44 billion in October and immediately took the company private. In May, mutual funds giant Fidelity [pegged Twitter's value](#) at \$15 billion, or about a third of what it was worth before Musk took over.

Linda Yaccarino, who was formerly head of advertising at NBCUniversal, was tapped to serve as Twitter's new CEO. She began in her new role June 5.

NEWPORT NEWS NEEDS MARKETING, AD HELP

The City of Newport News is seeking proposals from agencies specializing in marketing and advertising services.

The city is part of the Hampton Roads metropolitan area, which also includes Norfolk, Suffolk and Virginia Beach.

The Newport News Economic/Industrial Development Authority, the city's business development arm, wants a communications partner that can provide services including: assisting staff with the creation of a marketing plan; serving as primary marketing contact with media sources; maintaining and providing design for the EDA website; social media content development; proactively identifying new ideas for marketing opportunities; designing and producing the EDA's Annual Report; obtaining photos for promotional materials; and collaborating with tourism and communications staff for opportunities to promote the city.

Terms of the contract run for one year, with the option to renew at the city's discretion for four more one-year periods.

Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. (ET) on Thursday, June 15 and should be submitted via [the city's e-procurement portal, OpenGov Procurement](#).

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



as primary marketing contact with media sources; maintaining and providing design for the EDA website; social media content development; proactively identifying new ideas for marketing opportunities; designing and producing

ON THE MOVE

Comsint brings on **Allison Matthews** and **Jenna Matthews** (the two are not related) as executive VPs. Allison Matthews joins the agency from FleishmanHillard, where she was a senior vice president. She was previously a VP at Weber Shandwick and has also worked at Ketchum. Jenna Matthews was most recently a senior VP at Weber Shandwick and was previously at MSLGROUP. "Both bring deep experience in strategy and media relations across the consumer, corporate, food, healthcare, and tech sectors. They are the perfect additions to our team," said Comsint president and founder Nick Puleo.

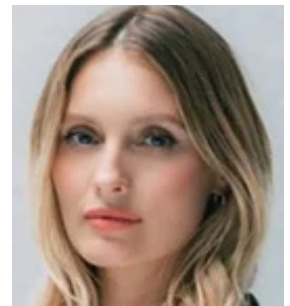
Brunswick Group names **Munesh Khanna** as a partner in its Mumbai office, effective July 1. Khanna joins Brunswick from Backbay Advisors, a financial advisory firm he co-founded in 2017. Before that, he led the India operations of both NM Rothschild & Sons and DSP Merrill Lynch, as well as the corporate finance & business restructuring team at PwC. Brunswick's Mumbai office will also bring on Vikram Limaye as a senior advisor on June 1. Limaye was managing director and CEO of the National Stock Exchange of India Limited for five years until July 2022. He was previously managing director and CEO of IDFC Limited, a diversified, publicly listed financial services conglomerate.



Munesh Khanna

The Wonderful Company, which sells a range of products including fruits, nuts, flowers, water, wines and juices, hires former Revlon VP of marketing **Benal Serin** as senior VP of marketing, starting in mid-June. Serin was most recently CMO at Profectus Beauty. In her new role, she will be responsible for leading all marketing efforts in Wonderful's product portfolio, working to build brand growth strategies and drive customer engagement, as well as overseeing flavor innovation.

Xhibition PR promotes **Grace Hitchen Hilsley** to VP, based in London. Hilsley has been with the agency since 2018, most recently serving as a director. In addition to leading global communications in the London office, Hilsley has spearheaded the launch of collections and collaborations by Belgian design brand Serax and worked to retain top-tier press for hospitality clients across the Xhibition portfolio. "Grace Hitchen Hilsley brings the highest level of expertise, creativity, and professionalism to Xhibition and the PR industry at large," says company co-founder and partner Ross Belfer.



Grace Hitchen Hilsley

Holland America Line promotes **Kacy Cole** to CMO. Cole has been with the company since 2021, and was previously VP, marketing and e-commerce. Prior to joining Holland America Line, she was senior VP vice president of marketing at digital creator platform LTK and has held integrated marketing, e-commerce and digital marketing posts at companies including T-Mobile, butter London and Tommy Bahama.

TIGHT BUDGETS RESTRICT FINANCIAL COS. PR

Senior leaders at financial services companies look at budget constraints as their biggest hurdle when it comes to meeting communications and marketing goals this year, according to a new study from Cognito Media.



Over a third of the more than 100 executives surveyed (35 percent) cited “budget” as the top challenge, with “execution” (18 percent), “negative external audiences and perception” (13 percent), “talent” (12 percent) and “ideas” (11 percent) listed as other limiting factors.

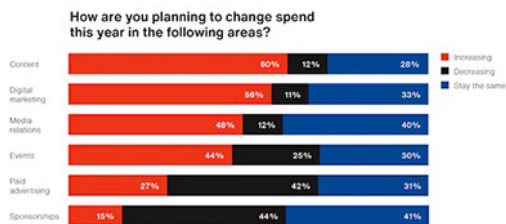
But while budget limitations are a strong overall concern, not all areas of marketing budgets are equal candidates for the chopping block. Sponsorships and paid advertising, in particular, were looked at with a considerably more wary eye than were areas such as content and digital marketing.

More than four in 10 respondents (44 percent) said they planned to decrease their spending on sponsorships, with almost as many (42 percent) aiming to cut paid advertising expenditures. Only 27 percent plan to spend more on paid ads, and just 15 percent said they would make a bigger outlay for sponsorships.

When it comes to content, 60 percent said they will increase their spending, with only 12 percent anticipating cuts. Digital marketing was close behind, with 56 percent indicating that they would hike spending, and just 11 percent saying they would trim it.

But a good indication of the importance executives attribute to communications can be seen by the weight they give customer relationships and CRM. Almost four in ten (38 percent) say that those areas have become more important this year. Brand/reputation (30 percent) followed closely behind, far outpacing safety and liquidity of client assets (seven percent) and product pricing (four percent).

The respondents also weighed in on how they think AI will impact their success in delivering marketing messages.



Over half (58 percent) said they think AI’s biggest effect will be a “greater volume of delivery,” with another 17 predicting

“better quality of delivery.” Just five percent, however, think that AI will “replace current staff.”

Finally, respondents were asked to choose which of several alternative scenarios for the marketing landscape at financial services companies they thought was the most likely in the future. Top on the list was “increased and on-going marketing volatility and stress” (37 percent).

But the other choices give hints at some major shifts. Over a third (28 percent) think “influencers will become more important than reporters,” almost as many (27 percent) predict that “automation will reduce internal account” and seven percent actually foresee the eventual elimination of earned media from their marketing plans.

WHAT WILL TRUMP’S PRISON GARB LOOK LIKE?

As it begins to appear increasingly likely that former President Trump will do a stretch in prison, what should his wardrobe look like? How should the First Felon be attired?

He cannot just go around in a giant orange prison suit—that would be grotesque. On the other hand, Trump must look like a prisoner in a prison, albeit a NICE federal prison and in a presidential way.

Plus, there are policy questions: Can Trump wear the presidential seal? How about his signature red ties that are as long as LeBron’s wide-raised arms? Will his name tag read, “President Donald J. Trump”?



According to the *New York Times*, Trump favors Brooklyn’s Martin Greenfield Clothiers, who also dressed Barack Obama and Michael Bloomberg.

The Donald won’t require formal wear, as it is unlikely he will be attending any state dinners. But he might want to hold a watch party in his inmate quarters on election night. After all, Socialist presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs garnered nearly a million votes when he was serving a 10-year prison term. Trump might get two or three million votes from fanatical loyalists who resemble Hiroo Onoda, the last Japanese soldier to surrender 29 years after WWII ended. Trump knows lots of Hiroo Onodas.

Whatever the style direction, the wheels had better start turning soon, making sure to clear designs with prison officials and ensuring that robust professional facilities for cleaning and pressing the presidential con wardrobe are in place. Everything must be in readiness for the First Felon POTUS.

Finally, who will do Trump’s hair? If the president does it himself, he will need extra time in the morning to tend to this chore, which is probably why he never got to the Oval Office before 11 a.m when he was president. “Executive time,” as the White House called it.

Bill Huey is president of Strategic Communications and the author of Advertising’s Double Helix: A Proposed New Process Model. Journal of Advertising Research, May/June 1999. His article about advertising effects has been cited in books and academic papers around the world.

THE DOOR PICKS UP CITYPICKLE

The Door signs on as agency of record for CityPickle, which bills itself as New York City’s first pickleball club. The agency has partnered with CityPickle since summer 2022, working on the launch of pickleball courts at Hudson Yards, the TWA Hotel at JFK Airport and Central Park’s Wollman Rink.

As AOR, The Door team will execute the media strategy for the company’s permanent indoor court facility in Long Island City, in addition to partnerships across the city.

“From our initial activation at Hudson Yards to our now 14 court takeover at Wollman Rink, The Door has exceeded all expectations both with the overwhelming amount of coverage and creative approach,” said CityPickle co-founders Mary Cannon and Erica Desai.



CLOUT CUTS PGA TOUR

Clout Public Affairs has dropped the PGA Tour as a client following its decision to merge with the Saudi Arabia government's LIV Golf.



It had been working with the PGA and 9/11 Justice, which wants to hold Saudi Arabia accountable for the terror attacks, to highlight the upstart tour's ties with the Kingdom.

Clout PA is a unit of Republican consulting firm Axiom Strategies.

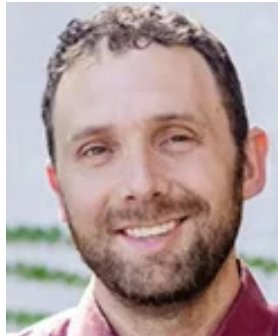
Jeff Roe, who is Axiom's founder, is an advisor to the Never Back Down political action committee that is backing Ron DeSantis.

DeSantis hosted 9/11 Justice president Brett Eagleson, and others who lost loved ones during the terror attacks and Gold Star families, at a Memorial Day barbeque at the governor's mansion in Tallahassee.

Former president Donald Trump hosted a LIV Golf tournament during the Memorial Day weekend at his course in Virginia, which is about 30 miles away from the Pentagon, where 184 people were killed on 9/11.

FGS GLOBAL WORKS DC FOR S2G VENTURES

FGS Global is monitoring legislation in the areas of energy, agriculture, climate and oceans on behalf of S2G Ventures of Chicago.



Lukas Walton

S2G is the investment platform of Builders Vision, which was launched and is led Lukas Walton.

He is the grandson of Sam and Helen Walton, founders of Walmart and the Walton Family Foundation.

Builders Vision invests in and collaborates with non-profits, businesses, and others working towards sustainable solutions to societal and environmental challenges.

FGS has nine staffers working the S2G Ventures push. The team

includes partners Catharine Ransom, Anthony Reed, Grant Leslie and Jacqlyn Schneider.

FINN LAUNCHES PURPOSE ALIGNMENT INDEX

Finn Partners has launched a diagnostic tool that enables brands to understand how product and purpose priorities factor into consumer purchasing decisions.

"The Finn Purpose Alignment Index" allows clients to sharpen their purpose-centric strategies and communications plans based on the predictive impact on brand perception and customer likelihood to back a brand for its social impact.



Barry Reicherter, managing partner, FINN Global Intelligence, and his research team developed the Index as part of the FINN commitment to advance corporate social

impact initiatives and reduce risks associated with "out of touch" campaigns that conflict with stakeholder interests.

The independent firm has made 40 social ranking factors that drive consumer purchase decisions available as a free download to support the PR industry's purpose initiatives.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

TMW Unlimited is named integrated marketing AOR for **Pride in London**, an annual LGBTQIA+ pride festival and pride parade which will be held this

year on July 1. The contract of at least two years follows a competitive pitch. Working alongside the Pride in London marketing team, TMW Unlimited will be responsible for the annual campaigns that coincide with each year's parade, as well as providing strategic and creative support throughout the year. It will also collaborate with the organization's production partners Getty Images and My Generation to raise awareness of the campaigns across channels, including outdoor advertising, digital, social, influencer, radio and press.

Bob Gold & Associates signs on as PR agency of record for **ShowSeeker**, a cloud-based ad management platform. The agency will work to drive awareness and adoption of ShowSeeker while bolstering the company's advertising sales, planning and workflow management solutions. ShowSeeker focuses on better monetizing ad inventory by introducing new efficiencies, automation, advanced targeting and more, with the goal of driving better ROI for buyers and sellers. The platform is used by companies including Cox, Spectrum, Viamedia, a4 Advertising, OnMedia, Sparklight Advertising and PRIMEDIA Network. "Bob Gold and his highly experienced team of senior counselors are recognized throughout the cable and advertising industries for keeping their clients in the spotlight with creative and engaging campaigns," said ShowSeeker founder and CEO Dave Hardy.

Powerhouse+Co. is retained by **RobotLAB**, a robotics integrator that works with companies in such industries as restaurant, hospitality, education, janitorial, assisted-living and delivery. The agency will support RobotLAB with comprehensive media relations and thought leadership campaigns to drive corporate awareness, highlight sector differentiators, educate key business audiences and reinforce the company's standing.

Hemsworth Communications adds **LOVU**, a romance travel booking app, to its travel and tourism client roster. Hemsworth will be responsible for supporting LOVU's PR launch efforts, including crafting and executing national media relations campaigns designed to establish the brand's presence as an innovative product. LOVU (pronounced "love you"), is a go-to resource for consumers planning celebratory romantic trips, offering exclusive deals, customized itineraries and expert travel advice from a network of dedicated travel advisors.

Nickerson, which works with clients in the real estate, architecture, sustainability and proptech sectors, is named agency of record for **JM Electrical**, a greater Boston provider of specialized electrical construction work, including the installation of EV chargers throughout New England. The company has worked on some of the most environmentally friendly buildings in the region. "Nickerson's results-driven client philosophy pairs perfectly with JM Electricals' collaborative work style," says JM Electrical principal & CEO Matthew Guarracino.

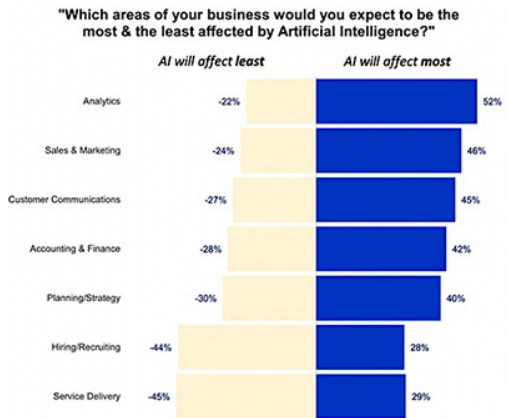


FEWER HIRES AT SMALL BUSINESSES DUE TO AI

For months, the news media has dedicated an extraordinary amount of attention to generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT, Google Bard and Microsoft Bing, as well as to fears regarding how that technology threatens to upend—if not completely replace—some sectors of the workforce.

As it turns out, those fears may be justified, as many small business owners now seem confident that they'll be able to leverage AI technology for an increasing number of applications traditionally handled by employees, [according to recent findings](#) from accounting software company FreshBooks.

FreshBooks' survey, which sought to measure AI's current



and future usage in one of the most vital sectors of the U.S. economy, discovered that 44 percent of business owners said they expect to hire fewer people in the future due to the capabilities provided by

generative AI.

More than half (60 percent) said they think AI technology will dramatically change their business within the next five years. Two out of three business owners surveyed (66 percent) said they plan to adopt generative AI for their business in some capacity within the next year.

When it comes to which areas of their business these owners expect to see the most impact from AI, analytics and finance came in at first place (52 percent), followed by sales and marketing (46 percent), customer communications (45 percent), accounting and finance (42 percent) and planning and strategy (40 percent). Bottoming out the list were service delivery (29 percent) and hiring and recruiting (28 percent).

On the other hand, small business owners don't seem particularly convinced that AI technology will replace the jobs of their employees anytime soon. Two-thirds of business owners surveyed said they don't think AI will replace them or their staff. The survey also found that the smaller the business, the less likely small business owners think AI will replace employees.

The report additionally found that nearly half (46 percent) of small business owners admitted they aren't currently clear on how AI could benefit their business. Only 25 percent said they're currently using or testing generative AI tools. And 16 percent admitted they don't use generative AI technology because they're not a "technical person."

Finally, regardless of how and to what extent small business owners foresee using AI tools in the course of running their business, an overwhelming majority of respondents (80 percent) admitted they're concerned about privacy, ethical and intellectual property issues associated with this technology.

FreshBooks' "AI Report" was based on an online survey of 1000 U.S.- and Canada-based small business owners across various industries. The survey was conducted in-house in May.

MICHIGAN STATE UNVEILS MARKETING RFP

Michigan State University is seeking proposals from agencies providing marketing and creative services.

The East Lansing-based public land-grant research university, which was founded in 1855, wants a marketing communications agency with health-science experience that can provide marketing and creative services and implement marketing and communication initiatives supporting its medical school, the College of Human Medicine.

Scope of the work includes design, logo preparation and creation of creative assets (for presentations and power points, flyer templates, merchandise, flyer templates, elevator signs and facility signage) as well as digital assets.

Proposals are due by 3:00 pm (ET) on June 16 and should be submitted electronically to Hatice Yalcindag, yalcinda@msu.edu.

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



RC'S CLARK TO NARRATIVE STRATEGIES

Rachel Gartner Clark, who led Real Chemistry's public affairs practice, is joining Narrative Strategies as managing director, overseeing the agency's healthcare practice.

At Real Chemistry, she worked with clients to mobilize patient and provider voices with the goal of educating and influencing decision-making at the Food and Drug Administration. She previously worked in the healthcare practices at Weber Shandwick and Edelman.

Gartner Clark also chairs the Patient Advisory Council for the Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition.

In her new post, she will lead a vertical with clients in the biopharmaceutical, medical technology, and provider sectors.



Rachel Gartner Clark

MZ GROUP REPS TARGETED TINGO

MZ Group represents Tingo Group, which hired White & Case to conduct an independent review of allegations made by short-seller Hindenburg Research that it fabricated its financials.

Tingo, which is listed on the NASDAQ, says it provides agriculture and financial services across Africa, the Middle East and southeast Asia.

Hindenburg released its report called "Tingo Group: Fake Farmers, Phones and Financials—The Nigerian Empire" on June 6.

It shorted Tingo's shares "because we believe the company is an exceptionally obvious scam with completely fabricated financials."

Tingo responded to Hindenburg's report by categorically refuting all the "allegations and misinformation" in it.

As a short-seller, Hindenburg "has a disclosed economic incentive to negatively influence the company's share price," explained Tingo.



COMMENTARY



Jay Monahan

PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan is now complicit in Saudi Arabia's exercise in sports washing, throwing in the towel after two years of bitter court fighting and agreeing to a shocking merger with LIV Golf.

He had called LIV "a foreign monarchy that is spending billions of dollars in an attempt to buy the game of golf."

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, owner of LIV Golf, is to be the exclusive investor in the

PGA/LIV golf-related commercial operations and businesses. It retains the right to make further investments.

It wasn't that long ago that Monahan was aligned with the families of 9/11 victims in the criticism of the PGA players who defected to the LIV.

The [911families.org](https://www.911families.org) group on June 11, 2022, criticized PGA Tour members who defected to the LIV.

[It issued a statement](#) that noted that Osama bin Laden and 15 of the 19 September 11 hijackers were Saudis and blamed the Kingdom for cultivating and spreading the hate-filled Islamist ideology that inspired the violent jihadists to carry out the deadly 9/11 attacks.

"When you partner with the Saudis, you become complicit with their whitewash, and help give them the reputational cover they so desperately crave—and are willing to pay handsomely to manufacture."

[Monahan once said](#): "I have two families that are close to me that lost loved ones. My heart goes out to them and I would ask that any player that has left, or that would ever consider leaving, have you ever had to apologize for being a member of the PGA Tour?"

Upon news of the PGA/LIV combination, Terry Strada, chair of 9/11 Families United, called Monahan a phony. "[Mr. Monahan talked last summer](#) about knowing people who lost loved ones on 9/11, then wondered aloud on national television whether LIV Golfers ever had to apologize for being a member of the PGA Tour. They do now – as does he," said Strada.

"Our entire 9/11 community has been betrayed by Commissioner Monahan and the PGA as it appears their concern for our loved ones was merely window-dressing in their quest for money."

But Jay's heart obviously is no longer with the 9/11 families. He has moved on, calling the PGA/LIV merger "a historic day for the game we all know and love."

More precisely, it's a historic day because it marks the decision of the PGA Tour to trash its legacy and tradition in exchange for Saudi loot.

It's also a big day for Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman and his effort to use sports to distract attention from his country's sorry human rights record.

It's day of betrayal for the 9/11 families. They were double-crossed by Monahan and the PGA.

SF combats "doom loop" image... The San Francisco Travel Association kicked off its biggest marketing campaign ever on May 30 to promote tourism to the city.

That effort follows a [slew of "doom loop" stories](#) about the city being stuck in an irreversible economic and social downward spiral brought on by crime, drugs, homelessness and the hollowing out of its business core.

The upbeat "[Always San Francisco](#)" campaign features iconic images (Golden Gate Bridge, Lombard Street, cable cars) and cameos from San Franciscans such as Lady Camden of RuPaul's Drag Race fame, Chinatown lion dancers and musicians Mae Powell and Michael O'Konis.

The campaign evokes the emotional joy that visitors experience in the city, said Lynn Bruni-Perkins, SF Travel's chief marketing officer.

The \$6M campaign will run through Oct. 22 in the US, Australia, Asia-Pacific, India, Europe, Canada and Mexico.

The Miles Partnership, a strategic marketing shop that specializes in travel, created the effort.

San Francisco Travel is predicting 23.9M visitors this year, up from 21.9M in 2022. It is looking for a \$1B increase in tourism spending.

The Always San Francisco push may juice those numbers upward.

Target comes out on top... The retailer ranks No. 1 in Bospar's "corporate courage index" ranking of brands that support the LGBTQIA+ community.

Bospar CEO Curtis Sparrer noted the irony in the ranking, coming at a time of media reports that Target bowed to conservative pressure and removed products from its Pride Collection.

He believes respondents put Target's long-time support of the LGBTQIA+ community ahead of its current cave-in.

"Target has been supporting pride for a decade, and that commitment has been part of the national consciousness," said Sparrer. "The long-term challenge for Target boils down to which side they pick."

We will see.

God help us... Former Vice President Mike Pence is running for the Republican presidential nomination because God told him to do so.

He told Republicans in Iowa that the next president "will hear from heaven, and he'll heal this land."

That's from a guy who stood by Donald Trump's side as he destroyed America's reputation throughout the world and fostered divisiveness and hate in the US.

That's not exactly what Jesus would have done.

Pence should have followed the example of Republican New Hampshire governor Chris Sununu.

The New Englander won't be running for the 2024 election because he understands the bigger the crowd of pretenders, the more likely it will be for Trump to cinch the prize.

Former governor Chris Christie is the only no-shot GOP presidential candidate who jumped into the race as a public service, to bash Trump.

—Kevin McCauley