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O'Dwyer's Newsletter



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APCO SCOOPS UP \$1.6M IN SAUDI WORK

APCO Worldwide has scooped up Saudi Arabia's National Center for Performance Measurement, which evaluates the efficiencies of public agencies.

The Center's goal is to build greater accountability and public trust in governmental units.

APCO's work calls for strategic communications, media relations and outreach to US policymakers about the Kingdom's efforts to benchmark and measure its progress toward long-term objectives.

The D.C.-based firm is to receive a flat fee of \$1.6M plus expenses for its work that runs through April 30.



PROPAGANDA CZAR EXITS STATE DEPT.

Donald Trump fired Steve Goldstein, who was propaganda czar at the State Dept., on March 13.



Steve Goldstein

The former senior VP at BP Global Solutions was sworn in Dec. 4 as Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and PA.

Trump designated State Dept. spokesperson Heather Nauert acting undersecretary of state.

With Goldstein's departure, the State Dept. has one permanent undersecretary, Tom Shannon, who plans to retire once a successor is confirmed, out of six.

Michelle Giuda, who was senior VP-global communications at Weber Shandwick, left her post to become assistant secretary of state, on Jan. 26. She reported to Goldstein.

R&C ALUM JOINS DKC

Ivy Mollenkamp has joined DKC in Los Angeles as president Sean Cassidy beefs up the west coast offerings of the New York-based firm.

She's a Rogers & Cowan veteran who established and managed its entertainment and lifestyle division.

Mollenkamp led communications at Zealot Networks, digital-first media/entertainment company, and most recently consulted for Participant Media and Trebel Media.



Ivy Mollenkamp

DKC president Sean Cassidy said she is a perfect fit for his firm as it builds up expertise in the entertainment, technology and consumer segments.

EX-DEVRIES US CEO SHIFTS TO SCHOLASTIC

Stephanie Smirnov, who served as US president of DeVries Global and held PR posts at Donna Karan International and L'Oreal, has joined children's publisher Scholastic, as executive VP and head of global corporate communications.

She's responsible for media relations, financial communications, social media, thought leadership and reputation management.

Smirnov will play a leading role in events celebrating the 100th anniversary celebration of the New York-based publicly traded publisher.

Most recently, Smirnov was managing director brand practice at Edelman New York.



Stephanie Smirnov

TULCHAN HELPS UNILEVER MOVE TO HOLLAND

UK's Tulchan Group is part of Unilever's media team handling the announcement that the consumer products giant is consolidating its headquarters in Rotterdam.

Since its formation in 1930, Unilever maintained dual headquarters in Rotterdam and London.

CEO Paul Polman denied the decision to choose Holland over the UK had anything to do with Brexit.

In 2017, Unilever consolidated its food division in Holland. The company plans to keep its beauty & personal care unit and home care business in the UK.

Tulchan's Jonathan Sibun, former deputy editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, works the Unilever business.

He advised Unilever in its successful 2017 effort to fend off a \$143B takeover bid by Kraft Heinz.

HUDSON SAILS FROM NFL

Dawn Hudson will step down as executive VP/chief marketing officer at the National Football League next month after a four-year run.

Her departure follows the March 13 promotion of Mary Ann Turcke, who was in charge of NFL Network, to the COO slot. She succeeded Tod Leiweke.

Turcke, one-time president of Bell Canada's media arm, is taking over the marketing, PR, events, technology and human resource departments.

The NFL issued a statement crediting Hudson for providing "refreshing insights and perspectives on how to portray our game, players and the special bond fans have with the NFL."



Dawn Hudson

FINSBURY HANDLES IHEARTMEDIA CHAPTER XI

Finsbury is handling the biggest bankruptcy in radio as iHeartMedia, owner of America's No. 1 network, files for Chapter 11 to restructure \$10B in debt.

iHeartMedia CEO Bob Pittman said the capital structure of the company, which has reported year-to-year revenue growth for the past 18 consecutive quarters, has been burdened by a heavy debt load.

iHeartMedia posted a \$95.4 net loss on \$1.9B revenues during the nine-month period ended Sept. 30.

The company operates 850 iHeart radio stations and more than 200 digital platforms that have attracted 130M social followers.

Bain Capital and Thomas H. Partners own 68 percent of iHeartMedia's stock.

Finsbury's Kai Goldberg and Sherri Toub represent iHeartMedia. Wendy Goldberg is iHeartMedia's executive VP-communications.

FRATELLI GROUP SIGNS ON WITH SINGAPORE

Public affairs shop Fratelli Group has inked a two-year contract to provide media and PR consultancy services for the government of the Republic of Singapore.

Fratelli Group's activities for Singapore will focus on media monitoring and counsel, as well as "raising awareness and a deepening understanding of Singapore as a longstanding and strategic partner of the United States," according to Foreign Agents Registration Acts documents filed in March.

The two-year campaign, which Fratelli will be performing on behalf of Singapore's Embassy in Washington, began on March 1. It brings the agency a total of \$432,000 payable on a monthly basis, with an option available for the Embassy to extend the contract for an additional year at a cost of \$216,000, or \$18,000 a month.

ROCKEY DIES AT 90

Jay Rockey, who built The Rockey Co. into the largest PR firm in the Pacific Northwest and sold the shop to Hill and Knowlton in 2000, died Feb. 24. He was 90.

Seattle-based TRC had more than 50 staffers and offices, and counted Boeing, Washington Mutual, Alyeska Pipeline, British Airways and Nintendo as clients.

Rockey made his initial mark on PR as director of the 1962 World's Fair in Seattle, which attracted luminaries such as Elvis Presley, Ed Sullivan, Nat King Cole and John Glenn. He secured coverage for the fair in the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Los Angeles Times* and a *Life* cover with a picture of the under-construction Space Needle. The Seattle World's Fair was the first international expo to turn a profit.

In 1976, Rockey was elected national president of the Public Relations Society of America.

A memorial service is slated April 21. More information is available at www.jayrockey.net.



Jay Rockey

HYPER-PARTISAN CONTENT DRIVES FACEBOOK

Politics, for better or worse, continues to drive conversations on social media. According to a March study by analytics firm NewsWhip, hyper-partisan publishers and their staff writers appear to engage some of the largest media audiences on Facebook.

NewsWhip in February ranked the top 100 reporters for English-language publications on Facebook by engagement and then analyzed that content to discover what underlying trends those reporters have in common.

The study found that an overwhelming majority of the most popular authors for February represent hyper-partisan publications such as the Daily Wire (conservative), Truth Examiner (liberal), Breitbart (conservative), the Washington Press (conservative) or small but similarly politically-charged outlets. Big publishers were underrepresented in the list, with five reporters — representing *The Atlantic*, the *New Yorker*, MSNBC and Fox News — comprising the only appearances of a major media outlet in the top 25.

Writers working for conservative publishers by far outnumbered their liberal counterparts: six writers in the top 25 are employed by conservative site the Daily Wire, while two are employed by liberal source the Truth Examiner and one writes for The Huffington Post.



Only one writer in the top ten represented an "established" news source: Terri Peters, a contributor to "The Today Show."

Given the partisan nature of many of the most popular authors on Facebook, the NewsWhip study suggests that content that polarizes or outright misinforms readers continues to engage and drive an enormous amount of conversations happening on the social site. The study couldn't come at a worse time for Facebook, as the findings arrive after the platform's well-publicized recent attempts to curtail politically divisive content in exchange for more meaningful engagements.

"Contrary to what Facebook has announced, a few of the top authors have also seen their engagements come from stories that might seem a bit like clickbait," a NewsWhip report on the study's findings concluded.

The study underscored the idea that readers seem to connect less with news outlets than with authors who have large, dedicated followings. This maps with findings in Edelman's latest Trust Barometer report, which found that trust in media is in a free fall, ranking as the least trusted institution for the first time. That report, which cites the lack of confidence in media stemming from a collapse of trust in social media platforms, also found that, paradoxically, trust in journalism itself is on the rise.

A similar Facebook publisher rankings report last year by NewsWhip found that viral, "feel good" media content produced by online publishers is beginning to overshadow hard news stories for yielding the most interactions on Facebook.

RUBENSTEIN REPRESENTS SACKLER

Rubenstein Communications represents philanthropist Jillian Sackler, widow of the late Dr. Arthur Sackler, one of three brothers who founded Purdue Pharma, maker of prescription painkiller OxyContin.

Arthur Sackler died in 1987, a decade before OxyContin, which is front and center in the opioid crisis, was developed.



Jillian Sackler

Following Sackler's death, heirs sold his third of a stake in Purdue to his brothers Mortimer and Raymond.

Activists have targeted the entire Sackler family for making money on the opioid crisis.

Artist Nan Goldin, for instance, staged an opioid protest on March 11 at the Metropolitan Museum's Temple of Dendur, which was funded by a

\$3.4M donation from the Sacklers.

About 100 protestors tossed pill bottles labeled "prescribed to you by the Sackler Family" into the moat surrounding the temple, according to a report in the *Guardian*.

Rubenstein's mission is to set that record straight.

"Naturally, my client is deeply troubled about the publication of any misinformation wrongly communicating to the public that she, Arthur M. Sackler or his heirs have financially profited from the sale of OxyContin, when, in fact, they have not," Janet Wootten, Rubenstein senior VP, wrote in an email.

The PR firm prepared a fact sheet and press statement to clear up misleading coverage.

It reads: "We bring to your attention that such discussion concerning Purdue and OxyContin has incorrectly and misleadingly lumped together brothers Arthur, Mortimer and Raymond Sackler (and their heirs), under a single "Sackler family" umbrella, when, in fact, Arthur M. Sackler and his heirs have never had a financial interest in the sale of OxyContin. Misinformation and confusion on this point requires prompt correction and clarification."

Rubenstein says the *New York Times*, *Time*, *Washington Post*, *Economist*, CNN and Associated Press are among outlets that have published corrections and clarifications to note that Arthur Sackler and his heirs have no financial interest in the sale of OxyContin.

GERMANS KICK SOCCER BALL TO BC&W

German Football Assn. has retained Burson Cohn & Wolfe to handle its bid to the host the Union of European Football Assn.'s 2024 soccer tournament.

The WPP unit's sport division, which is based in Lausanne (Switzerland), handles the PR and international strategy work.

Germany plans to stage the games in 17 cities, including Berlin, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Dusseldorf, Cologne and Munich.

Turkey is challenging Germany for the right to host Euro 2024. The winning bid will be announced in September.



PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

SevenTwenty Strategies has named executive VP **Vlad Cartwright** president of the DC-based firm.

Cartwright has been with SevenTwenty since 2009. Before that he served as executive VP at both Burson-Marsteller and Direct Impact.

In his new position, he will continue to lead PR and advocacy programs for SevenTwenty's *Fortune* 500 and trade association client base. SevenTwenty founder Pam Fielding praised Cartwright's "unique vision and ability to translate strategy into action."



Vlad Cartwright

SHIFT Communications has promoted **Alan Marcus** to managing director. Marcus was previously senior VP and New York office. Before SHIFT, he was a senior VP at Porter Novelli and held VP slots at MWW Group and Ketchum. Marcus will continue to lead and grow SHIFT's New York outpost. With offices in Boston, San Francisco, New York and Austin, the firm represents Citrix, Demandbase, McDonald's, The Rockport Group, Red Hat, RSA Conference and Webroot.

JetBlue Airways has promoted **Doug McGraw** to VP-corporate communications, and **Elizabeth Windram** to VP-marketing. For the past three years, McGraw has been the airline's director, corporate communications, leading external communications, reputation management, and operational crewmember communications. Before coming to JetBlue, he was senior VP and partner in the New York office of FleishmanHillard. In his new position, McGraw will oversee the company's communications strategy, including internal communications, media relations, reputation management, social media and financial communications. Windram has been



Doug McGraw

JetBlue's director, brand and advertising for the past two years. Windram previously spent seven years at E&J Gallo Winery, where she led brands including Barefoot Wine & Bubbly. She will now lead JetBlue's brand strategy.

Steinreich Communications Group, which serves the home furnishings industry, has hired **Larry Thomas** as content manager. Thomas joins the agency from *Home Furnishings Business* magazine, where he was senior business editor. Before that, he spent 27 years writing for *Furniture Today*. Before becoming a trade journalist, he was a reporter for the *Evansville Courier* in Indiana.

Donlin, Recano & Company, corporate restructuring firm, has named **Jennifer Mercer** VP and leader of its strategic communications group. Mercer joins Donlin Recano, an AST company, from Epiq, where she led its strategic communications group. She has also developed and managed critical communications programs for clients at such firms as Sitrick & Company, Hill & Knowlton and MWW Group as well as managing public relations for the CEO of Hitachi Data Systems. At Donlin, Mercer will work with internal corporate teams and company advisors to create strategies to communicate about business transactions.

TRAVEL ASSOCIATION TABS LOBBYING GROUP

Travel trade non-profit the U.S. Travel Association has hired lobbying firm Klein/Johnson Group for Capitol Hill representation on issues related to government appropriations and tourism, as experts across the travel industry fight to reverse a downward trend in international visits that has gripped the U.S. for more than a year.

USTA has retained K/J on issues related to “encouraging safe travel to and within the United States for both business and tourism,” according to lobbying registration documents filed in March.

The trade group has also hired K/J for help with appropriations bills as they relate to travel and Brand USA, the large-scale, public-private campaign to promote travel and tourism to the United States.

Inbound international travel to the U.S. has experienced a steep drop since President Trump’s inauguration, a trend that many travel industry pros have begun referring to as the “Trump Slump,” pointing to travelers’ reaction to America’s current political climate as well as policies such as travel bans from Muslim-majority countries as potential reasons for the decline.

An analysis by the USTA concludes this slump translates to a spending loss of about \$4.6 billion and 40,000 jobs. In 2016, America’s travel industry generated \$2.3 trillion for the U.S. economy (approx. 12 percent of the U.S. GDP) and supported 15.3 million jobs in the U.S.

Klein/Johnson Group was launched last year by two Podesta Group alums, Izzy Klein and Matt Johnson. Klein was previously communications director for Sen. Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and was also formerly press secretary and legislative assistant to Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA). Johnson worked as chief counsel to Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-TX).

Klein and Johnson manage the USTA account.

AVENUE ADVISES EX-UKRAINE LEADER

Avenue Strategies Global is representing Yulia Tymoshenko, the former prime minister of Ukraine, under a six-month agreement that went into effect Feb. 28.

The firm, which has close ties with the Trump administration, provides strategic communications, government relations and outreach to media and US policymakers on behalf of Tymoshenko, who led Ukraine in 2005 and from 2007 through 2010.

It is positioning Tymoshenko as a supporter of democratic reforms, economic transparency, liberalism and the establishment of rule of law in Ukraine.

Barry Bennett, who ran Ben Carson’s presidential run and then advised Trump, launched ASG after the 2016 election with Corey Lewandoski, a Trump campaign alum. Lewandoski is no longer associated with the DC shop.

ASG’s agreement is worth \$65K per month.



**Yulia
Tymoshenko**

Commentary

CAN KUDLOW PLAY TRUMP'S TV PUBLICIST?

Once long-time CNBC commentator Larry Kudlow settles in as head of the White House National Economic Council, replacing former Goldman Sachs president Gary Cohn, Donald Trump will have some serious competition for cable TV tube time.



Larry Kudlow

To survive the White House, Kudlow must avoid the path taken by another one-time Trump confidante, Steve Bannon, a guy who knew how to work the media.

The 70-year-old pinstripe suited Kudlow, ex-chief economist at Paine Webber and Bear Sterns and a veteran of Ronald Reagan’s administration, is a cable TV superstar.

Will he be comfortable in playing the role of Trump’s TV surrogate?

Cable TV shapes Trump’s worldview. One senses that Trump knows little or even cares about Kudlow’s economic philosophy. But he likes the way Kudlow looks on TV, just as he thought Rex Tillerson was Hollywood central casting’s idea of a Secretary of State.

The *Wall Street Journal* editorial page notes that Kudlow has been critical of slapping tariffs on steel and aluminum. It warns that the new economic chief may have to counter Trump to hold the line on “new bursts of spending, special pleading by industries, and above all a wave of trade protectionism.”

The WSJ editorialist says Kudlow is less than a brawler than Cohn and wonders “how such a nice guy will fare in the Trump Hall of Knives.”

But the ghost of Bannon is a bigger threat to Kudlow’s second tour of the White House.

Bannon, whom Trump referred to as “My Steve” during the campaign for the vital role that he played in putting Team Trump on track, eventually tumbled to “Sloppy Steve.”

The campaign strategist’s fall from grace began with the *Time* magazine cover that hailed him as “The Great Manipulator.” The accompanying “Is Steve Bannon the Second Most Powerful Man in the White House?” reportedly didn’t sit well with Trump, who is not one to share the media spotlight.

Michael Wolff’s book “Fire and Fury” completed Bannon’s downfall. As Trump put it, “When he was fired, he not only lost his job, he lost his mind.”

Can Kudlow keep his ego in check and thrive as Trump’s cable TV publicist? He could always give Bannon a call for some pointers.

—Kevin McCauley

