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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

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TOP 25 PR FIRMS POSTED SOLID GAINS IN '17

Twenty-one of the top 25 firms in ***O'Dwyer's* 2018 rankings** enjoyed positive growth in fee income, with 11 charting double-digit gains.

No. 1 shop Edelman, up 2.1 percent, neared the $900M mark, while No. 2 W2O surged 17.6 percent to $144.3M in income

Richard Edelman said business at his firm was slow during the first-half of 2017, but picked up as the year progressed. He noted that Edelman had outperformed the big agency networks. The CEO refuses to accept single-digit growth as the "new normal," saying the independent shop must battle ad agencies and digital outfits for market share.

Richard Edelman

W2O "had another breakthrough year," said CEO Jim Weiss as the firm exceeded its revenue target and improved in key areas of efficiency, profit margin, talent development and client service.

Jim Weiss

APCO Worldwide remained in the No. 3 slot with fees of $128.2M, up 6.3 percent. Finn Partners held steady at No. 4 with $81.2M in net fees, followed by financial PR/IR specialist ICR with $63.4M in net fees, up 13.9 percent.

Jennifer Prosek's firm hopped ahead of Padilla to come in at No. 6, posting $40.8M in net fees. Prosek Partners posted the biggest gain of the top ten, up 33.2 percent. Padilla checked in with a 1.5 percent gain to $40M.

Technology PR dominated Hotwire ($33.2M, up 4.9 percent) made the top ten for the first time at No. 8, followed by Coyne ($28M, up 2.6 percent) and another first-timer in the top ten, Ronn Torossian's 5W Public Relations, was up 13.3 percent to $27.5M.

Leading gainers

Leading gainers in the top 25 are: Prosek Partners (#6 $40.8M, up 33.2 percent), Highwire PR (#25, $17M, up 21.3 percent), W2O Group (#2, $144.3M, up 17.6 percent), Spectrum (#16, $24M, up 20 percent), and ICR (#5, $63.4M, up 13.9 percent).

Of the firms ranked #26-50, representing a range in fees from $8.4M to $16.3M, 21 posted gains with 12 in the double-digits. Leading gainers in this range are: KYNE (#42, $9.6M, up 64.3 percent), Bravo Group (#30, $14.3M, up 25 percent), Crosby (#28, $15.1M, up

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O'DWYER'S CELEBRATES 50 YEARS IN JULY

The July *O'Dwyer's* magazine will look back on 50 years of PR coverage and explore what lies ahead for PR and the communications business.

Companies 50 years ago relied on the media to get their news and viewpoints across to the public. Today they have numerous ways to reach key audiences in general releases or on an individual basis.

Cellphones, miracles of communication, dominate society. Media and other communicators format their content to fit the small screens.

The "get tough" with the press attitude of President Donald Trump is mirrored in the press relations of many companies and institutions throughout the land.

Articles by staffers and contributors will recall the PR/media scene of 1968 and contrast it with today's digital and web-dominated environment.

Among many changes is the flip from a male-dominated profession to one that is overwhelmingly female.

PR/Media A Different World in 1968

The PR/media world this writer experienced 50 years ago was radically different from the current environment.

"PR," once synonymous with press relations, later became one of many disciplines involved in shaping campaigns.

Only one of the ten largest firms ranked by O'Dwyer's for 2017 uses "PR" in its name. Only three of the top 25 do so. "PR" is seen as a term that put limits on the activities of a firm.

PR people used to make a point of personally interacting with reporters. PR pros would often show up at our offices and chat over a cup of coffee. More common was lunch. We often had lunch five days a week at various midtown New York locations. Standard dress for reporters and PR people, almost all of them male, was a suit and tie.

In a few decades, dress habits shifted to informal clothes including jeans. There was no need for formal business dress if the main or only form of contact was by phone or email.

This writer launched a weekly newsletter in 1968 after my employer of six years, the former *Hearst New York Journal-American*, closed the paper where I had been doing a daily ad column. The *Chicago Tribune* then hired me to do an ad column from New York. Many of the PR contacts I built up doing the columns for a total of eight

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BORDER PATROL COUNCIL NEEDS PR FIRM

The National Border Patrol Council, the union representing nearly 17,000 Border Patrol Agents assigned to the U.S. Border Patrol, is seeking proposals from agencies that can provide strategic consulting, media relations services and creative counsel as part of a multi-year retainer.

Founded in 1965, the NBPC is the sole labor representative for personnel assigned to the U.S. Border Patrol, which falls under the direction of the Customs and Border Protection agency within the Department of Homeland Security.

Scope of the work would include executing a proactive media strategy, managing media requests for interviews and booking NBPC spokespersons on TV and radio shows, crisis management, media training duties and drafting talking points, website content management and social media development, coordinating all activities with the NBPC's legislative division and assisting in the production of a weekly podcast/radio show.

Deadline for submissions is April 15 and should be sent to executive vice president Albert Trevino, atrevino@bpunion.org.

All submittals should be provided in 8.5" x 11" format with text in a standard 12-point font.

Download the RFP (PDF).

APCO EYES $333K FEE FROM EGYPTIANS

APCO Worldwide, which took over Weber Shandwick's $1.2M contract with Egypt last year, has updated the terms of its engagement with the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The DC-based firm now provides social media, website and digital advertising in the US for a fixed fee of $333K plus expenses, according to its Justice Dept. filing.

The purpose of the outreach is to improve Egypt's strategic partnership with the US and to highlight the country's economic development, society and culture.

Egypt is gearing up for its third election since the Arab Spring, with the tally for president slated for March 26 to March 28.

Human rights advocates have criticized the election as a sham, since most of the credible opponents to Abdel Fattah el-Sisi have either dropped out of the competition or were arrested, reported Bloomberg.

TC TRANSCONTINENTAL LOOKS FOR PR

TC Transcontinental, which bills itself as Canada's largest printer and key supplier of flexible packaging in North America, is looking for a firm to handle a US PR program to bolster its awareness.

Based in Montreal, the publicly traded company has annual revenues in the $2B range. It chalked up $502M in first-quarter 2018 sales and earned $58.2M.

A TCT spokesperson told *O'Dwyer's* the firm is taking a "targeted approach" to the search but may eventually open the process up.

The company employs 6,500 people in the US and Canada.

BYRON ALLEN'S ESI BUYS WEATHER CHANNEL

Comedian-turned media mogul Byron Allen's Entertainment Studios Inc. has bought The Weather Channel for an estimated $300M from a consortium of Bain Capital, Blackstone Group, and Comcast NBCUniversal.

Byron Allen

The deal does not include the Weather Group's weather.com and other digital assets, which IBM bought in 2015.

ESI, which Allen launched 25 years ago, produces, distributes and syndicates more than 40 TV programs, owns eight cable TV networks including Pets.TV, Recipe TV. Justice Central TV and MyDestination TV and runs Entertainment Studios Motion Pictures ("47 Meters Down" shark thriller, "Hostiles" western).

Allen said the acquisition was the start of ESI's process of "investing billions of dollars over the next five years to acquire some of the best media assets around the world."

ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION HIRES HEENAN

The Rockefeller Foundation has recruited Christine Heenan for the VP-policy, partnerships & communications post. She'll join RF later in the Spring.

Christine Heenan

Heenan served in the Clinton White House as senior policy advisor for healthcare reform and women's issues.

She also was director of community & government relations at Brown University and VP-communications at Harvard. Heenan, who founded Clarendon Group, advised Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ballmer Group and Broad Institute.

At RF, Heenan will direct strategic communications, arrange conferences and seminars and report to president Rajiv Shah.

RUBENSTEIN FASHIONS CLAIRE'S CHAPTER XI

Rubenstein is handling the bankruptcy filing of Claire's Stores, marketer of jewelry & accessories to "tweens," teens and young women.

Claire's, which is the world's leading ear piercer with more than 100M ears worldwide, says it's using Chapter XI as a "process to effectuate a balance sheet—not an operational—restructuring."

The Hoffman Estates, IL-based company, which sells products through 7,500 outlets in 45 countries, claims business is "growing, not shrinking."

With the September completion of the Chapter XI restructuring, Claire's expects to wipe $1.9B debt from its balance sheet.

Claire's anticipates fiscal 2017 sales of $1.3B and net income of $29M.

Rubenstein's Marcia Horowitz, Tisha Kresler and Alex Stockham represent Claire's.

BUDGET CITED AS TOP PR CHALLENGE

Cost remains the greatest obstacle facing the corporate communications world and a daily concern for professionals working in the industry today, according to a recent survey published by newsletter and online community Job of the Week.

That survey, which covered professionals' top challenges within the industry, as well as the trends and measurement tactics influencing much of their current work, underscored a consistent theme of being expected to do more with communications budgets that seem to grow increasingly smaller.

Most respondents said the biggest challenge facing PR functions today is financial in design. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) cited budget as their top obstacle, followed by the task of proving value or ROI to their business (54 percent).

Cost consistently comprised the greatest determining factor behind why communications agencies were fired. When agencies were let go, cost was traced to that decision 79 percent of the time, followed by service (50 percent) and results (40 percent). By contrast, 54 percent of corporate communications pros reported that they kept an outside agency because they needed an extra pair of hands.

Meanwhile, the financial challenges facing corporate communicators comes a more than half of those polled — 57 percent — also reported experiencing an ever-expanding list of duties. About half of respondents — 51 percent — said they expected their budgets to remain about the same next year.

Communications pros also cited several key functions that they claim have become more difficult in recent years. A slight majority (51 percent) said they believe media relations is getting harder, while about a third (32 percent) claimed that it's about the same, with only three percent saying the role is getting easier. Half of respondents (50 percent) said organic social media was getting harder as well, while only 19 percent say it's about the same and five percent say it's getting easier.

Respondents also identified several tech tools they claim are being used increasingly in the communications world. The top five are web analytics (78 percent), social media management (75 percent); and press release distribution and media monitoring (66 percent). Content management systems followed, at 50 percent.

In the coming year, communications professionals predicted that storytelling (79 percent), content marketing (71 percent) and thought leadership (67 percent) would be the top communications trends and tactics.

The JOTW 2018 Communications Survey was conducted in partnership with Atlanta, GA-based B2B technology shop Sword and Script Public Relations. It polled 155 communications professionals primarily focused on corporate communications in February. Most respondents were senior in-house PR pros in corporate comms roles. JOTW is the free email newsletter and online community founded in 2001 by IABC fellow Ned Lundquist.

O'DWYER'S CELEBRATES 50 YEARS IN JULY

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years subscribed to the NL, making it a financial success.

PR Services Industry Exploded

The PR services industry, specialist firms working directly for clients or helping PR firms to serve clients, vastly expanded in the past 50 years.

Fifty-five types of services by more than 700 firms were catalogued in the 84-page January 2018 O'Dwyer's PR Buyer's Guide, the 25th year of publication of this database.

These included firms providing media lists of all types and the techniques for reaching them, satellite media tours/roadshows, media training, crisis management, video production, executive search, conference planning, management consultants, merger specialists, graphic services, measurement and evaluation services, interactive/multimedia services, and photographers/stock photos, to name some of them.

Professionals working in the world of PR/marketing/advertising/social media benefit from the expertise offered by the service firms.

Vets Could Contrast PR in 1968 vs. 2018

PR veterans will be asked to assist us in contrasting the PR world of 50 years ago with today. Are there valuable practices that were common in 1968 that have been lost over the years?

A bedrock principle of PR was that what others say about you is more important than what you say about yourself—"third party endorsement."

Corporations and other news sources decided that their communications did not need endorsements by anyone else.

A basic measuring tool of the O'Dwyer ranking is the ratio of wages paid to employees. For most of the firms, that figure was close to 50%. Firms were supposed to devote at least half of their income to counseling and press relations.

Conglomerates purchased 18 of the 25 PR firms in the 1978 O'Dwyer's ranking and there were fears that the entire independent PR firm sector would vanish. Edelman and other firms refused to join the parade.

The July O'Dwyer's magazine will explore the changing role of "PR" in the marketing mix and examine how firms are coping with the new environment.

One question is how PR and related subjects should be taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels?

—Jack O'Dwyer

PROSPER GROUP TABS FORMER GOLIN CEO

Prosper Group has added former Golin CEO Rich Jernstedt to its roster of strategic advisors. He will continue to lead his consultancy, The Jernstedt Company, located in Chicago. Earlier, Jernstedt spent four years as a consultant at Porter Novelli and seven years at FleishmanHillard as CMO. He served on the boards of the Arthur Page Society, Institute for PR Public Relations and PR Council, where he was chairman.

Rich Jernstedt

BERLINROSEN REPS EXILED CAMBODIANS

BerlinRosen has picked up a contract to provide media relations and strategic communications services to the Cambodian National Rescue Movement, an exiled group formed in January to promote free and fair elections in its homeland.

New York-based BR began work for Paris-based CNRM March 6 in a program that will include messaging, fact sheets/backgrounders, press releases, op-eds, "explainer pieces," videos (shot outside of Cambodia), digital strategic guidance, website development and meetings with leaders in the US.

The public affairs firm is to receive a $250K fee for its services, which will run through Aug. 10.

TEAM OBAMA ALUM TAKES PANDORA PA SLOT

Parita Shah, who was chief of staff at the Millennium Challenge Corp., the US foreign aid agency that grants assistance to countries committed to sustainable development and reduction of poverty, has joined Pandora streaming service as public affairs head.

Parita Shah

Prior to MCC, Shah was VP at APCO Worldwide and press secretary for President Obama's Commerce Dept. chief Gary Locke and ex-Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

She was New Mexico communications director at Obama for America and served on John Kerry for President's advance team.

FH HELPS SAUDIS LEARN FROM BOSTON

FleishmanHillard is working with King Abdullah University of Science & Technology on an integrated communications program through April 15 to promote its participation in a March 24 forum that was hosted at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Contract fees/expenses are capped at $278K. The Omnicom unit will bill KAUST at its standard US hourly rates, which range from $75 to $525 per hour.

Work began March 7 for the forum, in which KAUST sought to learn how Boston developed its education/technology ecosystem and how to apply that knowledge to the Kingdom's Vision 2030 program, designed to reduce its dependence on energy by developing its health, education, recreation and tourism sectors.

EDELMAN'S HALL TAKES TELEMUNDO POST

NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises has named Krystyna Hall VP of corporate communications.

Hall joins the company from Edelman, where was a senior VP with responsibility for PR, corporate reputation and crisis management for such brands as PepsiCo and Samsung.

Before that, she was a senior VP at FleishmanHillard, where she worked on accounts including Lockheed Martin and the Egyptian Tourist Authority.

Krystyna Hall

MEREDITH HAS NO TIME FOR TIME MAG

Meredith Corporation is looking to unload several of the titles it picked up in its January acquisition of Time Inc. *Time, Sports Illustrated, Fortune* and *Money* are set to head for the auction block as Meredith looks to consolidate its focus on producing female-skewing lifestyle titles.

People, Entertainment Weekly, Real Simple, InStyle, Shape and *Travel + Leisure* are all expected to remain under the Meredith umbrella.

Along with the four magazines, the company plans to shed a total of 1,200 employees, in addition to the 600 who have already been let go at Times Customer Service, Time Inc.'s former subscription fulfillment operation.

The moves are part of an overall effort by Meredith to reduce annual costs by $400 million to $500 million. The company also says that it will work to raise the advertising and circulation performance of the magazines it keeps to "industry norms," while increasing profits from the Time Inc. digital properties to "Meredith's levels."

MEDIA MANEUVERS

While a story in the *New York Post* said that **Steve Bannon** was angling to buy *Newsweek*, a statement from Newsweek Media Group says that the magazine is not for sale. Bannon has repeatedly indicated his interest in buying a "name-brand" media outlet since he was allegedly pushed out of Breitbart News in January. But NMG says that interest has not resulted in any negotiations between Bannon and the company.

Judy Woodruff

PBS NewsHour has named managing editor **Judy Woodruff** solo anchor of the broadcast. In 2013, Woodruff and the late Gwen Ifill were named the program's co-anchors and managing editors, the first time two women were the co-anchor team for a national nightly news broadcast.

The National Press Club, its nonprofit Journalism Institute and 15 other professional journalism organizations filed a friend-of-the-court brief March 19 before the Board of Immigration Appeals in support of Mexican journalist **Emilio Gutiérrez-Soto**'s asylum case. Gutiérrez, winner of the Press Club's 2017 John Aubuchon Press Freedom Award, sought asylum in the U.S. after his reporting on official corruption made him the target of death threats in Mexico.

tronc CEO **Justin Dearborn** replaced Michael Ferro on March 19 as chairman just ahead of a *Fortune* story alleging inappropriate sexual behavior. Dearborn, who was appointed CEO of tronc in February 2016, was previously CEO of Merge Healthcare, which was acquired by IBM in October 2015 for $1B.

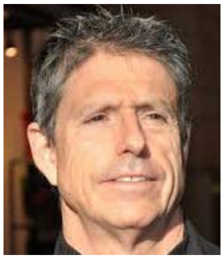
Digital First Media completed its acquisition of the *Boston Herald*. Last month, Digital First placed the top bid of almost $12 million for the paper in a bankruptcy auction, beating GateHouse Media, owner of the *Providence Journal* as well as more than 140 other daily papers.

Commentary

FACEBOOK'S IMPLOSION IS LONG OVERDUE

By Eric Starkman

Betting against Wall Street and media darlings could be a lucrative investment strategy. The CEOs of Enron, Worldcom, Washington Mutual, Lehman Brothers, Bear Stearns and AIG all held favorable stints on magazine covers, only to find themselves in jail or forced out in disgrace. History teaches us that we should be on the lookout for the next celebrated company most likely to blow up. All indications are it's Facebook.



Eric Starkman

Facebook's stock has plummeted in the wake of a *New York Times* story detailing how the company failed to disclose a serious data breach the Trump campaign attempted to exploit. While the Times offered no evidence the data was successfully utilized, facts no longer matter. Many Times readers now believe that Facebook contributed to President Trump's election. According to the story's most recommended reader comment: "Facebook is evil."

The Times' liberal readers are late to the Facebook opposition table. Conservative publications for months have been sounding the drumbeat that the company should be busted up because its clumsy attempts to regulate what constitutes "fake news" favored liberal viewpoints. Breitbart, independent of the Times' story, Sunday published a commentary advocating for a Roosevelt-style breakup of the social media titan.

Compounding matters was the disclosure on Monday that Facebook allowed the Obama campaign preferential treatment harvesting data because they were told the company "was on our side." Trump and Obama are respectively the most hated Presidents of the left and the right and Facebook has been implicated in helping elect both. That's made the company a major political target: Republican and Democratic leaders have summoned tech industry leaders to appear before Congress to account for how they protect consumer data.

Facebook's decision to deemphasize news stories in its feeds has alienated its biggest cheerleader: the mainstream media. The decision has taken a toll on the media's eyeball captures, and one publication has already gone out of business. Underscoring the media's anger, NBC News head Andrew Lack reportedly called the social media giant "Fakebook" at a recent meeting. (How ironic, given that NBC's Twitter account is managed by a third party).

Some of Facebook's employees have sounded the alarm about Facebook's supposed evils and have formed a coalition to eradicate the social media cancer they helped build. Facebook investor Sean Parker has warned, "God only knows what it's doing to our kid's brains."

Perhaps most damaging of all is Proctor & Gamble's recent disclosure that the company slashed $200 million from its digital ad spend last year because the consumer products giant found the ads wasteful. For all of Facebook's lofty claims about its user data, the world's biggest marketer didn't find it all that useful.

Facebook's troubles may be likened in magnitude to the crisis Johnson & Johnson faced when its Tylenol brand was tampered with. But CEO Mark Zuckerberg is no James Burke, the J&J CEO whose handling of the crisis is now legendary. Nor can Zuckerberg rely on COO Sheryl Sandberg, who seemingly is always more focused on promoting herself than Facebook. The Times reported late yesterday that Facebook routinely conducts polls to track the images of Zuckerberg and Sandberg. Tavis McGinn, the executive who oversaw the company's "executive reputation" function, resigned because he was disillusioned with Facebook's conduct.

When confronted by the Times for failing to disclose the data breach, Zuckerberg and Sandberg hid behind company lawyer Paul Grewal, who incredulously declared, "protecting people's information is at the heart of everything we do." Facebook investors better hope that Grewal is better at practicing law than crisis communications.

Facebook's business is predicated on creating a virtual world where people "like" each other. Unfortunately, in the real world, people will increasingly come to appreciate that Facebook is a fundamentally immoral company whose business is to exploit its trusting users. It will survive in some crippled form, but Zuckerberg and Sandberg are about to learn another historical lesson: The media invariably turns on the heroes it manufactures.

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Eric Starkman, a former financial journalist with major newspapers in the U.S. and Canada, managed an eponymous PR and crisis communications firm for more than 20 years. He is currently writing a television pilot based on his professional and personal experiences living in NYC.

TOP 25 FIRMS POSTED SOLID GAINS IN '17

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23.8 percent), rbb Communications (#36, $11.4M, up 23.5 percent), and JPA Health Communications (#45, $9.1M, up 19.2 percent).

Of the firms ranked #51-100, representing a range in fees from $1.5 M to $8.3M, 34 posted gains with 17 in double-digits. Leading gainers in this range are: Vested (#58, $6.1M, up 73.4 percent), Champion (#83, $2.8M, up 65.7 percent), Hemsworth Communications (#100, $1.5M, up 41 percent), North 6th Agency (#59, $6M, up 38.1 percent), and Idea Grove (#78, $3.2M, up 34.6 percent).

Overall, 90 of the 123 ranked firms had a positive change compared to last year when 93 of 124 firms were up.

New to the rankings this year are: Matter Communications (#24, $17.1M, up 3.1 percent), Tonic Life Communications (#39, $10M, up 2 percent), Tunheim (#59, $5.7M, even), Lazar Partners (#61, $5.3M, up 6.4 percent), Infinite Global (#66, $4.6M, up 16.9 percent), March Communications (#69, $4M, up 9.8 percent), Brownstein Group (#87, $2.6M, even), Stanton Communications (#93, $2.1M, down 3 percent), Hollywood Agency (#95, $2M, even), Bellmont Partners (#101, $1.5M, up 3 percent), Merryman Communications (#108, $1.2M, up 16.5 percent), RMD Advertising (#111, $1.1M, up 2.9 percent), Butler Associates (#113, $878K, up 9.5 percent), Weiss PR (#118, $573K, down 6.4 percent).

Commentary

STEVE BANNON GETS MEASURE OF REVENGE

Readership of alt-right news site Breitbart has plummeted since former chairman Steve Bannon was ousted in January following his fall-out with Donald Trump for critical remarks that he made about Team Trump in Michael Wolff's book, "Fire and Fury."

Politico reports that the number of unique visitors to Breitbart plunged from 15M in October to 7.8M in February. The loss of Bannon, according to Politico, stripped Breitbart of its identity. A re-energized Fox News, which shifted from Trump skeptic to true believer, also contributed to Breitbart's woes.

Steve Bannon

Billionaire heiress Rebekah Mercer, whose family bankrolled Breitbart, gave Bannon the heave-ho because he took the site "in the wrong direction," according to her Valentine's Day op-ed piece in the *Wall Street Journal*.

She expressed confidence that a Bannon-less Breitbart "has the opportunity to refine its message and expand its influence." That's not working out so well.

Her dad, Robert, former Co-CEO of Renaissance Technologies hedge fund, bailed out of Breitbart in November and sold his stake to his three daughters.

Breitbart probably isn't on top of Rebekah's mind these days. The Mercer family is an investor in Cambridge Analytica, which is smack dab in the middle of the Facebook mess.

Rebekah serves on CA's board. Her old buddy Bannon was a VP and investor in CA before leaving to run Trump's presidential campaign.

The *Washington Post* reported March 20 that Bannon worked on CA's program that used Facebook data to create voter profiles. That effort resulted in nifty Trump campaign themes such as "drain the swamp."

Rebekah Mercer

CA worked for Trump's campaign and for the Mercer family's Make America No. 1 super PAC that supported the presidential campaigns of Ted Cruz and Trump.

It's good bet that the Mercer family, which prefers to shun the media spotlight, will go under scrutiny in future investigations probing Facebook/CA's role in the 2016 election.

Rebekah may have thought that she was washing her hands of Bannon after she fired him at Breitbart.

She may be in for a reunion with Steve.

—Kevin McCauley

Commentary

WHY DOES BIG BUSINESS GET A BAD RAP?

Why does Big Business get such a bad rap? A better question: Why does small business enjoy such positive PR, portrayed as the engine of job growth and the symbol of all that's good with American capitalism?

The April issue of *The Atlantic* has an excerpt from "Big is Beautiful: Debunking the Myth of Small Business," which was written by Robert Atkinson and Michael Lind.

The authors tick off some reasons why Big Business is "the object of almost universal scorn," including Enron's "accounting chicanery," Goldman Sachs's "manipulation of derivative markets," and globalization that "turned American corporations into multinational enterprises with interests that do sometimes counter to those of their home country."

Small business, in contrast, stands as the "exemplar of American ingenuity and pluck," the "rare hero championed by both sides of the yawning political divide" that separates Republicans and Democrats.

To Atkinson and Lind, admiration for small business "is rooted in anachronistic ideals passed down from the nation's preindustrial founding."

On the flip side: "the reflexive disdain for large businesses exaggerates their malfeasance while misapprehending their vital role in continued American success."

While critics like Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren rail against corporate concentration, Atkinson and Lind note the percentage of manufacturing industries in which the top four companies accounted for at least half of total shipments increased only from 35 to 39 percent from 1952 to 2007.

Big companies pay higher tax rates, spend more on R&D, salaries/benefits and create more jobs ("though the depredations of a few job cutters have earned Big Business a reputation for heartless streamlining") than small firms.

Working Americans face many challenges, but turning them into shopkeepers, artisans or members of the gig economy is not that answer. The authors note that the richest parts of America and abroad are areas where self-employment is lowest.

Atkinson and Lind believe the ability of Big Business to buy influence in Washington via a battery of lobbyists, PR, PA and government relations firms may be why people hold it in low esteem.

They note, however, that small business has its own lobby on K Street through representation in trade groups and associations.

General Motors president Charles Wilson famously told Congress in 1952: "I thought what was good for the country was good for General Motors and vice versa."

Atkinson and Lind believe a dynamic economy requires interaction of firms of all sizes. "To flourish in the 21st Century, we must learn again that big can be beautiful, too," they wrote.

—Kevin McCauley

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