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NY LOTTERY SEEKS DIGITAL MARKETING FIRM

The New York State Gaming Commission is looking for a firm to handle its \$20M annual digital marketing campaign to promote the New York Lottery brand and sale of tickets.



The Empire State runs North America's biggest lottery, generating revenues of \$7.7B during fiscal 2019-20. The lottery has generated \$72B in funding for education since it launched in 1967.

The Commission, which views the Lottery as an "entertainment business," plans to award a five-year contract to handle the \$100M digital marketing budget.

The successful bidder will "serve as a strategic business partner working collaboratively with Lottery staff to develop and implement integrated marketing programs," according to the RFP. The firm will also conduct outreach to consumers, sales agents, Commission staff and other audiences.

The Commission's marketing partner must have an office in New York.

Responses are due March 17.

Interested parties must submit a technical proposal to Officer.Contracting@gaming.ny.gov with "RFP #C202103 – Technical Proposal" in the subject box, and a pricing proposal to Procurement@gaming.ny.gov with "RFP #C202103 – Pricing Proposal" in the subject box.

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

WALGREENS' FAITH JOINS CITY OF HOPE

Brian Faith joined City of Hope, the biomedical research center for diabetes and cancer treatment and care, as VP-communications on March 1 after a more than two-year run as VP-corporate communications at Walgreens.



Brian Faith

His role is to more broadly tell the story of the positive impact the Duarte, CA-based organization has on the patients, families, caregivers and communities that it serves.

Faith will handle thought leadership, issues, media relations, newsroom management, internal communications and social media.

Prior to Walgreens, he was managing director at Allstate, VP-media & external relations at Fannie Mae and press secretary for Sen. Dick Durban and Congressman Jim Bacchus.

FTI POSTS 8.8% DIP IN Q4 PR REVENUES

FTI Consulting's PR revenues declined 8.8 percent to \$60.5M during the fourth quarter, while operating income jumped 20 percent to \$10.2M.

Mark McCall, who heads the strategic communications unit, told O'Dwyer's he was really pleased with the financial results that were achieved during a challenging time, noting that his unit reported an "up-tick" from the third-quarter results.

FTI's core PR business performed well, sparked by gains in the healthcare and financial services sectors, according to McCall.

He attributed the sales decline to a fall-off in large-scale transactions and a drop in "pass-through" revenues (advertising, marketing dollars).

FTI continues to invest in the stratcom operation and is making key hires in areas such as crisis management and crisis PR.

For the full year, the stratcom practice registered a 5.9 percent dip in revenues to \$228M. Operating income dropped 19.2 percent to \$31.7M.



Mark Mc Call

TENEO TAKES WESTEXEC ADVISORS STAKE

Teneo has acquired a minority stake in WestExec Advisors, the DC geopolitical firm that was co-founded by secretary of state Tony Blinken.

It also will forge a strategic partnership with WestExec and its co-founders Michele Flournoy (former undersecretary of defense for policy), Sergio Aguirre (foreign policy advisor to Sen. Tim Kaine) and Nitin Chadda (strategy advisor to secretary of defense Ash Carter).

Declan Kelly, Teneo CEO, said WestExec's expertise will help his firm's clients make the best decisions as they navigate the increasingly complex and volatile international landscape.

The New York-based global CEO advisory also announced that former Connecticut senator Chris Dodd has signed on as a senior advisor.

The Democrat served for 30 years in the Senate and six years in the House.

After retiring from the Senate in 2010, Dodd did a seven-year stint as chairman/CEO of the Motion Picture Assn and then joined Arnold & Porter as senior counsel.



REINVENTION REQUIRED TO RETAIN TALENT

A study from LLYC says “companies must reinvent themselves to manage talent,” and offers tips for those that want to successfully manage their employees in a workplace that has been permanently changed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The agency’s Talent Trends report outlines 10 trends that it says will play a major role in that reinvention over the course of the coming year.

Not surprisingly, the first of those trends is what it calls “the activist employee.” The growing importance job seekers now place on company positions toward social issues has made it necessary for companies to address employee activism.

The report also suggests several ways in which companies can restructure work processes to improve work-life balance. Prioritizing the work being done over any specific work schedule can help employees focus on goals, rather than on simply being “available,” it says.

The need for constant learning—for both workers and managers—is also emphasized.

One unexpected trend: The importance of workers over 50. With their experience in crisis handling, they are well equipped to succeed in an era when almost every day seems to bring another crisis.

BRATTLEBORO NEEDS TOURISM MARKETING

The Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce is looking for an agency that can develop and execute a strategic travel marketing campaign.



The town seeks an agency that can attract visitors of color to shop, dine, stay and enjoy the town.

Scope of the work includes creation of a one-year visitor drive marketing plan; identifying metrics to measure the campaign’s success; tracking and reporting monthly data; and providing reports as well as a year-end summary.

Budget for the work is set at \$37,551. The contract runs for a year with the possibility of renewal.

Proposals are due by 5 p.m. (EST) on March 5. Proposals as well as any questions should be emailed to Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce interim executive director Greg Lesch, greg@brattleborochamber.org and Downtown Brattleboro Alliance executive director Stephanie Bonin, stephanie@brattleboro.com.

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

CISION ACQUIRES BRANDWATCH

Software giant Cision has entered into an agreement to acquire digital consumer intelligence company Brandwatch.

The deal, which was pegged at \$450 million, is expected to close sometime in 2021’s second quarter.

Founded in 2007 by CEO Giles Palmer, Brandwatch is a subscription-based service that applies AI and machine learning to social media monitoring for a customer base of more than 2,200 brand and agency clients. The software company maintains 10 offices globally.

Cision in a statement said the acquisition would provide its customers with a broader range of consumer and media intelligence services, allowing them to devise more effective customer engagement strategies from PR to marketing and online customer engagement.

ON THE MOVE

Amazon Studios brings on **Greg Coleman** as global head of franchise marketing, effective March 1. Coleman was most recently vice president of worldwide marketing and franchise management at Walt Disney Studios. Before coming to Disney, he worked in marketing strategy and research at MGM Studios. In his new post, Coleman will oversee the team dedicated to promoting Amazon’s fantasy and sci-fi original films and TV series.

Goodman Media International ups **John Lee** to VP. Lee, who joined BMI in 2015, was previously executive director. Prior to joining GMI, he founded John Lee MEDIA and served as director of communications & media relations for the New York Racing Association. At GMI, he leads PR efforts for clients in the firm’s professional services practice.



John Lee

RooneyPartners promotes **Jeanene Timberlake** to director and **Jeff Broderick** to chief administrative officer. Timberlake, who has been with the agency since 2014, is on its media relations team. She was previously the managing editor of HFMTechology, a news platform covering hedge-fund technology innovation. Broderick joined RooneyPartners in 2018 as finance manager. Before that, he was a senior associate at KPMG management consulting.

Hill+Knowlton Strategies appoints **Sergio Pisano** as chief executive officer of H+K Italy. Pisano was most recently CEO of iCorporate, a consulting firm specializing in corporate and crisis economic-financial communication. Before that, he was a general manager at Publicis Consultants and business unit manager for MSL Italy. In his new post, Pisano reports directly to H+K senior vice president Continental Europe Melanie Faithfull Kent.

Franco, a Detroit-based integrated communications agency, promotes **Tina Kozak** to chief executive officer and **Tina Benvenuti Sullivan** to president and chief operating officer. Kozak was previously Franco’s president and Benvenuti Sullivan was executive vice president and chief operating officer. Kozak succeeds Dan Ponder, who has held the chief executive role since 1996.

Konnect Agency promotes **Amanda Bialek** to president. Bialek, who has been with the agency since 2014, most recently served as executive vice president. Before coming to Konnect, she was group manager at Rogers & Cowan and an account executive at 5W Public Relations. Together with agency CEO Sabina Gault, Bialek will work to guide agency development, fuel growth and expand services.



Amanda Bialek

Evoke KYNE ups **Michael Grela** to executive vice president, head of reputation and social impact, a newly established role. Grela was previously senior vice president, head of marketing at the agency. Prior to joining Evoke KYNE in 2013, he was an account supervisor at Hill + Knowlton Strategies. He also serves as a vice president at the nonprofit Society for Health Communication. In his new role, Grela will focus on global social impact client engagements and work with leadership to grow this area of the business.

SOYBEAN EXPORT COUNCIL PLANTS PR RFP

The US Soybean Export Council wants to hire a firm to handle PR programming and global brand reputation management.



American producers face cutthroat competition from growers in other countries, as well as other vegetable and oil products.

USSEC asks for proposals to support reputation management strategy and programs that protect, enhance, better U.S. Soy's global reputation, ensure positive visibility and broader exposure.

The firm will refresh messaging, handle media relations, develop digital communications efforts, respond to crises and misinformation, and participate in trade events such as Commodity Classic, National Association of Farm Broadcasters Convention and the USSEC Global Trade Exchange.

USSEC puts its PR contract up for bid every three years. This RFP covers work that begins April 1.

Responses are due March 12 at RFP@USSEC.ORG.
[Download RFP \(PDF\)](#).

EDELMAN TARGETS DISINFORMATION

Edelman has launched a disinformation offering to help clients combat deceptive and false material with fact-based communications.

The No. 1 independent PR firm bills the Edelman disinformation shield as the first-ever global solution to fight private sector disinformation.

The offering follows a finding from Edelman's 2021 Trust Barometer, showing that more than two thirds of executives at large global companies worry about the weaponization of false information.

Jim O'Leary, global corporate practice chair, and Yannis Kotziagiakouridis, chief data and analytics officer, co-head disinformation shield operation.

The disinformation shield team consists of corporate reputation, crisis pros, predictive intelligence experts, behavior scientists and psychometric analysts.

QORVIS HIRES TRUMP VET ALUM BAUM

Kristina Baum, who served in the Trump administration as communications director for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, has joined Qorvis Communications as VP-Public Affairs.

At the WHOSTP, Baum served as on-the-record spokesperson for the COVID-19 pandemic response and developed messaging strategies for more than 90 policy streams.



Kristina Baum

She has also served as communications director at the House committee on natural resources; committee on science, space and technology; and press secretary at the Senate's environment and public works committee. Baum also did a stint as chief spokesperson for Chevron Phillips Chemical Co.

Michael Petruzzello, Qorvis CEO, said Baum's role as "communications director in the highest office of American government during one of the most challenging public health crises in our nation's history, makes her strategic counsel unparalleled."

'FALSE LIGHT' TARGETS GOTCHA JOURNALISM

"If Mark David Chapman had social media, he wouldn't have shot John Lennon—he would have tweeted about him."

That's a quote from Sandy Petty (aka "Fuse"), the protagonist of Eric Dezenhall's latest work of fiction, "False Light".

Fuse is a middle-aged reporter at the crossroads—about to be pinched out of existence by the inanity of social media and an aggressive young reporter, while dealing with a salty teenage daughter, a father with dementia, doubts about why his wife is still with him and frequent lapses into bittersweet memories of his childhood and an unreturned romantic advance on top of admiration, jealousy and resentment for a friend he has known for years who comes to him for help.

Dezenhall takes Fuse on a mission to avenge that friend's daughter, the victim of a sexual predator who plies his trade as a gotcha investigative reporter on a YouTube-like platform that has turned him into a media darling.

Pacho Craig's MO is to corner unsuspecting targets on video with questions that dance around direct allegations but put his targets in an awkward and very damning "false light."

Fuse is old-school, still rockin' a flip phone and generally going through his day stumbling around things he can't use, or as Dezenhall coins it, TICU (things I can't use). But he taps into the savvy he developed from years of investigative reporting for a *Washington Post*-like paper to make things right.

A subplot explores an incestuous relationship between his paper and a powerful PR firm that Fuse unwittingly sticks his nose into, placing him squarely in the sights of an aggressive young reporter on staff hellbent on putting old Fuse out to pasture.

Along the way, Dezenhall reveals insights into how to understand and handle the media he must've used many times for clients in his real-life crisis communications practice.

Fuse's immediate advice to his friend is to not go to the police on behalf of his daughter, who could quickly have her own reputation defamed in the media.

Dezenhall takes a hard look at the #metoo movement through the eyes of Fuse, whose brutally honest assessment is that things don't always work out in the end.

The story takes off when Fuse enlists former colleagues and some shady characters he's depended on for years in his own reporting to set up the big sting to take down Pacho.

I've lived in the D.C. area for 30 years and always enjoy movies and books that visit local spots I know well.

Dezenhall's story moves around from downtown D.C. and a steak restaurant on Connecticut Ave. (where he once took me out for lunch in the early 2000s) over to Georgetown and the C&O canal along the Potomac River and up to Chevy Chase and the tony Maryland suburbs.

The story has an "It's a Wonderful Life" theme to it, with Fuse coming to grips with his own frailty and life choices as he happily and skillfully engineers an unconventional yet appropriate version of justice.

Not bad for someone afraid to push a floor button on an elevator. (You'll have to read the book to get that reference.)

Dezenhall is CEO of his own crisis communications shop, Dezenhall Resources, in Wash., D.C. He makes regular appearances on major cable TV and radio outlets in addition to writing for the *Daily Beast* and *Huffington Post*.

This is his seventh novel. To order the book, [click here](#).

—John O'Dwyer



PORTLAND REPS FRENCH SUSTAINABILITY UNIT

Portland PR is working to raise the profile of France's Agence Française de Développement in the English-speaking media.



Founded in 1941, AFD supports sustainable development projects in 115 countries designed to combat climate change, erase poverty and support public health.

It spent \$17B on global projects in 2019.

AFD, which has more than 80 offices throughout the world, is a public financial institution that acts to further the policies of the French government.

Portland is to highlight AFD's "key role, in the global context of a renewal of multilateralism in financing climate and biodiversity," according to its services agreement.

It also will position AFD leader Remy Rioux as a commentator on global international development matters.

Portland, which is part of Omnicom, has Meghan Powers and Jamie Enright working the AFD business.

BRUNSWICK GROUP ADDS JWT TALENT ALUM

Brunswick Group has hired Maria Gianoutsos, who was global chief creative talent officer at J Walter Thompson, as global managing partner, people.

Gianoutsos, who joined the firm on March 1, handles recruiting, talent management and human resources.

Prior to JWT, she was North America managing director at The Talent Business and executive recruiter at ML Search, and has worked at agencies including Ogilvy, Weiss Whitten Staglino and Ammirati Puris Lintas.

Most recently, Gianoutsos was running The Counsel Co.

CEO Neal Wolin said Gianoutsos will help ensure that Brunswick has the right human capital strategy in place to unleash the full potential of staffers worldwide.



Maria Gianoutsos

JOELE FRANK PILOTS JOBY AIR TAXI DEAL

Joele Frank is piloting Reinvent Technology Partners' deal to acquire Joby Aviation, maker of electrical vertical takeoff/landing aircraft (eVTOL). RTP is the SPAC of LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman and Zynga founder Mark Pincus. The deal values Joby at \$6.6B.

Joby plans to develop an air taxi service, carrying passengers on trips from five to 150 miles.

It seeks to "revolutionize how people move by unlocking the possibility to leapfrog sustainably over the gridlock below."

The company hopes to launch commercial service in the US in 2024, before scaling globally using its own "verticals" and existing heliport/airport infrastructure.

Joby, which has partnerships with Toyota and Uber, sees a potential \$500B market in the US and a more than \$1T opportunity overseas.

Hoffman believes "Joby is well-positioned to create a transformative new human-centered mobility network."

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher has Ed Trissel, Jon Keehner and Scott Bisang representing RTP.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

M&C Saatchi Sport & Entertainment snags PR duties for **Piaggio Fast Forward**, a subsidiary of Piaggio, the Italian manufacturer of the Vespa scooter. The agency will develop and lead strategic communications programs as well as consumer and B2B media relations to support gita, a consumer robot from PFF that can carry up to 40 pounds of a pedestrian's belongings for up to four hours.

Feintuch Communications is selected as PR agency of record for **XL Construction**, which is focused on projects in northern California for clients in the advanced technology, corporate campus-



es and facilities, education, healthcare and life sciences and public sectors. Feintuch will work to amplify the company's story and its mission to "build to improve lives" via the construction trade, business media and key influencers.

Big Thirst Marketing is named agency of record for **Kerrville Hills Winery** and **Texas Heritage Vineyard**. The agency is tasked with helping each winery by implementing targeted marketing campaigns to increase direct-to-consumer sales in the tasting rooms and online. To work with these clients, Big Thirst is bringing on Kristin Rice, who was brand marketing manager for Dobbles Family Estate and its sister brand, Wine by Joe, in the Willamette Valley of Oregon.

French/West/Vaughan lands **Reborn Clothing Co.** to support the brand's integrated marketing strategy development and execution. FWV kicked off its work with the brand in January. Reborn Clothing Co. is a textile "upcycling" company, focused on turning consumer and corporate waste into new items. Operating from manufacturing facilities in North Carolina, Reborn works with brands, colleges and universities to repurpose surplus branded apparel and textile waste.

Butler Associates wins **Kinder Institute for Urban Research**, an academic think tank at Houston's Rice University, to lead a communications and public awareness campaign for the Institute's recent national infrastructure study and analysis, covering some 1,800 projects across the nation. Led by former HUD secretary Henry Cisneros and Kinder Institute director William Fulton, the research team conducted what it calls a bottom-up survey of leaders from the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. and also from its 100 largest cities — a total of 134 places.

Matter Communications expands ties with **Blue Yonder**, which specializes in digital supply chain and omni-channel commerce fulfillment. The expanded relationship includes public relations, demand generation support, social media (paid and organic), influencer relations and search marketing. "Matter has been a great partner to Blue Yonder over the past five years, applying innovative ideas and approaches to our PR and marketing that have helped further establish Blue Yonder as the clear end-to-end, supply chain platform leader," said Blue Yonder CMO Kevin Iaquinto, CMO, Blue Yonder.



160over90 picks up **Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC)**, which is made up of 11 historically black universities. The agency will lead all strategic and creative efforts for the Conference, which include developing a brand strategy, building a creative platform with a new look and feel, developing and executing a public relations strategy, and developing the MEAC's digital and social content strategy.

PRINT BOOK SALES SKYROCKETED IN 2020

The COVID-19 lockdowns resulted in the highest print book sales in the U.S. since 2010, according to sales data analysis from market research firm The NPD Group.

Sales of print books in the United States in 2020 totaled 751 million units, according to NPD, accounting for an 8.2 percent year-over-year increase from 2019.

Much of this growth was led by books in the juvenile fiction genre, the second-largest book category in terms of volume, which totaled sales of 186 million units in 2020, or about a third of all books sold in the U.S. last year.

Adult non-fiction print books, the largest category of books in the U.S. by both volume and sales revenue, increased 4.8 percent in 2020 to total 309 million units, or approx. 14 million more units sold than in 2019. Adult fiction followed, selling eight million more books year-over-year to total 138 million units. Juvenile non-fiction grew 23 percent.

2020's top seller was former President Barack Obama's memoir "A Promised Land," which sold 2.68 million copies. Young adult novel "Midnight Sun," penned by "Twilight" series author Stephenie Meyer, was second.

GOLIN'S BEHRMAN SKIPS TO EDELMAN

Mary Jo Behrman has joined Edelman after a nine-year stint at Golin, where she rose to the executive VP digital experience and head of innovation post.



Mary Jo Behrman

At the Interpublic unit, Behrman worked with Walmart, General Mills and Allstate. She handled enterprise transformation, predictive storytelling, influencer integration, reputation management and product promotion.

At Edelman's Chicago office, she holds the managing director, digital title.

Kevin Cook, Edelman Chicago president, expects Behrman's "background in mathematics, sharp analytical lens and deep experience in predictive story-

telling will sharpen our data and intelligence capabilities."

SLOANE & CO. TARGETS KOHL'S

Sloane & Co. represents an investor group that seeks to gain control of Kohl's Corp. department store chain with 1,100 outlets in 49 states.

Macellum Advisors, Ancora Holdings, Legion Partners Asset Management and 4010 Capital LLC, which own a combined 9.5 percent stake in Kohl's, plan to nominate nine directors to the 12-member board at the 2021 annual meeting.

They say "poor retail strategy and execution" have led to stagnant sales, declining operating margins, a 44 percent slide in operating profits from 2011 to 2019 and a chronically underperforming stock price. The investors also see an opportunity to "unlock" \$7-8B of real estate value "trapped" in the Menomonee Falls-WI-based company's balance sheet.

Kohl's maintains its strategic plan announced in October 2020 will accelerate growth and profitability.

The retailer suffered a \$12M loss on \$14B in revenues for the third quarter ended Oct. 1. It earned \$123M on \$4.6B sales for the year-earlier quarter.

SKDKnickerbocker owns Sloane & Co, which has Dan Zacchei and Joe Germani handling the investor group.

Edelman's Lex Suvanto represents Kohl's.

MEDIA MANEUVERS

AT&T is spinning off its **DirecTV** business, following the sale of a 30 percent stake in the unit to private equity firm TPG. TPG is paying \$1.8 billion for its stake in DirecTV, which the deal values at \$16.25 billion. AT&T paid \$49 billion when it purchased the unit in 2015. After the transaction, the U.S. services of both DirecTV and AT&T TV will form an entity jointly run by AT&T and TPG. AT&T says that almost all current employees will be unaffected. AT&T executive Bill Morrow will be CEO of the new unit, in addition to serving on its board along with two representatives from each of the owners. AT&T finance chief John Stephens told the *Wall Street Journal* that "the disruption in pay TV" (i.e. massive cord-cutting) led DirecTV's performance to fall far short of original projections.



Twitter is launching what it calls a "super follow" feature later this year. The feature will allow Twitter account holders to charge for exclusive additional content not seen on their regular feeds. The company says that the extra content can include subscriber-only newsletters, videos, deals and discounts. Users would pay a monthly subscription fee to access the extra content. The company did not detail what percentage of the revenue it would share with those who sign up paying subscribers.

The Washington Post names Cameron Barr, one of its four managing editors, to be acting executive editor following Marty Baron's Feb. 28 exit. Barr, managing editor in charge of news and features, is thought to be a leading candidate for the top job. Before joining the Post in 2004, he served as Tokyo bureau chief and Middle East correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*. Publisher Fred Ryan said that "the search for the next Executive Editor is actively underway with a broad and diverse group of exceptional journalists."

NEWS OF FIRMS

The Core Strategic Group launches **Belmont Digital Media**, which will offer clients online strategy, digital advertising and social intelligence services. Belmont began operations in late 2020, serving as the digital arm of projects for other CSG companies. Caroline Holman, based in Washington D.C., has joined CSG as president of the new company. With the addition of Belmont, the Core Strategic Group of companies now includes Bad-Fish Media, C3 Public Strategies, Chariot Campaigns, Core Decision Analytics, FSB Public Affairs, KPA Strategies and The Core Management Company. "We look forward to providing our clients with the strategies, analytics, and management to navigate the digital arena successfully," said CSG president and CEO Jeff Flint.



The Greater Kansas City chapter of the **Public Relations Society of America** marks the start of its 60th anniversary year by launching a \$25,000 endowment fund in honor of Inez Y. Kaiser, who was the first Black woman to join PRSA in 1966. The Inez Y. Kaiser GKC-PRSA Memorial Scholarship Fund at Greater Kansas City Community Foundation will award scholarships to undergraduate college students starting in 2022. The chapter hopes to increase the size of the endowment by raising additional funds via a capital campaign.

COMMENTARY



Kevin Sneader

Bad PR took down McKinsey chief. The management consultant's 54-year-old leader Kevin Sneader is the first global managing partner since 1976 not to win a second three-year term. Blame it on a bunch of reputational crises.

The once-prestigious McKinsey agreed last month to pay \$574M to settle lawsuits in 49 states over its work for Purdue Pharma, maker of OxyContin painkiller.

For Purdue Pharma, McKinsey drew up a marketing plan "to turbocharge" sales. It was a case of putting profit over people's lives, said Colorado attorney general Phil Weiser.

Sneader was not in charge of the management consultant when it took on the Purdue account 15 years ago. The same applies for McKinsey's controversial work for South Africa, Russia and Saudi Arabia.

But he was the person in charge when the *Financial Times* delivered another body blow to the firm's image with a Feb. 23 commentary called: "It needs to change its culture: is McKinsey losing its mystique?"

Laura Empson, author of "Leading Professionals," wonders if the vote against Sneader was "a ritual sacrifice to appease the bad PR," or a sign that the partners are pressing for reform.

Either way, McKinsey has an opportunity to clean the slate.

Interpublic sliced its global workforce 7.6 percent to 50,200 at year-end 2020, according to its 10-K filing.

US employment fell 6.3 percent to 21,000.

Omnicom applied a bigger scalpel to its staff, chopping 8.4 percent of them to the 64,100 level.

The ad/PR holding company had 20,800 US employees at the end of last year. It did not report a US breakout in its 2019 10-K report.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Interpublic provided "increased support for our people through one-on-one and group therapy sessions, self-care workshops and management training," according to the SEC filing. It also counseled clients on how to deal with their employee concerns.

Interpublic had 95 percent of its people working from home within days of the outset of the pandemic.

Omnicom noted that an overwhelming majority of its employees worked remotely last year and continue to do so.

That situation "may increase certain business and procedural control risks, including increased risk of cybersecurity incidents and exposure of sensitive business and client advertising and marketing information as well as personal data or information."

Weber Shandwick says that while it has only made slight progress in boosting workplace diversity numbers over the past year, the agency has committed itself to "foundational progress" geared toward bringing those numbers up.

Black employees holding positions at the executive vice president level or above nudged up from 2.5 percent in 2019

to 3.4 percent in 2020. For Hispanic or Latino employees, that number rose from 1.2 percent in 2019 to 2 percent last year.

The number listed as white dropped from 88.9 percent to 85 percent. Among the strategies the firm says it will employ to bring those figures in line with the composition of the overall population are strengthening its diverse talent pipeline and changing its internal career development processes to counter the effects of racial bias.

Weber Shandwick is IPG's PR flagship.

Hats off to Rupert Murdoch for striking a three-year global deal with Google, which will now fork over cash for the use of News Corp. content. It is unconscionable that giant platforms "steal" material from legacy media companies.

Google will now pay to use News Corp. titles such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *Barron's*, MarketWatch, *New York Post*, *Times of London*, The Sun, Sky News and *The Australian*.

News Corp. CEO Robert Thomson said the company has been fighting the platforms for more than a decade. "What was a solitary campaign, a quixotic quest became a movement, and both journalism and society will be enhanced."

He tipped his hat to Google CEO Sundar Pichai and his team for showing a "thoughtful commitment to journalism that will resonate in every country."

One hopes.

Hard-core Trump supporters are flocking to Fox News' competitors, a Suffolk University/USA Today poll finds.

The study says 73 percent of Trump voters watching Fox believe Joe Biden "stole" the election. That compares to 90 percent at One America News Network and 92 percent at Newsmax.

The poll found bad news for the Republican party.

Fox viewers are more loyal to Trump than the GOP by a 51 percent to 37 percent split. At Newsmax, it's 72 percent to 28 percent, and at OANN it's 80 percent to 15 percent.

If Trump forms his own party, he would gain the support of 70 percent of Newsmax watchers, 65 percent of OANN viewers and 41 percent of Fox fans.

And the Democrats would benefit from the break-up.

Trump ruled out forming a third party during his Feb. 28 speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference though he told potential donors to send their money to two of his committees rather than the GOP.

The COVID-19 crisis has taken a mental toll on doctors, according to a Feb. 24 study from McCann Health.

Though the public has rallied around healthcare providers, doctors say the joy they associate with their profession has dropped from 35 percent to 21 percent since a 2016 McCann study. Physicians also report their fear of treating patients has doubled to 24 percent.

Doctors do report a great sense of dutifulness, up from 43 percent to 62 percent.

They yearn for stability, up from 15 percent to 50 percent.

We all pray for that post-COVID 19 stability.

—Kevin McCauley