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ICR ACQUIRES LUMINA COMMUNICATIONS

ICR Inc. has acquired Lumina Communications, San Jose-based B2B technology firm that has more than 40 staffers and 50+ clients.



Specializing in cybersecurity, enterprise software and IT infrastructure, Lumina will join and double the size of ICR's technology & mobility PR practice.



Tom Ryan, ICR CEO and co-founder, said technology has been a longstanding area of growth for his firm. He's bullish

on the future as "as emerging solutions transform how all industries operate."

Bo Park, who heads ICR's tech practice, will work closely with Hugh Burnham, CEO and founder of Lumina. As managing partner of ICR, Burnham will report to Ryan and president Don Duffy.

Burnham will continue in his Lumina leadership post and focus on expanding the combined group's business via deepening ties with west coast start-ups, venture capitalists and private equity firms.

With the acquisition, Lumina clients gain access to a broader suite of integrated services including investor relations, capital markets advisory, crisis and special situations, investor access, branding and growth marketing.

Lumina also has offices in New York and San Diego.

TENEO'S MAAS MOVES TO KEKST CNC

Andy Maas, a member of the founding team at Teneo a dozen years ago, has joined Kekst CNC as a partner in New York.



Andy Maas

At Teneo, Maas was responsible for handling global reputational management services including C-suite, internal and external PR.

Earlier he led corporate communications at FTI Consulting, and served as VP at GCI Group's corporate technology practice.

Jeremy Fielding, co-CEO of Kekst CNC, looks forward to Maas partnering with clients as "they seek to cut through in today complex communications environment with storytelling, corporate positioning and executive thought leadership through a variety of communications channels."

CHAUTAUQUA CO. SEEKS CRAFT BEER/WINE PR

Chautauqua County, which is the western-most county in New York, has issued an RFP for a craft beverage, wine and ecotourism branding and marketing campaign.

It already has a thriving cultural tourism market, centered on the famed Chautauqua Institution.

Chautauqua's microclimate along Lake Erie and its rich soil is well suited for growing grapes. Welch's had its first headquarters in Westfield.

The Lake Erie Wine Country group has 20 winery members. Some of them have added breweries and distilleries.

Due to the growing wine & beverage scene, Chautauqua County is exploring a tourism transportation shuttle to link the various craft beers and spirits production sites.

Chautauqua County envisions spending \$150K for a marketing strategy, implementation and media buys over a 12-to-14 month period.

It will evaluate results of that project before giving the go ahead for a three-year marketing program.

Proposals are due May 15. They go to: Crystal A. Erhard; Administrative and Financial Assistant; 214 Central Ave., Suite 124; Dunkirk, NY 14048

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



REAL CHEMISTRY'S WHITE MOVES TO DENTONS

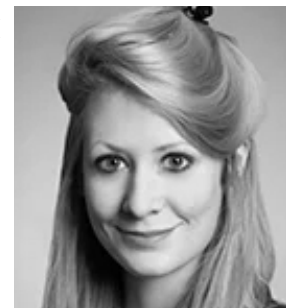
Camilla White, managing director for corporate strategy at Real Chemistry, has joined Dentons Global Advisors as a partner in its New York office.

She also did a 10-year stint at FTI Consulting, advising clients in the healthcare and life sciences sectors.

White has helped clients engage with key stakeholders including regulators, NGOs, investors, media and employees.

Denton Global Advisors also strengthened its Washington office with the recruitment of Ambassador Jorge Guajardo, who served as Mexico's envoy to China. He visited all 22 provinces in China and negotiated trade and investment agreements.

Prior to taking the ambassador post, Guajardo was Mexico's consul general in Austin. He joined Dentons Global Advisors from McLarty Associates.



Camilla White

COMPANIES SHOULD PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH

Good health is becoming more out of reach for consumers, according to a new report from Edelman, and businesses are seen as having a major opportunity to alleviate the situation.

Fewer than half (46 percent) of the 13,000 respondents across 13 countries that participated in Edelman's "Special Report: Trust and Health" reported being in very good (or better) health. In addition, 52 percent said that there is a significant gap between "how well I am taking care of my health vs. how well I should be"—a 14 percent jump from last year's survey.

The report, part of the agency's 2023 Trust Barometer, found several major factors behind that state of affairs. Inflation (cited by 77 percent) and pandemic restrictions (75 percent) were at the top of the list.

But several factors that should particularly interest communicators were high on the list as well. Two thirds of respondents (67 percent) said that "lack of trust" negatively impacts their health, with "polarization" (66 percent), "burn-out" and "misinformation" (both at 64 percent) just behind.

Another disturbing trend is the continuing decline in the media's status as a source of healthcare information. Globally, just half (50 percent) say that they trust the media to report accurate information about healthcare information, a slide of seven percent since 2019.

Perhaps because of that more people are providing themselves with their own healthcare information. More than four in 10 (41 percent) of respondents to Edelman's survey say they have been increasingly likely to educate themselves about health issues since the beginning of the pandemic.

But consumers also think businesses have a responsibility to focus on consumer health. More than eight in 10 (83 percent) said that think healthcare companies should "play a meaningful role in making sure I am as healthy as possible."

That can also have an effect at the cash register. Almost two-thirds of respondents (64 percent) said they consider the impact a brand, its products and its business practices have on consumer health when deciding which brands to buy.

The Edelman study was conducted between March 2 and 13.

GASTHALTER REPS ABOVE FOOD'S SPAC DEAL

Gasthalter & Co. is handling the merger of Above Food Corp., plant-based protein marketer, with Bite Acquisition Corp.



Above Food's "seed-to-fork" platform spans regenerative agriculture, ingredients manufacturing and consumer platforms to drive positive change across the food chain.

CEO Lionel Kambeiz believes Above Food is well-positioned in the \$200B plant-based food market that is driven by food scarcity and insecurity, global supply chain disruptions, ESG and sustainability demands.

The company, which is based in Regina, Saskatchewan, projects revenues of \$482M during the fiscal year ending January 2024 and adjusted EBITDA of \$23M.

Its stock will trade on the Big Board.

Gasthalter & Co.'s Nathaniel Garnick and Grace Cartwright handle the SPAC deal.

ON THE MOVE

Current Global hires **Holly Ward** as executive VP and the agency's first UK head of consumer marketing. Most recently, she was co-founder and director of The Forge Communications, where she ran campaigns for clients in the food, beverage, and lifestyle categories. She previously served as a managing director at both FleishmanHillard and Euro RSCG London (now Havas London). At Current Global, Ward will be tasked with driving strategic practice leadership, expanding the firm's client portfolio in the UK, building the agency's reputation, and championing talent development. The agency has also promoted Meghann Johnson to North America corporate operations lead, a newly created role.



Holly Ward

The Atlantic names **Tyler Watson** executive VP of marketing. Watson was most recently global VP of production at Condé Nast, where he led a team that delivered over 800 marketing campaigns annually across industries. He has also served as VP, communications at Barneys New York. In his new post, Watson's responsibilities will encompass creative strategy, brand marketing, the creative studio Atlantic Re:think, and Atlantic Insights, its marketing research division.

Wonder, a food-delivery company that partners with multiple restaurants, brings on **Daniel Shlossman** as chief growth and marketing officer. Shlossman joins the company from fast casual restaurant chain Sweetgreen, where he was CMO. Before joining Sweetgreen, he was head of product and marketplace experience at Uber. In his new post, Shlossman will be responsible for marketing, digital, partnership and product strategies, and customer experience.

Lansons appoints **Annamarie Phelps**, deputy chair of the British Olympic Association, as a senior advisor. Phelps represented Great Britain in five consecutive World Championships between 1991 and 1995 and in the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. She also held senior roles at British Rowing for over 16 years. At Lansons, she will provide expert counsel for clients in areas including sports partnership and sponsorship.



Annamarie Phelps

Spectrum Equity hires **Dan Kimball** as the firm's first CMO. Kimball was most recently SVP of marketing at Yelp. He was previously SVP of global marketing at Eventbrite and VP of marketing at Costar Group. At Spectrum, he will advise portfolio companies on all facets of marketing and work closely with the investment team on due diligence.

Deveney, which has offices in New Orleans and West Palm Beach, names **Melissa Lee** a partner in the firm. A leader in the agency's crisis, hospitality & tourism, healthcare and higher education practice areas, Lee has worked with the agency for 18 years. She has also served as director of public relations for the Audubon Nature Institute, press secretary for the mayor of Lafayette, LA, and has held reporting and management roles with NBC and ABC affiliates across Louisiana.

GUIDING CLIENTS IN FDA COURT BATTLES

In an unprecedented move, judges are assuming a doctor's responsibilities from the bench, even though they lack medical training or credentials. This development has raised serious concerns about the role the judicial system may have in shaping the government's regulatory authority, particularly regarding the drug and device approval process.



**Carrie Jones and Stefanie Tuck
co-authored this article.**

The quickly shifting landscape has left the biopharma industry unsure of how to proceed and looking to PR professionals to evaluate their comfort level for speaking out and provide guidance on the rapidly changing dynamics across this political issue.

As health communicators, we must guide life-sciences companies with advice that embodies three foundational pillars: educating decision-makers, elevating stakeholder voices and managing risk by scenario planning.

While news stories are focusing on the conflicting federal court rulings on the abortion drug mifepristone and the ongoing appeals process, biopharma companies are grappling with the implications of any judge having the power to change decisions made by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

With careful planning and execution, companies can overcome these hurdles while continuing to bring innovative treatments and therapies to patients who need them.

Educating the decision-makers

Decision makers, both internally at biopharma companies and externally at medical associations and advocacy organizations, need succinct, factually-based information before diving into further strategic and tactical planning.

This is why we must prepare top-level executives who converse with their educated government relations team to better understand the situation, how it impacts the industry and what to expect next.

Despite the FDA indicating medication is safe via market approval, many biopharma companies that make products some might consider "controversial," such as vaccines, stem-cell therapeutics and hormone therapy, could find themselves the [target of lawsuits](#)—now with a precedent of success.

Being informed of all factual aspects and risk factors will be crucial to ensuring that companies do not make any statements or movements that could be seen as damaging with regulatory bodies and the media covering these developments.

Elevating stakeholder voices

Patient groups, medical associations and academics are recognized as advocating for access to new medicines. However, we're now seeing major biopharma industry organizations join together with companies and key opinion leaders in unwavering support of the FDA's authority.

The drug discovery community strongly believes in giving every patient a platform to voice their opinions. We can all agree that patients are instrumental in driving progress. Leveraging media channels to amplify the voices of stakeholders is considered a best practice that aids in understanding how a medication or therapy can enhance their health, well-being and overall quality of life.

As PR professionals, it's our responsibility to advise clients on whom they should prioritize among their stake-

holders, when to do so and which channels to use for amplification. While patient perspectives are essential, we must also consider voices such as public health experts, government relations employees, and members of legislative bodies.

These stories can be used in multiple ways; we can use targeted op-eds, visit Capitol Hill to foster positive relationships with Congresspeople, engage with relevant advocacy groups, and use the media to amplify key opinion leaders' voices and bring broad awareness to different audiences.

We have a responsibility to help clients engage with all stakeholders who may be affected by this issue, which will likely play out in the Supreme Court.

Managing risk by scenario planning

Crisis and scenario planning tend to be time-consuming, meaning we need to drive home to clients why now is the time to think through key specifics so they feel ready to face any contingency the industry might experience.

Our biopharma clients have faced mounting pressure to achieve more with limited resources. Given the pace at which the mifepristone case is advancing through the legal system, they must analyze the situation and chart their next course of action. Yes, some clients may be anxious to act. That's why we must help them evaluate the pitfalls of impulsive communications and help them develop thoughtful crisis plans.

While the legal battle related to access to medical abortion gains visibility, other issues persist across the industry. For example, lobbying groups continue to bring lawsuits [challenging various portions of federal health involvement](#)—such as questioning the legality of stem cell research and changing what patients have "access" to including cost barriers.

We've already seen these legal challenges infect our system in [another recent court ruling](#) addressing the purview of the Preventive Care Task Force. This showcases just how embedded in our health system judges have become and the power they are wielding from the bench.

Recently, we've seen a ping-pong of movement faster than we've ever seen before in non-emergency situations. We must help our clients stay focused on the core purpose, mission and values, and continue to broadcast the good work they're doing to help patients across the country and the world.

Carrie Jones is CEO and Stefanie Tuck is Vice President with [JPA Health](#).

BERLINROSEN TAKES STAKE IN M18 PR

BerlinRosen and its private equity investor O2 Investment Partners have taken a majority stake in New York-based M18 PR, a real estate, hospitality and design specialist.

Launched in 2010, M18 has run campaigns for more than 200 projects and represents clients in more than 40 cities in the US and overseas. It has teams in Los Angeles and Miami. M18 will retain its brand and continue to be led by co-founders CEO Michael Tavani and COO Meg McGinnis.

Tavani said M18 is eager to team with BerlinRosen and the "platform of best-in-class agencies that it has created." The deal will provide M18 access to the resources of a collection of specialized firms and to executive talent across various service areas, he added.

BerlinRosen has more than 400 staffers.



Michael Tavani

FTI'S Q1 PR REVENUES JUMP 4.5%

FTI Consulting's strategic communications operation posted a 4.5 percent jump in Q1 revenues to \$73.1M as it enjoyed strong demand for reputational services work.



Mark McCall

The group increased its headcount by 16.3 percent (139 people) from a year ago to hit the 995 mark.

That hiring took a toll on the PR division's operating income as it fell 41.5% to \$8.7M due to higher compensation and SG&A outlays.

During the quarter, Mark McCall's unit added Lauren Crawford Shaver, who worked in the Obama administration on its landmark Affordable

Care Act, in Washington as a senior managing director.

Jennifer Mercer, who led strategic communications for Paladin Management Group, took the managing director post in Los Angeles. Leonor Díaz-Córdova of the CT Group advisory signed on as managing director in the EMEA crisis and litigation communications offering.

LA SEEKS COMMUNITY OUTREACH PARTNER

Los Angeles is looking for a partner to conduct a creative engagement and communications program to support land use policy and zoning proposals for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Neighborhood Plan.



Los Angeles wants a firm to reach community members that are not typically engaged in planning a transit network—including renters, low-income families, seniors, youth and non-English speakers.

The effort will include stakeholder meetings, special events, "street teams" at pedestrian hubs and focus groups. The firm will develop an educational toolkit, create promotional materials, run social media and digital campaigns and do advertising.

The outreach is set for kick off in the Fall. Proposals are due May 18 at <mailto:planning.contracts@lacity.org>.

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

REEVEMARK REPS MIDWEST/ANTARCTICA DEAL

Reevemark represents Midwest Holding as the life insurer/annuity company is acquired by Antarctica Capital investment firm in an all-cash deal worth \$100M. The \$27 per share offer is a 97 percent premium to Midwest's closing price on April 18.

Georgette Nicholas, Midwest CEO, said the transaction delivers a substantial cash premium to shareholders, while providing the company "the resources necessary to fully capitalize on our platform, business momentum and market opportunity." The deal is expected to close during the second half of the year.



Midwest is based in Lincoln, NE. New York-headquartered Antarctica has about \$1.5B in assets under management.

Reevemark's Midwest team includes Paul Caminiti, founding partner; Nicholas Leasure, managing director; Jill Steinman and Davey Roberts, senior associates; and Kelsey Thomas, associate.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Ruder Finn signs on as North American agency of record for Neo4j, a native graph database and analytics company. The agency will be responsible for implementing an integrated communications program, as well as working to amplify awareness of the company and category.

The scope of work will include strategic media relations and executive communications to support corporate and product PR. Antonia Caamaño, SVP of RF Tech, will lead the Ruder Finn team handling the account out of New York.

Oak Public Relations is named communications agency of record for Custom Cones USA, which produces supplies for cannabis pre-rolls and other cannabis packaging solutions. The agency will work to expand the presence of Custom Cones USA at conferences and trade shows, as well as publicize the company's blog content, and introduce its leadership as industry experts to targeted media.

The Sideways Life signs on as PR agency of record for Utu, a skincare brand targeted at outdoor enthusiasts. The agency will handle all public relations activities for Utu, including media relations, gifting and brand partnerships. Utu founder Richard Welch has worked with brands like Tom Ford, Nokia, Estee Lauder, Axe, Diesel, REN and The North Face.

Havas Formula picks up Mixbook, the No. 1-rated photo book brand. Focusing on media relations, Havas Formula's efforts will work to position Mixbook as the place to go to experience memories and connect with loved ones, as well as pitching holidays and gifting, thought leadership initiatives and customer stories. The agency's scope of work will also include product reviews and media sampling, lists/rankings, and sponsored content opportunities.

Magrino worked with Royal Salute, an aged, blended Scotch whisky, and luxury retailer Fortnum & Mason on initiatives centered around the May 6 coronation of King Charles III. For Royal Salute, which was created in 1953 to mark the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, Magrino worked on the global unveiling of the Royal Salute Coronation of King Charles III Edition at Westminster Abbey with U.S. media. The agency hosted an April 25 tasting event for the edition's release at New York City's Casa Cruz. Magrino also helped build awareness surrounding Fortnum & Mason's collection to celebrate the coronation.



Ripson Group adds Near North Health and Banging Gavel Brews to its client roster. The agency will oversee public relations, media relations, video production, content marketing, advertising and marketing for Near North Health, one of Chicago's largest community-based, primary health care providers. For Banging Gavel Brews, Ripson Group will work to create awareness and attract visitors to its new taproom and restaurant. It will also focus on message development, media relations, digital media and awareness for Banging Gavel's upcoming events over the summer.

APATHETIC CONSUMERS WANT WOKE BRANDS

Brands operating in the modern world have learned that in order to achieve brand loyalty and success, they should communicate with purpose and take a public stand on topical—



and often controversial—social issues. But according to a survey conducted by PR and marketing agency Method Communications, those same rules apparently don't apply to most American consumers.

Method's report, which sought to understand the role empathy plays in society (and consumer-brand relationships) suggests that empathy has suffered a sharp decline.

Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) think empathy in the United States has decreased in the past year. Only 27 percent think the average American is empathetic, down from 54 percent in 2021. More than a third (35 percent) said they're disengaged from politics because they feel powerless to make a difference.

That said, Americans still want brands to speak with a degree of authenticity and reliability that connects with them on an emotional level. The report found that more than two-thirds (67 percent) of Americans say a brand's stance on social issues affects their purchasing decisions. Nearly half (42 percent) said they've stopped purchasing from a brand due to a stance it took on a social issue, while 32 percent said they've purchased something due to a brand's stance.

More than a third (34 percent) said they actively pay attention to brands' stances on social issues so that their spending aligns with their personal values, though 26 percent of respondents admitted that they still purchase products from brands they disagree with and said they feel guilty about it.

Nearly half (47 percent) of Americans surveyed admitted they worry about the words they use every day, and 42 percent said they often censor themselves so they don't accidentally say something controversial. Only 10 percent said they never worry about their word choices.

Method's report, "Watch your Language: Think Like A Brand, Speak Like A Person," surveyed more than 2,000 Americans in November. Data was collected via an online survey using market research firm Dynata.

MONTGOMERY CO (PA) SEEKS PR SUPPORT

Montgomery County, which is home to more than 850K Pennsylvanians, is looking for a firm(s) to provide marketing and PR services. Located north of Philadelphia, Montgomery is home to towns such as Blue Bell, King of Prussia, Norristown, Jenkintown, Pottstown and Fort Washington.



The County's office of communications wants to hear from "capable firms that can demonstrate proven capabilities in the area of digital content creation, press events and outreach, writing, videography, photography and awareness campaigns," according to the RFP.

Montgomery County's partner(s) will be able to handle project-based work at various times during the year. It will issue one-year contract(s) with options for four additional one-year renewals.

Responses are due May 19 at Montgomery County's [Bonfire portal](#).

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

PERCEPTUAL RUNS CRISIS PR FOR ECUADOR

Perceptual Advisors is providing crisis PR services to Ecuador regarding the impeachment process of its embattled president Guillermo Lasso Mendoza.

The country is reeling from escalating violence, drug trafficking, corruption and food insecurity.

Lasso, who survived impeachment last year, is expected to face another effort to oust him on embezzlement charges that allegedly took place before he became president. He denies the allegations.

Perceptual Advisors is tasked with conducting media outreach in the US and overseas to "introduce/clarify the truth about the motifs of the impeachment" and Lasso's defense.

It is to receive a \$250K fee for work from April 5 through May 20. The pact is with Global Research and Asset Management LLC. Claudia Gioia, co-founder and managing partner at Perceptual Advisors, is project lead on the work.



Guillermo Lasso Mendoza

NEWS CORP. BOLSTERS TIES TO DEMOCRATS

Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. has retained Washington's Resolution Public Affairs, which is staffed by four women with close ties to Democratic lawmakers. The shop handles foreign correspondent security matters, antitrust issues related to book publishing and government oversight/regulation of artificial intelligence.

News Corp. is the parent company of the Wall Street Journal, whose Moscow correspondent Evan Gershkovich has been jailed and accused of spying by Russian officials.

RPA's Heather McHugh, ex-legislative director for Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer; Ashli Palmer, floor director for Majority Whip Rep. James Clyburn; Elizabeth Stanley, chief of staff for Rep. Nita Lowey; and Lea Fisher Sulkala, chief of staff for Rep. Linda Sanchez, work the News Corp. business.



JOELE FRANK HANDLES CYXTERA'S REVAMP

Joele Frank is handling Cyxtera as it hammers out a restructuring support agreement with lenders that will pump \$50M in new financing into the Miami-based colocation and data interconnections services company.

CEO Nelson Fonseca said the revamp strengthens Cyxtera's financial structure and positions it for long-term growth.

The RSA also provides Cyxtera a process to pursue the potential sale of the company or woo additional investors.

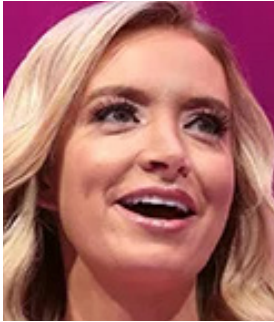
In the event that Cyxtera fails to arrange a third-party transaction, it will seek Chapter 11 protection.

The company reported a 7.8 percent rise in Q1 revenues to \$196.7M. Its \$325.4M net loss, includes a non-cash impairment charge of \$278.2M.

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher's Aaron Palash and Meaghan Repko represent Cyxtera.



COMMENTARY



Kayleigh McEnany

McEnany moves into the hot seat. Noted election denier, misinformation machine and former White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany will take Tucker Carlson's old eight o'clock tonight.

She will be the third person to audition for Mission Impossible, which is the job to revive Fox's ratings, which went south after Carlson was fired by Rupert and Lachlan Murdoch.

Tuck's program attracted 3.2M viewers during Q1. It now draws half that audience.

McEnany, who hosts Fox's "Outnumbered" midday opinion show, says she is eager to "dig into the state of politics, media, culture, and faith in America!" Spare us.

How can the audience have any faith in what McEnany claims is true? McEnany shot all of her credibility during her very first White House press briefing when she promised reporters that she would never lie to them.

Fox News famously pulled the plug on McEnany on Nov. 9, 2020 during an event at the Republican National Committee when she repeated Donald Trump's baseless rant about the stolen election and voter fraud.

She claimed Republicans want "every legal vote to be counted and every illegal vote to be discarded," implying that the Democrats supported illegal voting.

In cutting McEnany off, Fox program host Neil Cavuto said: "Unless she has more details to back that up, I can't in good countenance continue to show you this."

McEnany better keep her daytime job.

CNN cozies up to Trump. Why is CNN providing a platform to the indicted and twice impeached Donald Trump? Does the network see an opportunity to seize a slice of the Fox News audience? Has it no shame?

The planned town hall format, which will be moderated by "CNN This Morning" anchor Kaitlan Collins, is a perfect set-up for Trump to spout misinformation and nonsense.

Who will challenge Trump's lies and exaggerations? It won't be members of the audience of New Hampshire Republicans who will attend the May 10 event at St. Anselm College.

They are Trump lovers who will toss softball questions to their favorite ex-president. [Polling firm JL Partners](#) on April 18 reported that Trump leads the pack of Republican presidential candidates among primary voters in the Granite State.

He is supported by 51 percent of the poll's respondents compared to 18 percent for Florida governor Ron DeSantis and 10 percent for NH governor Chris Sununu. In a one-on-one match, Trump beats DeSantis 53 percent to 33 percent.

Trump has boycotted CNN since the 2016 and regularly trashed it as a purveyor of "fake news," so why is the network extending an olive branch to the former president?

Providing a propaganda outlet for Trump may boost CNN's ratings in the short run, but it is a big blow to its integrity.

PR people who view AI as a productivity tool rather than a major threat to their careers are blowing smoke.

IBM CEO Arvind Krishna told Bloomberg that he can't wait to use AI over the next five years to replace 30 percent of non-customer-facing jobs at the former Big Blue. That's about 7,800 positions.

Krishna is one of the first executives to admit that AI will ax jobs. Most maintain the myth of AI being a tool to empower employees.

The nine percent of Brits who "care a great deal" about the coronation of King Charles believed the \$125M to stage the pomp and pageantry is money well-spent.

It's a different story for the 64 percent of Brits who told the YouGov poll "they don't care very much or at all."

The UK, economic basket case of the G-7 nations, could have put the coronation outlays to more productive use.

[Loopex Digital](#), an SEO shop, ran the numbers.

For \$125M, the government could give 31,000 teachers and 29,410 nurses a raise, or construct 600 to 1,000 new affordable homes. A \$125M outlay could cover the energy bills of 39,962 medium-sized households, or add 40 to 66 megawatts of renewable energy capacity.

Expenditures for Charles' coronation far exceed what was spent for his mum, Elizabeth. Her 1953 coronation cost an inflation-adjusted \$57.5M.

What's the best way to commemorate the coronation? It's buying a King Charles bobblehead, of course.

The British government could earmark that \$125M coronation outlay for the purchase of 5M King Charles bobbleheads from the National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum in Milwaukee.

But it needs to give a heads-up to the Museum because current plans call for a limited run of 2,023 Chucks.

King Charles could join the bobbleheads of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip on the shelves of bobblehead collectors throughout the world.

I'm not a fan of British royalty, but it would be pretty cool to have a King Charles bobblehead on my desk to whack in the head every once in a while.

What do Silicon Valley Bank, Signature Bank and First Republic Bank have in common, other than failing? Each used KPMG as auditor and received a clean bill of health.

KPMG is the No. 1 accounting firm for the US banking business.

According to the Financial Times, publicly listed banks paid KPMG \$325M in fees during 2021, which represented 14 percent of its fees from public clients.

PwC trailed with eight percent of total fees from banks. EY got three percent and Deloitte registered two percent.

A KPMG spokesperson said the firm has long had a substantial and dynamic audit practice in the financial services industry.

It now has a PR problem, to boot.

—Kevin McCauley