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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
PR and Marketing
Communications

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November 16, 2015 Vol. 48 No. 45

NY CULTIVATES AGRICULTURE PITCHES

New York State has cast an agency search to pitch the state's agriculture, state Fairgrounds as an entertainment venue, and the annual New York State Fair as a can't miss event.

"New York State is largely urban, with the majority of its citizens removed from any direct connection with farming," reads an RFP released Nov. 10 by the NY Dept. of Agriculture and Markets. "There is a perceived attitude of consumer complacency with regards to the security of their food supply . . . [t]his lack of connection is viewed as destructive to agriculture."



In addition to burnishing the state's agriculture sector nationally and globally, the state wants to heighten awareness of its 375-acre Fairgrounds in Syracuse for shows, exhibitions and other events, as well as the 12-day state fair that draws about 950,000 people each year.

The state slates a five-year contract covering PR, marketing and public service advertising. Proposals are due Dec. 10.

RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1HNXtNc>.

SUST. PRODUCTS ENTITY SEEKS AGENCY

The global consumer products consortium focused on improving sustainability has launched a search for an agency to support its marketing and communications efforts.

The Sustainability Consortium, administered by the Univ. of Arkansas and Arizona State University with members including manufacturers, retailers, NGOs and academics, seeks an agency to "refresh" its branding and positioning statement, developing a narrative and a communications strategy.

The consortium also has operations at Wageningen Univ. in The Netherlands and Nanjing University, China. An RFP released through the Univ. of Arkansas carries a deadline of Nov. 25.

RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1HS5pga>.



ROBINSON TAKES COMMS REINS AT CBS NEWS

Christa Robinson, chief communications officer for Tribune until March, has landed at CBS News, where she'll head PR as senior VP of communications.

She takes a post vacated by Sonya McNair, who stepped down in October citing personal reasons.

"Her wealth of experience, her knowledge of the news business, and her relationships with those who cover us makes her the perfect choice for this position," said CBS Corp. chief communications officer Gil Schwartz.



Robinson

Robinson was previously senior VP of PR for CNN in 14 years with the network. She spent the last two years leading comms. for Tribune's TV and digital operations. Earlier, she was director of communications for the Clinton White House's Domestic Policy Council.

Robinson reports to Schwartz and CBS news division president David Rhodes. The news unit includes "60 Minutes" and the "CBS Evening News with Scott Pelley," among other TV programming, radio and digital.

MWW TAPS SCHWARTZ AS SAN FRAN GM

MWWPR has installed Alison Schwartz as senior VP and general manager of the firm's San Francisco office.

Schwartz will drive strategy and programs for MWWPR's clients and grow both the San Francisco office and technology practice.

Prior to MWW, Schwartz was general manager at Bay-Area based Grayling, following its acquisition of Atomic PR.



Schwartz

She held corporate comms. posts at Move Inc., part of Realtor.com and Move.com.

She has also been a senior executive at Waggener Edstrom (North American consumer practice lead) and Edelman, as well, and worked with some of the top brands including Kaiser Permanente, Microsoft and PayPal.

"Alison is a proven communications leader with extensive experience in crisis and reputation management, integrated marketing and strategic storytelling," said Michael Kempner, president and CEO of MWWPR, in a statement. "Alison's deep background and significant relationships in the technology and consumer sectors will be extremely valuable as we continue our expansion in the San Francisco and Silicon Valley markets."

DOWLING DEBUTS HUDSON CUTLER & CO.

Robert Dowling, former President of Fleishman-Hillard, on Tuesday rolled out Hudson Cutler & Company, a technology-based marketing and communications agency. Dowling, who is CEO of the new firm, has more than 25 years of experience in PR and marketing, working with such brands as American Express, Microsoft and Goldman Sachs, among others.

The agency, located in New York City, offers a wide array of services including software and technology development, management consulting, creative design and production, media, marketing and communications, experiential marketing, and research and analytics.



Dowling

Hudson Cutler has also developed partnerships with PR agencies Praytell, Peppercomm and iconic32 to extend these capabilities across segments.

“Our mission is to identify our clients’ most complex business and social challenges, apply great ideas, and then execute with the right blend of services. That typically puts technology at the center of our programs because we live in a world where most human interactions are technology-enabled,” Dowling said, in a statement. “Traditional agencies, on the other hand, operate myopically. PR firms want to sell press releases, advertising agencies want to sell 30-second spots, experiential firms want to sell events, even when those don’t address the challenge at hand.”

During his tenure at FleishmanHillard, Dowling managed the agency’s East Region and sister brands including Lois Paul & Partners, TogoRun and HighRoad Communications. He also has held senior positions at Ruder Finn and Peppercomm.

QLIK ON CUSP OF SELECTING NEW PR FIRM

Qlik, which provides data visualization and other software tools to more than 36,000 customers worldwide, is looking for a major global PR agency, O’Dwyer’s has confirmed.

The company now has a short list of potential PR firms and expects to make a decision next week, according to Maria Scurry, VP of global communications.



Qlik is seeking a full spectrum of PR and social media services. The budget is “modest retainer,” Scurry said.

However, she stressed that the company will define PR projects on a quarterly basis, which may boost the scale of spending.

The winning firm will succeed Weber Shandwick, which has been working with Qlik for the past five years.

“We’re looking for a refresh,” Scurry said.

“Weber was really good to us and we had a good ride, but we’re a different company now, with different needs. We need to keep challenging ourselves to recreate the brand.”

ROCKEFELLER FDN PUTS OUT RFP

The Rockefeller Foundation is seeking to sign a one-year contract with a full service communications and events firm to promote “Rock Talks,” a series of discussions about key social and economic challenges that relate to the Foundation’s work and grantees as well as a variety of business sectors. The Foundation’s budget for the effort is between \$400,000 and \$500,000.

The group anticipates hosting six events in 2016 at the Foundation’s New York City headquarters.

The selected PR firm will need to provide guidance and execution on programming strategy, content research, potential interviewee scoping and outreach, media outreach and coordination, thought leadership initiatives and digital and social media management, among other areas.

The winning firm will work directly with The Rockefeller Foundation in New York City and potentially offices in Nairobi and Bangkok.

Responses from prospective PR shops should include a detailed financial proposal, including the cost of all consulting and implementation services with details of the breakdown of all costs.

The agency will be selected by November 20, with a final contract to be made a few days after.



PADILLACRT SNAPS UP BRAND SHOP

PadillaCRT has snapped up brand strategy boutique Joe Smith in Richmond, Va., adding seven staffers.

The top independent firm, which has a strong Richmond presence with its CRT/Tanaka roots, gives executive leadership team slots to Joe Smith principals Christian Markow and Barry Saunders, the former Richmond chiefs of brand marketing agency Prophet.

Joe Smith’s client experience spans Chick-fil-A, The College of William & Mary and GE.

PadillaCRT CEO Lynn Casey said the deal both aligns with the firm’s growth strategy and will help clients “achieve their purpose and make strong connections with the people who are important to their success.”

HARRINGTON TAKES DC FOODMINDS POST

Kathryn Harrington, an agency vet recently embedded with the US Navy, has moved to FoodMinds in Washington as a senior VP.

FoodMinds co-founder Sue Pitman said Harrington’s hire is a response to demand for nutrition and public affairs counsel among clients.

As an SVP at kglobal, she led an embedded communications planning team at the Pentagon for the US Navy for the past year. She was previously a food and nutrition VP at Edelman and VP of public affairs for Ogilvy PR.

She also held communications posts with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington and the American Chemistry Council. In the public sector she was a comms. director at the US Dept. of Interior and at the White House, and was a press deputy to ex-Sen. John Warner (R-Va.).

ALLURE TAPS LEE FOR EDITOR IN CHIEF

There has been a changing of the editorial guard at *Allure*.

Condé Nast president Bob Sauerberg on Wednesday named Michelle Lee editor-in-chief of the fashion/beauty magazine, effective immediately.

Lee succeeds Linda Wells, who founded *Allure* in 1991 and will be transitioning to an advisory role at Condé Nast.



Lee

"When Linda Wells launched *Allure*, it broke new ground and redefined the beauty category, and she leaves us with that rich heritage to build upon," Sauerberg said, in a statement. "Today we begin a new phase of innovation for the brand, with Michelle paving the way for the next wave of consumers who crave interactive beauty content that's both inspiring and approachable."

Prior to joining *Allure*, Lee was editor-in-chief and CMO of Nylon Media, where she oversaw all editorial content, native advertising and marketing for *Nylon*, *Nylon Guys* and Nylon.com. She also helped introduce Nylon Studio, the company's in-house creative agency.

Before that, Lee was the chief content and strategy officer at Magnified Media, a full-service branded content and custom publishing agency.

FCC REJECTS AD BLOCKING REQUEST

The Federal Communications Commission has dismissed an advocacy organization's request to increase consumer Internet privacy protections.

Issued in June by non-profit Consumer Watchdog, the request petitioned the FCC to use its authority to force Internet companies to honor consumers' "Do Not Track" requests, prohibiting so-called "edge" providers — companies like Google, Facebook, YouTube, Pandora, Netflix and LinkedIn — from sharing consumer data with ad networks when consumers elect not to be tracked.

Because Internet privacy concerns can hinder broadband deployment, the nonprofit reasoned that it's in the FCC's best interest to enact such rules related to consumer privacy protection.

In a statement released Nov. 6, however, the FCC shut down that request, noting that "it has no intent to regulate" these "edge" providers.

The Commission stated that in its 2015 "Net Neutrality" measure to reclassify broadband Internet access service as a telecommunications service under Title II of the Communications Act — which would give the FCC responsibility for consumer privacy over broadband networks — any consumer privacy rules apply to Internet service providers, not to individual content companies that use those networks. In doing so, the Commission stated, it was not "regulating the Internet, per se, or any Internet applications or content."

Therefore, the nonprofit's request for rules requiring content providers to honor "Do Not Track" requests is inconsistent with the FCC's recent articulation of its authority over broadband Internet service, and therefore,

Consumer Watchdog's request "plainly does not warrant" the Commission's consideration.

In a statement, Consumer Watchdog privacy project director John M. Simpson said, "We believe the FCC has the authority to enforce Internet privacy protections far more broadly than they have opted to do, and are obviously disappointed by this decision."

The statement went on to say that Consumer Watchdog would continue pressing state regulators, Congress and the courts to better protect Internet users' privacy.

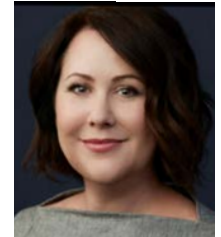
FOX TELEVISION GROUP UPS RYAN

Fox Television Group on Wednesday promoted Shannon Ryan to executive VP, marketing & communications.

Ryan will oversee publicity and corporate communications and talent relations for the network, 20th Century Fox Television and Fox 21 Television.

She will also oversee the company's Audience Strategy Group and continue to be in charge of Fox's creative services and special ops marketing teams.

Previously, Ryan was executive VP for marketing and communications for Fox, starting in 2011. She joined the company as a publicity coordinator.



Ryan

FACEBOOK CHANGES ACTIVE USERS METRIC

Hardly a day goes by without Facebook tweaking or altering its products and services in some fashion.

The latest move? Facebook late last week said, in an email to SocialTimes, that it wanted to provide a "cleaner metric" for its monthly active users.

Starting with its third quarter earnings the social network will no longer count what it called "third-party" pings, or people who did not access Facebook itself, but shared content or activity via Facebook Login-integrated websites or applications.

With a hat tip to SocialTimes, Facebook's revised definition for a monthly active user, included in the company's 10-Q filing, is as follows:

"We define a monthly active user as a registered Facebook user who logged in and visited Facebook through our website or a mobile device, or used our Messenger app (and is also a registered Facebook user), in the last 30 days as of the date of measurement."

The social network reported 1.5 billion monthly active users at the end of the third quarter, up from 1.49 billion in the previous quarter and 1.35 billion in the same period in 2014.

Facebook's alteration should make it easier for PR pros and marketers to show upper management a more legitimate picture of who is accessing the company's content and/or programming. But the change doesn't address what remains one of the major sticking points for social media investment: the value of "likes" and "followers," which both have been dismissed as so-called vanity metrics.



EXXONMOBIL FIGHTS BACK

By Fraser Seitel

Old-timers remember Herb Schmertz, the take-no-prisoners communications director of Mobil Oil in the '70s, who was known to answer the critics every Thursday with an advertorial in the *New York Times*.

These days, energy companies and most other corporations tend to keep their mouths shut when attacked publicly, choosing to fight their battles instead via owned media like Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.

That's why it's been so encouraging to see the Schmertz descendants at ExxonMobil refusing to stay silent when faced with a withering — and blatantly unfair — attack from climate change activists, sympathetic journalists, posturing politicians and on-the-make state attorneys general.

The current attack on the beleaguered energy giant stems from a series of articles in environmental news site InsideClimate News, as well as the *Los Angeles Times*, that essentially accused Exxon of purposely misleading the public about the dangers of global warming. The publications based their "investigative reporting" on ExxonMobil's own documents regarding its climate change work, which the company voluntarily made available on the Web.

Predictably, the stories were immediately followed by calls from liberal Democrats — led by Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton — for the Justice Department to investigate Exxon, just as it had with tobacco companies who lied to the public about the dangers of smoking.

While the comparison of Exxon and climate change with cigarettes and lung cancer seemed far-fetched — people die from smoking, but so far at least, nobody has been killed by global warming — it was enough for New York's high profile, publicity-seeking Attorney General Eric Schneiderman to subpoena Exxon's documents and launch a full-fledged investigation, to see if Exxon had willfully kept material information away from its shareholders.

Schneiderman, who's made no secret of his upwardly mobile political aspirations, pulled a similar stunt with Peabody Energy, the world's largest coal company. After his office made Peabody jump through hoops for two years, costing the shareholders beaucoup legal fees, Schneiderman announced that Peabody had agreed "to make more robust disclosures to its investors about the financial risks it faces from future government policies and regulations related to climate change."

In other words, Schneiderman got nothing for his wild coal chase, while costing the shareholders — the ostensible group he was purportedly working to "protect" — plenty. The same fate will likely befall ExxonMobil's shareholders, who will be forced to pay exorbitant legal bills while the attorney general-gone-wild raids the multinational oil and gas corporation's climate change archives.

But the good news in public relations terms is that ExxonMobil, unlike most of today's fraidy-scared companies who roll over when challenged by some half-cocked government official, is fighting back. Its chief spokesman, public and government affairs VP Ken

Cohen, has vehemently denied the trumped-up charges during regular blog posts and interviews.

Cohen has labeled the orchestrated campaign against it as a matter of "cherry-picking evidence taken out of context" to fit a sinister narrative. The real narrative, Cohen insists, is that Exxon has regularly communicated its climate change findings, and its public statements accurately, reflecting the company's evolving understanding of the causes and risks of climate change. Cohen has challenged InsideClimate News reporters to defend their accusations, and he has invited the public to read the Exxon climate change documents for themselves and reach their own conclusions.

Cohen's and Exxon's PR defense in the face of this orchestrated, left wing onslaught is refreshing. Just because Exxon makes money selling fossil fuels doesn't mean it is necessarily evil, despite the going-in assumptions of Attorney General Schneiderman's Star Chamber inquisition.

The fact is that neither wind nor solar nor batteries usually power the vehicles that most of us have to drive to get around.

Exxon has made no secret regarding the fact it believes fossil fuels, whether we like them or not, will be with us for some time to come.

Meanwhile, the company—just like the rest of us—would be smart to continue investigating how it must alter its business to respond to society's need to decrease carbon emissions.

Exxon claims it has been doing this, and has been sharing its findings truthfully as it has learned more over time — despite what InsideClimate News and Hillary Clinton and Eric Schneiderman might think.

And if you don't believe ExxonMobil, read the material and decide for yourself whether the company lied or misled or threatened the safety of the human race.

Fraser P. Seitel has been a communications consultant, author and teacher for 40 years. He may be reached directly at yusake@aol.com.

NORDSTROM PULLS SWEATER IN FLAP

Nordstrom is a major retailer that most likely has large PR and marketing departments.

Our guess is that more than a few marketing executives saw a Hanukkah sweater that recently went on sale via Nordstrom's stores and website—and has now caused a major embarrassment.

The blue sweater, which has the words "Chai Maintenance" knitted on the top and "Hanukkah J.A.P." on the bottom, has been pulled from shelves after it was criticized for perpetuating negative stereotypes of Jewish women, according to JewishJournal.com.

"J.A.P." stands for Jewish American Princess, a pejorative term, while "chai," the Hebrew word for "life," is pronounced "high."

In addition to being pulled from its stores, the sweater in question appears to have been pulled from the company's website, as well.

A men's version of the sweater says "Mazel tov" on the top front and "Oy vey" on the back, and "Happy Hanukkah" on both sides. It remains on sale.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS

US, EUROPEAN FIRMS FORGE PR ALLIANCE

Four agencies, including New York-based The Marino Organization, have banded together in a trans-Atlantic PR alliance dubbed Crossborders PR.

Italian firm Say What?, along with Porterfield PR and Storm Communications, both of London, joined with Marino in a network that is expected to expand in the coming months. TMO president Frank Marino said the union establishes a framework to help clients meet needs "around the world."



L-R: Alberto Scarpetta, Say What?; John F. Marino, The Marino Organization; Frank C. Marino, TMO, and Ian Purvis, Porterfield PR.

The firms announced the network in a ceremony at One World Trade Center.

TMO, which also has a Boston outpost, has worked with Colliers Int'l, Cushman & Wakefield and Walmart, among other clients.

Alberto Scarpetta is founder and CEO of 20-year-old Say What?, which has operations in Milan and Rome and focuses on media relations, event marketing and strategic planning. Ian Purvis leads commercial real estate specialist Porterfield. And Derek Lowe heads Storm, focused on consumer, corporate and social media work, with a roster including Cargill, EU Olives and Sara Lee.

Said Lowe: "The world is getting bigger and more complex in terms of PR challenges and techniques, but smaller in terms of international borders and speed of communications. It makes absolute sense to be formalizing well-trying working relationships to meet these challenges."

CSG OPENS NEW YORK CITY SHOP

Communications Strategy Group has opened an office in New York City. The new office, located in the financial district, joins CSG's existing offices in Washington, D.C., and Denver, where the company is headquartered.

CSG has hired Ashley Frost as its first senior associate in New York and plans to recruit additional professionals in the coming months.

"CSG is growing quickly, and that's due to two things: our unique and measured approach to content-based influencer relations and our ability to attract some of the brightest communications professionals from around the country," said Steven Shapiro, CSG's founder.

NEW ACCOUNTS

New York Area

Turner, New York/Q&A Residential Hotel, residential hotel concept opening Nov. 26 in New York; Vidanta, six resort hotel brands in Mexico, including Nuevo Vallarta, Riviera Maya, Los Cabos, Aca-pulco, Puerto Peñasco, Puerto Vallarta, and Mazatlán; World No-



mads, travel insurance, and Smith Fork Ranch,

luxury guest ranch near Crawford, Colo., for PR. **The Brooks Group**, New York/Fredrik Eklund, real estate tycoon and Bravo television personality from "Million Dollar Listings New York," for PR. Eklund recently released his first book, "The Sell: The Secrets of Selling Anything to Anyone" (Avery 2015), and on Nov. 20 launches a SiriusXM Stars show, "Buying and Selling."

East

Pan Communications, Boston/Maestro Health, employee health and benefits IT services, as AOR for PR.

French/West/Vaughan, Raleigh, N.C./National Pro Fastpitch, women's professional softball league, for PR, marketing and sponsorship development. The league recently added the Scrap Yard Dawgs of The Woodlands, Tex., to its existing slate of five teams. FWV CEO Rick French said the sport is well-positioned to grow its market share on TV and in stadiums around the US.

MMI, Raleigh, N.C./SciMetrika, population health consulting for the public and private sectors, for brand strategy, creative and PR.

South

E. Boineau & Company, Charleston, S.C./Diamonds Direct, jewelry company with seven locations in the US, and Palmetto Carriage Works, carriage company in historic Charleston, for PR and marketing comms.

Archer/Malmo, Memphis, Tenn./StollerUSA, agricultural production products, as AOR for the Houston-based global company, including PR, media, marketing, digital and advertising.

Southwest

Amendola Communications, Scottsdale, Ariz./SCIO Health Analytics, healthcare analytics solutions and services, as PR and content marketing AOR.

Zion & Zion, Tempe, Ariz./Casino Del Sol Resort, Tucson hotel and entertainment destination, as AOR for strategic marketing, including PR and social media, media planning and buying, message development, email marketing and interactive.

West

Global Results Communications, Irvine, Calif./View Technologies, joint venture of Stanley Black and Decker and RF controls that provides a platform for accessing real-time RFID data in the retail, manufacturing and logistics sectors, for strategic comms., media and analyst relations, social media, industry awards and speaking opportunities.

NEWS OF SERVICES**UBM: PR NEWSWIRE SALE 'NO CERTAINTY'**

UK-based UBM, more than a month after confirming talks to sell its profitable PR Newswire operation, said discussions are ongoing but no deal is certain.

"There is no certainty that [ongoing discussions] will result in a transaction being agreed upon," the company said in a trading update Nov. 10.

UBM said in September it was in "highly preliminary discussions with a number of parties" about a sale of PRN, which could fetch as much as \$700M. Reports at the time said PR software giant Cision was among potential suitors.

UBM, which is positioning around its core trade show/events business, in July replaced PRN's CEO with the parent company's own chief financial officer.

PRN's revenue topped \$300M in 2014 with profit around \$70M.

SIMON REBRANDS AS D S SIMON MEDIA

Digital, social and video communications firm D S Simon Productions has changed its name to D S Simon Media.

In a statement, the firm stated that the new name better reflects today's media

landscape, where digital content is created and distributed across paid, earned, shared, and owned platforms, services for which D S Simon has seen increased demand.

"The definition of media is changing," President & CEO Doug Simon said in a statement. "Media includes the compelling content we create for organizations and the broadcasters, journalists, bloggers and influencers that air, post, and share that content. Our name change reflects that new reality."

The new appellation comes on the heels of the company's 30-year anniversary. Simon founded the New York-based firm in 1986.

PAUL ADDS 'LIFE COACH' TO OFFERINGS

New York counselor Mike Paul is offering reputation "life coaching" sessions, a bid to help clients cope with 24/7 reputation management.

"We all now have both an online and offline reputation to manage with even greater pressure to be perfect, and we all will make mistakes or have challenges with our reputations and many times we need a coach to best help us," he said.

Paul, whose high-profile clients have spanned politics, entertainment and the corporate realm, is offering 45-minute sessions via Skype or FaceTime, based on a two-session commitment, advising clients "in both good times and bad worldwide."

Details are at reputationdoctor.com.

**Paul**

D S SIMON
M E D I A

PEOPLE**Joined**

Grace Ros Turiano, A/S, Cone Communications, and **John Heffernan**, comms.

manager, Miami International Airport, to Kivvit, Miami, the former ASGK Public Strategies, as principals. Ros Turiano is a former producer for South Florida ABC affiliate WPLG, while Heffernan was press secretary for Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez.

**Ros Turiano, Heffernan**

Tom Brandt, communications director for Rep. Lynn Jenkins (R-Kan.), to Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Washington, D.C., to handle public sector corporate comms. He was regional comms. director for the Republican National Committee and deputy press secretary for Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.).

**Kleinman**

Gerry Casanova, chief marketing and media officer, F-Factors LLC, to Rubenstein PR, New York, as senior VP and client services director. He was director of comms. and creative dev. at Hartmoor LLC and an EVP at Howard J. Rubenstein Assocs.

Howard Kleinman, blogger for The WPI Group and dir. of content dev. for the Bien Marketing Group, to the JPR Group, Montclair, N.J., as digital marketing associate. He was also a writer for Caryl Comms.

Tracey Shavers Jr., who handled media relations and publicity for MotorCity Casino Hotel, to Lambert, Edwards & Associates, Grand Rapids, Mich., as a senior associate. Binh Brenda Duong, an intern for the firm, joins as an associate.

Sam Fink, A/E, Isabelli Media Relations, to Zion & Zion, Tempe Ariz., as an A/E, a return to the agency. Malory Knutson, an intern, joins as PR and social media A/C.

Anita Bose, former chief strategist for Cooney Waters Unlimited, to W2O Group, New York, as head of client development, based in Chicago. **Jennifer Labus**, EVP and dir. of client services, The CementBloc, joins as managing director of integrated marketing in New York. She is a Pfizer and Euro RSCG Life alumna. Jennifer Paganelli, US media director, Cohn & Wolfe, to co-lead W20's earned media practices, alongside Brian Reid. She was a senior media supervisor at Edelman and A/E for Ogilvy PR. And **Chuck Aueletta**, VP for Digitas, joins as group director of digital marketing to open a Philadelphia outpost for W20.

**Bose**

Meg Miller, director of PR for the Produce Marketing Assn., to Campbell Soup Co., Camden, N.J., as senior manager of communications, effective Nov. 30. She was previously with the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Assn.

Brenda Connell, account specialist, OOBIE, to Complete PR, Greenville, S.C., as a PR rep.

FRENCH REELING IN STUDIO FOR 'ROCK' MOVIE

Rick French's negotiating skills should come in handy.

The founder and CEO of PR agency French/West/Vaughan is currently meeting with a handful of major Hollywood studios regarding financing the film based on the 2010 best seller "Not Without Hope."

French, the film's executive producer, is in negotiation mode as the film's original studio, Relativity Media, faces bankruptcy proceedings.

"When you have a best-selling book being turned into a movie with Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson, you get [film] studios calling you," French said, adding that he expects to have a done deal within the next few weeks. "We'll take our time and figure out which is the best partner to make this movie with." He would not name the studios.

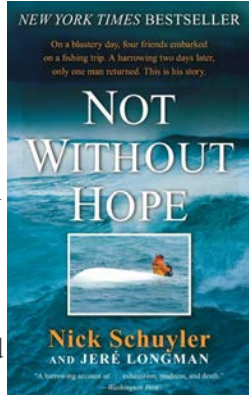
French's connection with the movie stems from his agency's representation of Nick Schuyler, who wrote "Not Without Hope."

Schuyler, a former star football player at the University of South Florida, was the sole survivor of a tragic boating accident in the Gulf of Mexico in which three of his friends—Oakland Raiders linebacker Marquis Cooper, Detroit Lions defensive end and former N.C. State University star Corey Smith and Will Bleakey, who played football at the University of South Florida—died.

French subsequently brokered a book deal for Schuyler, who wrote "Not Without Hope" with *New York Times* sportswriter Jere Longman.

"As someone who shapes and tells stories everyday on behalf of our clients, it hasn't felt like a stretch to take those same skills and apply them to filmmaking, in great part to protect the integrity of Nick's story and pay tribute to his friends who perished," French told O'Dwyer's.

In addition to Hollywood producer, you can put "professional sports team owner" on French's resume. He recently became a partner with the Daytona Tortugas, the Class-A affiliate of the Cincinnati Reds.



CROP PROTECTION ASSN TAPS COHN & WOLFE

The Crop Protection Association, which represents the UK Plant Science sector, has selected Cohn & Wolfe for media relations and issues management.

The association promotes the role of modern plant science in safeguarding the UK's food supply, "from seed to shelf." Its members develop and manufacture several plant science technologies, which help cultivate and protect food crops, gardens, woodlands infrastructure and public places.

"Cohn & Wolfe stood out to our selection panel for their extensive and current experience in engaging on technical and sensitive issues," said Nick Von Westenholz, CEO of the Crop Protection Association. "The CPA is committed to explaining the role of the Crop Protection industry and the benefits of its products to the community."

STUDY: PROFITS STAGNANT AT AGENCIES

The average operating profit for small and mid-size PR agencies was relatively flat in 2014, compared to 2013, and fell roughly 2 percent compared with 2012, according to Gould + Partners' latest benchmarking study.

The study, which was released this week, took the pulse of 111 PR agencies. The agencies range from less than \$3 million in annual revenue to more than \$25 million in annual revenue.

Overall, agencies' operating profit was 16.2 percent in 2014, compared to 15.8 percent in 2013 and 18.8 percent in 2012.

Regardless of the size of the agency, however, profitability remains sluggish.

For example, for companies with revenue between \$3 million and \$10 million, operating profit in 2014 was 16.1 percent, while agencies that generate between \$10 million and \$25 million in revenue had operating profit of 17 percent (see chart).

"Not a lot firms are hitting 20 percent," said Rick Gould, managing partner of the firm that bears his name. "They're increasing their labor costs without commensurate higher fees."

Gould stressed that if agencies raise their employees' salaries they must raise rates for retainers (or however the agency charges its customers).

But many agencies fail to raise their rates because they fear blowback from clients, Gould said.

It's a fundamental problem plaguing the PR field: Managers don't pay enough attention to the hard numbers and shortchange the value of their services.

What is more, retainers—as opposed to an hourly rate—often slide into doing work that doesn't get billed.

Gould partly blames colleges and universities that offer PR as a major. "They don't teach the business of the business," he said.

Another foreboding aspect of the study was the level of turnover: an average of nearly 20 percent, which is down slightly from the previous two years. But the churn in the PR field is a growing concern among agencies of all stripes.

"It's getting worse," Gould said, referring to the turnover and that the millennials who are increasingly populating the PR field have little to no sense of loyalty. "They want more stimulation and work that is more challenging. For millennials, you have to keep them excited."

Among nearly two-dozen steps for the model PR firm, Gould said the following five elements are the most crucial:

Lock in Second Tier; make those employees entrepreneurs

Control Staff Turnover—25 percent max

Retain a full-time or part-time CFO

Know your net worth/book value/equity

Commit that you are your number one client.

BRIEF: Neotrope, a marketing, PR, and content development agency, on Thursday introduced its 2016 annual PR Grants program for U.S.-based 501(c)3 charities. There is no fee to apply, and applications are being accepted now through Jan. 1, 2016. Info: prgrants.com

The slaughter of theater, restaurant and nightclub patrons in Paris Nov. 13 would have been much less if France did not have strict gun laws and some of the patrons were armed, Donald Trump and others are saying.

If Parisians had been allowed to carry arms “It would have been a much, much different situation,” Trump said to cheers at a political rally in Texas Nov. 14.

Cities such as Chicago, that has the “toughest gun laws in the U.S.,” also have “the highest violence, the highest problem with guns and shootings and killings,” he said.

The carnage in Paris, accompanied by threats from ISIS of more attacks in France and elsewhere, will focus attention on whether strict gun control laws are a danger to the general population, preventing citizens from defending themselves.

More than a few people with guns would have been needed to repel the attackers who trained their guns for two hours and 40 minutes on 1,500 at the Bataclan music hall where the Eagles of Death Metal were playing. Six of the seven attackers at the hall and in other places blew themselves up after carrying out their missions.

Religion + Arms Is Deadly Combination

Attackers, motivated by religious beliefs and nationalist fervor, present a difficult problem to normal law enforcement.

Among those arguing that the “obsession” with gun control in the U.S. must be re-examined is New York PR counselor Mario Almonte of Herman & Almonte PR who has had his views published in the HuffPost.

There are arguments on both sides, he admits. While guns are dangerous, so are cars. The number of deaths each year from auto accidents and guns is about equal at 34,000. But no one thinks of banning cars because they are seen as a necessity, he says.

A far more dangerous but permitted activity is smoking which kills an estimated 480,000 Americans yearly. About 42 million or 17.2% of the population still smokes. Some 16 million current or former smokers have lung disease.

40 Shootings, 310 Deaths Tracked by L.A. Times

Worth studying is a record of 40 mass shootings resulting in 310 deaths by the Los Angeles Times dating back to July 18, 1984 when unemployed security guard James Huberty killed 21 and wounded 19 others at a McDonald's in San Ysidro, Calif.

Other high death tolls were the 32 victims at Virginia Tech, April 16, 2007; 27 at Sandy Hook elementary school, Newtown, Conn., Dec. 14, 2012; 22 at Luby's Cafeteria, Killeen, Texas, Oct. 16, 1991, and 13 at Columbine high school, Colo., April 20, 1999.

Schools, churches, offices and cafeterias were among the most targeted locations.

Gun advocacy groups, including the National Rifle Assn. and the Second Amendment Foundation sponsored “Guns Save Lives Day” on Dec. 15, 2014, one day after the anniversary of the attack on the Newtown school.

NRA CEO Wayne LaPierre, referring to the Newtown shooting at a televised press event Dec. 21, 2012 at Washington's Willard Hotel near the White House, connected gun violence with “gun-free zones,” violent films and video games, the media, weak databases on mental illness, and lax security.

He called for armed officers at schools. Asa Hutchinson, former Arkansas congressman and Drug Enforcement Administration chief, was named to head the NRA's effort to develop a “school shield program.”

Backers of the Dec. 15 rally, including the Citizens Committee for the Right to Bear Arms, said that post-Newtown gun control legislation has victimized guns rights advocates.

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America said that “To hold a gun-glorifying event on Dec. 14, [original date of “Guns Save Lives Day”] a day when America will remember the slaughter of 26 innocent Americans, including teachers and first-grade students, can be deemed nothing less than abject evil.”

Muslim Terror Coming Says Gun Group

A posting Nov. 14 by executive director John Boch of Guns Save Life said that France has experienced “horrendous, coordinated Muslim terror attacks” for the second time in a year, the first being at the Charlie Hedbo offices, and that “It's just a matter of time before radical Muslims launch similar, multi-pronged attacks in America.” The website portrays Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America as two women with their heads buried in the sand. Another graphic on the site has the theme, “Muslim Terror Is Coming: Get Ready.”

“Bigger, bolder terror attacks are coming to America,” says the posting. “America's law enforcement people do great work thwarting Muslim terror attacks. They aren't perfect, though. If we are ready, we can shoot them down and let them die in a gutter like the dogs they are.

“It happened earlier this year when two Muslims drove up to an event intent on slaughtering innocents inside. A single, observant beat cop armed with a pistol shot both of the rifle-packing, body-armor clad, would-be-mass murderers dead within seconds.”

Attackers are likely to pick targets of religious and social significance such as religious institutions, Jewish-owned businesses, or public facilities such as schools, day cares or even hospitals, he says. “They will go to locations where gun possession for law-abiding civilians is generally prohibited.”

For those able to carry sidearms, he advises something stronger than a .38 pistol. They don't work too well at stopping attackers especially if they are wearing body armor. Aim for the head or groin, he says.

“Be aware of your surroundings,” advises Boch. “Pay attention to those around you and what they are doing. Know where your exits are and where cover and/or concealment is when you're in public. Situational awareness is the single best thing you can do to keep yourself safe, be it from domestic hoodlums or foreign Muslims looking to kill in the name of their ‘Allah.’”

– Jack O'Dwyer