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FINN PARTNERS HAULS IN HAWKINS INT'L PR

[Finn Partners](#) has acquired [Hawkins International PR](#), the upscale travel firm with 26 staffers in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco.



Jennifer Hawkins

Jennifer Hawkins, founder of the firm, will become managing partner, luxury travel, at Finn Partners.

Peter Finn noted that Hawkins International PR represents “many of the most celebrated hotel and resort brands in the industry” and has “a keen grasp on what drives high-end demographics.”

The shop’s clients include Dorchester Collection, Gstaad Palace and Seabourn Cruise Line.

The firm boasts of capabilities such as media intelligence, consumer/trade press relations, trendspotting, content development, storytelling, social media strategy, digital marketing and brand partnerships.

Finn Partners also is acquiring Hawkins International PR’s affiliated Maverick Creative unit and its 10 staffers.

[Finn Partners, which chalked up \\$10.4M in 2020 travel fee income](#), says the addition of Hawkins and Maverick puts it over the \$20M mark.

Stevens Group facilitated Finn Partners’ deal for Hawkins International PR.

TARTIKOFF TO HEAD COMMS AT PARAMOUNT

Spotify head of communications, content and advertising Jenny Tartikoff is heading to Paramount Pictures, where she will be executive vice president of global communications.



Jenny Tartikoff

Tartikoff succeeds Chris Petrikin, who left the position in September after the replacement of studio chief Jim Gianopulos with Nickeloden head Brian Robbins.

Tartikoff had only been at Spotify since July. She was previously SVP, global communications post at Universal Pictures; SVP, corporate entertainment at Rubenstein; and director of communications at NBC News.

She reports to Robbins and oversees the studio’s corporate communication strategies including media relations, executive and internal communications, and corporate social responsibility.

NYS INSURANCE FUND SEEKS COMMS HELP

The New York State Insurance Fund plans to hire multiple firms to handle its marketing communications efforts.

NYSIF’s mission is to guarantee the availability of workers’ compensation insurance and to provide timely medical payments to injured workers.

The RFP says work covers improving NYSIF’s market perception, new business acquisition and retention campaigns, improving digital communications, increasing online service usage, creating website content and media buying.

Proposals are due Nov. 22 at contracts@nysif.com with “Formal Proposal—Bid #2021-36-ADM” in subject line, or by mail to: NYSIF-Procurement Unit; Bid #2021-36-ADM; PO Box 66699; Albany, NY 12206

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

KOCH, B-M ALUM JOINS ID TECH ASSN

Robert Tappan has joined the International BioMetrics + Identity Assoc., the trade group for the identity technology industry. He will focus on branding, advocacy, thought leadership, media relations and serve as the “voice” of the industry.



Robert Tappan

Tappan has been director of external relations at Koch Industries, president of D. C. operations for Burson-Marsteller and principal deputy assistant secretary for public affairs at the State Dept.

The IBIA works “to educate citizens, legislators and policymakers about the benefits of biometrics and the responsible use of technologies for human identity.”

EX-NFL PR PRO BLUNT SETS UP SHOP

Blunt Group Strategies, a boutique Black and woman-owned firm that provides strategic consultation for clients in the sports, politics, and entertainment sectors, is started up by Traci Otey Blunt, former senior vice president, corporate communications at the NFL.

Before coming to the NFL, Blunt held several leadership roles at The RLJ Companies, and was deputy communications director for Hillary Clinton during the 2008 presidential campaign.



Traci Otey Blunt

EDELMAN UPS SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

[Edelman](#) has named Robert Whittaker, founding CEO of Just Capital, as senior advisor to its newly launched Edelman Impact unit formed to advance the climate, purpose and ESG goals of clients.



Martin Whittaker

Just Capital is the nonprofit that evaluates and ranks companies on their sustainability, human capital, diversity, equity and inclusion performance.

The firm also named Robert Casamento its first-ever global head of climate. He is a 25-year veteran of global climate, ESG and corporate strategy.

Casamento was founding director of the World Economic Forum's global climate change initiatives and a member of sustainability efforts at EY and Deloitte.

Richard Edelman said his firm wants to partner with clients who are committed to change and will use the net-zero emissions by 2050 target to guide its effort. The addition of Whittaker and Casamento to its purpose and sustainability team "is a most serious commitment on the part of the firm to lead," he said.

SHIFT JOINS PADILLA'S BRAND PORTFOLIO

Boston-based [SHIFT Communications](#) has joined [Padilla](#) as one of its operating brands. The agency officially becomes a Padilla unit effective January 1, 2022.



Matt Kucharski

SHIFT and Padilla are part of Montreal-based holding company Avenir Global. AG acquired Padilla [in 2018](#).

SHIFT now joins Padilla's roster of communications brands, which includes Chicago-based food and nutrition consulting shop FoodMinds, brand consultancy Joe Smith and research authorities SMS Research Advisors. The agency, in a statement, said the combine effectively brings Padilla's annual revenues to

\$55 million and accounts for approximately 240 employees across seven U.S. offices

SHIFT managing partner Rick Murray, who led National PR's Toronto operations, retains his position at SHIFT and will become an EVP at Padilla. There will be no change to SHIFT's branding or to its physical office locations.

Padilla last year accounted for nearly \$36 million in net fees, according to [O'Dwyer's rankings of PR firms](#).

ABMAC WORKS PANERA BRANDS' IPO

Abernathy McGregor represents European investment firm JAB Holdings as it slates an initial public offering for its Panera Brands unit composed of Panera Bread, Caribou Coffee and Einstein Bros. Bagels.

USHG Acquisition Corp., a SPAC sponsored by Danny Meyer's Union Square Hospitality Group, has agreed to invest in Panera's stock once the IPO is completed.

Meyer will invest his own money in Panera Brands and become lead independent director of the unit. He said Panera Brands meets his investment criteria to combine with "a purpose-driven business that is scalable and built for the long haul." JAB will remain an investor in the company.

AbMac CEO Tom Johnson represents JAB.

The firm is part of Havas Group's AMO network.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

[SourceCode Communications](#) is named communications agency of record for **Legion**, which helps employers deliver value to their employees and optimize labor efficiency through its AI-powered workforce management platform.

Through this partnership, which started in Q1 of this year, SourceCode is working to help the company expand its PR capabilities in the workplace management space.



"We recognized a partner in SourceCode that really understood and empathized with our goals," said Legion vice president of marketing Kristin Brennan.

[Lou Hammond Group](#) is chosen by the **State of Mississippi** as public relations agency of record for tourism. LHG will work to develop an aggressive public relations program focused on further encouraging visitation to the state. "On the eve of our 39th anniversary, we are proud to have Mississippi join our growing destination roster," said LHG chairman and founder Lou Rena Hammond. "Travel is back, and this state offers tremendous opportunity and universal appeal."

W is appointed US public relations agency for **British Airways'** US re-start project. W will work with the airline to support its efforts to bring passengers back onboard its planes. Ending 597 days of restrictions, the BA001 flight has been resurrected from its Concorde days and seats onboard have been offered to friends and families separated during the pandemic. "This is the second brief we have awarded to W, who have shown incredible creativity and commitment to delivering results," said British Airways head of global PR & social media Victoria Madden.

Idea Hall is named agency of record for branding and marketing communications services for **ocV!BE**, a \$3 billion, 95-acre, master-planned, mixed-use fusion community slated to open in 2024 in Anaheim, CA. The agency will work with ocV!BE on all phases of the project, from entitlements to groundbreaking, and offer branding, communications and strategic counsel for the property and individual entities.

[FINN Partners](#) is named PR agency of record for **Bolthouse Farms**, a leader in growing and distributing fresh carrots, premium branded beverages and refrigerated dressings. FINN oversees all strategic planning and execution for consumer PR efforts, trade PR efforts, corporate communications and earned influencer relations for the company. Bolthouse has also brought on The Many as advertising agency of record.



Ditto adds **Purrrble**, an interactive tool that helps people combat stress, to its client roster. The agency is providing messaging, media training and media relations services to Purrrble, focused on raising awareness for the product throughout the holiday gift guide season. Ditto is also heading up media relations strategy for **Justworks**, a software company that provides entrepreneurs and businesses with access to benefits, payroll, HR and compliance support.

[R&J Strategic Communications](#) is selected as PR and digital marketing agency of record for **NAI Fennelly**, a commercial real estate brokerage that operates in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. R&J will leverage its public relations, digital marketing, and social media capabilities to bolster the firm's brand awareness. The agency will also work to further position NAI Fennelly as a thought leader and premier solutions provider throughout their target markets.

NET ZERO CARBON'S COMMUNICATIONS GAP

In the wake of the [IPCC report](#), it's become indisputable that humans are influencing the warming of the earth. However, after the 26th UN Climate Change Conference, along with [Europe's recent pledge](#) to become the world's first net zero emissions continent by 2050, it's clear there's growing momentum for a greener planet.



Alex Wittner

Future-proofing the environment is top of mind for forward-thinking technology companies, but progress is slow. Calls to action are mounting from consumers, investors, and government bodies, yet [only 20 percent](#) of the world's 2,000 largest corporations have made any sort of net zero carbon commitments to date.

The step towards net zero is important, not just because it's the right thing to do for the planet, but because prioritizing climate issues also gives companies a competitive advantage. Between 2011 and 2019, the Stoxx Global Climate Change Leaders index outperformed the Stoxx Global 1800 index by [5.3 percent per annum](#). To reap the benefits of climate-focused initiatives, PR leaders need to help companies overcome the net zero carbon communications gap.

Challenges

Approaching net zero is a daunting task for the four-fifths of businesses that haven't yet broached the topic, but starting a conversation about the challenges can get the ball rolling:

- While [frameworks](#) are under development, there are no formal reporting regulations in place and likely won't be for years, which leaves many companies directionless and unable to accurately measure their impact.
- The first movers are facing scrutiny for failing to disclose enough specifics—tactics and timelines—detailing how they plan to reach their goals. But until regulations are implemented, there are no formal [disclosure and compliance](#) requirements to keep companies in check.
- Companies fear scrutiny from the industry if their planned practices are deemed less effective.

Despite these challenges, companies don't need to have all of the answers to take action; it's more important to start the process and inform stakeholders. There are three key practices companies can adopt to benefit the environment—and their shareholders—while avoiding criticism:

1. Involve key decision makers from day one
2. Develop a flexible plan
3. Overcommunicate to all shareholders

Internal Communications: Get all decision makers involved early

Net zero is a seemingly simple concept; offset greenhouse gas production by taking measures to reduce existing greenhouse gases. But in reality, achieving net zero is a multi-faceted problem that touches every part of a company, so there's no one-size-fits-all approach. Despite no obvious path forward, one thing is clear: real change starts from the top.

Collaboration is necessary for progress

Whether the goal is healthy returns or a healthier planet—or both—the pursuit of net zero must intertwine with every aspect of the organization. Companies can do this by involving the executive team and board members in early planning stages to share cross-organizational knowledge and external

expertise. They can then assign a core task force to gather that knowledge and distribute it throughout the organization, making clear the direction, steps and goals to all key decision-makers.

Wisdom can come from unexpected places

External partners can be helpful collaborators; they may be working on their own [ESG](#) or net zero targets and could have insights that supplement the process. Even competitive alliances can help with plan development. Plus, working together can lead to even larger scale benefits:

- Lead by example. Putting purpose over profits to develop industry-wide standards with other major players is one of the most effective ways to make a lasting difference.
- Provide guidance. These mutually beneficial, strategic relationships should reframe how the industry approaches net zero and creates accountability.

Rather than waiting years for frameworks, you can make a bigger impact if you start putting plans and partnerships into place now.

Create a plan that allows for flexibility

Implementing sweeping climate pledges without interim targets and measurable tactics is like delivering pizza without a map: you might reach your destination eventually, but you'll waste a lot of time and money in the process. In order to remain accountable, companies must establish timelines for their initiatives and implement cross-divisional reporting systems to measure progress.

But most importantly, companies need a plan of attack that not only uses net zero as a north star but also includes measurable milestones that will help them stay on track. While developing targets, it's important to keep in mind that:

- Directly reducing emissions is [much more effective](#) and sustainable than paying others to offset those emissions.
- Net zero isn't just about reducing future emissions; it's about addressing the pollution that already exists.
- To be successful, the entire organization and value chain must be aligned with, and work towards, net zero goals.

Rather than waiting until you find the perfect solution before getting started, you're better off assembling a team and structures that work to discover solutions through discussion and experimentation.

Overcommunicate

One of the main factors hindering progress towards net zero is a lack of communication. To connect with stakeholders, companies must share goals externally when the time is right and be transparent about their progress, challenges, and unknowns. [Bad news](#) or sudden adjustments to plans can be alarming to stakeholders, but they will be much more understanding if your company is transparent right from the start.

In communications, companies can further build confidence by focusing on the processes and structures that help to address and overcome obstacles when they arise. Involvement in external alliances—such as partnership networks—can be especially useful in building credibility and keeping the focus on long-term outcomes.

The path to net zero is a global puzzle, and it's constantly changing. But creating a plan isn't about having all of the answers, it's about taking action. It's not too late—and definitely not too early—to implement a robust net zero strategy, execute against that plan and communicate challenges and progress along the way.

Alex Wittner is Account Director of Tech PR at [ICR](#).

'HEARTLAND OF IRELAND' WANTS PR

Tipperary Tourism is searching for a partner to develop a 2022 brand marketing campaign to promote the “undiscovered heartland of Ireland” in order to increase the number of holiday trips made there.



The campaign will include an emotional component, positioning Tipperary as “a slow, authentic place that provides the opportunity to de-stress, connect with loved ones and remember what is important in life,” according to the RFP.

Tipperary Tourism wants to highlight the County as a food destination (home of Dexter cattle, Cashel Blue, Piedmont Cattle, sustainable farm visits, and local farmers markets) and a center for crafts, including Rossa pottery and Hanly Woolen Mills.

There also are ample opportunities for hiking, biking, water sports and horseback riding, along with “yet-to-be-discovered experiences that are rooted in a land even more ancient than the historic buildings that remain, yet fully in harmony with the modern world.”

Proposals are due Nov. 23 at www.etenders.gov.ie.
[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

LAND O'LAKES RELIES ON FGH

Finsbury Glover Hering is representing Land O'Lakes food cooperative on agricultural sustainability and rural broadband issues.

The Arden Hills, MN, based company has been working with Microsoft and Watch Communications to address the rural broadband gap, which affects more than 18M Americans, according to the Federal Communications Commission.

Sixty percent of farmers say they lack the necessary connectivity to run their business.

Land O'Lakes, which generated \$14B in 2019 revenues, also is working to bridge the digital divide with awareness and advocacy through its American Connection Project.

FGH has Grant Leslie, head of its food practice; Karla Thiemann, ex-chief of staff to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack during the Obama administration; and Kevin Bailey, a policy advisor to Vilsack, working the Land O'Lakes account.

WPP is majority owner of FGH.

Land O'Lakes in October broke a consumer campaign tagged “Eat It Like You Own It” that was timed to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the company. Battery, a creative shop of Havas Media, developed the advertising.

R&CPMK VET KWOK JOINS BERLINROSEN

[BerlinRosen](#) has added Cary Kwok as executive VP in its emerging gaming, digital & lifestyle unit.

She joins the NYC firm from Rogers & Cowan PMK, where she exited after a nearly five-year stint as EVP, digital entertainment, tech & gaming.

Earlier, Kwok spent 11 years at Golin, which is R&CPMK's sister Interpublic firm. At Golin, Kwok launched Nintendo of America's Wii and Wii U consoles.

BR's technology clients include Samsung, Mozilla, Dolby, Audible and Bloomberg Media.



Tiffany Haverly

WORDS MATTER IN DEI PROGRAMMING

Language plays a big role in a company's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, according to a new study from the Institute for Public Relations and The Wakeman Agency.

Almost all (97 percent) of the 393 communications leaders polled for “[The Language of Diversity](#)” agreed that “language or words can influence or reinforce power dynamics in the workplace.”

The study also found that clear definitions of basic DEI terms are seen as a priority. Two-thirds (66 percent) of respondents said that the public relations industry needs to develop standard definitions related to DEI.

That lack of definition extends to company policies. Less than one quarter (24 percent) of respondents said their organization's definitions of basic DEI terms were publicly available. Only slightly more (31 percent) said their organization had formal DEI definitions in a company handbook or guide.

When it comes to the top priorities of DEI initiatives, race topped the list, with 83 percent calling it at least a “medium priority.” Other significant factors include sex (77 percent), ethnicity (75 percent), cultural background (63 percent) and mental health (62 percent).

“Lack of clarity around language plays into power dynamics—perpetuating and even exacerbating inequity in the workplace and roadblocking authentic inclusivity,” said The Wakeman Agency founder and CEO Vanessa Wakeman.

“Language or words can influence or reinforce power dynamics in the workplace.”



NEWS OF FIRMS

[Allison+Partners](#) launches Connected Thought Leadership, a global offering designed to help CEOs and other leaders stand out in competitive environments by developing bold ideas and powerful, memorable conversations. The offering combines research, narrative discovery and messaging sessions, and robust, integrated communications to help companies and business leaders establish a strong corporate reputation and differentiated thought leadership positioning.

[Antenna Group](#) starts up a public affairs practice in Washington, DC. Antenna Public Affairs, which focuses on policy advocacy, policymaker engagement and issues management, is led by executive vice president Andy Beck, former head of public affairs at the U.S. Department of Energy. Beck has also held senior positions at kglobal, Makovsky and MWWR. The practice will work with clients in the energy, climate, extractives, transportation, infrastructure, defense, technology and financial industries sectors.

[Walker Sands](#) celebrates its 20th year in business by making \$1,000 donations to 20 charities that span a wide range of causes and cities throughout the U.S. The agency turned to its employees to select the recipients, which come from such locations as Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, Boston, and Atlanta. The organizations benefiting from the donations include My Block My Hood My City, Backpack Brigade, and Raising a Reader Massachusetts. “As we look to the future, Walker Sands is committed to creating a positive impact in both the industries we touch every day and in the larger community,” said Walker Sands CEO Mike Santoro.



PR NEEDED FOR ART THERAPY TO VETS

Americans for the Arts is looking for a communications partner to help improve the health, well-being and quality of life of trauma-exposed military service members and veterans, as well as their families and caregivers, by increasing knowledge and access to clinical creative arts therapies and community arts engagements.



The effort is on behalf of Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts, Pentagon and Department of Veterans Affairs.

The selected firm will write press releases, blogs, articles, newsletters, brochures; manage social media; handle press relations; serve as liaison with the NEA's PA staff; and ensure that content complies with federal policies.

It will coordinate activities with partners, such as the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine and Mid-America Arts Alliance.

Budget for the project that will run from Dec. 1 to Dec. 15, 2022 is set at \$96K.

Responses are due Nov. 17 at creativeforces@artusa.org.
[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

KEKST REPS PEAK CAPITAL'S PRETZELS DEAL

[Kekst CNC](#) represents Peak Rock Capital as the Austin-based private equity firm sells its Pretzels Inc., pretzel manufacturing outfit, to Hershey Co.

Pretzels Inc. makes and distributes traditional, peanut butter-filled, flavored and seasonal pretzels, as well as and other snack products, to grocers and to national brands. It produces Dot's Pretzels, which also is being acquired by the candymaker as part of "advancing Hershey's snacking powerhouse vision."

Hershey's CEO Michele Buck said acquiring Pretzels Inc will expand the company's snacking and production capabilities while keeping the special connection to Dot's.

Hershey's is shelling out \$1.2B to acquire the two companies, which generated \$275M in annual sales for the fiscal year ended September 30.

Kekst CNC has Daniel Yunger, Hallie Wolff and Emma Cloyd working the Peak Rock Capital business.

Publicis Groupe owns Kekst CNC.

FTI CONSULTING PICKS PAPP

[FTI Consulting](#) has hired Capitol Hill veteran Brian Papp as a managing director in its strategic communications unit, where he will advise clients on public policy and government relations matters.



Brian Papp

Most recently, Papp was staff director on the Senate Finance Committee's subcommittee on international trade, customs and global competitiveness. Earlier, he was a senior policy advisor for Delaware Senator Tom Carper, advising him on labor and agriculture issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bryan Zumwalt, head of FTI's government affairs in the Americas unit, expects clients will benefit from Papp's insights on the workings in Washington and from the relationships that he has developed with the Biden administration and senior staff in both the House and Senate.

FAKE NEWS CONTINUES TO HURT JOURNALISM

Journalists say [the "fake news" problem isn't going away](#) and continues to plague the news industry, according to research released by Chicago-based B2B communications agency [Greentarget](#).

Greentarget's report, which surveyed journalists to analyze their sentiments surrounding the fake news phenomenon as well as what effects it's had on their profession, found that journalists aren't feeling much better than they were a year ago about fake news. 84 percent of journalists currently agree that fake news has negatively impacted their profession, compared to 80 percent who'd reported this sentiment for Greentarget's previous report on the topic last year.

One in five journalists surveyed (20 percent) said they believe recent media literacy efforts have had no impact when it comes to lessening the spread of fake news, and only six percent think Big Tech's monitoring of social media has had a significant impact on the problem.

Journalists widely believe that false and misleading news is something they and their colleagues have an ethical responsibility to fight: 93 percent said journalists are best positioned to vet and identify fake news, compared to 85 percent last year.

WAKELY MOVES FROM MARS TO PEPSICO

Jane Wakely is exiting the lead CMO position at Mars to become executive vice president, chief consumer and marketing officer, and chief growth officer, international foods at PepsiCo.

At Mars, Wakely was also CMO of Pet Nutrition, one of the largest divisions in the company's \$40 billion portfolio. Before that, she was global CMO of its chocolate division.

As chief consumer and marketing officer at PepsiCo, she will work to bolster its consumer-centricity, innovation, brand and marketing capabilities. As chief growth officer, international foods, Wakely will be responsible for accelerating the Positive Choices pillar of pep+ (PepsiCo Positive), which will develop products with more diverse ingredients, such as plant-based proteins, nuts and seeds, and whole grains.



Jane Wakely

NAFCU'S GARIBAY GOES TO INVARIANT

Marisol Garibay, a 20-year communications veteran, has joined Invariant to advise its financial services clients on public affairs and media relations matters.

She joins the DC shop from the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions, where she was VP-communications & media relations. Garibay led NAFCU's push to deliver its policy priorities via simple, effective and compelling messaging.

Before NAFCU, Garibay was chief communications officer for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Earlier, she was communications director at the Office of Management and Budget, deputy assistant of PA at the Treasury Dept., and communications director at the House Committee on Financial Services.



Marisol Garibay

COMMENTARY

Ninety-five percent of PR firms surveyed by Davis+Gilbert LLP expect to increase their revenues during 2022.

That would be on top of the projected 77 percent increase for this year. Healthcare, technology and corporate/financial firms showed the greatest growth.

[The Davis+Gilbert Public Relations Industry 2021 Survey Trends + Highlights](#) report found that 38 percent of firms have goals to increase the number of people of color on staff during the next six months. That's up from 28 percent a year ago.

On the DEI front, 72 percent of firms have established a pay equity plan to ensure that all BIPOC are being compensated fairly.

Seventy percent of firms are tracking and reporting workforce diversity data on an annual basis to create accountability for the firm. Another 70 percent have donated to groups promoting racial justice.

The surveyed firms lagged in developing a training program for Black men/women and rotating participants in different sectors to find their specialty (33 percent) and in setting up supplier diversity programs with set goals (30 percent).

The three top challenges for 2022: retaining talent, hiring new people to keep up with the workload and flat or decreasing client budgets.

PR firms may be optimistic about their prospects for the upcoming year, but they plan to scale back their operations in New York.

The Partnership for New York City reports that 43 percent of PR firms are expected to reduce their footprint in the Big Apple in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Only the accounting profession (86 percent) topped the PR business in planning to shrink their office space. The tech sector weighed in at 38 percent. Real estate (15 percent) and consumer products companies (13 percent) are the most bullish on NYC's recovery.

The Partnership found that on the average weekday, 28 percent of Manhattan workers were at the office at the end of October. More than half (54 percent) of Manhattan employees were fully remote.

The Partnership reports that less than half (49 percent) of workers are expected to be in the office on an average weekday by the end of January.

Only 13 percent of them will be in five days a week. A third will be in three days per week.

Uh-oh... It's generally not a good sign when the CEO of a publicly traded company says, "We are a real company" during a conference.

But that's what Rick Dauch, CEO of Workhorse Group, maker of electric vans, told investors during his Nov. 9 call when he broke the news that the company reported negative revenue of \$576,602 during the third quarter.

To be fair to Dauch, he jumped into the Workhorse driver's seat in July.

Workhorse founder Steve Burns in 2019 agreed to buy a Lordstown, OH, auto plant that was shut down by General Motors.

Then-president Trump hailed the move and Burns left Workhorse to run Lordstown Motors, which has its own financial and operational problems.

Dauch is optimistic that Workhorse "will be prepared to deliver the best-in-class vehicles for the commercial electric vehicle market starting in 2023."

There's a big difference between being prepared and actually delivering the C-1000 goods.

Is TikTok harming kids? The chairman of a House Oversight and Reform subcommittee wants documents and information from TikTok about its "troubling practice of showing dangerous content to minors, including sex- and drug-related videos and videos peddling COVID-19 misinformation," Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) wrote to TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew on Nov. 10.

The social media platform has more than 1B users, of which 130M are aged 10 to 19, living in the US.

TikTok's algorithm learns users' interests and exploits their vulnerabilities much faster than other platforms, according to Krishnamoorthi.

"The subcommittee is also deeply concerned that TikTok has failed to adequately police itself despite high volumes of inappropriate content on the app," the Congressman wrote.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Sept. 8 that TikTok failed to respond to complaints of inappropriate sexual content on an account that it created. It alerted the platform about the 1,276 bondage and sex-related videos that appeared on its feed. TikTok only removed about half of them.

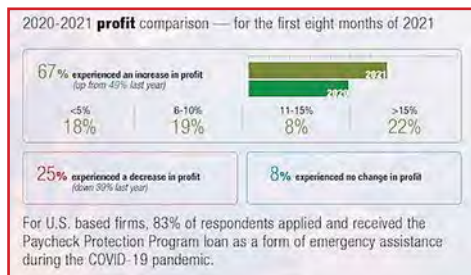
Krishnamoorthi wants to know what actions TikTok plans to take to adjust its algorithm and remove harmful content.

Zip it, Chris. When I got nothing to say, my lips are sealed, sang the Talking Heads. McDonald's CEO Chris Kempczinski apologized for his insensitive texts that just surfaced about the April shooting deaths of two kids in his company's Chicago restaurants.

The Duke University and Harvard Business School grad sent a text to Mayor Lori Lightfoot calling the murders tragic and blaming parents for failing the kids.

In a video sent to McDonald's US workers, Kempczinski promised to "learn from the incident." He also said his "background" and "very narrow world view" contributed to his ignorance. Wow. Did you even eat at a Mickey D's while at Duke or Harvard?

His clueless statement begs the question: Why did the board hire a CEO who had no clue about the company's customer base in the first place?
—Kevin McCauley



Davis+Gilbert Public Relations Industry 2021 Survey Trends + Highlights report