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TEXAS WANTS FIRM TO TOUT WINE BUSINESS

The Texas Department of Agriculture is looking for a firm to promote its wine industry, which has a \$13B economic impact on the Lone Star State.

The desired firm will plan a national wine campaign that features media events in New York and San Francisco (once COVID-19 travel restrictions are lifted) next summer and

in Texas' Hill Country (home to most of the state's 400 wineries) and High Plains (grape growing) regions.

It will invite "high-status and formally recognized" wine professionals and journalists who are perceived to be top influencers in the fields of wine rankings, winemaking and viticulture and whose opinions have the potential

to significantly impact consumption and sales of Texas wines, according to the Dept.'s RFP.

The events must include opportunities for reporters to interview Texas winemakers and to sample their products.

Responses to the RFP are due Nov. 6. They go to: Texas Department of Agriculture; Stephen F. Austin Bldg.; Attention: Procurement Contract Office; 1700 N. Congress Ave, 11th Floor; Austin, TX 78701

The package must include the solicitation number: RFP 551-20-00804 and be marked "CONFIDENTIAL."

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

DC FOOTBALLERS RECRUIT CITADEL'S JENSEN

Julie Andreeff Jensen, who previously led corporate affairs and communications at financial services company Citadel, is joining the Washington Football Team as senior vice president of external engagement and communications.

At Citadel, Jensen also was in charge of marketing, brand communications, executive communications and philanthropy, as well as launching Connect/Women, a female mentorship program. She was previously a partner at the Brunswick Group.

She has also worked on the presidential campaigns of Barack Obama, Christopher Dodd and John Kerry.

Jensen is charged with overseeing communications, public affairs, the Washington Football Charitable Foundation and the team's alumni program.

She will also work with senior vp of media & content Julie Donaldson on the Women's Initiative Network, which focuses on women's leadership and advocacy within the organization.



Julie Andreeff Jensen

PUBLICIS POSTS 9.2% DROP IN Q3 REVENUES

Publicis Groupe reported a 9.2 percent decline in Q3 revenues to \$2.7B and a 5.6 percent slip in organic growth as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to batter its operations.

CEO Arthur Sadoun put a positive spin on the numbers, saying that Publicis did better than anticipated.

"Our organic growth for Q3 is at -5.6 percent, ahead of ad spend forecasts at -10 percent," he said. "For the second quarter in a row, we are confirming that we have strong foundations to weather these unprecedented times."

The US, which represents 60 percent of overall revenues, reported organic growth of -2.4 percent, rather than the -7.0 that had been forecasted.

The European business declined 9.7 percent to \$640M in the quarter and 9.0 percent organically. The UK took a 10.6 percent hit in organic growth.

Sadoun is encouraged that "our performance with the top 200 clients is slightly positive for the first nine months of the year," but warned that Q4 might be impacted and come in below Q3 due to the resurgence of COVID-19.

Publicis owns Kekst CNC, Qorvis Communications and MSL.



Arthur Sadoun

HARRIS DIAMOND EXITS AS MCCANN CEO

PR pro Harris Diamond is stepping down as CEO of Interpublic's flagship McCann Worldgroup ad agency after an eight-year run. COO Bill Kolb will assume the top spot at the end of the year. Diamond joined McCann after leading IPG's constituency management group for eight years and helming Weber Shandwick for nearly 17 years.

He said after 35 years of building a PR business and leading global marketing communications at IPG, it's time to look at new horizons.

"I owe a tremendous debt of thanks to so many clients and colleagues, particularly the senior teams at McCann Worldgroup, Weber Shandwick, CMG and IPG who have truly been, to the extent I have been successful, keys to that success," said Diamond.

IPG CEO Michael Roth credited Diamond for McCann's record of success, recognition from clients, the industry and media, and for empowering one of the strongest leadership teams in advertising.



Harris Diamond

MOROCCO'S OCP ENLISTS FLEISHMANHILLARD

FleishmanHillard has agreed to represent OCP Group, phosphate fertilizer giant that is 94 percent owned by the Government of Morocco, as it seeks to fend off countervailing duties imposed by the US Commerce Department.

Tampa's Mosaic Co. filed a petition with the Commerce Dept. in June claiming that OCP's exports to the US are unfairly subsidized by Morocco.

In its "letter of agreement" with OCP, FH spells out a two-phase communications program beginning Oct. 6.

The one-month Phase 1 planning and preparation stage, which has a budget cap of \$100K, covers information gathering, traditional/US social media analysis, stakeholder identification/recommendations, information analysis, materials customization and digital planning.

The Phase 2 activation and engagement push is expected to last for five months and budgeted at no more than \$250K.

It includes external outreach, earned media, stakeholder/grassroots/grasstops engagement, microsite development, online grassroots and paid digital amplification.

FH senior VPs Anthony Zagora and Bailey Witt work the account with VP Tayler Tchoukaleff and Spencer Girouard.

Omnicom owns FH.

Cornerstone Government Affairs also is working for OCP under a \$300K one-year contract that went into effect Oct. 1.

OMNICOM DIVERSITY CHIEF HEADS TO SONY

Tiffany Warren, senior VP & chief diversity officer, is leaving Omnicom at the end of the month after a more than



Tiffany Warren

10-year run for Sony Music Group. She will become SMG's executive VP-chief diversity & inclusion officer.

Chief John Wren noted that Omnicom was the first in the industry to create a top diversity post.

Under her leadership, Warren notched "notable gains in recruiting, retaining and developing a diverse workforce across the group and have accelerated our momentum in doing

more to advance systemic equity," according to Wren.

She headed OMC's "open leadership team" which includes 25 diversity champions across the holding company's agencies and network.

SCHOLASTIC'S SMIRNOV JOINS LIPPE TAYLOR

Stephanie Smirnov, a consumer branding and corporate communications pro, has signed on at Lippe Taylor as chief engagement officer.

She joins the New York firm from Scholastic Inc, where Smirnov was executive VP & head of global corporate communications in charge of earned/social media, marketing, events, and crisis management.



Stephanie Smirnov

Earlier, Smirnov was managing director at Edelman, handling Unilever, Church & Dwight, Chobani and Priceline; and US CEO at DeVries Public Relations, responsible for its Procter & Gamble products.

At Lippe Taylor, she takes over from Tracy Naden, who will assume a new role at the firm.

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGERS ON THE MOVE

While most social media managers give themselves high marks for job performance, far fewer of them plan to stay in their present positions for more than a couple of years, according to a recently released study. Plus, most of them say that they spend less than half of their time on the job working on social-media related duties.

"The Career Path of a Social Media Professional," conducted by the Institute for Public Relations Digital Media Research Center, Ragan Communications and the University of Florida, surveyed more than 400 social media managers to find out about their job roles and responsibilities, career ambitions, and the reporting and management structure at their companies.

Sixty percent of those surveyed rated their job performance as either above average (44 percent) or excellent (16 percent), and nearly all of the rest (36 percent) put themselves in the average category.

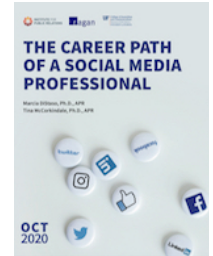
Those numbers were similar when respondents were asked how their companies perceived their value, with 36 percent saying they were seen as average, 42 percent as above average and 17 percent saying their perceived value was excellent.

However, only 13 percent of respondents said they would "definitely" be promoted to a more senior social media position, with 27 saying they would "probably" be promoted. On the other side a third (33 percent) said they would "probably not" or "definitely not" be promoted.

Perhaps because of that, few respondents plan to stick around in their position for the long haul. Almost a quarter (22 percent) said they were actively seeking new opportunities. Only 19 percent said they planned to be in their current role in five years' time.

Close to a third (31 percent) of those surveyed said they were the only employee on their company's social media team, while 51 percent said led a team of two or three people, and only six percent were on social media team with more than 11 employees.

To read the entire study, [click here](#).



EDMONDS (WA) WANTS TOURISM BOOST

The City of Edmonds, which is on the shores of Puget Sound minutes from Seattle, is looking for a firm to promote tourism.

Incorporated in 1890, Edmonds boasts of "historic charm, outstanding natural aesthetics, a vibrant and bustling downtown and a thriving arts and cultural scene," according to its RFP.

The desired firm will create a yearly promotional plan, pitch stories, draft tourism articles, conduct social media activity and manage Edmonds' website.

It will have experience in tourism marketing and the ability to work with various interest groups and stakeholders.

Proposals are due Oct. 23. They may be emailed in PDF format to patrick.doherty@edmondswa.gov with "Edmonds Tourism Promotion Services Response" in the subject line.

Proposals also may be mailed to: The City of Edmonds; Attn: Patrick Doherty; 121 Fifth Avenue North; Edmonds, WA 98020

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



LIFTING THE VEIL ON SALARIES AND PROFITS

For the past three decades, I've been immersed in the agency side of high-tech public relations. During this time I've worked for, competed against, or personally built just about every type of agency you can imagine, from the small, scrappy media relations "boot camps" capable of getting results and taking abuse from clients with equal aplomb, to the ivory tower "brand snob" shops projecting an air of extreme selectivity and unattainability to the average tech company.

While I've developed my own strong opinions on how to scale a PR agency (hint: there are many paths to success, not just one), there is one unifying factor without which none of these firms would ever get off the ground—the people who staff them. Most of these people are young, impressionable, eager to do a great job and completely clueless about the agency business model and its nuances.



Fred Bateman

This is a topic I've been fascinated by for years, and many of my colleagues and confidantes will know that I conduct a yearly survey of salaries and financial practices for tech PR agencies. While this survey has become an invaluable resource for agency owners to see how their salary and benefits

packages stack up against competitors, it still doesn't solve a fundamental issue: without financial transparency, there will always be a degree of suspicion as to where all the profits go every year and resentment from the staff for the strict code of secrecy about agency finances in general.

No Better Time for Transparency

It's time for a reckoning in our industry. Agency owners are intimately familiar with the games being played and the stories being told to young, talented employees. "Our firm is renowned for its culture. We love and care about our work, and we treat our team members with compassion." Meanwhile, horror stories are shared about those other agencies, where account executives are worked to death and left to cry quietly at their desks.

Moreover, the PR agency model with its hierarchical structure—beginning with the entry-level Account Coordinator and usually containing at least 8-10 different titles to climb, e.g., Assistant Account Executive, Account Executive, Senior Account Executive, Account Manager, Senior Account Manager, Account Director—puts staffers on a hamster wheel of sorts, constantly dangling the carrot of the next promotion in order to extract the highest possible performance over the greatest length of time. After ten years, those willing to stick it out might have the chance to become a VP and finally get a sense of the financials underlying the agency.

The broader business community has already been facing this reckoning over the past few years, as a lack of transparency has revealed that companies and organizations systematically underpay women and people of color. Most famously, this summer saw Condé Nast's red-hot Bon Appetit YouTube channel implode when it was revealed that several BIPOC staffers were not compensated for their work. Meanwhile, their white colleagues had signed five-figure contracts.

A Culture of Radical Transparency

Having thought about this issue now for decades, I was finally presented with the opportunity to try something different with the founding of Bateman Agency. Though the agency is still in its early days, we are building our organization on a foundation of transparency and fairness, with the principle that equal work merits equal pay. Salary bands for full-time employees and hourly rates for contractors will be shared with all Bateman Agency staffers regardless of W-9 or W-2 classification, and we are ensuring that each employee has a clear understanding of how the agency uses its profits and why.

Transparency at Bateman Agency is a matter of trust. While I hope that our team has faith in my leadership and my interest in fairness, the legacy of high-tech PR gives them no reason to take an agency founder at their word. By lifting the veil on our salary structures and ensuring that every employee knows the score, we're creating an environment free from jealousy, competition and the feeling of being undervalued.

In every aspect of our work, transparency can only serve to solve problems. An agency that doesn't keep secrets from its employees is one that communicates more effectively, works more efficiently, and maintains a truly positive company culture.

If introducing new degrees of transparency would cause problems for your agency, take the time to ask why. If knowing how much your coworker makes would lead to resentment, what kind of decisions have been made? It's time for PR to open up about its payment policies; I hope Bateman Agency will only be the first of many.

Fred Bateman is CEO & Founder of Bateman Agency, LLC (www.bateman.agency).

FTI HOOKS MARLIN AS CRISIS CHIEF

FTI Consulting has appointed senior managing director Myron Marlin head of crisis and litigation communications for the Americas in its strategic communications segment.

Before joining FTI in 2014, Marlin was communications director at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. He has also served as chief spokesman and director of public affairs at the U.S. Department of Justice, and has been a senior vice president at APCO Worldwide.

In his new role, Marlin will lead a multidisciplinary team of experts providing communications counsel to clients as they prepare for and manage complex crises involving litigation, regulatory, operational, political and reputational risk.

"Having served in leading communications roles at the SEC and DOJ—and subsequently counseling myriad corporate clients facing crises, litigation and government investigations—Myron's leadership atop this core practice area will be a tremendous asset to our firm and our clients," said FTI Americas head of strategic communications Brian Kenney .



Myron Marlin

SC DEPT. OF ED WANTS TO ENROLL PR FIRM

The South Carolina Department of Education, which oversees more than 1,200 schools, 750K students and 60K educators in the K-12 public system, is seeking a PR firm to provide strategic communications, media outreach and crisis management services. The Department also owns and maintains the state's pupil transportation system.

The RFP calls for a campaign that will increase and enhance program awareness and perception among stakeholders, including parents, educational partners, South Carolina's general public and national/regional/local media.

The desired partner will use "research and market-based strategies to evaluate implementation and execution of strategic communications and marketing plan and messaging," according to the document. It also will develop and distribute electronic and print campaign marketing/promotional material.

The Department plans to issue a three-year contract with work beginning on Dec. 1. There will be two one-year renewal options.

Proposals are due Oct. 30. Interested parties must have a state vendor number that may be obtained at www.procurement.sc.gov.

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

JOELE FRANK HANDLES MALLINCKRODT

Joele Frank is handling the Chapter 11 filing of Mallinckrodt as the pharmaceutical company seeks to ease pressure from claims arising from the opioid crisis.

Mallinckrodt is using the bankruptcy to iron out a \$1.6B deal with state and local governments to settle the claims made by thousands of plaintiffs.

CEO Mark Trudeau said the company worked diligently during the past several months to evaluate available options "to achieve a comprehensive resolution to the significant litigation and debt issues overhanging our business."

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher has Michael Freitag, Aaron Palash and Aura Reinhard on the Mallinckrodt case.

APCO NAMES WHEELLESS EQUITY HEAD

Charlene Wheelless, most recently VP-global corporate affairs at Bechtel Corp., is now senior advisor for equity and justice issues at independent firm APCO Worldwide.



Charlene Wheelless

She will advise APCO and its clients on equity, justice, diversity and inclusion issues. Wheelless also will counsel clients on purpose, crisis management, internal communications and organizational change.

"Finding ways to address racial and systemic inequalities must be an integral part of every company's corporate strategy," said Margery Kraus, APCO founder/executive chairman.

Before joining Bechtel, Wheelless was VP-communications at Raytheon's intelligence & information systems unit and senior VP global communications & marketing at American Management Systems.

Wheelless, who joined APCO's international advisory council in August, chairs the Arthur W. Page Society.

APCO is No. 3 on O'Dwyer's rankings of PR firms with 2019 fees of \$142.3M.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Bullfrog + Baum has been named public relations and marketing agency for North America for the **Kyushu Tourism Promotion Organization**, which promotes travel to Japan's southernmost island. Bullfrog + Baum will work with KTPO to raise awareness around Kyushu among U.S. travelers through strategic media relations that will highlight the adventures that await travelers on the island. "We are excited to work with Bullfrog + Baum to introduce Kyushu as the next must-visit destination within Japan," said KTPO executive director Futoshi Watanabe.

Magrino has added third-generation, family-owned meat purveyor **Mosner Family Brands**, to its client roster. Magrino will be handling media relations for the launch of Mosner's direct-to-consumer home delivery service. Founded in 1957 and a pioneer in the local food movement, the company is building on its business as a purveyor for restaurants, distributors and retailers. The agency has also signed on with boutique hospitality company **Savory**, the **Court of Master Sommeliers**, which encourages quality standards for beverage service, and **Salcheto**, an organic winery based in Montepulciano, Italy.



Buffalo Agency has been enlisted by **Rain or Shine Golf** to promote the company's online retail channel, www.rainorshinegolf.com, as well as its service offerings which help golfers find at-home practice/entertainment solutions. Buffalo will execute a strategic public relations campaign to publicize Rain or Shine Golf in consumer and trade media across North America. This includes promoting company storylines, proprietary products and partnerships.

French|West|Vaughan works with **Wilmington and Beaches CVB** on "Fall is the New Summer," a campaign promoting fall travel to the North Carolina resort area. FWV's work for the client includes earned media outreach, social media and blog content development. The effort, which primarily focuses on reaching in-state audiences who are actively researching travel options, will utilize such channels as paid search, paid social, programmatic, targeted eBlasts and publisher direct. Continuing through the end of October, the campaign seeks to reassure potential visitors about COVID concerns related to safety and remind potential travelers that the destination's summer offerings are all still available in the fall.



Powers Brand Communications has acquired three new franchise clients: **petbar**, a Dallas-based pet wash and spa; **The Closet Trading Company**, which sells used clothing, shoes and accessories for women, and fast-casual restaurant **Nick Filet**.

TransMedia Group has been engaged to manage all public relations activities for the South Florida affiliate of **RSVP Advertising**, which bills itself as the "Original Luxury Direct Mail Agency." TransMedia Group plans to schedule radio and television appearances and print interviews for RSVP of South Florida owner and operator Mitch Ziffer. It will also assist with social media content and graphic creation for RSVP's luxury card packs, which promote brands to homeowners in need of their services.

COVID-19 VACCINE IS NO. 1 TOPIC IN '21

COVID-19 will remain top of mind for consumers in 2021, according to a survey that is part of the USC Center for Public Relations' newly published 2021 Relevance Report.



Close to half (44.3 percent) of respondents listed a potential COVID-19 vaccine as a subject in which they are highly interested. Perhaps in response to quarantine living, food and recipes were the second-most-popular topic, cited by 21.8 percent of the respondents. Conducted in partnership with

the Institute for Public Relations and Golin, the survey asked 1,087 Americans about the topics, products, brands and people that will be most relevant to them next year.

When it comes to where survey respondents go to express their opinions on social issues, Facebook beats all comers, with 46.1 percent naming it as the platform they go to most often. Instagram came in second at 17 percent, and Twitter was favored by 10.9 percent.

With an eye towards life getting back to normal next year, 20.8 percent of respondents said they were looking forward to eating inside restaurants. Other activities, such as attending live concerts (11.9 percent), going to movie theaters (10.8 percent), going to the beach (9 percent) and traveling by air (8.2 percent) were somewhat less popular.

Trust was a major issue for survey respondents as well. Doctors were chosen as the most accurate, credible source of information by 18 percent, followed by journalists (10.5 percent) and educators (7.7 percent). Only 2.4 percent said that public relations professionals were the most trusted source.

Amazon, Chick-fil-A and Apple ranked as the brands whose overall social engagement would make consumers most likely to support them in 2021.

The 2021 Relevance Report is available for download at annenbergl.usc.edu/relevance.

UNC CHARLOTTE LOOKS FOR PR JOLT

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte has issued an RFP to handle its PR and marketing initiatives on an as-needed basis.

UNC Charlotte was established in 1965 with the incorporation of Charlotte College into the state system. It has an enrollment of 30K, with 19 percent pursuing graduate degrees.

The school has consolidated its communications, design, marketing and production contractors into a more unified, manageable and centrally directed set of relationships to improve the strategic focus of its outreach effort, according to the RFP.

On the PR front, UNC Charlotte seeks a firm(s) to position its brand and work with the media relations staff to enhance the University's image or protect its reputation.

The partner(s) will handle content development, media relations, training, social media, messaging, events and marketing activations.

Preference will be given to firms based in the Greater Charlotte area.

Responses are due Oct. 27

They must be submitted electronically via the North Carolina Business Invitation Delivery System (NC BIDS).

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

PR FIRMS PLEDGE TO BOOST LIFE IN CHICAGO

Chicago mayor Lori Lightfoot and Michael Fassnacht, the city's chief marketing officer, have announced the launch of "By Chicago. For Chicago," a program under which participating agencies will donate one percent of all staff hours worked to provide pro-bono support to organizations that work to improve the lives of all Chicago residents.

Signing on to the "By Chicago. By Chicago" pledge are 17 creative agencies, PR and strategic communications firms, and healthcare marketing organizations that include Edelman, Ogilvy, Zeno Group, Current Global, MSL, Havas Chicago and Flowers Communications Group.

The initiative will connect organizations with agencies that can offer them services such as creative campaigns, social media content, marketing materials, integrated media strategies and virtual or live events.

Fassnacht will work with participating agencies to help identify and suggest projects based on each agency's strengths, but agencies are also encouraged to select their own pro-bono projects.

Agencies that would like to join the "By Chicago. For Chicago" pledge can contact Alison Bouchard at alison.bouchard@cityofchicago.org.

INDIA INKS WILLIAMS GROUP

India has hired the Williams Group for strategic counsel, tactical planning and government relations on policy matters before the White House, Congress and select state governments, as well as academic institutions and think tanks.

Williams Group founder Michael Williams, former managing director of Credit Suisse in its public policy Americas unit and special assistant to the president and staff director for legislative affairs in the Clinton White House, is working the India business.



Michael Williams

The \$15K monthly contract began Oct. 1 and runs through March.

The firm reports to Taranjit Singh Sandhu, India's ambassador to the US.

DIVERSITY MARKETING CONSORTIUM EXPANDS

The Diversity Marketing Consortium, which works to help offset systemic racial and gender-based inequity for under-represented business founders, has brought on several new members.

Peppercomm, Clarity, Praytell and Racepoint Global have all signed on to support the organization, which was formed in July 2020 by SourceCode Communications, Cheer Partners, influencer agency Social Studies and Superbolt.

DMC is partnering with Harlem Capital, an early-stage venture capital firm focused on investing in minority and women founders in the United States, to provide \$3 million in pro bono marketing services over the course of two years.

Companies in the program, which include those in Harlem Capital's portfolio, will work with the DMC for a minimum of three months, after which another group of founders will participate in the program.

Startups that wish to apply for the program can do so through [Harlem Capital's pitch competition](#) on Oct. 22, or by visiting [the DMC's website](#).

COMMENTARY



Elizabeth Warren

“I’m Mike Wallace and I’m from 60 Minutes.” Those words were once feared by CEOs across the land.

During the 1990s, there were plenty of crisis PR workshops about what to do when Mike Wallace and his camera crew show up unannounced at corporate headquarters. Slamming the door and turning out the lights may have been the best strategy.

Today there’s a new sheriff in town, one more likely to fire off a letter than to make a dramatic TV photo-op.

That missive begins with “I write to express concern” and Senator Elizabeth Warren is that concerned corporate watchdog.

The Massachusetts Democrat on Oct. 13 set her sights on Walt Disney Co. chairman Bob Iger and CEO Bob Chapek.

She expressed her concern about their decision to “lay off 28,000 workers during an economic recession, while reinstating pay rates for highly compensated senior executives.” Ouch.

Warren shredded Disney’s argument that California’s decision to keep Disneyland closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic triggered the job cuts.

She said 6,400 of the workers were laid off in Florida, along with another 8,857 part-timers.

In April, Disney’s top executives took salary cuts of 20 to 30 percent, but pay was restored in August, a month before the company’s Sept. 29 announcement of 28,000 layoffs.

The Senator blasted the huge total compensation packages hauled in by Iger (\$47M in 2019) and Chapek (\$22.5M) and the billions (\$47.9B from 2009-2018) spent to repurchase stock, “a practice that is known to turn excess cash into higher stock prices for the benefit of shareholders.”

She took Chapek to task for saying earlier this year: “Our ability to do good in the world starts with our cast members....who create magic every day. Our commitment to them will always be our top priority.”

Warren responded: “Yet it appears that—prior to, and during the pandemic—Disney took good care of its top executives and shareholders and now is hanging its front-line workers out to dry.”

Mickey and Minnie have a friend in Warren.

Has Donald Trump totally lost his mind? Or is a case of COVID-19 “brain fog?” The president’s squabble with Dr. Anthony Fauci, the most revered figure on Team Trump, is not exactly a smart PR move.

America’s top infectious disease expert is enraged that Trump’s campaign used him in one of their ads as apparently endorsing the president’s efforts to fight the virus. That would only be true on opposite day.

“I can’t imagine that anybody could be doing more,” said Fauci in the ad. That reference was to the COVID-19 task force, not the COVID-19 denier-in-chief.

The doctor, who has never endorsed a candidate in his

50 years of government service, told the president to knock it off, saying it would be “outrageous” and “terrible,” if he popped in another spot.

He warned Trump that if he was featured in another ad that it would “come back to backfire.”

Of course, Fauci’s threat is like waving a red cape at a charging bull. You can bet Fauci will make a return appearance in the campaign. When it comes to COVID-19, what else does Trump have going for him?

What could the good doctor do in response? He isn’t thinking of quitting his post. “Not a chance,” he told *The Daily Beast*. “Not in my wildest freakin’ dreams, “did I ever think about quitting.”

How about ratcheting it up to DefCon1 and endorsing Joe Biden?

That would be a great way for Fauci to gain a measure of revenge for Trump’s depraved indifference to the scientific recommendations made to counter COVID-19, which has killed more than 215K Americans.

Working remotely is taking a toll on productivity at Google, according to an internal survey that found only 31 percent of its engineering staff report high productivity levels.

Conducted at the end of June, at-home productivity slipped eight points from a survey in March, according to the tech website, *The Information*.

Michael Bachman, head of engineering productivity, called the data “relevant for all teams across the company.”

In July, Google CEO Sundar Pichai extended the work from home option from the end of year through the second half of 2021 to give employees that ability to plan ahead.

“I hope this will offer the flexibility you need to balance work with taking care of yourselves and your loved ones over the next 12 months,” he wrote in an email to staffers.

Many tech firms followed Google’s lead on the work at home option. As productivity slips, will they revisit their policies?

More than 140 professionals signed on for the Oct. 14 launch of the 100kPledge (The100kPledge.com) online “pledgiestry,” the first public record of racial justice initiatives that enable companies and individuals to commit and track progress to improving economic opportunities for Black communities by 2030.

The 100Kpledge is a digital social contract that hosts a sortable public record, where a counter displays total dollar amounts committed and progress made to meet the goal. It operates on an honor system.

The 100Kpledge started with \$45B in commitments. They include pledges from Twitter founder Jack Dorsey (\$1B), Salesforce (\$410M), Michael Jordan (\$100M), Verizon (\$10M), Cisco (\$5M), TikTok (\$4M) and Yum Brands (\$3M).

The 100Kpledge is the brainchild of Vijay Chattha (founder of VSC strategic communications/content firm), Paras Shah (strategy director at Different Strokes) and Nihal Mehta (founding general partner at Eniac Ventures).

Hats off to them.

—Kevin McCauley