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O'Dwyer's

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DENVER NEEDS CLIMATE CHANGE PR

Denver seeks a firm to develop an innovative and creative communications and engagement strategy to inject climate change and action more prominently into the public dialogue.



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

The Office of Climate Action, Sustainability and Resiliency reports that 71 percent of Denver residents are “very worried” or “somewhat worried” about climate change but 64 percent of them “rarely” or “never”

discuss the subject with family or friends.

The aim of the communications effort is to bridge the gap between Denverites concerned about climate change and those taking action to solve it.

It will encourage people to buy electric vehicles; reduce consumption of single-use plastic; cut water use in landscaping; shift to solar or switch from gas to electric for heating/cooling/cooking; and consider careers in “green jobs.”

The selected firm will mobilize audiences to take action to confront the climate crisis through using trusted messengers to tell stories that have urgent, actionable steps, according to the RFP.

Denver has budgeted \$3M for the three-year PR effort. Proposals are due Oct. 25.

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

HERBALIFE RECRUITS TYSON FOODS' BROWN

Herbalife, a health and wellness company, names Susan Brown VP, head of global corporate communications. Brown was previously head of global corporate communications at



Susan Brown

Tyson Foods. She was also founder of strategic comms shop Big Impact Communications and led global communications at PwC.

In her new role, she will lead Herbalife's communications function, including the development and execution of all internal and external communications, overseeing corporate reputation, and advancing communications strategy in support of the company's business objectives.

“Susan brings a wealth of experience in communications and reputation management for global companies to this leadership role, and we are excited to welcome her to the Herbalife family,” said executive vice president and chief of staff, Ibi Montesino.

CHARTWELL REPS GOU'S PRESIDENTIAL RUN

Chartwell Strategy Group is providing media relations and public affairs services in the US for Terry Gou, the Foxconn founder who is running for president as an independent candidate in Taiwan.



Terry Gou

Foxconn, the largest electronics manufacturer in the world, is based in Taiwan but generates the bulk of its revenues from its factories in China. Its Shenzhen plant produces most of Apple's iPhones.

Billionaire Gou, 72, has promised to bring Taiwan “back from the abyss of war with China,” according to a report in the BBC.

He selected actress Tammy Lai, who played the role of a presidential candidate in the Netflix hit show “Wave Makers,” as his running mate. The show sparked a “MeToo” movement in Taiwan.

Taiwan's presidential election is set for Jan. 13.

Chartwell's \$50K a-month contract runs from Sept. 1 to Jan. 31.

Managing directors Matthew Epperly and David Tamasi, director Janet Nice, and associate Grayson Midkiff work the effort for Gou.

BUZZFEED'S MITTENTHAL TO THE GUARDIAN

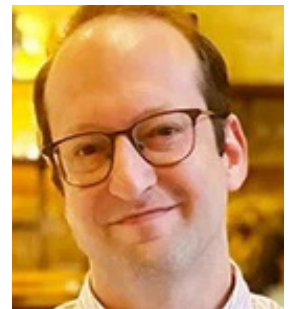
Buzzfeed VP, communications Matt Mienthal moves to The Guardian US, where he will serve as head of communications.

Mienthal joined BuzzFeed in 2017 to lead comms for its news division, and later took responsibility for the rest of the company's communications as well.

He was previously a spokesperson for Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign and press secretary for the New York State Attorney General.

At the Guardian US, Mienthal will be responsible for driving the platform's editorial and commercial reputation and brand, working with senior Guardian editors and executives, in the US and globally.

“Matt is a trusted, experienced media operator, and I know he will help us get the biggest impact from our journalism,” said The Guardian US editor Betsy Reed.



Matt Mienthal

COMMUNICATORS TAKE STRATEGIC ROLE

Communications leaders are playing a larger role in every aspect of a company's decision making, according to a newly released report from Edelman.



“[The Future of Corporate Communications](#)” surveyed 218 heads of communications to get a look at how they think their jobs—and the overall state of corporate communications—are changing.

The big takeaway: CCOs are taking on duties that go far beyond what was once expected of them. Survey participants reported that they now spend close to one-fifth (18 percent) of their time “advising the CEO on non-communications activities.” More than half think of themselves as strategic partners or advisors to their organization's business leaders—up from slightly over a third who said that two years ago.

A key function of the expanded role is that communications leaders are being brought into the conversation about important business decisions at an earlier point. More than a quarter (27 percent) say they are consulted before a decision is taken, with 64 percent saying they are asked to weigh in on tentative decisions as a way of gaining perspective on stakeholder considerations. Just nine percent said they are not asked until after a decision has been made.

Heads of communications are also taking a bigger role in managing the tools and talent required to fuel more data-driven decision making. Close to half (44 percent) said that they are investing more heavily in communications technology than they did last year.

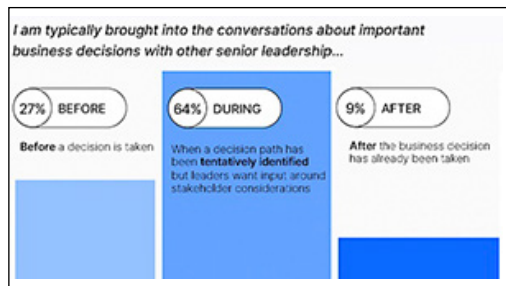
The rise of the importance of employees as stakeholders has also impacted the jobs of communications leaders. That's especially important when it comes to a company's stance on social issues, where employees are putting the most pressure on organizations to act. Comms leaders say they are expected to drive culture and employee experience through such strategies as ensuring clear communications and transparency, as well as maintaining a positive and supportive work environment.

Because of that, survey respondents say that comms leaders will be a key factor in shaping the next phase of stakeholder capitalism. More than three-quarters (76 percent) say ESG considerations are “mostly or fully” integrated into their communications

strategy. They add that helping move those considerations forward will require better data and analytics, increased enterprise action and increased comms budgets.

However, those increased budgets may not be on the way. While 55 percent of those surveyed in 2021 expected comms budgets to grow over the next year, that number slid to 40 percent in this year's study.

The [Edelman](#) study was initially fielded in June of this year, with extensive interviews being conducted in July and August.



ON THE MOVE

TrailRunner International hires **Seth Hand** as managing director and head of Middle East. Hand joins TrailRunner from Edelman Middle East, where he was managing director and led the regional corporate reputation practice. Before Edelman, Hand served in several other senior leadership roles in the Gulf region, including regional managing director for the Middle East at Finsbury and director for new market development at Grayling. “We are pleased to have found in Seth a leader who sees the world the same way we do and who will help us find the best ways for TrailRunner to contribute to the broader success of this incredibly dynamic and critically important part of the world,” said TrailRunner International CEO Jim Hughes.



Seth Hand

Antenna Group brings on **Marisa Long** as senior VP of climate & energy and **Kristin Ford-Glencross** as VP of climate & mobility. Before joining Antenna Group, Long was at Washington D.C.-based global non-profit U.S. Green Building Council, where she worked to shape campaigns for various international and domestic products and programs. Ford-Glencross was previously VP, brand strategy + executive thought leadership at Rogers & Cowan PMK and a VP at APCO Worldwide. She will guide clients in communicating complex mobility and electrification technologies.

Winebow Imports, an importer of fine wine and spirits, names **Brad Mayer** as senior VP, marketing. He previously served as VP, marketing at the company from 2006-2015. Most recently, Mayer led marketing and communications at Union Wine Company. He has also served as VP, public relations & experience at Precept Wine; senior product manager at Amazon; and director of product marketing at Nordstrom.

DCI Group adds **Chary Sathea** and **Hannah Student** to its digital and social media team. Sathea, who is coming on board as a director, was most recently a senior digital account supervisor, digital at Praytell. She has worked with brands such as the Cancer Research Institute, Fender and Globalization Partners. Student, who joins DCI as a senior account executive, was most recently with Targeted Victory. She has managed the digital programs for U.S. Senators, Governors, Representatives, and major Congressional committees.

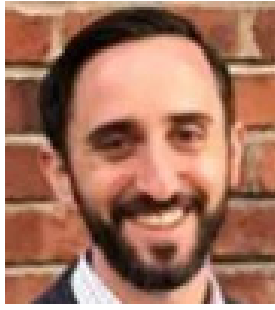


Chary Sathea, Hannah Student

Marcus Theatres, which owns or operates 993 movie screens at 79 locations in 17 states, appoints **Ken Thewes** as senior VP of marketing. Most recently, Thewes was the chief marketing officer for Regal Cinemas, the second-largest theater chain in the US. He was previously VP of marketing for Spartan Stores and Chili's. At Marcus Theatres, Thewes will be tasked with leveraging his experience and relationships with film studios and theatrical exhibition to maximize attendance and revenue for the company's locations.

SEVEN TIPS FOR SUCCESS AT CES 2024

I live in the San Francisco Bay Area, which means we're entering the warmest months of the calendar year: A late summer after the cool ocean breezes and heavy fog of June,



Chip Scarzini

July, and August. However, that doesn't mean the mind shouldn't drift toward the winter months. In fact, if you're planning on making some noise at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in January, the clock is already ticking.

One more year from the worst of things, all signs point to many more adding the largest consumer products showcase in the world to their calendars in 2024.

As you begin the planning process, here are a few things to keep in mind to ensure your next visit to the Las Vegas Strip is your best yet:

Tap into key CES topics of note.

Every year, the Consumer Technology Association (CTA) settles on an overarching theme for CES. In 2024, and for the second year in a row, they'll emphasize the collaborative campaign, [Human Security for All \(HS4A\)](#), which focuses on the role technology can play in improving the human condition. There are many ways of interpreting this purpose, but brands participating in CES this year should consider what role they or their products play in making life better for all.

Lean into CES' reputation as a new product show.

CES is still very much a new product show. While it's best to announce products that will, at some point, be made available for purchase, don't be afraid to pull the curtain back a bit and share some under-development product innovation that may still be a bit further away.

Immersive, hands-on experiences often deliver the goods.

As your team begins to map out the brand experience at the show, consider how you might be able to give booth or suite attendees—especially media and analysts—immersive, hands-on time with your product(s). It's one thing to tell someone you have a great product, but another thing entirely to let them experience it for themselves.

Consider a surround-sound content strategy for your brand, not just your news.

Every year, a few brands will dominate CES media coverage simply by virtue of their reputation for innovation. However, a little creativity and rigor around content development can go a long way toward ensuring success for your brand. For example, carve out time and structure for your teams on the ground at the show to embrace the broader CES experience. Set them loose with a smartphone and a well-organized plan and turn them into roving content creators. One cautionary note: Make sure to set clear creative guardrails so those smartphone videos shine vs. embarrass.

Start everything early—earlier than you think.

I've always advocated for deploying a far-reaching pre-brief media strategy because I find it's the best way to set product launches and brand experiences up for success while easing the burden on reporters who will be pulled in a million directions as the show comes into focus. If you've waited to pitch the media until launch day, it's too late.

Don't forget the folks at home.

If the virtual CES of 2021 taught us anything, it's that it is

entirely possible to build a winning CES program—and from a media perspective, cover the show—from the comfort of home. I'd expect that this will continue. Still, the brands generating the most attention will be the ones who create positive experiences for those covering the show from far afield.

And finally, yes, ask yourself if you have an AI story.

There's no avoiding the inevitable AI spotlight at CES 2024. The various permutations of Generative AI has been the topic of the year and it will surely be on the tip of everyone's tongue at CES 2024. How is AI impacting your brand? How has it impacted product development, if at all? Consider what might be possible to say about this burgeoning technology that has carved out sizeable real estate in 2023 tech conversations and will only continue to grow in influence and impact. But don't just force an AI angle because it's all the rage—make sure your AI story is authentically yours and maps honestly to your product narrative and brand value.

The beauty of CES is that there are a million ways to run a successful program. And every year, it's fun to do a bit of tinkering and try new things. How will you approach the show this year? I'd love to hear your thoughts and, in a few months' time, hope to see you in Las Vegas!

Chip Scarzini is head of technology at [Ruder Finn](#).

NYS SEEKS PR PUSH FOR COUNTY/LOCAL FAIRS

New York State is looking for a firm to handle marketing and advertising to promote its more than 50 county and local fairs slated for 2024.

Designed to highlight agricultural products, history and tradition, the fairs also feature a Midway, food vendors, exhibitions and musical acts.



The campaign's messaging will educate the general public about how fairs bolster local economics and promote them as exciting and affordable entertainment options.

New York has budgeted \$1M for the 2024 marketing and ad push.

Responses, due Oct 18, must be mailed or hand-delivered to: NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets; Division of Fiscal Management; 108 Airline Drive; Albany, NY 12235; ATTN: Lindsay Blair or John Ross (RFP0314)

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

ICR HANDLES FAT DEAL

[ICR Inc.](#) handles FAT Brands as the Los Angeles-based fast-casual, quick-serve restaurant owner/franchisor acquires Smokey Bones Bar & Fire Grill chain from Sun Capital Partners.

The \$30M acquisition puts FAT (Fresh. Authentic. Tasty.) into the barbecue business. Smokey has 61 outlets in 16 states.

"Having a strong player in the barbecue space provides another arrow in our quiver for the polished dining segment and opens the door for additional growth strategies for our sister brands," said Andy Wiederhorn, chairman/founder of FAT.

His company owns 17 brands including Johnny Rockets, Ponderosa and Bonanza Steakhouses, Pretzelmaker, Fatburger, Round Table Pizza and Hot Dog on a Stick.

ICR's Michelle Michalski has IR duties for Fat Brands.



VERMONT PRESCRIBES DISEASE MARKETING

Vermont plans to award one or more contracts to firms that provide chronic & infectious disease marketing, communications and media services.



The desired outcomes of the RFP are to establish four-year agreements to develop, enhance and implement behavior change marketing, communications and public health education services for the Dept. of Health's Division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and the Division of Laboratory Sciences and Infectious Disease, according to the document.

The selected firms will have knowledge of behavior change theories; marketing/health communications principles; experience of dealing with print, TV, radio and online media to reach different target audiences; and expertise in PR, advertising, research and media planning/buying.

Vermont has budgeted \$2.7M for the marketing push that will begin on Jan. 1.

Proposals are due Oct. 13 and go to the [Green Mountain State's electronic portal](#).
[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

SATTERWHITE SHIFTS TO INVARIANT

Invariant has added Ellen Satterwhite, who has nearly 20 years of Silicon Valley, government and agency experience, to its strategic communications and public affairs team.



Ellen Satterwhite

Previously, she was a VP at Glen Echo Group and a staff member at the Federal Communications Commission.

She will counsel Invariant's tech clients on how to build brands, launch products and manage regulatory and legislative issues.

Satterwhite joins Invariant from San Francisco-based Patreon, which helps creators develop online platforms to manage and grow their subscription models. As head of global communications and US policy, she oversaw corporate, crisis and policy communications programming.

GAGNIER WORKS XFL, USFL MERGER

Gagnier Communications handles the XFL as it plans to merge with the United States Football League, a move that joins the two spring leagues.

The combination "will anchor professional spring football with substantial capabilities and resources to ensure future growth," said the joint announcement.



The leagues promised to release more details soon.

The games of the USFL, which opened its second season in April are televised by FOX and NBC. The XFL kicked off in February with eight teams

The former husband and wife team of Dwayne Johnson and Dany Garcia, along with Gerry Cardinale's RedBird Capital Partners own the XFL.

Gagnier Communications' Dan Gagnier and Lindsay Barber handle PR for the XFL.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Workhouse lands **HeroicU**, a workforce development company committed to preparing students and families for the challenges of the New Workforce, focusing on skills development, engagement and accountability. Workhouse will direct a program of international branded visibility for HeroicU, including global public relations, domestic promotions and celebrity partnerships. HeroicU comprises approximately 100 experts in game-based learning, social and economic success, health and wellness, 21st-century skills, and character development.

Sharp Think is taking on PR agency of record duties for the **National Kitchen & Bath Association** and the **Kitchen & Bath Industry Show**. The agency



will be responsible for all earned media, thought leadership and special programming for NKBA and KBIS, working to engage the architecture, design and building communities. NKBA, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2023, is a not-for-profit trade association for the kitchen and bath industry. KBIS, owned by NKBA and produced by Emerald Expositions, is the largest show in North America serving the kitchen and bath sector. The next KBIS will be held February 27-29, 2024 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

5W Public Relations signs on as PR agency of record for **Linqto**, a financial technology investment platform democratizing access to private markets for accredited investors. 5W will work to disseminate Linqto's key messages and reach a wider audience through media relations, conferences and awards. The agency will leverage its media expertise and strategic storytelling approach with accredited investors and private equity and financial media outlets.

Hemsworth Communications adds **Villa Vie Residences** to its roster of travel and tourism clients. Hemsworth is tasked with crafting and executing a national public relations launch for the cruise ship, developing an integrated media relations, event, award and promotional strategic plan to establish its presence as a leading force in the evolution of luxury world travel. Villa Vie Residences offers travelers the opportunity to explore the world while living onboard a luxury cruise ship.

360PR+ will handle public relations for fine jewelry brand **Mattia Cielo**. The agency will work to raise awareness of the brand's core collection, RUGIADA, and new releases, with activations at specialty fine jewelry retailers nationwide. Founded in 2007 by Mattia Cielo, heir of a dynasty of Italian jewelers, Cielo Venezia 1270, the brand's products are distributed in more than 20 countries.



Magrino signs on to represent viral media personality **The Pasta Queen**, e.g. Nadia Caterina Munno, along with her brand. The agency is tasked with optimizing The Pasta Queen's social reach and strategy while also extending her profile beyond the social feed. Munno is a businesswoman, social media entertainer and chef as well as a *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* bestselling author. She shares her recipes with millions of followers on TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and Facebook, and has appeared on such media outlets at *TODAY* and *The Drew Barrymore Show*.

PR FIRMS STRUGGLE TO WIN BUSINESS IN 2023

2023 has been a tough year for PR agencies. According to the latest findings in an annual report released by business development firm RSW/US, PR agencies this year have struggled on multiple fronts, citing smaller budgets, slower referrals and longer sales cycles as ongoing themes in 2023.

According to the report, 58 percent of agencies said obtaining new business this year has been harder. That's a big leap from last year (when only 43 percent said business was tougher) and 2021 (when only 28 percent expressed difficulty finding new business). In fact, this year's numbers are closer to 2020 levels (67 percent), a year when the industry was subjected to COVID-induced lockdowns, budget freezes and extreme economic uncertainty.

Only seven percent of agencies said it's been easier to obtain new business in 2023, versus 17 percent who said so in 2022 (and 38 percent in 2021). More than a third (38 percent) of agencies also reported a decrease in new business opportunities, whereas only 26 percent said the same last year.

It's also taking longer for agencies to close deals. The percentage of agencies reporting that it took them longer than six months to close a deal rose significantly in 2023, to 18 percent (from five percent in 2022), indicating that, like money, business timeframes are getting tighter as well.

So, what's behind this slowdown? In the immortal words of James Carville: "It's the economy stupid." The RSW/US report revealed that many agencies at least see an obvious link. Nearly half (45 percent) of agency executives believe that business is down at their agency due to the economy. Less than a third (28 percent) said they don't think the economy has anything to do with it, while 19 percent cited the economy as a factor that has boosted their business.

When asked why it has been harder for agencies to obtain new business, most (61 percent) cited fewer client opportunities, followed by prospect budgets being too small (55 percent).

Other reasons agencies gave as to why business has faltered this year included prospects going dark (37 percent), an inability to connect with the right person (15 percent), clients not having a communications/marketing process in place (13 percent) or having no time to develop one (11 percent) and an inability to make the investment (five percent).

Referrals came in as the number-one new business generator for PR agencies this year. More than two-thirds of new communications business in 2023 has come from referrals (69 percent), followed by picking up business from existing clients (50 percent). Interestingly, a comparison with last year's data reveals that referrals—which were 64 percent in 2022—have gone slightly down this year, and business from existing clients—59 percent in 2022—has gone up.

Other ways that agencies found business in 2023 included networking (46 percent), followed by conferences, presentations or speaking engagements (28 percent), organic search (20 percent), inbound marketing programs (15 percent), emails (14 percent) and paid search (seven percent).

The RSW/US 2023 "Agency New Business Report" surveyed 3,000 agency executives in the U.S. and Canada. The survey was conducted in September.



NEWS OF FIRMS

Karbo Communications launches an AI practice, which will provide clients with customizable communications and digital marketing solutions designed to help them own the AI narrative. The agency has worked with AI innovators over the last 25 years, giving it deep experience and perspective on the needs of AI-focused companies. The experience of the agency's team members includes working with such brands as Nvidia, IBM Watson, Meta, Penguin, Cornelis Networks and AppDynamics. Karbo has also developed a comprehensive AI Blueprint, which includes AI guidelines, a code of ethics, plus best practices for the use of AI tools and workflows in PR, content development and digital marketing.

Ruder Finn unveils rf.engage, its global center of excellence for strategic internal communications and engagement. The agency says that internal engagements now account for close to 20 percent of its global client portfolio. The new unit is headed by Ruder Finn's London office managing director, Nick Leonard, reporting to CEO Kathy Bloomgarden. EVPs Trish Nicolas and Jem Gregory will be part of the senior team. rf.engage brings together the company's strategic internal communications, change management and employee engagement expertise to help businesses connect their people to strategy, goals and purpose, and ensure internal and external activities are aligned.

Ballantines PR launches a brand refresh designed by J. Burks Studio. The new design pays homage to the agency's beginnings as part of Ballantines Hotel, a mid-century modern hotel in Palm Springs owned and operated by BPR founder and president Sarah Robarts. The hotel, a gathering place for creatives and connectors, grew into a business with influence across industry verticals. Headquartered in West Hollywood with offices expanding into New York City, San Francisco, Miami and London, BPR works with clients in sectors including luxury, sports, tech, entertainment, hospitality and the arts.

Marketing Maven partners with HAI, Innovate Marketing Group and MLT Creative to launch "The Anniversary Collective," a specialized consortium focused on helping organizations commemorate their significant milestones and events. Marketing Maven will lead marketing strategies for the collective, leveraging its experience in multi-channel campaigns, storytelling and brand amplification. The collective, which includes historians, archivists, exhibit designers, integrated marketers, social media consultants, public relations experts, and event planners, employs a systematic approach that incorporates storyboarding and tactical development, in-depth research, and a final phase focused on event and marketing execution.

MXP Ventures, a platform that launches and scales marketing agencies globally, is backing two new agencies: **Tailored**, an Amsterdam-based social media agency, and **Voxeon Communications**, a Cape Town, South Africa firm that specializes in internal communication, employee engagement and employer branding. Tailored will focus on pan-European consumer markets and helping brands use social media to connect with and engage customers. Voxeon's mission is to help remote and hybrid organizations build trust and inspire connections.



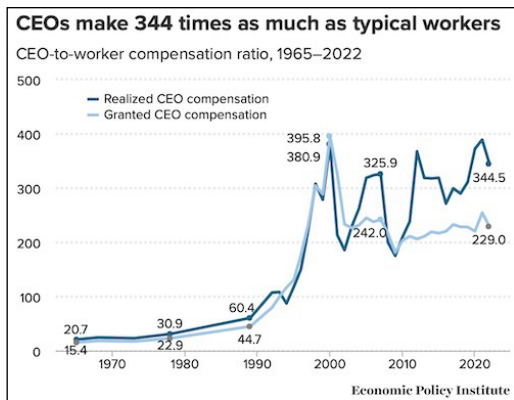
COMMENTARY

What a shocker... Compensation for CEOs at the 350 largest publicly traded firms dropped 14.8 percent to \$25.2M in 2022, compared to only a 1.9 percent dip for employees at those companies, according to a report by the Economic Policy Institute.

A lousy stock market hit the pockets of CEOs. The fall in comp was due to the reduced value of exercised options due to the decline of stock prices.

But shed no tears for corporate chieftains. Their compensation has soared 1,209.2 percent since 1978 vs. a 15.3 percent boost for a typical worker.

In 2022, CEOs “earned” 344 times more than one of their workers. That’s a big jump from 21 times in 1965.



Out-of-this-world CEO pay contributes to rising inequality. EPI believes CEOs are getting paid more because of their leverage over corporate boards, not

because of any management genius.

The think tank recommends empowering shareholders to vote on CEO comp and using tax policy to incentivize lower CEO pay.

Who knew? The great state of Idaho is well-known for its spuds, but wine?

Idaho is perfect for growing grapes. It has warm days, cool nights and lots of relatively affordable land.

Riesling, Chardonnay, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot rank as the top five wines produced in The Gem State.

The Idaho Wine Commission wants to move the state from consideration as being an “up and coming” wine producer to one that is ready for “prime time.”

It is wrapping up a search for a firm to handle PR and marketing, IWC’s Julianne Germain told O’Dwyer’s.

Watch out, California. Here comes Idaho.

George Bush I was mocked and ridiculed for his 1988 presidential campaign stop at a flag factory in Bloomfield, NJ, a move somehow meant to demonstrate his patriotism.

As if his service as a Navy pilot flying about 60 missions in the Pacific during WWII wasn’t enough for voters.

Workers at the Annin & Co. factory, who were paid piece rates, didn’t exactly share Bush’s enthusiasm about their jobs, according to a report in the *Washington Post*.

While Bush wrapped himself in the American flag, Donald Trump, who triggered the Jan. 6 assault on the US Capitol, visited a gun shop in South Carolina on Sept. 25.

He told the owner that he would like to buy the special edition Glock pistol that has his image on it.

That sends an endorsement of violence to MAGA world: next time when you storm DC come “locked and loaded.”

Bush used the flag to showcase “the new pride in America” and “our renewed strength.” Trump wants to tear the government down and set himself up as the “retribution” president.

The GOP used to pride itself on being the party of ideas. It has devolved into nothing more than a vassal of Trump.

Sir Martin Kinda Loves Donald. Donald Trump is “not bad for the economy” whatever one may think of him personally, said S4 Capital chief Martin Sorrell, who expects an economic rebound for the communications business in 2024 once the US and UK elections are over.

S4, which has cut 500 jobs in 2023, reported a \$28.8 M operating loss during the first-half on a 5.1 percent boost in like-for-like revenues to \$552.4M.

Sorrell has his eye on the long-term. He said S4 has built out its AI vision across all practices. Those efforts will “pay off in future growth as we enter the next wave of ‘software eating the world,’” said the 78-year-old Sorrell.

\$1B reputational “hit.” McKinsey & Co. agreed on Sept. 26 to shell out \$230M to cities, counties, school districts and Native American tribes for its alleged role in the US opioid epidemic, putting the opioid-related amount paid out by the management consultant at \$870M.

McKinsey admitted no wrongdoing. “As we have stated previously, we continue to believe that our past work was lawful and deny allegations to the contrary,” it said.

The firm had advised Purdue Pharma, the maker of Oxy-Contin and ground zero of the opioid crisis.

McKinsey watchers will keep a close eye on the firm to make sure it adheres to its 2019 promise to get out of the opioid consulting business.

It wants to close the books on the opioid PR disaster.

Sign of the times. The Public Relations Society of America’s annual conference set Oct. 15-17 will have many professional development sessions on the Metaverse, AI and ethics.

But there will only be one “Preparing for Active Shooter Crisis Communications” session, and it shouldn’t be missed.

It deals with the July 17 mass shooting at the Greenwood Park Mall in Indiana, where a lone gunman killed three people and was shot dead 15 seconds later by a shopper.

Greenwood mayor Mark Myers and Deana Haworth, CEO of Hiron full-service shop in Indianapolis, are speakers at the active shooter meeting. Hiron worked with Greenwood’s PR team, police department and the FBI to communicate events of that tragic day to residents and the nation at large.

Haworth on Sept. 22 spoke at the second annual National Trauma Journalism Symposium held at Indiana’s Franklin College.

Let’s hope there’s no need for an active shooter session at PRSA’s 2024 confab.

—Kevin McCauley