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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
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BELL POTTINGER COLLAPSES

Bell Pottinger last week went into “administration” following fall-out from its racist campaign in South Africa, which triggered client defections, resignation of CEO James Henderson, five-year expulsion from the Public Relations and Communications Assn. and failure of financial firm BDO to find a buyer for the reeling PR firm.



Lord Tim Bell on
BBC Newsnight

A BDO spokesperson said: “The administrators are now working with the remaining partners and employees to seek an orderly transfer of Bell Pottinger’s clients to other firms in order to protect and realize value for creditors. We have taken appropriate steps to preserve the rights Bell Pottinger may have in relations to the failure of the business.”

The BDO staffer noted that a “number of redundancies” have been made following an assessment of BP’s financial position.

SAUDI ARABIA PLANS GLOBAL PR PITCH

Saudi Arabia is planning a worldwide communications campaign to counter its negative press coverage and is in the market for PR firms eager to handle the effort, according to the *Financial Times*.

The program calls for information “hubs” to be established in London, Berlin, Paris and Moscow, according to a document reviewed by the FT. Additional hubs could be established in Mumbai, Beijing and Tokyo in 2018.

The hubs would produce press releases, publish social media content and invite “influencers” to visit Saudi Arabia.



Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

The PR initiative comes as Saudi Arabia spearheads an economic and political blockade against neighbor Qatar, and wages war in Yemen, where it has been accused of bombing civilians.

Andrew Bowen of the American Enterprise Institute told the FT that Saudi Arabia is losing the communications war with Qatar. He noted that while the Saudis have gone negative, Qatar has “tried to take the moral ground.” Qatar, according to Bowen, “so far is winning the war for western hearts and minds.”

Saudi Arabia uses Qorvis MSLGroup, Podesta and Harbour Group for PR in the US.

FINN PARTNERS ACQUIRES ABI

Finn Partners has entered into a formal agreement to acquire New York-based global B2B firm ABI Marketing Public Relations. Financial terms of the deal were not publicly disclosed.

Founded in 1980, ABI specializes in marketing for the industrial and trade sector, providing services primarily for packaging, food and beverage, life sciences, chemical, plastic, automotive, aerospace and environmental companies. The New York-based firm maintains additional offices in London, Frankfurt, Singapore and Shanghai.



Peter Finn, founding partner of Finn Partners (R), with ABI Marketing Public Relations CEO and founder Alan Isacson.

In light of the deal, the agency will now be known as ABI, a Finn Partners company. Founder and CEO Alan Isacson now takes the title of managing partner. All of ABI’s offices will remain, with the exception of the firm’s

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CORP. ETHICS SHAPES BRAND PERCEPTION

The behavior of management and the ways in which an organization impacts society are now widely responsible for people’s perceptions of a company. And if the numbers are any indication, many of the world’s top companies aren’t considering the political and societal forces influencing their reputations as well as their brands’ ability to maintain relevance with today’s audiences, according to a **study of global consumers** released by FleishmanHillard.

The report, which sought to measure the divide between consumers’ expectations and their actual experiences with global companies, suggests that the private sector needs to play a greater role in the issues of the day and pay more attention to the myriad external factors influencing their storytelling, lest they risk becoming irrelevant in the eyes of consumers. Specifically, the study found that about half of those polled — 51 percent — said their perceptions of a company were influenced merely by their expectations of its products and services.



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FINN PARTNERS ACQUIRES ABI

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New York location. All staff from that office will relocate to FP's Midtown headquarters.

Finn Partners founding partner Peter Finn told *O'Dwyer's* that the acquisition widens the independent agency's global footprint, effectively adding new outposts in Asia and Europe, while introducing industrial marketing to the firm's toolkit.

ABI accounts for the latest addition to what has become an acquisition spree for the New York-based agency. Finn Partners earlier this year acquired Singapore-based B2B PR and **marketing agency Ying Communications**, a deal that closely followed its 2015 buys of **Portland-based agency Lane PR** and Washington, D.C.-based branding and **marketing services shop Greenfield Belser**.

The agency in recent years also acquired San Francisco-based **tech agency Horn Group** and New York-based health and education firm gabbegroup and Washington-based **education specialists Widmeyer Communications**.

M&A advisor Gould + Partners facilitated the ABI deal.

Finn Partners last year posted nearly \$77 million in net fees, accounting for seven-percent year-over-year gains from 2015.

CORP. ETHICS SHAPES BRAND PERCEPTION

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However, almost the same number — 49 percent — said their perceptions of a company are now shaped by information regarding how its management behaves and the impact that the company is having on society as a whole.

Authenticity In An Uncertain World

When it comes to what drives a brand's authenticity, 51 percent of consumers say customer benefits shape their perceptions of a company's products or services. However, almost the same number now say their opinions of a company are driven either by management behaviors (24 percent) or society outcomes (25 percent).

Consumers across the world now widely recognize companies' societal influence, and a growing number expect the private sector to play a more active role in solving social issues. Almost three-quarters — 74 percent — said they wanted companies to go beyond mandated regulations, and 63 percent said they believe companies should lead the charge when it comes to driving the world's interchange of ideas, products and cultures. A vast majority — 81 percent — also said they believe a company's ethical treatment of its employees goes beyond pay and benefits and also includes notions of equality and inclusivity.

A large percentage of this responsibility, according to consumers, falls on the shoulders of management. More than three-quarters — 78 percent — said the behaviors and integrity of a CEO reflect the belief system of the company he/she leads. On the other hand, consumers were three times more trusting of a company's employees than its CEO when it comes to delivering the truth regarding how a company behaves.

WHAT TO DO IN AN INTERVIEW

By Judah S. Harris, photographer and filmmaker



Do you need to appear in a video interview to promote your company, organization, or service? We've all seen countless people who've been interviewed on video, from the news to documentaries or promotional films. Sometimes they speak for seconds, or they might go on for a few minutes.

There are even longer presentations that are symposiums or conference-based, or that enter the realm of educational training. The classic TED Talks are 18 minutes — though sometimes less than 10 — if that's what the speaker opts for. They're on video, but we can't call them interviews. That is more about public speaking. Certainly, the interview opportunity and public speaking are very closely related. But the expectations, the preparation and the level of control are substantively different.

I've been interviewed on video and have also been a guest on radio shows. In my professional work, I've interviewed known and lesser-known people for my film projects. As an interviewer, I prepare for all my interviews and take time to direct the subject who will be featured, before the camera starts to roll and between takes. I'd like to give a number of general tips to make the video interview more successful for you when it's your turn to speak.

First, do you know why you are being interviewed?

Know the intended purpose of the video, where it will be seen, and why you're the person being asked to appear on camera (even if you made the decision, or even if other people will also appear).

Think not only about what you want to say but also what the viewers might want to hear (that's a major oft-repeated PR rule) — and connect the two as seamlessly as possible. Stick to your message, but "hear" the intended audience's possible thoughts and comments. Of course, try to anticipate some of the common questions that are out there. Those questions may change based on the subject you're discussing or the timing of the video's release (trending topics of interest can fluctuate over one or two days, weeks, or even longer depending on the industry).

For more natural (and believable) presentation, forgo memorizing your entire text. Memorize only the organization of select ideas and specific keywords that must be incorporated. Do memorize — or plan — your pauses. They need to be there in the right places. Listeners are more a part of the conversation when pauses are present.

If you're being interviewed, there's going to be an interviewer — either on camera with you, or just prompting the questions. Let that person lead the way. Refrain from answering before the question has been fully heard or absorbed. After a radio interview once — when I was discussing one of my photography projects — the seasoned host pointed out that I jumped in too hastily at



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WHAT TO DO IN AN INTERVIEW

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times, all ready with the answers that I wanted to give. (I was still invited to be back on the show a second time!)

How are you doing on camera? Even if you're not offered, ask for some direction from the interviewer (or producer). Gauge how your message sounds to others who are not as closely familiar with what you want to say and the specific subjects you regularly speak about. Is it interesting, believable, and clearly understood? Ask for a candid response from those around you.

It all starts before the camera and audio equipment appear. Prepare before you get on camera. Except for circumstances where you have no advance warning, it's best to allow some preparation time for a video interview by practicing your message and your presentation style. If being interviewed on video is new to you, ask for an observer to watch and offer general feedback. Don't over-practice, though, for interviews — and remember not to memorize, to assure a more natural presence (one trick is to have the observer throw out a few different types of questions to prompt different responses).

After the video interview is released, you'll have a chance to review your presentation. Learn from it, but also grasp that we're often overly-sensitive to things and may be too close — and not used to seeing ourselves on camera — to properly assess how we did. We might also miss things that should be tapered for next time. Once you get comfortable with being interviewed, there will definitely be a next time. And then comes the challenge of keeping it new and fresh, strengthening our listening skills to really hear the questions posed to us, and accepting the challenge of sharing our information in new ways.

Video interviews are usually good marketing tools. If an outside media outlet initiated, you'll have a finished clip to use for your promotional purposes. If you are commissioning, you can use video interviews to improve your website, or for presentation at meetings or large-audience live events where the audience is right there in the room (or watching via a live stream). Combine your interviews with B-roll (footage of activities, programs, product or other scenes that relate to your topic) to showcase your message in a storytelling manner. If the interview is good it really can be utilized in a number of strategic ways, even internally. It's important to assess your archive periodically. We've all perused Media tabs on websites and seen, at times, that the latest entries are long ago. That sends a wrong message. The addition of even a couple of new clips can fill in that space nicely.

NAT'L SEC. COUNCIL CYBER CHIEF JOINS FTI

FTI Consulting has recruited Cheryl Davis, who headed cybersecurity policy at the US National Security Council, for the managing director slot in its technology practice.

Based in DC, Davis will advise clients on data system design, threat prevention, incident response and remediation, privacy and security.

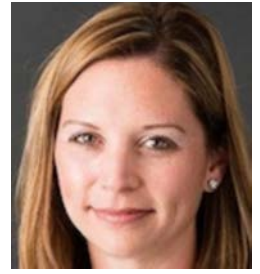
She will work with senior managing director Anthony Ferrante, who served as director of cyber

incident response at the USNSC.

As advisor to the Obama/Trump administrations, Davis led the federal government's response to malicious cyber activity that threatened the US and its allies.

As US lead on China's cyber matters, Davis coordinated the agreement between the two states that set the rules for theft of intellectual property.

Sophie Ross, global CEO of FTI's technology segment, said as clients respond to increasingly large and varied cyber threats Davis' experience "becomes vital in helping them protect against cyber incidents and implement strategies to decrease future exposure."



Cheryl Davis

BIRKETT RAKOW SOARS WITH ALASKA AIR

Diana Birkett Rakow is the new VP-external relations at Alaska Airlines, succeeding Joe Sprague, who left Sept. 1 after a 17-year stint.

She was VP-PA, communications and brand manager at Kaiser Permanente, joining the managed care consortium with its acquisition of Group Health Cooperative.

Rakow led Group Health's 75-member strong PA/marketing team and its budget in excess of \$25M.

Earlier, she worked three years on the US Senate Finance Committee.

At the airline, Rakow is in charge of corporate communications, government relations and community outreach teams in Alaska, Hawaii, San Francisco and Seattle.

The Alaska Air Group (Alaska Air, Virgin America and Horizon Air) flies 40M passengers a year to about 120 destinations in the US, Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica and Cuba.



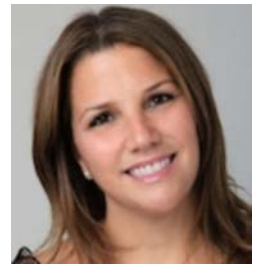
Diana Birkett Rakow

FINN PARTNERS GRABS GELLER

Finn Partners has appointed Brooke Geller to the role of senior partner. She'll lead the agency's consumer practice in New York.

Brooke joins the global independent agency from full-service PR, marketing and government affairs firm DKC, where she was stationed for more than seven years and served as senior vice president. Prior to that, she was a vice president in Rogers & Cowan's entertainment and lifestyle division. Earlier in her career, she was an account executive at New York-based lifestyle agency **Nike Communications** as well as an account executive at **Ruder Finn**.

As head of FP's New York consumer practice, Geller will oversee planning, client management, event marketing and product publicity. She'll report to managing partner Alicia Young.



Brooke Geller

Church steeples, because of their height and key in-city locations, are bringing churches \$25K, \$50K and more yearly from telecom companies for cellphone arrays.

“Next time you pass a church, look up and take a closer look at its steeple,” says DCG Real Estate, which helps churches to market themselves to telecoms. “There’s a reasonably good chance it’s a cell tower.”

Not only are church steeples desirable locations for the telecoms, but the churches, mosques and temples appear eager to buttress their incomes in a way that involves little effort and no cost.

Early church architects, according to [Religious Product News](#), “designed grand cathedrals and churches that had intricate, soaring steeples.

The vertical lines of the steeple helped to visually enhance the lines of the church, directing the viewers’ eyes vertically to the heavens.”

Churches Mum; WHB Church Has Cell Tower

Protestant, Catholic and Jewish Synagogues contacted by this reporter and EMF health advocates across the nation mostly would not return calls and emails on the subject. Not returning an email was Joseph Zwilling, PR head, Archdiocese of New York. A few individual cases of cell towers in spires were confirmed.

We learned that St. Marks Episcopal Church on Main st., West Hampton Beach, has leased its spire to telecoms. Rector Michael Ralph said the companies involved are AT&T and T-Mobile. He would not give the cost of the contracts nor length.

Our next stop was measuring, with an Acoustimeter, the radiation being emitted from the spire as we stood across the street. It was near the top of the danger zone—measuring No. 14 on a scale that went from No. 1 (0.02 volts per meter) to No. 15 (6.00 volts). **No. 14 was 4.5 volts per meter.**

We also visited the Westhampton Country Club across the street. Most rooms were below the danger level but one was at that level. Club officers and staff should hire one of the many services that check EMF.

Foster Raps Cell Towers in Churches, Synagogues

Susan Foster, medical researcher who has helped firefighters block cell towers on firehouses, said “Churches, synagogues and mosques are playing with the lives of people and not doing their research.

“For the time it takes to read Corinthians, they could delve into the research in the [BioInitiative Report](#) rather than taking the word of a telecom salesperson who gets them to sign a 20-year lease without any liability coverage in case parishioners or neighbors become ill.



St. Mark's Episcopal Church, West Hampton Beach

Ministers, priests, rabbis and mullahs are putting the financial reserves of their churches at risk, but most importantly, they are risking the lives and well-being of the flock they are charged with taking care of.”

“Children at church schools are especially at risk,” she said. “They are bathed in powerful radiation up to eight hours a day, five days a week. Shame on the churches for ignoring the science.”

President Ronald Reagan crippled EMF research when he defunded the wireless radiation research arm of the Environmental Protection Agency in the early 1980s, she said.

More Stations Needed for 4G and 5G

The new 4G and 5G cellphone antennas work over much shorter distances than earlier antennas. Hundreds of thousands of new transmitting stations will be needed, and churches are a prime target of AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon and the other telecoms. Church steeples have been sought as stations since the early 1990s, said California Watch, which merged with revealnews.org.

There are 350,000 religious facilities in the U.S.—314,000 Protestant and Christian; 24,000 Catholic, and 12,000 mosques, temples and non-Christian.

[DCG dismisses EMF health claims](#) in two sentences midway through a 1,073-word release. “Many people still fear that cellular towers pose a health hazard because the equipment emits levels of radiation. Although there’s little evidence to support claims that cellular towers are dangerous, it is a common fear.”

Colorado Parishioners Stopped Celltower

Residents of Fort Collins, Colo., in March 2016 blocked installation of a six-panel cell tower in the spire of the LifePointe Church. Residents said, “Like more than 100,000 times since 2004, a major cellular carrier once again was pushing for greater cell coverage for their network. While the approval process for new cell towers has come to be a slam dunk in the US, this time things would be different.

The installation was blocked.

At issue were the potential health impacts from the cell tower’s close proximity to a residential community and Leshar Middle School, which lay 150 yards west of the church. Meanwhile, residents had uncovered more than 6,000 studies showing harm from electromagnetic radiation (EMR).

All this coupled with the emergence of new science emboldened the community to speak out.

Local media reported: “In the weeks leading up to the community meeting, Heather Lahdenpera had worked tirelessly to first alert the community of the impending decision, and then catalyze broad engagement across more than one-third of the residents nearby. What makes this so spectacular is that few communities have acted with so much passion and resolve since the Telecommunications Act of 1996 took away the rights of citizens to challenge the siting of a cell tower based on health concerns.”

– *Jack O’Dwyer*