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Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's

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## **NEWFOUNDLAND NEEDS PR FOR IMMIGRATION**

Newfoundland and Labrador wants to hire a firm for a five-year \$10M marketing campaign to encourage people to move to Canada's easternmost province.



The Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills has a goal of luring 5,100 permanent residents annually through 2026.

The NL newcomers may come from other parts of Canada or elsewhere in the world.

The marketing partner will pitch NL's "beautiful landscapes, arts & culture, well-developed infrastructure, low cost of living, progressive social programs and world-class affordable post-secondary education," according to the RFP.

It will "challenge traditional marketing methods, dig deep into available research and consider new innovative approaches and opportunities for growth."

Proposals are due Sept. 27 for the immigration push that is expected to kick off on Dec. 2.

Interested firms must register at NL's electronic bidding system at <https://www.merx.com/nl>.

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

## **GORDON JOINS SPLC**

The Southern Poverty Law Center has appointed Tia Gordon chief communications officer.

From her DC perch, she will oversee strategy and design for the organization's earned media, editorial, digital/social media and creative departments.

Previously, she served as chief of communications and advocacy for UN Women and as VP of global communications at Catalyst, a nonprofit that works with CEOs and companies to build workplaces that are well-suited for women.



**Tia Gordon**

Gordon is also the founder of TTG+PARTNERS, a communications consultancy focused on the challenges faced by college students who come from marginalized and underserved communities.

In her new post, she will oversee strategy and design for the organization's earned media, editorial, digital/social media and creative departments.

Based in Montgomery, the SPLC works to fight racial injustice in the South and beyond and dismantle White supremacy.

## **DAVIS, LIVINGSTON SIGN LIBYA WARLORD**

Lanny J. Davis & Associates and the Livingston Group have signed on as DC representative for field marshal Khalifa Haftar, the 77-year-old Libyan-American commander of the Libya National Army, to build US support for the national election that is slated for Dec. 24.

Davis, who was special counsel to president Clinton and his spokesperson during the impeachment trial, is working in conjunction with former House Speaker-designate Bob Livingston.

The Davis-Livingston team inked an engagement letter with an advisor to Haftar on August 24 that establishes a monthly fee of \$160K for up to six months.

The mission is to prepare and support a high-level visit to Washington by the client.

In support of the DC visit, the Davis-Livingston team will draft a background paper and talking points to be pre-approved and used by the client and team in advance and during the trip.



**Lanny Davis**

## **LANDIS PRESIDENT DAVID LANDIS RETIRES**

David Landis, founder and president of Landis Communications Inc., announced that he plans to step down at the San Francisco-based agency, effective October 1.

General manager Sean Dowdall will succeed Landis as president.

Landis, who founded the agency in 1990, told *O'Dwyer's* that his shop, which was responsible for launching Old Navy, making Match.com a household name and helping save the redwoods of California through the agency's longstanding client, Save The Redwoods League, "exceeded all expectations."



**David Landis**

Landis said he plans to continue penning his food/restaurant column for the *San Francisco Bay Times* and will also interview symphony, opera, jazz and Broadway stars for the Amateur Music Network.

Landis, one of the last independent communications agencies in San Francisco, accounted for more than \$2.1 million in net fees in 2020, according to [O'Dwyer's rankings of PR firms](#).

## **SAUDI INVESTMENT FUND TAPS TENEO**

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund has awarded Teneo two contracts for international communications and stakeholder engagement services worth nearly \$3M.



The "Focused Strategy and Structure Diagnostic Project" is pegged at \$1,860,000, while "Project Wedge" is valued at \$837,500. Both pacts went into effect Aug. 25.

The goal is to position the PIF as a sophisticated global investment organization with a solid track record and targeted strategy.

Teneo is to show how PIF is creating opportunities and driving transformation in the Kingdom. It will pitch PIF's focus on generating sustainable returns and diversifying the economy of the country.

Teneo co-founder & COO Paul Keary heads the Saudi team that includes Tim Burt (vice chairman); Melissa Mackreath and Michael Osborne (senior VPs); Stephen Cohen, Jeff Sindone and Sparky Zivin (senior managing directors); Maie Ahmed and Andy Parnis (managing directors); and Emily Johns (associate).

## **GROUPS RAP CUOMO ON PR REP**

Former New York governor Andrew Cuomo's decision to use campaign funds to pay the salary of PR man Rich Azzopardi violates the state's election laws, according to Susan Lerner, executive director of Common Cause New York.

Her group, with the League of Women Voters, NY Public Interest Research Group and Reinvent Albany, want the New York State Board of Elections to investigate whether paying Azzopardi is an appropriate use of campaign funds.

They contend contributors to Cuomo's \$18M campaign fund intended the money to be used for his political campaign, not for his personal spokesperson.

Azzopardi, who joined Cuomo's staff in 2012, told the *New York Daily News* that it is "permissible" for him to serve as Cuomo's spokesperson on matters related to questions concerning legal reviews and about his time in office.

He allegedly played a part in a smear campaign targeting Cuomo's political opponents and sexual harassment victims, according to the report from attorney general Letitia James.

## **SARD VERBINNEN CUES UP CUE HEALTH'S IPO**

[Sard Verbinnen & Co.](#) represents Cue Health as the San Diego health technology company and maker of home test kits for COVID-19 readies an initial public offering.



The company's goal is to enable people to manage their health through real-time, actionable and connected health data.

Cue envisions a suite of testing kits to provide consumers lab-quality results in 20 minutes without the need to visit a medical facility. It is working on test kits for influenza, respiratory syncytial virus, fertility, pregnancy and inflammation. Cue plans to file for FDA approval for those kits during the second half of next year.

The company signed a \$480M agreement with the Pentagon and Dept of Health and Human Services in Oct. 2020 for 6M of its test kits.

Cue posted \$201M in first-half revenues and earned \$32.8M. It plans to list its stock on the NASDAQ.

## **ON THE MOVE**

**Brunswick Group** adds **Francesca Scassellati Sforzolini** as a partner in Brussels. Sforzolini was most recently managing director and head of the Brussels office at Incisive Health. She was previously public policy and press officer at GS1's global office, director of stakeholder communications and operations director of the European Climate Foundation and head of communications at Mars Nutrition for Health & Wellbeing. At Brunswick, Sforzolini will advise global healthcare and life sciences clients on healthcare policy and corporate-related matters.



**Francesca Scassellati Sforzolini**

**MongoDB**, a general-purpose database platform, names **Peder Ulander** chief marketing officer. Ulander joins MongoDB from Amazon Web Services, where he was head of enterprise and developer marketing. He has also held senior marketing and product management positions at Cisco, VMware, Sun Microsystems and Symantec. At MongoDB, Ulander will oversee the marketing organization, including marketing operations, corporate communications, demand generation & field marketing, growth marketing and content marketing.

**Luxury Brand Holdings**, parent company of jeweler Ross-Simons, hires **Cathy Fischer** as chief marketing officer. Fischer was previously senior vice president of marketing for Signet Jewelers. She has also held executive-level marketing and general management roles at Glidden Paint, Goodyear, Newell-Rubbermaid and Procter & Gamble. In her new post, Fischer will oversee all marketing and creative functions for the company, reporting directly to president and CEO Jim Speltz.

### **MP&F Strategic Communications**

names **Brittany Irby** its first director of community engagement. Irby, who came on board MP&F in June 2019 as an account supervisor, will continue to lead existing client teams while also engaging with new clients who want to establish or build a presence in Nashville. Before joining MP&F, she was a project manager for the Nashville Public Education Foundation, the Imagination Library manager for United Way of Greater Nashville and the education manager for the Center for Nonprofit Management. "Brittany has a passion for connecting people, and she has put that passion to work for a number of our clients," said MP&F partner Mary Elizabeth Davis.



**Brittany Irby**

**The PNC Financial Services Group** names **Amanda Rosseter** chief communications officer. Rosseter most recently held the CMO post at Equifax, where she led a comprehensive communications strategy for the company's enterprise transformation. She was previously senior director, global external communications for The Coca-Cola Company. In her new position, she is responsible for advancing strategic external and internal communications for the company, overseeing media relations; corporate responsibility, employee, crisis, human resources, business and executive communications; social media; intranet management; and video, web and live event productions.

## WHY DATA TRANSPARENCY MATTERS

We all know the indelible mark recent social movements involving diversity, equity and inclusivity have had on the communications landscape. There is a clear need to reassess who we are speaking to, the messages we are using and the resonance these may or may not have. But what if we're only looking at the issue from the surface? What if the data we are looking at to make these decisions is flawed in and of itself?



**Carlos Santiago**

Many of us rely on third-party data to inform our programming, recommendations and executions—in fact, it has been the foundation of planning, targeting and buying decisions that help to measure ROI.

And we trust these quantitative measures at face value, rarely second-guessing the methodology or accuracy of such metrics, but putting our full faith and commitment behind these numbers.

But upon further inspection, we realize there's more to this story, as we are now uncovering a credible means of evaluating multicultural identity data measurement and its providers in an effort to fuel better quality results that are reflective of audiences and their purchasing decisions.

### Exposing the Issue of Data Transparency

The first step in the process is understanding what percentage of multicultural consumers' hashed email addresses (devoid of private identifiable data) appear in third-party data and what percentage of those are accurately flagged as African American, Hispanic or Asian. For this reason, the Alliance for Inclusive and Multicultural Marketing, an arm of the Association for National Advertisers, partnered with Truth {set}, a company dedicated to measuring the accuracy of digital record-level marketing and media, to conduct a study on multicultural consumer identity accuracy and coverage.

So far, 16 third-party data providers, a number that has more than doubled since last summer, have participated in AIMM's quarterly studies with Truth {set}. They include traditional and disruptor providers: Acxiom, AdZapier, Alliant, Bridge, Epsilon, Fluent, Infutor, LB Digital, Onemata, Speedeon, Stirista, Targetsmart, Throttle, V12, Webulla and 180 by Two Speedeon. Updated results can be found at [AIMM's Data Transparency & Quality initiative page](#).

The quarterly tracking study uncovered the following issues:

- **Underrepresentation:** In the data provided by Truth {set}, only half of all records were assigned any race/ethnicity (what we call coverage), leaving a wide information gap for multicultural marketers. African American and Asian consumers especially were not represented proportionally in the third-party datasets since AIMM started its tracking. In the last two quarters, AIMM has seen data providers substantially improve both African American and Asian coverage.

- **Inaccuracy:** Data providers have been very accurate identifying White consumer records, doing so 90 percent of the time since the tracking started. However, a quarter to one-third of the multicultural assignments were incorrect, depending on the target segment.

- **Visibility:** Due to the dual impact of representation (coverage) and accuracy in practical terms, multicultural audiences have been much more invisible in data than White consumers. Compared to about two-thirds of White consumers, only three in ten African Americans and one in four Asian

Americans were “visible” to marketers as the initiative started. Through AIMM's spotlight on multicultural identity data, now half of African Americans are visible and one in three Asians. Unfortunately, the visibility of Hispanic consumers remains flat at half of the segment.

### Setting a New Standard

So where do we go from here? To improve industry-wide standards and set best practices, AIMM created a dashboard of data providers, offering transparent insight into their data's multicultural consumer identity coverage and accuracy. Since conducting the initial benchmark study, participation in the project has continued to grow as more providers recognize the need for improved practices. So far 15 data providers are on board with AIMM's goal of improving their data transparently through third-party validation. Data providers not participating with AIMM may not be as focused on systemic improvements of multicultural identity data and continue the legacy practice of self-validating their own data. AIMM expects that more will join as the bar raises industry-wide.

However, this progress will also require the support of brands and their partners. They create the market for third-party data and ultimately act upon the insights within the data.

As a communications professional, you have a role to play as well. Follow these best practices to ensure the data you use is both accurate and fully representative of your entire potential audience set:

- Seek transparency in your sources, methods and other data characteristics that will help you understand its suitability.
- Validate multicultural assignment accuracy and representation of data before use.

You can also access more information in AIMM's recent white paper, [Addressing Biases in Multicultural & Inclusive Identity Data](#), which discusses research methods, initial findings, opportunities for growth and best practices for marketers and data providers.

It's time the entire ecosystem gives attention to multicultural data quality to bring about improvements over time so that we may minimize bias, #SeeALL in advertising and media and deliver stronger ROI. Data quality is everyone's responsibility—smart, informed buyers and open, transparent providers.

*Carlos Santiago is co-founder of the Alliance for Inclusive and Multicultural Marketing (AIMM).*

## BAE SYSTEMS HIRES SAIC'S SANTOS

BAE Systems names Roela Santos VP of communications in its intelligence and security sector. Santos comes to BAE from SAIC, where she served as chief communications and marketing officer. She was previously chief communications officer at Engility, which was acquired by SAIC in 2019, and has been global communications director for cybersecurity and special missions at Raytheon.

In her new position, Santos will oversee all of the I&S sector's communications activities, including internal communications, external communications, media relations, digital engagement, crisis communications, marketing and community investment. “Roela's deep leadership and communication experience in our market will strengthen the I&S sector as we continue to deliver for our customers and grow the business,” said sector president Al Whitmore.



**Roela Santos**

## **SORRELL STRIKES AGAIN**

S4Capital merges its Media Monks digital-first marketing and advertising unit with LA-based culture and creative marketing agency Cashmere.

The deal expands the capabilities of S4's content practice in the US as well as its global cultural strategy.



**Martin Sorrell**

Founded in Los Angeles in 2003 by Ted Chung and Seung Chung, Cashmere executes "authentic, culturally relevant content and campaigns" for clients including Google, Instagram, Facebook, BMW, WarnerMedia, adidas, Netflix, Disney, Amazon and Apple.

In August, the agency was appointed as "Culture Agency of Record" by Taco Bell.

S4 executive chairman Martin Sorrell said that Cashmere's "ability to translate contemporary culture into compelling content and reach diverse audiences is a rare talent and something we want to integrate at the heart of our content practice."

## **BOULANGER TO EXIT BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE**

Jessica Boulanger, executive VP-PA at the Business-Roundtable, is stepping down Sept. 30 to pursue other opportunities.



**Jessica Boulanger**

She brought impressive Republican credentials to the DC group upon joining it in 2012 from New Media Strategies, an online marketing firm. Earlier, she worked for the House Republican leadership as press secretary to majority leader Roy Blunt and on the staffs of majority whip Tom DeLay and conference leader Deborah Pryce.

Boulanger also was communications director for the National Republican Congressional Committee.

At the BR, she advocated on behalf of Donald Trump's tax cut, as well as the Trade Promotion Authority and the revamped North American Free Trade Act.

## **BCW'S MCQUILLEN MOVES TO INVARIANT**

BCW's Bill McQuillen has joined Invariant to counsel clients on media strategy, PA, executive visibility and reputation matters.



**Bill McQuillen**

As executive VP and Washington media lead for BCW, McQuillen prepped executives for interviews and helped them forge relationships with news outlets.

He rejoined the WPP unit in 2018 from American Hotels & Lodging Assn., where he was VP-communications. Earlier, he was senior director of PA at Burson-Marsteller and VP-PA at JDA Frontline.

Prior to entering the PA arena, McQuillen was at Bloomberg News for 15 years, serving as senior trade and labor reporter.

Heather Podesta, founder/CEO of Invariant, said McQuillen's "advisory instincts, relationships, team leadership and storytelling will add immediate value to our clients."

## **MEDIA RELATIONS UNFAZED BY PANDEMIC**

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic's economic impact on newsrooms, PR and communications professionals generally don't believe that earning media coverage has gotten any more difficult in the last year, according to [a recent media relations report](#) by Agility PR Solutions.



Agility's survey, which asked more than 3,700 PR and communications professionals about their media relations practices and how they generate coverage, found that fewer than a third (30 percent) of PR and communications professionals reported experiencing more difficulty earning press coverage since last year. A majority of respondents (38 percent) said their media outreach success was about the same as it was in 2020, and more than a third (35 percent) said that earning coverage has actually become easier in 2021.

Respondents with more senior titles generally had a more positive outlook on the difficulty of earning coverage, and were more likely to believe that getting coverage has become somewhat less difficult over the past 12 months.

The survey also found that a majority of PR and communications pros (69 percent) regularly send their pitches to lists containing up to 100 media contacts. A quarter of all respondents said they stick to lists of 25 contacts or fewer. About the same number said they pitch between 101 and 250 journalists at a time.

When it comes to the extra content communicators add to their pitches, 45 percent said they think video footage increases the chances their story will land coverage. 44 percent said exclusive interviews help their story get picked up the most.

In terms of the follow-up, almost all respondents (89 percent) said they reach out to journalists after the initial pitch. The majority (59 percent) said they wait between two and three days after their initial pitch, but more than a quarter (27 percent) said they follow up sooner, waiting only a day. The rest (14 percent) said they wait between four and seven days.

Agility's Media Relations Survey Report polled 3,787 respondents in May. Approximately 44 percent of respondents said they work for a PR/communications agency, 42 percent work for an in-house PR department and 14 percent work as solo practitioners/consultants.

## **ATLANTA HOUSING SEEKS SHELTER PR FIRM**

The Atlanta Housing Authority is scouting for a firm to handle strategic communications and media relations services.

Georgia's largest housing authority, which serves more than 23,000 low-income households, wants a firm "to assist in continuous efforts to build, enhance and protect its reputation by fostering authentic and mutually beneficial relationships between AHA and its stakeholders," according to the RFP.



The firm also will be a liaison with news media and others to build relationships, clarify positions and raise awareness of AHA's brand and services.

AHA plans to issue a two-year contract with options to renew for three additional one-year periods.

Proposals are due Sept. 15. They must be sent to AHA's Jaggaer electronic sourcing platform.

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

## MESSINA GROUP ACQUIRES SEGAL COMMS

The Messina Group has announced the acquisition of Segal Communications, the consumer technology and lifestyle PR shop serving clients in the San Francisco Bay area.



**Jim Messina, Sarah Segal**

Jim Messina, who was Barack Obama's 2012 campaign manager, launched his DC-based political consulting, campaign management and advocacy firm in 2013.

Sarah Segal, who began her career as a broadcast journalist, worked at The Blueshirt Group and Shift Communications before setting up her firm in 2018. The firm has worked for Johnny Doughnuts, [Shane Co](#), Cabana, Pomi, Hotel Ketchum, Leon & George and Republic Wireless.

The addition of Segal Communications broadens TMG's strategic communications capabilities. It acquired Greenbrier Partners, corporate communications, media relations, and crisis management firm, in 2018, and co-founded Amplify, a media buying shop.

## ICE MILLER HANDLES LIBERIA'S BICENTENNIAL

Ice Miller Strategies has signed on as the lead PA shop for Liberia as that African nation, which was settled by freed American slaves, celebrates its bicentennial in 2022.

Liberia president George Weah said Aug. 27 in Monrovia that the bicentennial program will be a year-long celebration commencing Jan. 2022.

Ice Miller manages a bicentennial team that includes Strom Public Affairs (Columbia, SC) and Carbon Thread (Atlanta).

It will represent Liberia before the Biden administration, Congress, federal agencies and multilateral groups that have stakes in Liberia's economic and national security interests, according to its engagement letter.

Liberia will pay Ice Miller \$300K annually for a three-year period that began Aug. 1. There is an option to renew for another one-year period.

Strom Public Affairs is in line for a \$10K monthly fee for its three-year effort, while Carbon Thread will earn \$20K per-month.

## BLUESHIRT GROUP WORKS IFIT IPO

The Blueshirt Group is working the investment community on behalf of iFit Health & Fitness, which made an S-1 filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission on Aug. 31 to list Class A shares on the NASDAQ.



Based in Logan, UT, iFit markets exercise equipment under the NordicTrack, Weider, iFit, Sweat, Freemotion and other brands. It also has 1.5M monthly subscribers for its online exercise content.

The pandemic lockdown helped iFit report \$1.7B in revenues for the year ended May.

That was up 99.8 percent from the same period a year ago.

The company's net loss widened from \$98.5M to \$516.7M during the year.

The Blueshirt Group, which is part of Next15, has Christine Greany representing iFit.

Brunswick Group's Matt Levine is handling press.

## VANGUARD'S ROBERTS NAMED METLIFE CMO

MetLife has named Michael Roberts executive VP and chief marketing officer, effective Nov. 2.

Roberts joins MetLife from The Vanguard Group, where he has served as CMO for its retail investor group, a direct-to-consumer business with more than \$2 trillion in assets under management.

He was previously CMO and digital strategy officer for Bank of America's merchant services business, as well as senior vice president, marketing at TIAA-CREF.

At MetLife, Roberts will lead global brand and marketing with responsibility for designing marketing solutions to help the company build customer relationships and successfully execute on its strategy.

He succeeds Esther Lee, who retired at the end of June.



**Michael Roberts**

## NEWS OF FIRMS

**Landor & Fitch** is behind the design of the **XX New York** campaign, which supports a volunteer team fundraiser for the New York Police and Fire Widows' and Children's Benefit Fund—also known as Answer the Call. The agency has provided logo design and tagline creation (“20 years since the towers fell and heroes rose up”), [merchandise design](#) and promotional asset design and creation. Answer the Call provides immediate and ongoing financial assistance to the families of FDNY, NYPD, and PAPD heroes killed in the line of duty.

**Prosek Partners** launches a video series on how the finance industry has the capacity and responsibility to help shape solutions for the world's energy transition. Developed with Prosek's sustainable finance consulting partner Blue Dot Capital, the series features interviews with leaders across the banking and investment management space who both have significant climate strategies in place and are actively committed to furthering the transition to a more sustainable energy future.



**Redwood Climate Communications**, which focuses on public relations for climate tech startups, companies and corporate initiatives, opens for business. Redwood, part of tech firm Strange Brew Strategies, offers such services as strategic counsel, writing, media relations, and marketing content and consultation, targeting “any organization whose central function contributes to climate change mitigation or adaptation.” The agency is led by Josh Garrett, who was previously vice president of cleantech at Antenna.

**C3 Public Strategies**, a Core Strategic Group company, acquires **Grassroots Girl**, which provides customized voter-contact platforms primarily for Republican candidates and ballot initiatives. Grassroots Girl founder Lane Koch has joined CSG as vice president and will operate out of the firm's St. Louis office. Before founding Grassroots Girl in 2020, Koch was senior vice president at EXPolitics and national director of program and business development at Vanguard Field Strategies.

# COMMENTARY



**The Texas abortion law and US Supreme Court's unwillingness to block it** are blows to America's image overseas, [according to a top human rights official at the United Nations](#).

The chair of the UN's working group on discrimination against women and girls, which usually tackles issues in the Arab and developing world nations, called the Texas SB 8 law a violation of international law because it denies women control over their own bodies and endangers their lives.

Melissa Upreti considers the Texas law structural sex and gender-based discrimination at its worst.

She told *The Guardian*:

"The law and the way it came about—through the refusal of the US Supreme Court to block it based on existing precedent—has not only taken Texas backward, but in the eyes of the international community, it has taken the entire country backward."

The US Supreme Court decision to punt on the Texas abortion law that tramples the Constitutional rights of women was hardly a profile in courage.

The Washington jurists ripped up 50 years of federal precedents and allowed the Lone Star State to devise a scheme to evade judicial scrutiny, [according to the eloquent dissent written by associate justice Sonia Sotomayor](#).

She accused her colleagues of burying their heads in the sand in letting the Texas law stand because of "complex and novel antecedent procedural questions."

Sotomayor said the Texas law opens the door for any state "to evade federal judicial scrutiny by outsourcing the enforcement of unconstitutional laws to its citizenry."

Lawmakers in Florida, South Dakota, North Dakota, Indiana and Mississippi have announced plans to introduce their own restrictive abortion laws that are modeled on the Texas measure.

**The US has spent more than \$21T** on the military, law enforcement and surveillance systems since the 9/11 attacks, according to [a study compiled by the Institute for Policy Studies](#), a progressive think tank in DC.

Released in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, the report questions whether that massive investment bolstered the safety of Americans.

America's "turbo-charged" militarism has sparked deep divisions in the country, including the growing threats from white supremacy and authoritarianism.

IPS calculates that the \$16.26T spent for the military, which includes \$7.2B for contractors, accounted for the bulk of the national security outlays during the past 20 years.

The balance went to veterans' programs (\$3T), homeland security (\$949B) and federal law enforcement (\$732B).

The Report says the outlays spent on the military shows the US has the means and political will to act on its priorities.

"The task of the next five, 10 or 20 years will be to shift those priorities to better meet the array of threats we face," it concludes.

**More than half (52 percent) of US employers** had already planned to require their workers to get vaccinated prior to president Biden's Sept. 9 decision to mandate that companies with more than 100 workers require vaccinations or weekly testing.

That was a finding in a Willis Towers Watson survey that was conducted between Aug. 18 and 25 and released Sept. 1.

A majority (62 percent) of companies plan to require proof of vaccination from workers, such as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cards, while 36 percent are willing to take their employees at their word.

The Business Roundtable praised Biden's vaccine mandate and his continued vigilance in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

"America's business leaders know how critical vaccination and testing are in defeating the pandemic, which is why so many have invested resources in encouraging and incentivizing their customers and employees to get vaccinated," said BR president/CEO Joshua Bolten.

He noted that many companies have decided to implement a vaccine mandate for some or all their employees.

Biden will be cheering them on. A Gallup study finds 45 percent of workers have been affected "a lot" by the pandemic.

Fifty-three percent of that group temporarily stopped working, half took pay cuts and 49 percent worked fewer hours due to COVID-19.

Only one in five are "engaged" workers who are enthusiastic about their jobs, while 43 percent are stressed, 25 percent are sad and 24 percent are angry.

Gallup estimated that low employee engagement costs the global economy \$8.1T.

"If 80 percent of an organization's employees are not engaged at work, the organization's resilience during a crisis will be at high risk and leaders won't be able to consistently reach their goals. There is no way for leaders to be effective when their people aren't paying attention to them," says [Gallup's "State of the Global Workplace: 2021 Report"](#).

**Signs of a potential recovery for the battered travel business** are fading from view, according to a poll conducted by Morning Consult for the American Hotel & Lodging Association.

It found that almost seven in ten (69 percent) of leisure travelers are planning fewer trips, 55 percent are postponing current travel and 42 percent are killing travel plans with no thought of rescheduling.

Chip Rogers, CEO of AHLA, said the rising levels of COVID-19 and the onset of slower travel months means the hotel business is at a pivotal point.

ALHA and UNITE HERE, the largest hospitality union, have been asking Congress for direct pandemic relief for more than a year. Congress has failed to deliver the goods.

Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Rep. Charlie Crist (D-FL) have sponsored the Save Hotel Jobs Act, which would provide a lifeline to the segment.

The Morning Consult survey shows that time is running out for the travel business.

—Kevin McCauley