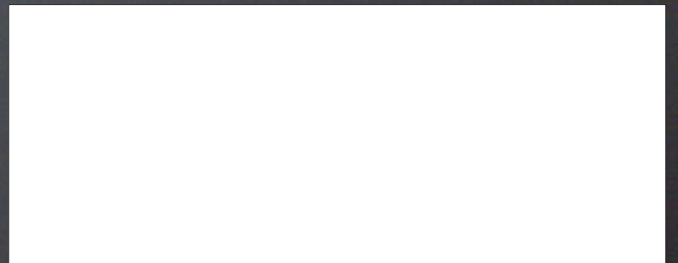




# FEMALE FANS RISING

Truths from the Women  
of Taylor, the Leader in  
Sports Public Relations

(see center spread)



December 2018

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HALLEY BARNES  
Account Executive/Lacrosse Coach

**O'Dwyer's**

# O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

## TOP SPORTS PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2017)	Firm	Net Fees (2017)
1. <b>Taylor</b> , New York, NY	<b>\$9,630,000</b>	13. <b>SPM Communications</b> , Dallas, TX	<b>\$173,700</b>
2. <b>French   West   Vaughan</b> , Raleigh, NC	<b>5,708,953</b>	14. <b>Marketing Maven Public Relations</b> , Camarillo, CA	<b>161,573</b>
3. <b>Coyne PR</b> , Parsippany, NJ	<b>2,800,000</b>	15. <b>Trevelino/Keller</b> , Atlanta, GA	<b>150,000</b>
4. <b>Edelman</b> , New York, NY	<b>1,692,000</b>	16. <b>MP&amp;F Strategic Communications</b> , Nashville, TN	<b>142,411</b>
5. <b>APCO Worldwide</b> , Washington, DC	<b>1,116,600</b>	17. <b>BLAZE</b> , Santa Monica, CA	<b>96,301</b>
6. <b>Jackson Spalding</b> , Atlanta, GA	<b>1,070,787</b>	18. <b>Padilla</b> , Minneapolis, MN	<b>79,099</b>
7. <b>Konnect Agency</b> , Los Angeles, CA	<b>878,829</b>	19. <b>The Buzz Agency</b> , Delray Beach, FL	<b>66,269</b>
8. <b>Hollywood Agency</b> , Hingham, MA	<b>518,000</b>	20. <b>Power Group, The</b> , Dallas, TX	<b>61,300</b>
9. <b>Fish Consulting</b> , Hollywood, FL	<b>417,000</b>	21. <b>North 6th Agency, Inc.</b> , New York, NY	<b>60,179</b>
10. <b>Racepoint Global</b> , Boston, MA	<b>355,826</b>	22. <b>BoardroomPR</b> , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	<b>50,000</b>
11. <b>O'Malley Hansen Communications</b> , Chicago, IL	<b>327,000</b>	23. <b>Greenough</b> , Boston, MA	<b>12,500</b>
12. <b>Hodges Partnership, The</b> , Richmond, VA	<b>174,000</b>	24. <b>Perry Communications Group</b> , Sacramento, CA	<b>11,050</b>

# O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

## TOP ENTERTAINMENT PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2017)	Firm	Net Fees (2017)
1. <b>Edelman</b> , New York, NY	<b>\$27,028,000</b>	16. <b>O'Malley Hansen Communications</b> , Chicago, IL	<b>233,000</b>
2. <b>Finn Partners</b> , New York, NY	<b>8,475,000</b>	17. <b>MP&amp;F Strategic Communications</b> , Nashville, TN	<b>\$201,637</b>
3. <b>Taylor</b> , New York, NY	<b>5,023,000</b>	18. <b>North 6th Agency, Inc.</b> , New York, NY	<b>120,358</b>
4. <b>French   West   Vaughan</b> , Raleigh, NC	<b>2,122,003</b>	19. <b>BoardroomPR</b> , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	<b>100,000</b>
5. <b>Peppercomm</b> , New York, NY	<b>1,759,304</b>	20. <b>Power Group, The</b> , Dallas, TX	<b>93,671</b>
6. <b>Public Communications Inc.</b> , Chicago, IL	<b>944,577</b>	21. <b>Hollywood Agency</b> , Hingham, MA	<b>87,750</b>
7. <b>Padilla</b> , Minneapolis, MN	<b>684,648</b>	22. <b>Champion Management Group</b> , Dallas, TX	<b>79,307</b>
8. <b>Greenough</b> , Boston, MA	<b>539,500</b>	23. <b>The Buzz Agency</b> , Delray Beach, FL	<b>71,309</b>
9. <b>LaunchSquad</b> , San Francisco, CA	<b>475,000</b>	24. <b>Standing Partnership</b> , St. Louis, MO	<b>46,231</b>
10. <b>IW Group, Inc.</b> , West Hollywood, CA	<b>426,000</b>	25. <b>SPM Communications</b> , Dallas, TX	<b>36,000</b>
11. <b>Jackson Spalding</b> , Atlanta, GA	<b>389,093</b>	26. <b>Matter Communications</b> , Newburyport, MA	<b>34,650</b>
12. <b>Singer Associates, Inc.</b> , San Francisco, CA	<b>325,874</b>	27. <b>Rasky Partners, Inc.</b> , Boston, MA	<b>25,340</b>
13. <b>Hodges Partnership, The</b> , Richmond, VA	<b>270,000</b>	28. <b>Maccabee</b> , Minneapolis, MN	<b>23,512</b>
14. <b>Brownstein Group</b> , Philadelphia, PA	<b>256,760</b>	29. <b>Rosica Communications</b> , Paramus, NJ	<b>23,000</b>
15. <b>rbb Communications</b> , Miami, FL	<b>238,073</b>	30. <b>WordWrite Communications LLC</b> , Pittsburgh, PA	<b>22,625</b>
		31. <b>CooperKatz &amp; Co.</b> , New York, NY	<b>15,000</b>

# O'Dwyer's

Communications & New Media

Dec. 2018 | Vol. 32 No. 11

## SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT SPECIAL

HEALTH CONTENT DRIVES SPORTS, FITNESS MARKETING CAMPAIGNS    BRIDGING THE ESPORTS ACCESSIBILITY GAP

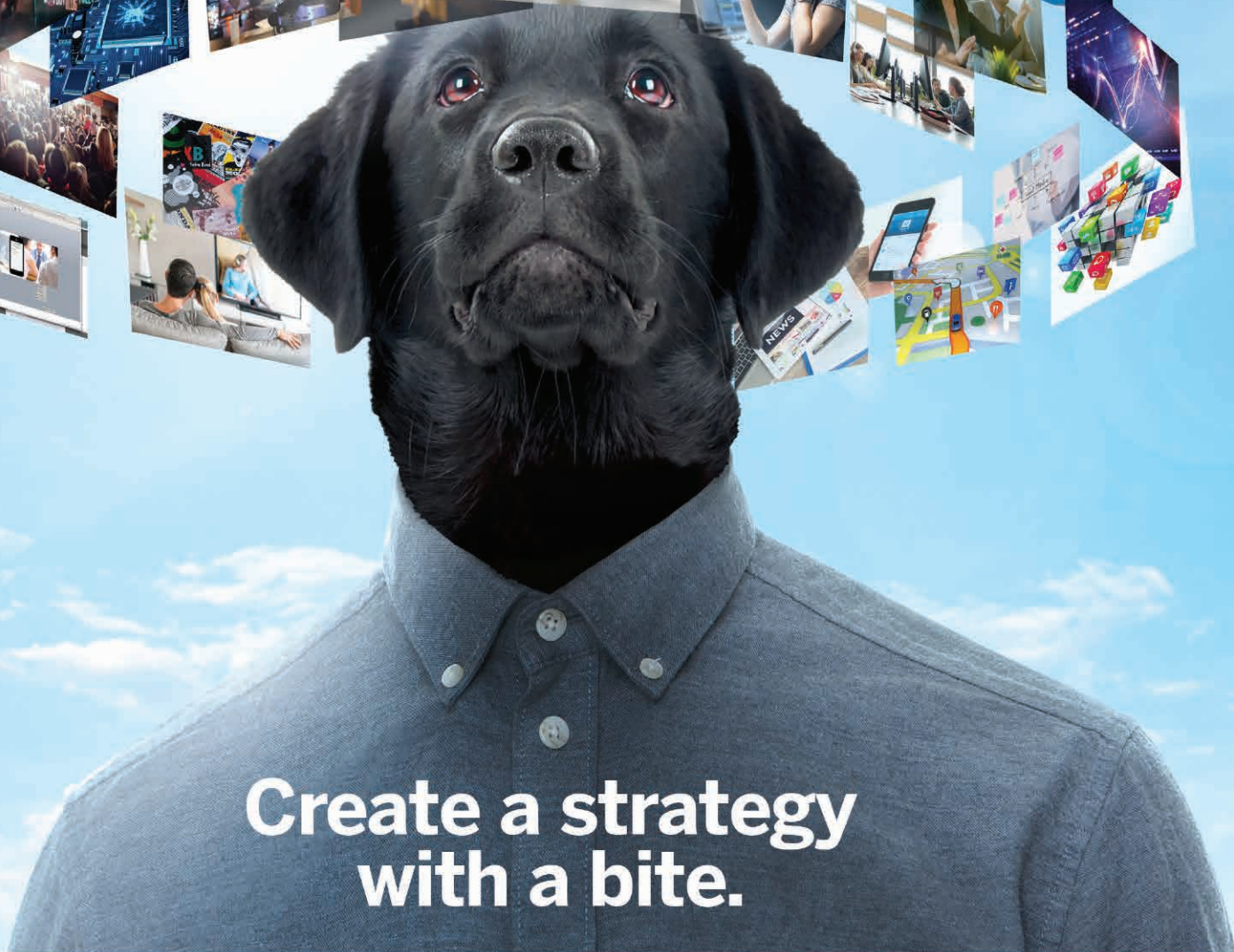
MUSIC FESTIVAL EVENT PLANNING STRATEGIES    WHY CULTURAL ALIGNMENT IS KEY WHEN MARKETING TO GEN Z

MEDIA PLACEMENT TIPS FOR THE STREAMING ERA    PROFILES OF SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT PR FIRMS    & MORE!



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Report says those with negative feelings about the press have trouble spotting fake headlines.

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Companies perceived as ethical have better reps, survey finds.

### HEALTH DRIVES SPORTS MARKETING MESSAGES

Ads and messages with the word "healthy" do better with sports- and fitness-minded consumers.

### AMERICANS HUNGER FOR HEALTHCARE INFO

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# How low can Facebook's reputation go?

Few companies witness as many reputational setbacks in a decade as Facebook has seen in the last two years. After the site became a haven for Russia-backed political ads and fake news content, after Cambridge Analytica gained access to the data of millions of the site's users without their permission, after a massive October security breach, the company in November was hit with yet another crisis.

It makes you wonder how many more scandals the network can endure, or how long until we realize the company's best days are cataloged somewhere safely in the past.

The latest development in the platform's worsening reputation woes centers on a bombshell Nov. 14 *New York Times* report that the social media giant had hired Definers Public Affairs, a Washington D.C.-based research consultancy, to discredit an anti-Facebook coalition formed by several prominent progressive groups by linking them to billionaire philanthropist George Soros.

The group in question is "Freedom From Facebook," a grassroots coalition that calls on the Federal Trade Commission to break up Facebook-owned services WhatsApp, Instagram and Messenger into separate units in the hopes of giving users more control over their data. It was formed by a half-dozen high-profile progressive groups, including the Open Markets Institute, MoveOn Civic Action, SumofUs and Citizens Against Monopoly. Axios in November reported that the "initial donor" behind the FFF campaign was David Magerman, a Pennsylvania philanthropist and former hedge fund executive.

Soros in January had delivered a speech at the World Economic Forum, in Davos, Switzerland, where he described Facebook as a "menace to society" and called for tightened government regulation of the platform after it became a hotbed for Russia-government-linked attempts to disrupt and influence the election.

In response to the *Times* report, critics blasted Facebook for playing into long-running anti-Semitic conspiracy theories surrounding the liberal 88-year-old financier that have frequently circulated fringe corners of the web.

Facebook quickly severed its ties with Definers following the article's publication, but not before stocks plummeted, continuing a downward slide that began in light of the company's abysmal second-quarter earnings results.

Then the attempts at damage control began, and in classic Facebook fashion, they came late. Confused. Perilously off the mark. In a Nov. 15 blog post, Facebook Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg said she "did not know" that Facebook had hired Definers or had any idea about "the work they were doing," a position she clarified in a Nov. 21 statement before noting that "the idea that our work has been interpreted as anti-Semitic is abhorrent to me — and deeply personal."

The following week, Facebook's policy and comms. head Elliot Schrage finally released a statement detailing Definers' work for Facebook, which included "sending ... press clippings, conducting research, writing messaging documents, and reaching out to reporters," as well as asking the firm to help the tech company better understand the FFF campaign. Schrage took responsibility for hiring Definers, and pushed back against the characterization of the agency's work as "opposition research."

As it turns out, however, Sandberg may have known more about her company's attempts to link the site's critics to Soros than previously acknowledged. According to a follow-up Nov. 29 *New York Times* report, the COO had personally requested that communications staff research Soros' financial ties. This report focused on a series of emails exchanged between Sandberg and a Facebook senior executive in January, where the COO requested research into what Soros potentially stood to gain from criticizing the company.

In response to the Nov. 29 *Times* report, Facebook again clarified its activity, this time claiming the firm had merely researched "potential motivations" behind Soros' Jan. attacks on Facebook, specifically, whether Soros was betting against the site's stock.

Turns out that wasn't the complete story either. BuzzFeed on Dec. 1 published an internal document prepared by Definers detailing Soros' potential ties to the groups behind the Freedom From Facebook campaign. The document includes a section labeled "George Soros Connection," which examines Soros' alleged financial ties to FFF members MoveOn, The Open Markets Institute, SumofUs and Citizens Against Monopoly.

Definers has denied that its work for Facebook constituted "opposition research," and said in a statement that its primary goal consisted mainly of running "a large-scale news alert service" for the platform, which included "media monitoring and public relations around public policy issues facing the company." This statement doesn't jibe with Definers' own document, which concludes that "It is very possible that Soros is funding Freedom From Facebook."

Perhaps Facebook should update its crisis playbook to include this important adage: get your story straight. ○

— Jon Gingerich

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# Press detractors more likely to fall for fake news

Those harboring negative feelings about the press have the most trouble spotting fake headlines, according to a recent report.

By Jon Gingerich

People with an aversion to the news industry have more difficulty differentiating between actual news and “fake” news content, according to a recent report from the News Co/Lab at Arizona State University’s Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication in collaboration with the University of Texas at Austin’s Center for Media Engagement.

The study, which sought to measure local communities’ news fluency as well as their attitudes toward the press, tested respondents’ ability to identify phony headlines and compared those findings along shared education, income and age characteristics. It discovered that those who harbor a dislike for the media are often bad at discerning fake news from the real thing, and worse, often don’t realize they’re doing so.

Respondents were asked for the first word that came to mind when they heard the word “news.” About 62 percent responded with a negative phrase, “fake,” “lies,” “untrustworthy” or “BS” among the responses provided. The remaining 38 percent responded with a positive or neutral phrase such as “information” or “factual.” Those who used a negative word in reaction to the “news” identified as Republican 74 percent of the time, compared to 26 percent who identified as Democrat.

Participants were then shown a series of headlines or story ledes and were asked to identify whether that item was news, opinion, analysis or advertising content. Those who used a negative phrase to describe the news were less likely to distinguish news from opinion or advertising compared to those who used a positive or neutral phrase (73.8 percent vs. 79.5 percent, respectively).

The survey also discovered that education level seems to make a difference in someone’s ability to parse real news from phony content. Respondents were supplied with three headlines, two real and one fake. While the study found that most overall (62 percent) correctly identified which headline was fake, more than two-thirds (68 percent) of those with a college degree or more were able to successfully spot the fake headline, compared to 57 percent of those with less than a college degree.

Income also appeared to be a causal factor. Those earning \$150,000 or more a year were statistically more likely to detect false news better than those making less than \$30,000 a year (71 percent vs. 54 percent, respectively). The same goes for age: about

two-thirds (66 percent) of respondents between the ages of 18 to 64 were able to correctly identify a fake news headline, compared to 56 percent of those ages 65 and older.

In another part of the survey, respondents were asked whether they occasionally require help finding the information they need online. Those who used negative phrases to describe the news were less likely to admit they ever needed help (34 percent) compared to those with positive or neutral reactions to the news (42 percent). Those with a high school education or less were also more likely (44 percent) to say they sometimes needed help finding information online compared to those with an associate’s degree (38 percent) or those with at least a bachelor’s degree (34 percent).

Partisan identity, on the other hand, didn’t appear to be a clear causal factor in determining whether someone is more or less likely to be fooled by a fake headline (two communities polled revealed that Democrats were statistically more likely

to spot fake news, but a third found that fewer than 60 percent overall were able to correctly identify a false headline, with no statistically significant differences in partisanship among this group). However, those identifying as Democrats were far less likely to use a negative word when describing the news compared to those identifying as Republicans (26 percent vs. 74 percent, respectively).

The News Co/Lab / Center for Media Engagement at UT Austin study surveyed more than 4,800 people in Macon, GA; Fresno, CA; and Kansas City, MO via Facebook between May and June. A separate portion of the survey partnered with local newsrooms in those cities, surveying 88 journalists and 51 news sources via the Qualtrics research platform between July and October.

These findings also revealed a disparity between how reporters view themselves and the public’s perceptions of them. When asked if their news organization “is focused on helping the community,” 83 percent of journalists agreed, compared to only nine percent of the public. When asked if their newsroom was “concerned with the community’s interests,” 93 percent of journalists agreed, compared to only 10 percent of the public. ○

## Amazon leads in purpose, reputation

By Steve Barnes

A company’s sense of purpose plays a major role in its overall reputation, according to a new survey from Porter Novelli and Cone.

The 2018 Porter Novelli/Cone Purpose Premium Index finds that purpose is one of the three key dimensions of corporate reputation, accounting for 13 percent of the total. While that’s less than the weight given to quality (65 percent) and vision (18 percent), the study’s authors stress its importance, saying that “when it comes to diligently building a reputation, every single point matters.”

The study uncovers a strong link between a company’s purpose score and its overall reputational rank. Amazon takes the No. 1 spot on both the study’s purpose premium index and its reputation index, with UPS coming in second on each list. Colgate-Palmolive and Alphabet, the parent company of Google, are also in the top 10 on both indexes.

Survey respondents also listed the attributes of a company’s sense of purpose that they found important. Corporate responsibility (86 percent) was their first choice, closely followed by caring (85 percent), advocating for issues (81 percent), protecting

the environment (79 percent) and giving back to important causes (73 percent).

The importance of purpose to consumers shifts with regard to demographics. Women who responded to the survey were 24 percent more likely to regard purpose as a “very important” element of a company’s reputation than men were. Democrats were more likely to stress purpose than were Republicans, and Hispanics and African Americans put a greater importance on purpose than did the population at large.

Differences in income and age, however, did not seem to have a big effect, with only those over 65 saying they did not think purpose was an important element of reputation.

In addition to boosting a company’s reputation, its sense of purpose can also have a dramatic effect on the bottom line. One-third of respondents said they would be more likely to try a product or service from a purpose-driven company. Companies with higher purpose premium index scores also tend to have consumer bases that are much more likely to follow content from those companies, regardless of channel. ○

# Health drives sports marketing messages

Most consumers take a casual approach when it comes to personal fitness goals, according to a new study, and are more likely to gravitate toward sports- and fitness-related marketing messages that contain the word “healthy.”

By Jon Gingerich

**M**arketing content containing the word “healthy” is more likely to resonate with consumers when it comes to sports- and fitness-related products and services, according to a new survey released by Phoenix-based ad, PR and digital marketing agency Lavidge.

The survey, which identified the trends driving customer preferences in today’s \$70 billion sports marketing industry, found that consumers widely prefer ads aimed at their health and products and services geared toward supporting a healthy lifestyle.

The survey discovered that more than half of respondents (51 percent) said “healthy” was the word they preferred most to describe sports and/or fitness products and services. This was followed by “quality” (47 percent), safe (46 percent), inexpensive (45 percent) and comfortable (42 percent).

Words like “risky,” “daring” and “revolutionary” scored last on the list. “Holistic,” a buzzword that’s taken the health and wellness marketing industry by storm in recent years, didn’t gain very much traction with consumers, and was cited by only eight percent as a word they liked to see when sports and/or fitness products and services are described.

When it comes to the sports and fitness messages to which consumers are most receptive, 70 percent said they preferred content geared toward helping them maintain a healthy lifestyle, and nearly the same (69 percent) said they preferred phrases aimed at helping them get the most out of their individual ability. More than half (58 percent) said they like phrases that support their fitness goals, and nearly the same amount (57 percent) said they like messages that understand their own personal goals and needs.

“Consumers prefer the word ‘healthy’ because it speaks to achieving their top priority when it comes to being physically active,” Dave Nobs, Lavidge Managing Director of Business Development, told O’Dwyer’s. “Before purchasing a product or signing up for a program, consumers want to be assured it will improve their level of fitness. They want to get results for their efforts and they want to avoid getting involved with something that could do more harm than good.”

## TV remains top market

An overwhelming majority of respondents (79 percent) said TV ads are the preferred medium for learning about sports- and fit-

ness-related products, services, memberships and events. Surprisingly, nearly two-thirds (62 percent) cited direct mail as their number-one method for receiving sports and fitness marketing messages, while 54 percent listed web ads and 38 percent named social media. Mobile ads were not a top pick, cited by only 18 percent.

Perhaps not surprising, digital media was far more popular among younger respondents looking to learn about sports and fitness. Millennials surveyed said they preferred to receive sports marketing content via social media (84 percent), the Internet (74 percent) or on mobile devices (54 percent).

## “Casual” defines most fitness habits

The survey also found that most consumers take a casual approach when it comes to sports and fitness in their personal lives. Most respondents (29 percent) characterized their level of involvement in sports

or workout activities as casual, and listed walking (71 percent), hiking (23 percent) and cardio training (16 percent) as the fitness activities they participate in most regularly. Only 18 percent said they’re actively involved in any specific sport or activity, and only five percent said they’re actively involved in multiple sports or activities.

On the other hand, the survey discovered that most consumers spend more money on gym memberships (an average of \$125 a year) than they do on live sporting events, equipment or sports and fitness apparel.

Lavidge’s 2018 Sports Marketing Report polled more than 400 adults living in the Southwest United States (specifically, people living in the Phoenix, Salt Lake City, Denver, Albuquerque, Tucson, Las Vegas and San Diego metro areas). The survey was conducted by WestGroup Research during 2018’s second quarter. ○

# Americans hunger for healthcare info

By Steve Barnes

**T**he appetite for healthcare information among American consumers continues to rise, according to a new study from Weber Shandwick and KRC Research, but their trust in the information they receive is not keeping pace.

Nearly three-quarters of the 1,700 adults surveyed (73 percent) said that they obtain health-related information from the Internet, a considerable uptick from the 59 percent who gave the same answer in a 2013 study from Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life project.

In addition, 55 percent of respondents identified as Healthcare Information Seekers (those who look for health-related information at least once a year) said that they were relying more on the internet for that information than they did five years ago.

Among the benefits respondents attributed to the boom in healthcare information were the ability to fact-check information (54 percent), the ease with which information can be found (54 percent) and the amount of information that be found on any topic (50 percent).

But when it comes to reliability, consumers are skeptical. For example, while two-thirds (67 percent) of Healthcare Information Seekers say they find health information on social media, 83 percent of

them voice concerns about incorrect or misleading information.

That skepticism cuts across generational lines. Gen Z respondents were actually more concerned about inaccurate information from social media sources (91 percent) than were Boomers (87 percent). The study’s authors say this shows that content or channels are the challenge for communicators, rather than social media familiarity or proficiency.

What is the source for much of the most satisfactory information? Medical professionals. Physician’s assistants or nurses and eye doctors were the most trusted, with 66 percent of respondents saying they were very satisfied with information they received from those sources. But all categories of medical professionals (dentists, doctors, chiropractors, etc.) topped the study average of 40 percent.

Because of this, the study’s authors suggest that putting medical professionals behind content is one way to increase trust in the healthcare information provided to consumers across various channels. Using clear language in communications and employing research to understand audience needs are among the other strategies they suggest. ○

# How brands can bridge the esports accessibility gap

The booming esports industry will provide massive fan engagement opportunities for brands open to fully collaborating and growing with it.

By Ross Lipschultz

“Esports” might be the word on everyone’s mind as we enter 2019. The immense landscape of competitive gaming continues to grow, bringing in diverse audiences internationally for interactive experiences at a rate that traditional sports haven’t seen in years. Television coverage of esports has tripled in the last year alone, and the industry now generates \$900 million in revenue from the nearly 400 million fans it claims worldwide. Both of those numbers are expected to double by the end of the decade, so it’s not a surprise that brands across all verticals are asking themselves how to enter the esports arena.

But the burning question is, how?

*Forbes* published an interesting article in October called “A 71-Year-Old with Overwatch League Tickets Delivers Five Lessons About Esports,” and it leads us to a set of insights around the esports industry that require brands to take a new approach to stand out. In the article, the reporter followed her 71-year-old aunt to Blizzard Arena in Los Angeles to learn about what someone who’s clearly outside of the expected demographic would enjoy from being at a gaming competition live.

She drills it down to five key points:

You don’t have to be a gamer to enjoy esports.

There needs to be a longer on-ramp for non-gamers or non-genre fans.

We need to do more with the personalities in the sport.

We need to do more to get women into the game.

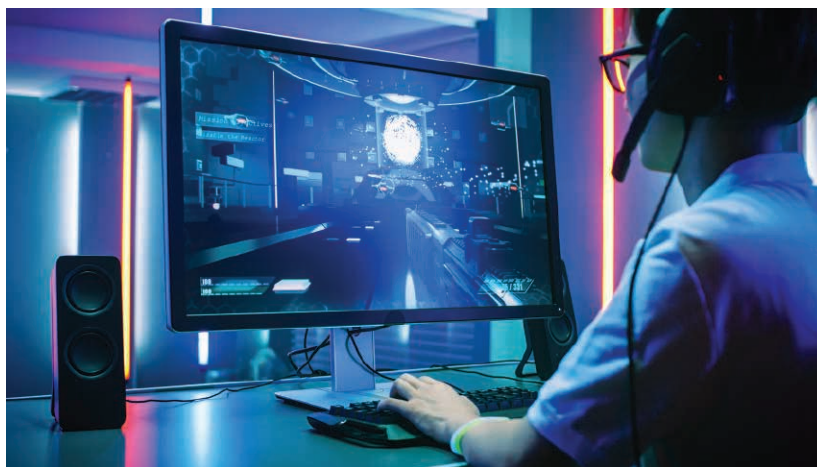
We need to do more to show just how tough the feats on screen really are.

What do all five of these have in common? Accessibility. The biggest challenge facing all esports leagues is whether they can not only extend their appeal past avid fans of the game, but also welcome new members of the audience with open arms. Many games have a large learning curve where, unlike a sport like soccer, where the goal is very clear, it requires quite a bit of explanation to get the flow of each individual game. Having trusted personalities, voices and even just basic facts and figures seem to be lacking in the industry’s broadcast and live experiences, which traditional

sports provide in spades.

The major obstacle in widespread accessibility, however, may lie in the lack of representation for various genders, races, ages, etc. Brands that want to fix the massive gaps in fan-to-player relatability can be at the forefront as esports looks to drop the “e” and lose the stigma of being a novelty. For example, Nielsen Games recently reported that the U.S. fan base for esports is roughly 25 percent female, yet that percentage is much lower when it’s focused on professional players.

So, how can brands bridge the accessibility gap, on many levels, to break through? We’ve seen several partnerships in this space that take the approach of “It’s cheaper than traditional sports, and look how fast it’s growing.” While that may be true, it sells a brand’s leverage short. Throwing money at a new frontier can occasionally turn into a masterpiece like a Pollock, but for a brand to truly penetrate with its messaging and be thought of by the esports community as a trusted partner of the games they love, there are three key tenets to follow:



**Specify your audience.** A general esports strategy will no longer maximize a brand’s investment. Given that different games are attracting different demographics, with different ambitions, it’s critical to ensure the target audience is indeed playing and engaging with that specific title. More than three times as many women cite “real-time strategy” games (e.g., *Warcraft*) as their favorite type of esports game, while 63 percent more men say first-person shooters (e.g., *Counter-Strike*) are their go-to. Brands need to recognize these types of disparities, and plan accordingly, just like they would if they were targeting tennis vs. basketball fans.

**Advocate for growth.** Despite significant progress, esports have yet to obtain broad mainstream recognition. Leading sports marketers can leverage the industry’s rise and serve as an authentic, global advocate for esports, providing opportunities and incentives that traditional sports take for granted. Esports leagues are already ponying up million-dollar prize pools worldwide, but can a brand come in and provide paths for people to join the sport and go pro? Nearly 81 percent of League of Legends fans aspire to become professional gamers, but many of them worry about the stigma attached, so the push for mainstream acceptance can breed a new level of support for the audience.

**Cover your bases.** Just like traditional sports, esports and its surrounding leagues and players can go through peaks and valleys of popularity and attention as new games arise. Brands should engage with a range of tournaments and teams, focusing on smaller bets that don’t favor a single game and adapting to the new landscape. Half of 2017’s top 10 esports games — by tournament prize money — didn’t exist in 2013; which makes an investment in esports one that a brand must monitor regularly.

If brands follow these principles, they can provide more access points for fans of all ages, and therefore create the opportunity to integrate themselves into the fabric of the industry, where they can be synonymous with esports. Traditional sports have many brands that reach this level of synergy (i.e., DirecTV and the NFL), but esports currently has an open sandbox for brands to get more strategic and creative in the next year.

*Ross Lipschultz is an Account Supervisor at Taylor, working with P&G and Fox Sports. Prior to joining Taylor, Lipschultz managed corporate communications for the Chicago Bulls and worked as a reporter for Sports Illustrated and Bleacher Report.* ○



Ross Lipschultz

# The mix that makes a music festival great

A relatively unsung music festival in a mid-sized city offers big lessons for event specialists and communications experts around the country.

By Billy Warden

The sweet sound of a successful music festival is irresistible to cities and towns across the country. And with good reason. A successful music festival can galvanize a community as its signature event, bringing visitors and amplifying a city's reputation as a worthwhile destination. And it can play matchmaker to life-long attachments between acts and fans.

To that end, Raleigh, NC has turned up the volume on a template that might guide others. In the great tradition of mix tapes, call it the Infinite Mix model. The massive success of Raleigh's festival suggests that key considerations should be not only the music, but the levels of involvement and intimacy a festival offers its audience.

Every fall for the past six years, Raleigh's World of Bluegrass hosts a series of events tied to the annual gathering of the International Bluegrass Music Association. While bluegrass is enduring and entertaining, it's not the world's best-selling music genre. And Raleigh, a prosperous mid-sized city in the midst of a growth boom, has, in some quarters, leaned into branding itself as a tech hub, which may cue the sounds of club bangers more than banjos.

Yet, the bluegrass festival has flourished in North Carolina's capital since it moved in 2013 from Nashville, where it maintained a lower profile. This year, the event drew a record 223,000 people and scored a direct economic impact of \$12.7 million. Raleigh's *News & Observer* summed it up by noting the festival "has become a signature event for the area and the largest event of the year."

So, what's the secret? How did the bluegrass festival jump out of the gates to make such an impact? And what does that mean for other cities coveting their own version of a SXSW?

In his 2016 book, *Music/City*, Jonathan R. Wynn proposed three categories for urban music festivals. The Citadel model concentrates its events in one major venue; a coliseum, for example. The Core model mixes large and small venues; from arenas to clubs hosting both free and paid events. And the Confetti model spreads happenings throughout a city, including spaces like galleries and parks.

A Citadel festival can feel impersonal but produce a massive media bang. A dispersed Confetti model is potentially more personally engaging, but, as Wynn noted, "might lack the large media impression of a more

focused event."

Raleigh's bluegrass festival is a "Confetted" happening that also manages to make a huge media and community impression. And that's where the Infinite Mix comes into play. The festival is an extravaganza of experiences, the sum total of which is positively explosive.

Contained within a six-block footprint, the festival includes a vast array of opportunities to engage:

Out of town and local bluegrass fans can buy tickets to star-studded events such as IBMA's annual awards show.

Fans can attend seminars and take in industry exhibits at the convention center.

A series of showcase gigs plays out over several days at downtown clubs.

A barbecue cook-off invites festival-goers to sample the talents of the region's best pit masters.

And a bustling two-day street festival — known as Wide Open Bluegrass — on downtown's main street hosts stages programmed with free live performances and a parade of vendors, from craft beer to craft jewelry.



This variety is stunning in its quantity. But just as important is the quality of engagement opportunities. The Infinite Mix isn't just about the wealth of events, but about the rich emotional connections that further fuel the festival's success.

In a *Forbes* column on the new rules of the "experience economy," Daniel Newman wrote: "What (people) want, it turns out, is an experience — something memorable, something they can connect with, something that makes them feel like less of a checkbook and more of a participant."

And boy, does Raleigh's World of Bluegrass offer a wide variety of ways to participate. At the awards ceremony, fans can relish in the pageantry of an industry gathering and the excitement of witnessing per-

formers accepting career-making prizes. Later, at the street festival, they can casually mingle with many of those same musicians.

The fans rave to the musicians about their songs and shows. And the musicians — delighted by the community welcome — rave to the fans about the vibrancy of their city. As Martin Coppo of the veteran bluegrass band Red Wine put it: "Great street atmosphere, wonderful crowd, excellent organization, nice venues, lots of great jamming and a warm welcoming feel from the whole city and the community."

And there it is! Whether you listen to bluegrass or Top Forty, everyone loves to hear they live in a special place. And very near everyone wants to be part of making it even better. That's participation!

This phenomenon — the engagement of both audience and performers in a virtuous circle of mutual reinforcement — is best illustrated in the jaw-dropping scene at a hotel situated smack in the middle of the festival. Here, the halls fill with musicians, both famous and obscure, as well as fans. No red ropes or security guards separate them. Here, everyone rubs shoulders and trades quips. A local, amateur banjo player can jam with Grammy nominees.

It's no wonder that festival-goers flood social media platforms with photos of the hotel shenanigans. And in a way, the expectations of social media — which have come to define our age — are a handy way to summarize the power of the Infinite Mix. On social, you can choose the platform you like best, the raw rat-a-tat-tat of Twitter, for example, or Instagram's smooth parade of images. You can choose to be completely passive, or you can participate in every conversation.

Raleigh's bluegrass festival offers a similar array of options. Whatever your preference for participation, it provides an entry point. And that's the hook. The optimal music festival doesn't just invite the community to buy a ticket. Rather, the event — from the stars to the fans, from the bars to the hotels — is a community, all wrapped in an Infinite Mix of participation possibilities.

Billy Warden is a founder of GBW Strategies in Raleigh. ○



Billy Warden

# Redefining media placements in the streaming era

**Adding live-streaming video to your communications strategy can boost the reach, interaction and value of marketing and PR campaigns.**

By Crosby Noricks

While modern PR offers the core benefit of helping steward brand reputation and growth, publicity remains the most tangible marker used by companies to point to a successful result. Media placements help justify the ongoing investment in a communication strategy informed by data, yes, but is also what maintains a field position that relies heavily on consumer intuition, collaboration and creative ideation over paid media's more straightforward projections and metrics.

With a shrinking set of editorial opportunities and the rise of sponsored content, affiliate requirements and the now-ubiquitous phone as a non-stop entertainment device for our increasingly hop, skip and jump minds, communication professionals have a new two-fold task. First, a curiosity toward reimagining the media placement entirely, and second, the seemingly daunting task of convincing clients of the validity and value of this new definition.

In the immediate, if we evolve beyond simply pitching digital and developing feed-based social content strategies to drive engagement, and instead embrace the full possibility of video-based owned and earned media, the landscape opens up once more to reveal an expansive playground from which to put brand messaging and interaction front and center. If done well, brands can extend the value and interest in existing company products, services and programs.

In particular, the use of live streaming, from both an earned and owned media perspective, provides valuable opportunities to extend reach, build rapport and support marketing and PR initiatives authentically. A study from Research and Markets found the video streaming market is projected to be worth \$70 billion by 2021, with live-streaming video to be a major means for media outlets to stay in the game.

## A new way to work with publications

As media companies are tasked with developing the nimbleness and flexibility required to compete for eyeballs and ad dollars, so comes the rise of new, video-based content and promotional opportunities for brands.

At NewFronts in May, Refinery29 announced the forthcoming launch of CHANNEL29, an on-demand video destination and the expansion of original video programming, as well as key partnerships such as Daydream by Google, an in-depth

study with CBS NEWS and more. Over the last year, the company has seen a 720 percent increase in watch time on YouTube, as well as a 132 percent rise in audience engagement on Instagram.

In a PR Couture article specific to Facebook Live, Ximena Beltran, Founder of C1 Revolution, explained that media companies are putting budget behind video content, and in some cases, are being incentivized by Facebook to do so. Pitching a client for an in-person or remote interview delivered in a live-streaming format not only gives clients the opportunity for longer, more in-depth airtime than the standard few minutes given during a broadcast segment, but these types of opportunities can be easier to secure, and happen more quickly, than pitching the print or digital editor for coverage.

## Drive anticipation with access

Of course, companies don't need to secure an opportunity with the social media editor of a lifestyle publication's Facebook page in order to take advantage of live video on Facebook or Instagram. According to data from quintly, Facebook videos filmed live on the platform drive nearly double the engagement of videos on YouTube and Instagram, with a significantly higher organic reach. Benefit Cosmetics' weekly live show on Facebook draws in more than 25,000 views on each show, and hundreds — sometimes thousands — of comments and shares.

Jaclyn Johnson, CEO of Create + Cultivate, and host of the podcast Work Party (and author of the book of the same name), regularly hops onto Instagram live to answer career and business questions in support of the book and new podcast episodes, providing followers with the opportunity to ask their burning questions while demonstrating her expertise and accessibility. Jamie Jensen, host of the podcast Creative Making Money, follows up each live episode with a live "After Party" on Facebook featuring that week's guest for a deeper dive and opportunity for listeners to ask follow-up questions. Jensen explained that this content bonus "gives listeners a chance to hear from me in addition to guests, engages listeners on multiple platforms, and provides me additional listener data unavailable through iTunes, as well as retargeting opportunities, making it way easier to hit those 'seven touches' potential customers typically need before they make a purchase."

## Tailor content to consumer preference

That same study from Research and Markets also discovered that 80 percent of those surveyed prefer live video to reading a blog, and four times as many respondents would rather watch a video about a product or service than read about it. As sad as this may seem to those of us who consider ourselves die-hard readers, it supports our ever-changing consumer behaviors and lifestyle as well as a switch in strategy when it comes to influencer outreach and digital placements. While knowing where your ideal customer avatar/profile is getting their news from has always been engrained in PR pros, it is an even more critical skill nowadays with the variety of platforms available in this digital era.

While the idea of an Instagram Takeover isn't novel anymore, the Instagram Live feature does give those taking over accounts the chance to connect more deeply with new audiences on a dynamic and responsive level. Danielle Thur, VP of Lifestyle & Entertainment Brands at Rogers & Cowan concurs, noting that "an Instagram takeover of a top outlet can be just as beneficial as an editorial story."

## Extend the value of event programming

Local businesses with an event or programming component can also benefit from live streaming. Shop Good, a clean beauty shop based in San Diego, regularly streams educational programming through Instagram. Founder Leah Kirpalani explained, "we feel live streaming builds our community by placing value and education as a top priority. It's one of the key pillars of our business. With only about 20 percent of our Instagram audience based locally, offering this free content builds loyalty and nationwide engagement with our brand, ultimately increasing overall conversion."

As communication strategy becomes more comprehensive and sophisticated, companies who embrace a diverse new media mix will find natural areas of connection and engagement by showing up with compelling and shareable content served up just the way consumers like it; which, increasingly, means considering fully the use of video for brand storytelling, audience participation and strategic support for other ventures.

Crosby Noricks is Founder and Director of PR Couture and lecturer at California State University San Marcos and San Diego State University. ○



Crosby Noricks

# Cultural alignment is key for brands aiming at Gen Z

There's a reason why Mountain Dew collaborates with street artists, why Levi's teams with urban youth on DIY skate spots and why Milk Cosmetics creates product collections with established lifestyle brands. They know deeper connections are crucial to alignment with youth culture.

By Gregg L. Witt

Today's young people tend to be highly individualized and making culturally relevant connections is non-negotiable. If you want to be noticed, followed and garner their attention, find and align with the most relevant groups within youth culture. Successful brand alignment with young people depends, in part, on your organization's capability to make psychographic and situational context a priority.

What does this mean? Many brands default to demographic, geographic and behavioral targeting as their primary filters because they are more convenient, but the reality is that relationships are built in the personal realm. Demographic targeting, such as age, gender and ethnicity, remain a starting point to help organize consumers who are more likely to be a good match with a brand.

However, the ultimate goal is audience segmentation that helps us not just organize youth culture, but to understand it.

## Hyper-individualization is the norm

Gen Z is pushing the idea of individualism, sometimes to the point of hyper-individualism. Gen Z defines itself as being more highly individualized than previous generations. This perception is important. Whether or not they truly are the most individual generation of our time is a moot point if they believe they are. It's interesting when you consider how much exposure they have to the world via the Internet and social media, at a time when they're developing a sense of self: they may have more options and raw materials to choose from than previous generations.

Regardless of studies and statistics, to understand Gen Z's perspective we have to recognize their self-perception as the most unique generation. A 2017 report by AwesomenessTV found that, "Growing up in a time when intersectionality is the buzzword du jour, [Gen Z] perceive identity on a spectrum — a complex, ever-evolving construction of self rather than a static set of demographic descriptors. Now we are faced with an arsenal of niche, interchangeable and hyper-specific labels ..." In fact, there seems to be an infinite number of hybrid subcultures that young people can zero in on and claim as "home." No identity is too specific or personalized; it can all be made-to-order. Being highly individualized isn't a barrier to entry or to societal acceptance. One might easily be accepted because of their individuality,

instead of being excluded for it.

Today's youth celebrate differences with less judgment or hesitation than previous generations, but it goes beyond just self-expression. Gen Z needs a more flexible identity because they have to adapt to more variety and situations in their lives. Identity is less and less conveyed by a static, stereotypical 'persona,' and more by a fluid, evolving, ever-changing condition.

We've all been in situations where we bring forward a different side of our personality to blend in with others, whether that's our parents, boss, peers or partners. This is adaptation. Gen Z will try to match themselves to their current situation just like everyone else. Yet, because they're also at a life stage marked by transition, coming up with the right personality may be more intense, because they're discovering and defining themselves, as opposed to toggling between more solidified personalities like adults might do. Gen Z is blending characteristics like the pieces in a kaleidoscope. A teenage male entrepreneur who enjoys knitting while he and some friends drive to Coachella is no longer seen as having an identity crisis. He's making an identity statement.

If brands want to connect, they need to understand and adapt to the way that Gen Z defines and identifies themselves. But tuning into the trends and influences that inform Gen Z's lifestyle and consumer choices means getting out of boardroom comfort zones and into the complexity of youth experience. So, where do we start?

## Putting alignment into action

A brand's likelihood of building a commercially viable audience is in direct relation to that brand's ability to identify and connect with the right spectrum of groups within youth culture. The key word here is spectrum. Relying on demographic targeting alone is like casting a net into the water and crossing your fingers. A segmentation method rooted in the lifestyles of youth culture may require more patience and work up front, but it's far more likely to result in real cultural identification and alignment with the groups that will desire and value what that brand represents.

## Key stages of youth culture alignment

**Stage 1: Needs Analysis:** Determine the extent of your targeting needs. How big, small, specific, etc. does your audience have to be for a particular offering?

**Stage 2: Brand and youth personality**

match: Identify the consumer traits and characteristics you should look for that would be compatible with your brand's offerings. What qualities do you and your ideal audience share?

**Stage 3: Identify and prioritize potential subgroups:** Develop a list of subgroups that share key personality traits and characteristics with your brand, and determine their alignment with commercial viability for your brand. What groups share these qualities? How deep is the connection, and how commercially viable is that group for your brand?

**Stage 4: Optimal youth audience definition:** How do alignment and commercial viability intersect? Who's most aligned, who is most viable, and how can you strike the most successful balance? Do you need to sacrifice a little alignment to reach a more profitable group, or will sticking to a smaller group of more aligned youth result in more long-term success?

## Youth culture alignment tips, takeaways

### Hyper-individualization is the norm:

Gen Z expects unique. When developing creative strategies to reach Gen Z, remember that being highly individualized or even "weird" presents an opportunity to connect with them on their frequency.

Traditional demographic targeting models are outmoded. If you really want to get tuned in with this group of individualistic young consumers, focus segmentation strategies on psychographic, lifestyle and situational context as priorities.

Embrace the diversity of Gen Z. If you approach Gen Z as a homogeneous entity and fail to appeal to the multitude of segments that comprise it, you'll be relegated to a limited view of both their world and the motivations behind their decision making.

Identify like-minded subgroups within youth culture that align with your brand, and build relationships with them. Develop content and experiences that connect to the passions and situations of youth consumers. This human connection helps us to develop true alignment, which fuels the most effective strategies.

Gregg L. Witt is a youth marketing strategist and Chief Strategy Officer of Engage Youth Co. ○



Gregg L. Witt

# TEAM



## OUR WOMEN IN SPORTS



**CARLA WILKE**  
CHIEF INTEGRATION OFFICER

*I have run 11 marathons and two ultramarathons.*



**MAEVE HAGEN**  
PRESIDENT

*I started every single game of my four-year Division I college career.*



**LAURIE DUFFY**  
VICE PRESIDENT

*I am a competitive runner and I've worked six NCAA Final Fours.*



**JENNA MITCHELL**  
VICE PRESIDENT

*I was five days old when I went to my first basketball game.*



**HAYLEY WOODE**  
EXECUTIVE DESIGN DIRECTOR

*I've activated at three NFL drafts.*



**CYNTHIA RAMSARAN**  
MARKETING DIRECTOR

*I'm an old-school gamer at heart.*



**ESTHER WALSH**  
ACCOUNT DIRECTOR

*I tutored Raven's QB Joe Flacco in college.*



**ALEX STATHIS**  
ACCOUNT DIRECTOR

*I've been to more than 20 boxing matches in-person.*



**HALLEY BARNES**  
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

*I was a Division I athlete and coach lacrosse.*



**GABBY EASLEY**  
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

*I'm the daughter of an NFL Hall of Famer, and I played Division II women's basketball.*



**YVETTE SIGNORE**  
ASSOCIATE ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

*A die hard NFL and Peyton Manning fan, I've been to all four of his Super Bowl appearances.*

# TAYLOR

*Do marketers need to be sports fans? Maybe not, but it's certainly a game-changer for Taylor. Taylor's marketing and communications executives, which includes more than 50-plus women activating our sports campaigns, understand female fan passion better than anyone in the industry. In 2018 alone, this team has supported sports activations for client partners such as P&G, Capital One, Comcast and DraftKings, among others. That's why year over year we are O'Dwyer's #1 ranked sports agency.*



**BRIANNA KAUFFMAN**  
VICE PRESIDENT DIGITAL

*I bleed Northwestern purple. Go Cats!*



**SAM BAIER**  
DIGITAL SPORTS DIRECTOR

*I took my daughter to her first NFL game at six weeks old.*



**BECKIE SOMO**  
DIGITAL DIRECTOR

*A competitive dancer and a Mets fan.*



**BRIANNA BISHOP**  
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

*Super Bowl war room pro and long-time Carolina basketball fan.*



**CRYSTAL MARIE McDANIELS**  
ACCOUNT DIRECTOR

*Clippers fan before, during, and after Blake.*



**LAUREN SAWYER**  
ACCOUNT SUPERVISOR

*I'm a Charlotte Hornets season ticket holder.*



**ALY HITE**  
ACCOUNT SUPERVISOR

*In my house, Saturdays and Sundays are for football.*



**SAMI RYAN**  
SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

*I've been to the last three MLS All-Star Games.*



**BROOKE BOAT**  
ASSOCIATE ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

*I'm a former NFL cheerleader who now spends Sundays watching NASCAR.*



**SYDNEY TUKES**  
ASSOCIATE ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

*I go to a Laker game every chance I get!*

[www.taylorstrategy.com](http://www.taylorstrategy.com)

# Teamwork, timing and rock 'n' roll magic

How a communications agency helped bring Teen Cancer America's story to millions.

By Charles Upchurch

When French/West/Vaughan agreed two years ago to serve as pro-bono partner to Teen Cancer America, there was little doubt it had the potential to be a life-changing decision. Not only did the agency want to help change the lives of teens and young adults fighting cancer, but the relationship with the non-profit, founded by Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend of The Who, promised to be as transformative for our agency as it had been for everyone involved with TCA since it launched in 2012.

That's certainly been the case, and never more so than in 2018, when FWV played a key role in the two most important PR events of the year for TCA, helping to raise more than \$4 million for the charity.

Early in the year, the FWV and TCA teams began laying groundwork for a fund-raising concert to be held in August at a private home in Los Angeles. On a parallel track, coordination was underway between FWV and "CBS Sunday Morning" to produce a feature profile on Daltrey. Months later, the two initiatives came together as Daltrey concluded his U.S. tour in San Diego and played one final show: a backyard concert in Pacific Palisades. While in L.A., he connected with "Sunday Morning" and correspondent Jim Axelrod to share his passion for the cause that he considers his life's mission.

For the private concert, FWV Chairman and CEO Rick French enlisted the help of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame + Museum and the Buddy Holly Educational Foundation. As a trustee of the Rock Hall and a board member of the Holly foundation, French arranged for contributions to the event that made entertainment headlines, helping to raise critical awareness and drive donations.

For a backyard event that already had Daltrey and The Who band, pop superstar Ed Sheeran, Van Morrison and Jewel on the bill, French leveraged his Rock Hall connections to bring legendary singer-songwriter Don McLean on board to perform his classic hits "American Pie" and "Vincent." Sheeran was a devoted fan of McLean and had previously performed "Vincent" on stage, although the two had never met. A backstage introduction would prove to be historic.

French suggested that the two perform "Vincent" together at the fundraiser. Sheeran was delighted at the idea, and the musicians quickly huddled for an impromptu

rehearsal of McLean's haunting ode to Vincent Van Gogh. A video clip of Sheeran and McLean working through the verses and chords of the beloved song made for pop music magic and became a viral sensation, generating millions of impressions on social media and digital platforms. Video of the duet on stage also made its way to digital channels, providing additional awareness for TCA.

French also arranged for the Holly foundation to donate a Buddy Holly replica guitar autographed by 75 of the world's greatest living musicians, including Paul McCartney, Keith Richards, Eric Clapton, Brian Wilson and many others. The guitar would prove as valuable for publicity as it was at auction. FWV used it to generate coverage in *Rolling Stone*, *Billboard*, *The Independent*



FWV Chairman and CEO Rick French (L), alongside pop superstar Ed Sheeran and singer-songwriter Don McLean at TCA's Backyard Concert.

and *The Daily Mail* among others, driving awareness higher and prompting advance bids.

With "Sunday Morning," FWV first coordinated a visit with Daltrey in London, capturing the legendary frontman in the neighborhood where he grew up. The CBS crew followed Daltrey as he visited young cancer patients in a London hospital where Teenage Cancer Trust (the UK precursor to TCA, also co-founded by Daltrey) has changed the national standard of care over the course of 25 years.

Coordination with "Sunday Morning" continued all summer. The goal was to film Daltrey during his U.S. tour and accompany him to a TCA hospital unit. There was also the matter of the sit-down interview with Axelrod. Logistics proved to be challenging as Daltrey and his band made their way

across the country. Production plans in New York, Cleveland and Chicago were scuttled, and the tour finale and backyard concert drew near. Once concluded, the 74-year-old singer planned to return to England.

FWV had a three-day window to work with tour managers, concert venue staff, personal assistants, TCA board members, hospital administrators and CBS producers to pull off the shoots needed for the Daltrey feature. In the two days prior to the backyard concert, FWV and CBS arranged a live shoot at Daltrey's San Diego concert finale, a sit-down interview in Beverly Hills, and a visit with young cancer patients at UCLA Santa Monica Hospital. With no time to spare, "Sunday Morning" got their story.

The backyard concert included a soul-stirring performance by Jewel followed by Van Morrison, McLean, and a stunning one-man pop tour-de-force by Sheeran, who called McLean back to the stage for their historic duet. The evening was closed by Daltrey and company who unleashed "Pinball Wizard," "Behind Blue Eyes," "Baba O'Riley," "My Generation" and other epic tracks, reminding everyone why The Who is regarded by many as the greatest rock band of all time.

The event raised more than \$4 million for TCA, which will enable the funding of four new TCA teen cancer units which each require an average of \$1 million to develop. FWV's media relations efforts generated massive visibility for TCA following coverage in dozens of entertainment, celebrity and philanthropy websites, delivering more than 25 million estimated print and online media impressions.

When the "CBS Sunday Morning" profile on Daltrey aired on November 11, 2018, it was one of the biggest media moments in the six-year history of TCA, generating an additional 10 million total impressions across all channels.

The success of these initiatives on behalf of TCA is measured by the growth and expansion of services the organization provides to adolescents and young adults fighting cancer across the U.S. The need for awareness and funding is at the heart of FWV's involvement with TCA. It's a relationship cherished by everyone at the agency, and one that's changing lives for the better.

Charles Upchurch is Senior Counselor at French/West/Vaughan. ○



Charles Upchurch

# Sports is more than home runs and touchdowns

Sports has played a large and important role in American history, and not always in positive ways.

By Arthur Solomon

When historians look back at the sports scene during the first two years of the Trump era, one aspect will stand out: the politicization of the games in light of the President's consistent dressing down of African American athletes, most notably National Football League quarterback Colin Kaepernick for kneeling during the "Star Spangled Banner."

Historians will also tell you that sports have always had a checkered career in America's history, most of it on the debit side of the ledger.

- For decades, the NFL not only denied that its employees would suffer brain damage from hard hits, but also attempted to destroy the reputation and career of a leading researcher in brain trauma.

- It wasn't until the Brooklyn Dodgers signed Jackie Robinson to a Minor League contract, in 1945, that the color line was broken by a Major League Baseball team.

- The United States Olympic Committee and its affiliates have a sorry history of ignoring sexual abuse of young athletes until it becomes public knowledge. The U.S.O.C. has also willingly participated in the Olympics games in the dictatorial countries of Russia, China and Yugoslavia.

Historians will also recognize that the mogul-owned sports franchises — and the high-salaried employees who ran sports-affiliated organizations — did little to correct their ethical stance until they became public.

While the sexual abuse scandals involving young gymnasts have been continuing news stories, it's the manufactured flag controversy fostered by the White House that has caused the greatest uproar among the American public, at least according to some 2017 polls.

To hear the President and his right-wing radio and TV programmers speak about Kaepernick, a visitor from another planet would think the quarterback committed treason, instead of simply expressing his rights as an American citizen.

However, it appears that most Americans, unlike those in recent polling, now disagree with Trump that protesting during the playing of the "Star Spangled Banner" is unpatriotic. "National Football League players who kneel in protest during the National Anthem are not unpatriotic," said 58 percent of American in a Quinnipiac

University national poll released in June.

In reality, Kaepernick is the latest athlete to have played a large part in awakening many Americans — who rely mainly on sports pages and right wing programming for what they consider important news — to the injustices in sports and in our society. And Kaepernick's kneeling is only the latest example of protests by African American athletes against police brutality against their brethren.

- In 1947, Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in MLB when he was promoted to the Brooklyn Dodgers. Years later, he admitted that he didn't sing the national anthem.

- In 1968, American track stars John Carlos and Tommie Smith raised their fists in what they said was a protest against racism and injustice on the medal stand of the Olympics in Mexico City. They were banned from Olympic participation and vilified by newspaper columnist Brent Musburger, who called them "black-skinned storm troopers." Today, the two track stars are considered civil rights heroes.

- In 1969, St. Louis Cardinals' all-star centerfielder Curt Flood initiated the path that now gives baseball players free agency, instead of being forced to play for one team indefinitely.

- But perhaps, it was Cassius Clay, who in 1964 provided the loudest black athlete voice against racial injustice by changing his name to Muhammad Ali, saying his former name was his "slave name."

There undoubtedly are other athletes — both black and white — who deserve to be on this list. But the above are probably the ones who had the greatest effect of giving African American athletes a public voice that was heard by all.

Not surprisingly, Hispanic athletes, certainly a target of racists, have kept quiet about racism in the U.S. Understandable, because many aren't American citizens and might be fearful of having visa problems preventing them to come to America and ply their trade.

But what is surprising is the lukewarm support for Kaepernick and racial justice by white athletes, especially NFL players, many of whom owe their team's success to their black teammates.

A most notable exception is Chris Long, a standout defensive end for several teams,

when he became the most prominent white player to support Kaepernick, saying he respects the former quarterback. And bucking the culture associated with NASCAR, Dale Earnhardt Jr. tweeted in part, "All Americans R granted rights 2 Peaceful protests," part of a John F. Kennedy quote.

Sports history shows that black athletes who have been shunned for demonstrating against racial injustice become symbols for freedom years after their actions. Despite the racist taunts of a racist President, Kaepernick will eventually join their ranks because while it takes way too long, Americans eventually — sometimes — do the right thing.

In addition to the politicization of sports, there were two other important developments during the Trump era that will change the way the sports scene is viewed by a large segment of the entire U.S. population. After decades of saying that gambling and Las Vegas are a no-no for the NFL, the league authorized the Oakland Raiders to relocate to the city, and some NFL owners are now backers of online gambling sites, highlighting the hypocrisy of the league. But on a long-term basis, falling or mediocre TV ratings of sporting events, especially by youngsters, might be the most alarming happening to team owners, networks and sports marketing sponsors.

Athletes protesting police brutality, and others who aren't fearful of standing up to the actions of a President who attacks democratic allies while praising totalitarian leaders, might be viewed by historians as the finest developments in an otherwise appalling sports scene during the initial two years of the Trump era.

Not even the whitewashing commentary of Trump's repressive actions by Fox News' Sean Hannity, Jeanine Piro and other far-right conservative commentators, who risk poisoning American democracy, can erase the stain on our freedoms by the President they protect.

Arthur Solomon, a former journalist, was a senior VP at Burson-Marsteller. He now is a contributor to public relations and sports business publications, consults on PR projects and was on the Seoul Peace Prize nominating committee. He can be reached at [thursolomon4pr@juno.com](mailto:thursolomon4pr@juno.com). ○



Arthur Solomon

# O'Dwyer's guide to ENTERTAINMENT & SPORTS PR

## 5W PUBLIC RELATIONS

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5W Public Relations is a top 15 independent PR firm whose client list spans across lifestyle, sports and entertainment. 5WPR has been a trusted PR partner to celebrities, business leaders, and professional sports leagues. Client experience includes Bowlmor AMF, Wendy Williams, Pat Smith, D'Angelico Guitars™, Davenport Theatrical Enterprises, and the Wiggles. 5WPR's services include celebrity branding, event management, fashion shows, Red Carpet events, record label promotion, launch events, movie premiers, and influencer management. 5WPR has secured product placement, brand ambassador partnerships or event appearances for our clients with the following celebrities and influencers: Jessica Alba, Anna Kendrick, Kim Kardashian, Fergie, Chrissy Teigen, Thomas Keller, Daymond John, Jeremy Piven, Kevin Durant, reality show stars, movies and a slew of others.

## BLAZE

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**Matt Kovacs**, President

BLAZE is the trusted partner of choice for lifestyle contender brands hungry for a real piece of the marketshare. BLAZE has been retained by a growing number of savvy clients who want integrated PR, influencer and social media strategies and flawless execution. BLAZE senior level professionals play a hands-on, day-to-day role with clients. With more than

two decades of relationships and a solid team founded in strategic approaches, BLAZE is adroit in advancing client objectives and nimble to the quick-changing pace of media technologies.

Clients include: ESPN, The Fit Expo, Gold's Gym, Great Mall, Griffin Club, Performance Bike, Ontario Mills, Outlets at Orange, Spectrum Sports and youththeory Racing.

## BZA PR

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BZA is a PR and marketing firm with more than 60 years of combined experience in the sports journalism and PR fields. BZA has the experience and contacts to maximize client exposure via PR, promotions, event planning, event production and marketing plans.

The firm's network of media contacts at the local, national and international levels facilitates media placements. Its service-oriented philosophy includes strategic plan development, interaction with client contacts, cultivation of media promotions to enhance advertising buys, adherence to timelines, timely progress reports, on-site execution and event results and evaluation.

Sports clients include: NFL (National Football League), NHL (National Hockey League), Showtime Championship Boxing, OMEGA, MGM Resorts International, CareerBuilder Challenge Santa Anita Race Track, JDP Communications, Bellator MMA, TGR Live, Breeders Cup, Auto Club Speedway, Farmers Insurance Open, PBR (Professional Bullriding), Red Bull, Rocket Mortgage Classic, Weatherman

Umbrellas, Los Angeles Dodgers, Los Angeles Rams, World Team Tennis, Kings Hawaiian and LA84.

## FINN PARTNERS

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**David Hahn**, Senior Partner, MEDIA CONNECT, 212/593-5847  
**Howard Solomon**, Managing Director, Finn Partners West, 415/348-2733

At Finn Partners, entertainment is elevated to the highest of art forms. From experiential activations for leading consumer brands to advance and opening communications strategies for some of the world's finest museums, dance companies and orchestras, Finn Partners brings a unique perspective and years of combined experience to the field of entertainment and cultural marketing and communications.

As the 2015 *Holmes Report* Midsize Firm of the Year, Finn Partners is one of the fastest-growing independent communications agencies in the world with headquarters in New York City and offices in Chicago, Detroit, Fort Lauderdale, Jerusalem, London, Los Angeles, Munich, Nashville, Portland, Paris, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., with additional international capabilities through its own global network and PROI Worldwide. The firm's work in the entertainment and cultural sectors lies within two major groups at the Agency: Polskin Arts & Communications Counselors and Media Connect, both based in New York.

A division of Finn Partners, Polskin Arts & Communications Counselors is the oldest and largest

firm specializing in cultural public relations. Polskin Arts plans strategy for comprehensive campaigns focused on major institutional initiatives, represents corporations and other funders engaged in cultural initiatives and provides ongoing counsel and crisis communications. Clients include: The Museum of Modern Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, Whitney Museum of American Art, American Museum of Natural History, The Studio Museum in Harlem, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Columbia University, the J. Paul Getty Trust, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Menil Collection, Fondation Louis Vuitton, the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative and UBS.

MEDIA CONNECT is a specialty division of Finn Partners that focuses on the promotion of authors, entertainers, and artists. MEDIA CONNECT regularly promotes bestselling authors for major book publishers including Mitch Albom, Daniel Silva, and Dean Koontz. MEDIA CONNECT helps media companies such as Condé Nast, HBO, PBS, National Geographic and The Discovery Channel by providing Satellite TV and Radio Tours and online social media campaigns.

## FRENCH/WEST/VAUGHAN

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**Rick French**, Chairman & CEO  
**David Gwyn**, President / Principal  
**Natalie Best**, Executive Vice President / Director of Client Services / Principal  
**Jack Glasure**, SVP, S&E Practice Leader

French/West/Vaughan (FWV) is the Southeast's largest independently-held public relations, advertising and social media marketing agency. Founded in

April 1997 by agency Chairman & CEO Rick French, FWV now employs 113 public relations, public affairs, social media, advertising and digital marketing experts among its Raleigh, N.C. headquarters and New York City, Los Angeles and Tampa offices. Ranked as the #2 firm for sports PR and #6 for entertainment PR by *O'Dwyer's*, FWV specializes in creating maximum brand exposure for its clients through strategic partnerships, paid endorsements, sponsor relations, event management, social media, experiential marketing and traditional earned media outreach programs.

FWV is the first and only N.C.-based public relations firm to earn National Agency of the Year honors, something the firm has now captured 12 times in its illustrious 21-year history, including seven in the past 18 months. The agency also earned a Top 10 ranking this year in the *Holmes Report* Global Creative Index, and made its debut among the country's top 15 PR firms, ranking No. 14 nationally and No. 1 in the Southeast, according to *O'Dwyer's*. FWV is also listed as the nation's third largest Consumer-focused PR firm in the 2017 *PR Week* global rankings.

Sports and entertainment clients include legendary sports agent Leigh Steinberg, former NFL quarterback Michael Vick, former NFL running back and *Dancing with the Stars* winner Rashad Jennings, National Pro Fastpitch, Daytona Tortugas Professional Baseball, the Veteran Golfers Association, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Sure Sports Lending, the Louisiana Film & Entertainment Association, MyMy Music, the Roanoke Rapids Theatre, BlitzPredict, Epifany, Square Off, Chef Christine Hazel, and best-selling author Nick Schuyler. In addition, agency Chairman & CEO Rick French is a film producer with several projects recently released or in development, including *Not*



**Actress, Chef and mother of two, Haylie Duff, created quick and easy recipes to share with other busy parents for her Hunter PR-brokered partnership with Smithfield Marinated Fresh Pork.**

*Without Hope*, the feature film based on Schuyler's memoir, the comedy, *The Real Don Quixote*, starring Tim Blake Nelson, and a biopic on fight trainer Angelo Dundee.

Additionally, FWV has a pro-bono partnership with Teen Cancer America (TCA), the national non-profit founded by rock 'n' roll icons Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend of The Who, and works closely with its sports and entertainment ambassadors, including PGA TOUR star Daniel Berger, Duke basketball legend Nolan Smith, Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder, actress Victoria Summer and others.

The agency has also done work on behalf of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), United States Polo Association, Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, United States Speedskating, international swimwear brands Arena and Speedo, Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson, retired All-Pro NFL running back Arrian Foster, Detroit Lions safety Glover Quin, Cincinnati Bengals defensive tackle Geno Atkins, former Chicago Bears safety Ryan Mundy, former NFL safety Terrence Holt, Pro Football Hall of Fame nominee Torrey Holt,

NFL legend-turned filmmaker Simeon Rice, former Indianapolis Colts GM Ryan Grigson, singer-songwriter Jacob Whitesides, singer-songwriter Lucie Silvas, platinum-selling musician T.I., actor Brandon Mychal Smith, AstroTurf, MoGo Mouthguards, MyBookie online sportsbook, TVG (America's Horseracing Network), the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) and The Backstreet Boys, among other notable clients.

## HUNTER PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Partners: **Grace Leong, Jonathan Lyon, Mark Newman, Donetta Allen, Gigi Russo, Erin Hanson**

With the right celebrity association, event sponsorship or integrated content opportunity, the entertainment world offers added star power and sizzle, providing one of the fastest ways to drive main-stream brand awareness and build brand identity.

Drawing from a strategic public relations point-of-view, Hunter's entertainment and sports specialists based in New York and Los Angeles help to authentically position brands to attain the right amount of "cool factor," generate impactful earned media impressions, earn consumers' attention and keep brands top of mind.

Hunter's dedicated entertainment and sports marketers are tapped-into the worlds of pop culture, lifestyle, fashion, sports and entertainment and work across all agency clients to manage strategic alignments that solidify a brand's role in popular culture through the practice's core competencies: talent and influencer engagement; event sponsorship negotiation and activations; integrated content and entertainment media relations & strategy.

Recent highlights include a three-year-long relationship between allergy-sufferer, Jordana Brewster, and ZYRTEC®; Haylie Duff creating simple, drool-worthy meals with Smithfield Fresh Marinated Pork; toasting to Hollywood's biggest stars with Tequila Don Julio at the 87TH Annual Academy Awards®; and

— Continued on page 22

The January issue of *O'Dwyer's* will profile crisis communications PR firms. If you would like to be profiled, contact Editor Steve Barnes at 646/843-2086 or [steve@odwyerpr.com](mailto:steve@odwyerpr.com)

## HUNTER PUBLIC RELATIONS

Continued from page 21

celebrating DIY wins by creating Halloween "Box-Tumes" with an integrated contest on "Live with Kelley and Ryan" for Amazon Prime.

KEITH SHERMAN  
AND ASSOCS.

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**Keith Sherman**, President  
**Brett Oberman**, VP  
**Scott Klein**, VP

Keith Sherman & Associates provides strategic public relations counseling and marketing communications services to a diverse entertainment, arts, lifestyles and international brands clientele.

We are proud of several long-term client relationships including 10 years working for the *New York Times*, 18 years for the Tony Awards, 29 years representing Olympic Gold medalist Brian Boitano and a decade working for insurance broker Marsh & McLennan.

KSA has represented hundreds of corporate-to-cool network, cable and digital broadcasts, studio and independent films, Broadway and Off-Broadway shows, national tours, media companies, high profile events globally, festivals, not-for-profit organizations, awards, travel, sponsorships, diversity, healthcare, technology and more. Our site, ksa-pr.com, provides additional information.

Results. A fresh point of view. Proactive work. Smart strategic thinking. Integrity. These are some of the elements that distinguish KSA's work.

Clients include: *Architectural Digest*, Art Students League of New York, BE MORE CHILL, Mike Birbiglia, Brian Boitano, Bolshoi Ballet, BRAVO, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Broadway League, Columbia University, Drama Desk Awards, Feinstein's/54 Below, Focus Features, Forum Gallery, Henry Holt and Company, Hertz, Adrian Grenier, Kimpton Hotels, Lang Lang, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Can-

cer Center, Montreal Jazz Festival, New York Marriott Marquis, the *New York Times*, The Onion, Point Foundation, Colin Quinn, Samuel French, Sheen Center, Sony, Tony Awards, Universal Pictures, Visiting Nurse Service of New York.

## PEPPERCOMM

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**Ann Barlow**, Partner and President, West Coast  
**Deborah Brown**, Partner and Chief Marketing Officer  
**Jacqueline Kolek**, Partner and General Manager, New York Office  
**Maggie O'Neill**, Partner and Chief Client Officer

Peppercomm is an award-winning strategic, integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York City with offices in San Francisco and London. The firm connects brands, messages and people through data-driven insights, cross-channel communications and brilliant customer experience. Employing an omni-channel approach, the company uses customer insights to determine the right mix of tools and platforms to help clients reach, engage and influence customers along their path to purchase.

Founded in 1995, Peppercomm has received numerous accolades, including the *Holmes Report's* North American Corporate/B2B Agency of the Year and *Bulldog Reporter's* Mid-sized Agency of the Year. The agency has been listed as one of *Fortune's* 10 Best Workplaces in Advertising and Marketing, 100 Best Workplaces for Women, 50 Best Small and Medium Workplaces and 50 Best Workplaces for New College Grads.

Services include Branding, Content Strategy & Development, Creative Services, Crisis Management, Digital Solutions, Experiential, Insights & Strategy, Licensing, Public Relations & Social Media and Research & Measurement.

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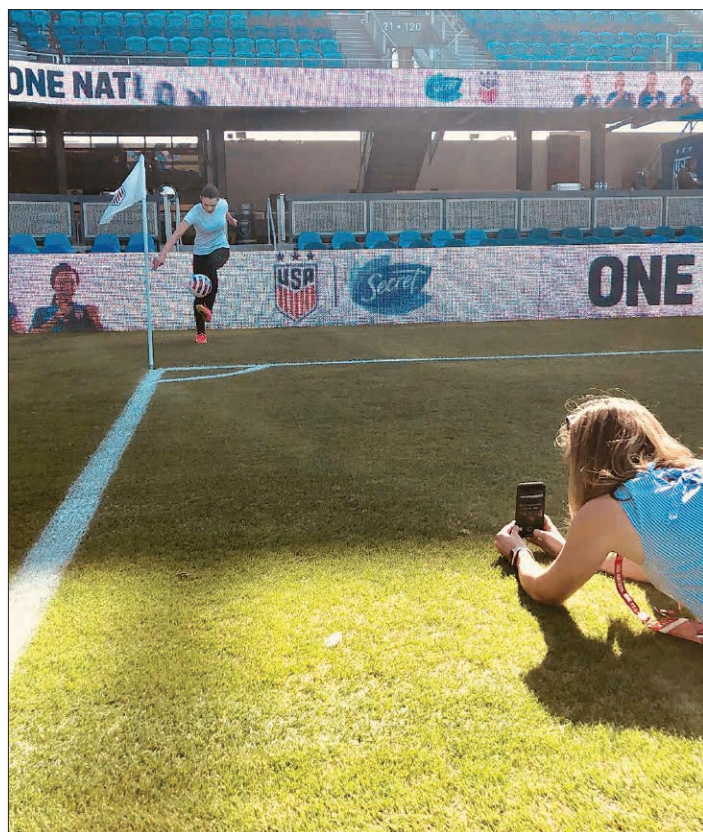
## TAYLOR

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**Tony Signore**, CEO & Managing Partner  
**Bryan Harris**, COO & Managing Partner  
**John Liporace**, Managing Partner  
**Maeve Hagen**, President

The perennial leader in the annual *O'Dwyer's Sports Rankings*, Taylor has forged a reputation of excellence in public relations and brand marketing for 35 years by partnering with the world's leading corporate marketers utilizing their sports, lifestyle, and entertainment assets to engage consumers and foster brand relationships that drive business growth. The agency's roots are firmly planted in the world of sports and its legacy of developing and activating hundreds of award-winning campaigns for leading brands in support of sports sponsorships is unparal-

leled. From global properties like the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup, to the crown jewels of U.S. sports — the World Series, Super Bowl, NBA Finals, and Daytona 500, among others — Taylor has long been a trusted counselor for many of the world's most influential sports marketers. As the sports landscape has rapidly evolved and shifted in response to the impact of social media and game-changing technology platforms, Taylor has helped to redefine the rules for fan engagement. The agency's deep knowledge and insights around fan behavior across a multitude of sports is at the core of its Taylor Digital Sports group, which is uniquely positioned to lead digital strategy and activation for many of the sports industry's marketing and technology innovators. Taylor's client partners include Allstate, AMB Group, Capital One, Circle K, Comcast, Diageo, DraftKings, Fox Sports, Mercedes Benz, Panini America, and P&G. ○



"Taylor worked with P&G brand Secret to announce its partnership with the U.S. Women's National Team during their international friendly against Chile in September. In addition to Secret implementing a full stadium takeover, Taylor worked with soccer freestyling influencer Indi Cowie to take women's soccer fans everywhere on an energetic, behind-the-scenes journey of the partnership announcement."



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Gloria Bohan Founder & CEO Omega World Travel & Godmother of Windstar's Star Legend  
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## Gwinavere Johnston dies at 75

**G**winavere Johnston, who founded her Denver PR firm in 1975, died Nov. 1 by taking advantage of Colorado's medical-aid-in-dying law after struggling with her diagnosis of progressive supranuclear palsy, according to her family-written obituary.

The Wyoming native launched the Johnston Group, which evolved into JohnstonWells with blue-chip clients such as US West, Coors, Qwest and Wells Fargo.

The *Denver Post* (Nov. 6) called Johnston a "trailblazer," who made a name for herself in the business world after moving to The Centennial State.

The obit remembers Johnston a bit more colorfully: "In her beginnings, she was a renegade in a male-dominated industry, which earned her endearing nicknames too inappropriate to print."

She served as President of IPREX North America, President of PRSA Counselor's Academy, head of PRSA/Colorado and a long-time Silver Anvil judge.

The family says that donations in Johnston's name should be sent to Mile High United Way at [bit.ly/ForGwin](http://bit.ly/ForGwin) or the University. ○



Gwinavere Johnston

## Precision Strategies rounds up Reno

**T**he well-traveled Tom Reno, most recently COO at BCW, has joined Precision Strategies, the DC shop co-founded five years ago by three top aides to President Barack Obama.

The 25-year PR veteran worked at 42West (COO/CFO), Solebury Communications (CEO), Ogilvy PR (Executive VP/corporate practice leader), Hill & Knowlton (Executive VP/GM-NYC), GCI Group (President/NYC) and Makovsky & Co. (Managing Director).

He takes on the COO title at Precision, which serves clients such as Bank of America, Pfizer, Facebook, General Electric, National Football League, ACLU, Lyft, Mu-



Tom Reno

seum of African American History and Culture, Planned Parenthood and League of Conservation Voters.

Precision co-founders Stephanie Cutter, Jen O'Malley Dillon and Teddy Goff helped engineer the 2008 election and 2012 re-election of Obama.

Cutter and Dillon were Deputy Campaign Managers for Obama '12; Goff worked as Digital Director for the re-election drive. ○

## Edelman's Ellner to head BCW corp. PR

**B**CW has named Edelman's Brian Ellner Executive VP of the agency's global corporate solutions practice.

At the independent firm, Ellner did a four-year stint as GM for public affairs and issues advocacy, handling clients in the finance, food, education, sports and transportation categories. Before Edelman, he was Vice Chairman at MacAndrews & Forbes, evaluating education technology companies for investment or acquisition.

Ellner also has nonprofit and political experience. He served as Lead Strategist for the Human Rights Campaign's effort to win marriage equality in New York and was a Senior Aide in New York City's Dept. of Education during Mayor Mike Bloomberg's administration.

Ellner takes over the duties of Aranthan "AJ" Jones II, who will now lead BCW's public affairs and crisis group in the US. ○



Brian Ellner

## Le Cannu is Prosek managing director

**P**rosek Partners has appointed Karen Le Cannu as Managing Director. Le Cannu comes to the firm from HSBC, where she was head of external communications for global banking.

Le Cannu was previously a Director at London-based strategic communications consultancy Powerscourt, leading its bank's team. She started her career as an analyst for the Bank of England.

"Our global client base will benefit from Karen's deep financial



Karen Le Cannu

sector experience, creativity and high energy," said Prosek Managing Partner Jennifer Prosek.

Le Cannu will be based in London initially and will relocate to New York in 2019. ○

## Hudson swims to FTI Consulting

**C**arolyn Hudson, who was Executive VP in Weber Shandwick's employee engagement & change management practice, is now at FTI Consulting as a Managing Director in its strategic communications segment.

She's in charge of the Americas people & change group, which works with HR, communications and other C-suite executives to drive transformational change.

Prior to Weber Shandwick, Hudson was at Accenture as part of its change management practice and internal marketing group.

During her more than 25-year career, Hudson handled mergers & acquisitions, internal communications, social media, culture transformation and technology roll-outs.

At FTI, she reports to Brian Kennedy, head of the Americas strategic communications shop. ○



Carolyn Hudson

## CBS promotes Raftery to EVP

**C**BS Corporation has named Kelli Raftery Executive Vice President, Communications. Raftery most recently served as Senior VP, Communications, at CBS, managing media relations for its corporate communications department.

Raftery was formerly VP, CBS Entertainment, overseeing the CBS Daytime publicity group. Raftery has also served as a Communications Director at *Sports Illustrated*.

In her new role, Raftery will work with CBS CCO Dana McClintock and Executive VP Chris Ender to guide the company's overall media relations and communications strategy. She'll be based in New York. ○

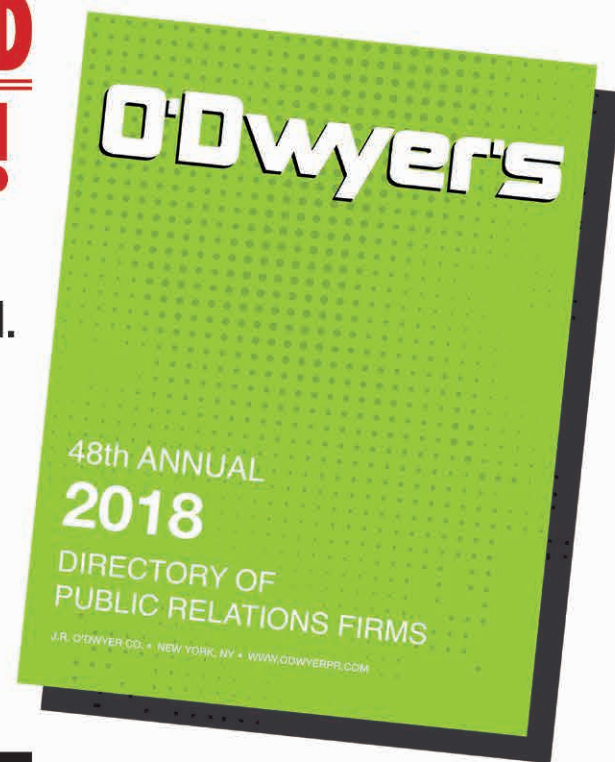


Kelli Raftery

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*Choosing and Working with your PR firm*

# Replacing the coach: chucking Zuck, dumping Trump

By Fraser Seitel

Last month, the Cleveland Browns, suffering through yet another losing season, fired its coach. The same week, the winless/Labronless Cleveland Cavaliers of the National Basketball Association also fired its coach.



**Fraser P. Seitel** has been a communications consultant, author and teacher for more than 30 years. He is the author of the Prentice-Hall text, *The Practice of Public Relations*.

In sports, professional and collegiate, teams demonstrate their desire to change course by firing the man, or occasionally woman, in charge (in part because failing teams can't easily clear the decks of sub-par players).

In many cases, the move does little to restore the team to winning status, but at least it indicates that

management is doing something to assuage critics.

Recently, business has begun to borrow this strategic public relations technique to help restore the credibility of damaged organizations.

The most compelling recent case is that of automaker Tesla, founded and managed by the always-unpredictable and often-unsteady Elon Musk. Musk is a constant reminder that the line between genius and insanity is razor thin.

On the one hand, Musk has also almost single-handedly created and mass produced a world class automobile. On the other, he's impetuous, impervious to advice and surrounds himself with sycophants. Sound familiar?

Musk is also, if you pardon the expression, a serial tweeter. And in August, when he falsely tweeted about having "secured financing" for taking Tesla private, the Securities and Exchange Commission not only fined him \$20 million but made him relinquish his position as Tesla Chairman.

Three weeks later, Tesla appointed an Australian woman board member whom nobody had heard of to replace its ram-bunctious genius as chairman. Tesla's stock immediately soared and subsequently has fared much better than its formerly high-flying brethren in the recent tech rout on Wall Street.

The clear and compelling message: changing coaches works.

Which brings us to Facebook and the Republican Party.

Like Tesla and the Cleveland sports teams, both, too, have fallen on tough times.

- Mark Zuckerberg's company is in shambles, thanks to never-ending Russian interference and a damning front-page *New York Times* article accusing Facebook and its Chief Operating Officer, Sheryl Sandberg, of underhanded tactics to distract attention from its problems. Facebook's stock, which stood at \$218 a share in July, now hovers in the \$130s, a dizzying drop of 40 percent in four months.

- Donald Trump's Republican Party, meanwhile, has suffered a similar ignominious fate, getting its butt kicked in the mid-term elections, including a precipitous decline in support from suburban, college-educated, formerly dependable Republican women who've evidently grown tired of the infantile commander-in-chief.

Accordingly, it's time for both Facebook and the Republicans to consider reversing their respective death spirals by "replacing the coach."

In Facebook's case, the sheepish Zuckerberg ain't going nowhere. It's his company, after all. But COO Sandberg is another story. Her erstwhile Democratic supporters are seething that their former darling targeted mega-Dem donor George Soros as part of her distraction campaign. So the normally-ubiquitous Sandberg has gone under cover as her reputation smolders.

Were Sandberg to be replaced as Facebook COO with another proven manager — preferably from outside the company — Zuckerberg would be credited for making the kind of decisive move of which most people believe him incapable. Because "most people" are likely right and Zuckerberg lacks the courage of offing his second-in-command, Facebook could still recruit a Silicon Valley star to share power

with Sandberg in its executive ranks.

Either management change would boost the company's credibility, not to mention goose its suffering stock price.

The Republican Party's challenge with Trump is more complicated.

Contrary to what you read in the *New York Times*, our coarse commander has, in fact, achieved quite a bit in his first two tumultuous years in charge. His boldness boosted an economy — greater production, higher wages, decreased unemployment — that had been relatively lifeless under his two timid presidential predecessors. He got rid of scores of unnecessary and costly regulations. And he helped destroy ISIS and neutralize North Korea. Most of all, he demonstrated that things can, indeed, get done in Washington if you're willing to make decisions and stick your neck out, which most entrenched politicians, sadly, are not.

But after two years, the grand Trump experiment is waning. The midterms proved that unless the President drastically changes his nasty tune, Republicans aren't likely to have the votes to win in the future. And if Trump loses the stock market, which seems eminently possible as the recovery dissipates and recession nears, then he'll not only sacrifice more voter support but also his grip on the party.

So, like Facebook, the Republicans must make a change at the top. The logical candidate to replace the incumbent is Vice President Mike Pence, who would basically continue the Trump agenda with more humanity and less drama.

Obviously, convincing the blockheaded Trump to stand down for reelection won't be easy. But if Republicans want to salvage the Senate in 2020 and retain the presidency, it's becoming increasingly clear that they, like Facebook, have little choice but to replace the coach. ○

## Journos dismiss bias, defend unnamed sources

Only nine percent of business journalists think an unconscious bias has affected their profession's ability to report on the Trump administration.

The vast majority — 71 percent — believe journalists remain committed to seeking the truth and reporting it fully, according to a survey of North American business journalists released by the Society for Advancing Business Editing & Writing and rbb Communications.

The survey found the most respondents — 36 percent — said while naming a source is always preferable, most readers and viewers

today understand and accept why the use of unnamed sources is sometimes necessary. More than a quarter — 26 percent — said they don't feel compelled to use unnamed sources more than before. An additional 18 percent said the current political landscape has birthed a growing skepticism toward the use of unnamed sources, and they're concerned that stories will now be viewed as less credible as a result.

The largest portion of journalists — 37 percent — polled said the most unpleasant part of the profession is its constant uncertainty and instability. ○

# Managing for prosperity in 2019

By Richard Goldstein

To be successful in 2019 and beyond, you need to assess how 2018 went for your agency and what changes, if any, need to be made.

In 2013, I wrote a column titled “Turn on your profit meter.” To start this month, I’m again going to discuss these issues. Five years has gone by and it’s time for a refresher course if you will.



**Richard Goldstein** is a partner at Buchbinder Tunick & Company LLP, New York, Certified Public Accountants.

Rick Gould has recently published his surveys on the public relations industry. They not only provide a “report card” of the industry but a road map to prosperity. I also plan on reviewing my past columns to write a

compilation of advice I’ve given in the past.

So, here goes! There are six areas that I believe are critical to ensure prosperity in 2019:

**Over-servicing.** After all these years, over-servicing hasn’t gone away. Stop or reduce this at any cost. After all, the PR agency isn’t getting paid for the over-servicing, so why do it? Get a monthly report on time invested against the retainer, so you can put the brakes on if needed.

**Time reporting.** I’m not aware of many clients of a CPA firm or a PR agency that will accept an open-ended hourly fee. That said, time reporting is still a necessary cost accounting tool. Insist that employees submit time spent daily, or at least once a week. Daily, however, is preferable. Set an example yourself. Recording time while it’s still fresh in the staff’s mind is crucial.

**Communicate.** Are you consistently over retainer or over budget because the clients keep on adding work or changing the scope in the middle of a program without an increase in the retainer or budget? If so, talk to the client. The operative words are “Change Order.” Most of your clients, I believe, aren’t out to force you to operate at a loss. Remember, it’s your responsibility to make sure your agency earns a decent profit.

**Stop work?** If you’re consistently over budget or over retainer and your staff isn’t operating efficiently or they can’t bring themselves to stopping work, you have a different problem. If you have budgeted

wrong, you need to find out sooner than later. While you may not be able to cure the problem currently, you can do what’s necessary to not have this issue happen again.

**Walk away.** If all else fails — and there’s no other way to stop the profit drain — walk away! What’s the point on continuing work with a client if you can’t produce quality work and can’t make money on the account? Move on!

**Raise your hourly rates.** If your account staff bill an average of 1,400 hours annually and you raise rates an average of only \$10, that’s an increase in revenue of \$14,000 per person annually. If you have 20 staff, that’s \$280,000 additional income. I believe this should be palatable to most clients. Also, consider a billing rate review. Determine what your rates should be based on your direct labor costs, overhead and desired profitability percentage. Then try and benchmark this against your competition. This exercise will tell you a good deal on how you run your agency.

**Pick your clients.** Why spend your time hanging onto some small, miserable, poorly managed, never-going-to-make-it clients who bore your staff but help keep the lights on? You tell me! Maybe there’s more opportunity to cast your bait where bigger and more attractive fish are lurking. Clients who give your best staff the chance to do work they’re proud of and which does not

put them to sleep in the middle of the day, may just give you the opportunity to make more money.

## Best practices in the PR Industry

The Gould “Best Practices” report includes what’s seen as the 22 most critical benchmarks for a PR agency to track. In addition to this, I’ll be discussing in future columns trends in billing rates and utilization as well as revenue growth in the PR industry.

It’s not possible to include all 22 benchmarks in this column, but the most critical are: revenue per professional; total labor cost; total operating expense (overhead); operating profit; average monthly minimum fees.

**Operating profit.** The benchmark in the industry — or at least the firms surveyed — is 18 percent. While this percentage has increased from 2015, the report comment is “This is in the right direction.” According to the report, most firms are showing 20 percent. In my view, this isn’t in the right direction! In 2015, the survey indicated 15.2 percent. Going from 15.2 percent to 18 percent is not a big deal. There can be many factors, including inflation, that can account for the increase. However, 18 percent or even 20 percent is nothing to write home about. So, what should your target operating goal be? Well, in my view, the bar needs to be raised to 25 percent to 33.3 percent. If you think this isn’t obtainable, you’re wrong! ○

## Fast pace of M&A activity likely to keep going

The pace of mergers and acquisitions in the public relations and integrated marketing communications sector shows little sign of slowing down, according to a survey just released by Davis & Gilbert.

Out of the 109 firms that responded to the survey, 92 percent indicated that they had been approached by a potential buyer in the last two years. More than half (54 percent) said they thought it was likely or very likely that they would sell their firm within the next three years.

The top three reasons cited for contemplating a sale were reaping a personal financial reward for the seller, executing a personal exit strategy or gaining the opportunity to take on greater challenges in a larger firm.

The most attractive buyers from a seller’s point of view were large independent PR firms, with large publicly traded holding companies coming in second and small or midsized PR firms occupying third place. Consulting firms and private equity firms ranked much further down the scale than

they did in last year’s survey.

Those rankings are a pretty good reflection of the 67 M&A transactions that Davis & Gilbert identified over the 12-month period ending Oct. 1. Independent PR firms constituted 61 percent of the buyers in those transactions, with public holding companies accounting for 37 percent and private equity firms sitting at just two percent.

Not surprisingly, the most popular acquisition targets are firms that specialize in tech, which accounted for 39 percent of last year’s M&A deals. Among the other specialties attractive to buyers were travel & tourism, financial services/investor relations, healthcare and sports/entertainment.

The survey also asked firms to identify the top three challenges they faced over the past 12 months. Attracting and keeping top talent was tops on the list, and most firms said they expected that challenge to remain strong. Firms also cited the need for specialized talent who have business development and client management skills. ○

## Army marches \$4B recruitment biz to OMC

The Army announced Nov. 20 that Omnicom's DDB Chicago has won the \$4 billion, ten-year marketing and advertising program that had been at Interpublic for a dozen years.

The U.S. Army Mission and Installation Contracting Command at Fort Knox, KY, is the contracting agent.

Work locations and funding levels are to be determined.

The Interpublic team, which was led by McCann Worldgroup and included Weber Shandwick, was eliminated from the pitch due to a technical issue.

FleishmanHillard is part of the winning DDB team.

WPP also pitched. ○



## Facebook hires DOJ antitrust pro

Facebook hired Kate Patchen, who headed the Justice Dept.'s antitrust office in San Francisco, this month as associate general counsel for litigation matters.

The 14-year Justice Dept. veteran joins the social media giant as tech companies grapple with antitrust issues and critics blast Facebook as too big and in the need of a break-up, noted the *Financial Times*. A reinvigorated Congress is expected to mount an effort to cut Facebook down to size.

Embattled Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg told CNN on Nov. 21 that he will not step down in the wake of a Nov. 14 *New York Times* article on the social media company's effort to smear critics. He defended COO Sheryl Sandberg as "a really important part of the company." ○



Kate Patchen

## iRobot joins China trade lobbying fray

Consumer robotics company iRobot becomes the latest U.S. company to retain lobbying support on Capitol Hill in light of the Trump admin's escalating trade dispute with China.

The Bedford, MA-headquartered technology company, which manufactures autonomous consumer vacuum cleaners such as the popular Roomba, hired legislative policy and strategic consulting firm Van Heuvelen Strategies, LLC to lobby "on tariffs on vacuum cleaners manufactured in China," according to lobbying registration documents filed with Congress in October.

iRobot makes its vacuums in China. Press outlets in late October reported that the robotics company's shares fell 14 percent amid investor worries surrounding how the three rounds of tariffs that President Trump has slapped on Chinese imports since the beginning of the year might affect future distribution of its products.

A three-member team handles the iRobot account, including VH Strategies principal Bob Van Heuvelen, who was formerly chief of staff to Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND) and director of civil and regulatory enforcement at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency between 1991 and 1997. He'll be joined by Stephen Ward, who was previously chief of staff to Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM); and Valerie West, who was natural resources director to Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR), as well as a congressional liaison to the Bureau of Reclamation and a staffer on the House Natural Resources Committee. ○

## Juul picks Empire Consulting

Juul Labs, which has more than 70 percent of the US e-cigarette market, has hired Capitol Hill veteran Chaka Burgess' Empire Consulting Group to handle legislative and Food and Drug Administration regulatory efforts regarding e-cigarettes and vaping products.

The San Francisco-based company, which has been the main target over the public backlash against teenage vaping, announced plans to suspend selling flavored e-cigarette pods in retail outlets and end social media promotions, just ahead of the Nov. 15 FDA announcement to impose sales restrictions on flavored e-cigarettes.

Burgess, who has more than 20 years of experience in PA, coalition building, lobbying and ally development, is co-managing partner of Empire.

Previously, he was VP-Government Relations at the American Gaming Assn., director of global government affairs at Amgen, federal lobbyist at Eli Lilly, and consultant at APCO Worldwide.

Burgess is a board member of the Congressional Black Caucus Political Action Committee, which should be energized with the January arrival of a Democratic-controlled Congress. ○

## Ex-LA mayor Villaraigosa lands at Mercury

Antonio Villaraigosa, former mayor of Los Angeles who ran an unsuccessful bid for California governor, has landed at Mercury as co-chairman.

At the Omnicom unit, Villaraigosa will focus on strategic and crisis communications work. He'll be based in the firm's Los Angeles office.

Villaraigosa wrapped up his second term in office in 2013. He chaired the 2012 Democratic National Convention, served as president of the US Conference of Mayors in 2011-2012 and did a stint on President Obama's Transition Economic Advisory Board in 2008.

Before becoming LA Mayor, Villaraigosa sat on the city council and was a member of the California State Assembly, where he rose to the Speaker position.

Villaraigosa doesn't plan to do any lobbying work for Mercury, which has a foreign client roster that includes Qatar, Turkey, Consulate of Japan, China's Hikvision, Haiti and Cameroon. ○



Antonio Villaraigosa

## Warren squeezes Saudi PR firms

Sen. Elizabeth Warren wrote letters to the heads of 23 PR/lobbying firms to determine the extent of their current and past business with Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the Oct. 2 torture, murder and dismemberment of dissident and Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi.

The Massachusetts Democrat noted that lobbying for the Saudi government has been a profitable industry,” and quoted a Bloomberg estimate that D.C. lobbyists “raked in \$76.9M” over the past decade for Saudi Arabia advocacy work.

“This ongoing status as a representative of Saudi government interests raises questions about whether your firm prioritizes profit over basic human rights, and whether it is ethically and morally defensible for American lobbyists to be providing services to a repressive regime that does not share America’s values,” wrote Warren in her Nov. 28 letter.

Warren’s letters went to Hill+Knowlton’s Jack Martin, Fleishman-Hillard’s John Saunders and MSLGroup Americas’ Ron Guirguis, who stepped down from the helm last month.

They ask for full and unredacted contracts with the Saudis from Jan. 2017 to present, list of specific issues, potential involvement with Trump administration officials and whether the firm expects to continue Saudi representation.

Warren also penned missives to the heads of five firms, (Gladstone Place Partners’ Steve Lipin, BGR’s Lanny Griffith, Glover Park Group’s Michael Feldman, Harbour Group’s Richard Mintz and Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher’s Ken Doran), commending them for their decision to ax Saudi Arabia from their client roster.

“While your firm has dropped Saudi Arabia as a client, it remains in the public interest for your firm to provide a full, transparent accounting of its previous business ties to the Saudi government.” ○

### FARA News



## NEW FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT FILINGS

Below is a list of select companies that have registered with the U.S. Department of Justice, FARA Registration Unit, Washington, D.C., in order to comply with the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, regarding their consulting and communications work on behalf of foreign principals, including governments, political parties, organizations, and individuals. For a complete list of filings, visit [www.fara.gov](http://www.fara.gov).

**Capitol Counsel LLC**, Washington, D.C., **registered Nov. 19, 2018 for China-United States Exchange Foundation**, Hong Kong, regarding periodic fact-finding meetings with members of Congress on issues affecting U.S.-China relations.

**Keene Consulting**, Ft. Washington, MD, **registered Nov. 6, 2018 for People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria**, Algiers, Algeria, regarding interaction with appropriate U.S. governmental officials concerning matters of interest to the principal.

**Qorvis MSLGROUP**, Washington, D.C., **registered Nov. 2, 2018 for Republic of Fiji COP23 Presidency**, Suva, Fiji, regarding support and promotion of COP23, the informal name for the 23rd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Bonn Germany from Nov 6-17, 2018.

**Barnes & Thornburg LLP**, Indianapolis, IN, **registered Nov. 20, 2018 for Embassy of Hungary**, Washington, D.C., regarding issues of religious freedom and immigration involving US government officials.

### Lobbying News



## NEW LOBBYING DISCLOSURE ACT FILINGS

Below is a list of select companies that have registered with the Secretary of the Senate, Office of Public Records, and the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Legislative Resource Center, Washington, D.C., in order to comply with the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995. For a complete list of filings, visit [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov).

**The Liaison Group, LLC**, Washington, D.C., **registered Nov. 14, 2018 for California Cannabis Industry Association**, Sacramento, CA, regarding bipartisan legislation allowing states to set and enforce laws governing cannabis use, allowing companies operating legally in the cannabis industry to use traditional institutions for financial transactions, and correcting flaws in the US tax code that serve as barriers to legal commerce in the cannabis space and slow the development of solutions that can improve Americans’ lives.

**Galactic Ventures, LLC**, Mojave, CA, **registered Nov. 21, 2018 on behalf of itself** regarding issues related to commercial spaceflight.

**Bose Public Affairs Group**, Washington, D.C., **registered Nov. 21, 2018 for International Literacy Association**, Newark, DE, regarding issues related to literacy and teacher preparation relating to Higher Education Act reauthorization and the Every Student Succeeds Act.

**Davidoff Hutcher & Citron, LLP**, Washington, D.C., **registered Nov. 20, 2018 for T-Mobile USA, Inc.**, Washington, D.C., regarding telecommunications issues with the New York Congressional Delegation.

**Peck Madigan Jones**, Washington, D.C., **registered Nov. 19, 2018 for Election Systems & Software, LLC**, Omaha, NE, regarding issues related to election security.

## Algeria keen on NRA alum Keene

David Keene, former National Rifle Assn. President and American Conservative Union Chairman, is representing the DC lobbying interests of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria under a one-year pact worth \$360,000.

Algeria is keen for Keene Consulting Services to interact on its behalf with members of the Trump Administration, Congress and non-government decision-makers “to strengthen the relations of friendship and cooperation” between it and the US, according to the consulting agreement.

KCS was hired “to promote Algeria’s role of peace and cooperation in world and regional affairs” and to attract business, trade and investment in the African nation.

Keene, a former Special Assistant to Vice President Spiro Agnew and New York Sen. Jim Buckley, advised the presidential campaigns of Ronald Reagan, Bush I, Bob Dole and Mitt Romney. ○

## Iraq hands Holly D.C. work

The Embassy of Iraq is ironing out a written agreement with Holly Strategies Inc. for strategic counsel and outreach to US officials in Congress and the Trump Administration.

The pact is expected to be worth about \$7,000 per-month and cover a broad range of geopolitical matters that impact the US-Iraq bilateral relationship.

Josh Holly launched his firm in December 2017 following the implosion of The Podesta Group, where he did a six-year stint. Prior to joining Tony Podesta’s firm, Holly served as a Communications Director in Congress and Deputy Press Secretary for Tennessee’s former Republican Senator Lamar Alexander. ○

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530 7th Ave., #502, New York, NY 10018

212/924-3600

letstalk@jpublicrelations.com

www.jpublicrelations.com

Employees: 65. Founded: 2005.

**Agency Statement:** J Public Relations (JPR) is an international luxury PR and social media agency specializing in hospitality, travel and luxury lifestyle brands with offices in New York City, London, Los Angeles and San Diego. JPR is a trusted leader in media relations and brand strategy, trend forecasting, brand partnerships, influencer relations, social media strategy and unparalleled media placements worldwide.

Established in 2005, the award-winning agency has consistently risen to become the country's fastest growing, bi-coastal agency in the travel and hospitality spaces. JPR's global roster includes more than 125 hotels in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Caribbean, Dubai, Europe, New Zealand, Asia and more. JPR steadily garners and retains notable clients including Relais & Châteaux, Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, Vail Resorts Hospitality, Grace Hotels, InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown, Newport Beach & Company, Four Seasons Lanai and 15 Ritz-Carlton Hotels & Resorts.

JPR is listed on the Observer's annual "PR Power 50" as one of the country's most powerful PR firms. The agency also garnered "Top Places to Work" by PR News and "Agency of the Year" by *Bulldog Reporter* in addition to multiple trade and consumer awards for company culture and brand success.

Jamie Sigler O'Grady, Sarah Evans, partners

### Locations:

#### New York

530 7th Ave., #502, New York, NY 10018

212/924-3600

#### San Diego

2341 Fifth Ave., San Diego, CA 92101

619/255-7069

#### Los Angeles

429 Santa Monica Blvd., #280, Santa Monica, CA 90401

310/722-7066

#### London

14 Gray's Inn Rd., 3063, London, WC1X 8HN, UK

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Grace Hotels

Grand Hotel Tremezzo, Lake Como

Gurney's Resorts - Montauk & Newport

Helena Bay, New Zealand

Hotel del Coronado

InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown

InterContinental, Washington DC - The Wharf

Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts

Newport Beach & Company

Rancho La Puerta

Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa

Regent Seven Seas Cruises (project work)

Relais & Châteaux

The Palms and The Shore Club, Turks & Caicos

The Private Suite at LAX

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