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The background of the entire page is a photograph of palm trees silhouetted against a vibrant sunset sky. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a warm orange and yellow near the horizon. The palm fronds are dark and detailed, creating a tropical atmosphere.

Communications & New Media

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SPECIAL EDITION: CORONAVIRUS & THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

THE TRAVEL SECTOR'S PROLONGED CLIMB TO RECOVERY
PR ROADMAP FOR A 360-DEGREE REOPENING STRATEGY
RESTORING CONFIDENCE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY
ENGAGING DESTINATION PARTNERS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES
WHY TRAVEL'S REBOUND MAY COME SOONER THAN LATER
STEPS TOURISM BRANDS CAN TAKE TO REOPEN STRONG
INSIDER TIPS TO HELP THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY RECOVER
STUDY: TRAVELERS ARE STILL PLANNING TRIPS IN 2020
HOW TO NAVIGATE A POST-COVID-19 MEDIA LANDSCAPE
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Facebook revises policies amid ad fallout

So far, the most predictable development of 2020 is the news that Facebook finds itself in yet another public relations crisis. The world's largest social media site has long exhibited a hands-off approach when it comes to the political speech that's allowed on the platform, allowing it to effectively become a hotbed for misleading advertisements, hyper-partisan propaganda, unchallenged political statements and racist content.

And now these policy decisions have the company wending its way through yet another round of negative publicity, a development foregrounded in a history of data breaches and a digital architecture that allowed Russian trolls to circulate fake news in an attempt to sway a presidential election. Somehow, through the intricacies of fate, Facebook is in trouble for doing what Facebook has always done.

Things came to a head during the George Floyd protests in late May, when President Trump posted an admonition to rioters on the platform that "when the looting starts, the shooting starts," a racially-charged phrase that was coined in the late 1960s by former Miami police chief Walter E. Headley.

While Twitter blocked the post for violating that platform's policies, Facebook refused to take any action whatsoever, with chief Mark Zuckerberg stating—in a Facebook post, naturally—that his company's "position is that we should enable as much expression as possible unless it will cause imminent risk of specific harms or dangers spelled out in clear policies."

It was later reported that Facebook—and even Zuckerberg himself—allegedly communicated with the White House in an unsuccessful attempt to get Trump to modify the inflammatory post. Hundreds of Facebook employees staged a virtual walkout over the company's handling of the matter.

In June, a coalition of civil rights groups—including the Anti-Defamation League, the NAACP, Color of Change and others—organized the #StopHateForProfit movement, which effectively urged companies to freeze their paid advertising campaigns on the site until Facebook does something to address the "long history of allowing racist, violent, and verifiably false content to run rampant on its platform." The ensuing boycott resulted in major brands such as North Face, Coca-Cola, Unilever, Verizon, Lululemon, Levi Strauss & Co., Ben & Jerry's, Hershey, Starbucks, Patagonia, Eddie Bauer and approx. 400 others pulling their ad spending on Facebook, some throughout the month of July and others for the rest of the year.

Brands are well-attuned to the fact that activism is the new normal in America, that a growing number of consumers today are motivated to make purchasing decisions that reflect their personal values. As a result, brands are taking increasingly vocal stances on the social and political issues shaping our world, which has found an unlikely tension point in Facebook's laissez-faire stance on the content that flows over its platform, resulting in what's arguably the site's greatest crisis since the Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018.

In response, competing social media platforms have taken the opportunity to preemptively reevaluate their content policies, effectively positioning themselves as safer alternatives to Facebook. Amazon's live-streaming platform Twitch suspended President Trump's account for what it called "hateful conduct." Social news aggregator Reddit, one of the most popular community-based forums on the Internet, shuttered its pro-Trump "The_Donald" subreddit, as well as approx. 2,000 other communities, and unveiled a new policy intended to prevent users from "attacking marginalized or vulnerable groups." Even Twitter, Trump's go-to communications platform, has begun adding disclaimer labels to the President tweets that violate company policies.

In light of the pushback, Facebook has backpedaled on its rules and is now enforcing stricter standards regarding how it moderates misinformation and "problematic" content. On June 26, the site announced it would begin adding labels to posts that violate Facebook's policies. The social giant also announced it would delete hundreds of accounts tied to groups that "promote violence," and recently took down several Trump re-election ads containing images that bore an alarming resemblance to symbols once used by the Nazis for identifying political prisoners. Finally, the company committed \$200 million in grants, investments and ad credits for black-owned small businesses and non-profits working with black communities.

It remains to be seen whether these steps will be enough to quell critics and stop the advertising hemorrhage, or if Facebook's newfound beneficence will simply be viewed as a series of performative gestures. Perhaps the bigger question is whether the growing brand boycott will even move the needle in terms of the platform's long-term roster of seven million advertisers (forecasts by eMarketer estimate that Facebook will still experience 22 percent growth in worldwide ad revenues this year, or about \$85 billion). It stands to reason that until some behavioral change occurs among Facebook's users, if growing dissatisfaction with the platform and its policies finally causes consumers to leave in droves, attracting advertisers in the future will be the least of Facebook's worries. ○

— Jon Gingerich

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One in four U.S. newspapers have shuttered since 2004

The United States has lost about one-quarter of the newspapers it had 15 years ago—or more than 2,100 titles—according to a June report by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

By Jon Gingerich

U.S. newsrooms have existed in a perilous state for years now, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing economic recession will only further exacerbate the ongoing decline of the nation's local media ecosystem.

According to a June report released by the Hussman School of Journalism and Media at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, more than one-fourth of the country's newspapers have disappeared in the last 15 years, leaving a growing number of American communities without access to local news.

There are 6,736 local newspapers in the United States—1,260 dailies and 5,474 weeklies—that were still being published at the end of 2019. According to the UNC report, this number reveals an astounding disappearance of 2,155 papers from the 8,891 news titles that were being published in 2004, accounting for a loss of approx. 212 daily titles and 1,943 non-dailies.

In the last year alone, more than 300 newspapers across the U.S. shuttered, resulting in a loss of about 6,000 journalism jobs and a print news circulation decline of approx. five million. At least 30 U.S. newspapers closed or merged between April and May 2020 alone, according to the report.

As a result, “news deserts” have spread across the country, leaving more than 1,800 communities in the U.S. without access to local print or digital reporting. About half of the nation's 3,143 counties have only one newspaper, and two-thirds don't have a daily. More than 200 of the counties in the U.S. currently have no local news outlet whatsoever. Of the newspapers that have survived, many have now been rendered “ghost papers,” with little original reporting.

2020 has dealt two once-in-a-century catastrophes—a global pandemic and an economic collapse on par with the Great Depression—which no doubt will result in the continued closure of countless more local

newsrooms. Ironically, these events had the effect of driving Americans' interest in local news in recent months, as homebound residents across the country eagerly awaited updates on how the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting their communities and what steps state and local officials were taking to respond to the crisis.

“The paradox of the coronavirus pandemic and the ensuing economic shutdown is that it has exposed the deep fissures that have stealthily undermined the health of local journalism in recent years, while also reminding us of how important timely and credible local news and information are to our health and that of our community,” the report's authors wrote. “This is a watershed year, and the choices we make in 2020—as citizens, policymakers and industry leaders—will determine the future of the local news landscape.”

Findings for the Hussman School of Journalism and Media's report, “News Deserts and Ghost Newspapers: Will Local News Survive?” were based on a survey of state press associations as well as a proprietary database collected by the Center over the past 15 years. ○

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Americans getting urge to travel

Travelers are slowly beginning to feel more secure about heading out on trips, according to the latest from a sentiment tracking tool created for the travel and tourism industry.

By Steve Barnes

MMGY's Travel Safety Barometer, released on June 15, asked respondents to rank how safe they felt various travel activities were on a scale of 0 (extremely unsafe) to 100 (extremely safe).

While the perceived level of safety remains fairly low across the board, there was a marked improvement from the May 8 edition of the report. Respondents overall gave domestic travel a 44 on the scale, up 29.4 percent from the 34 it received in the earlier survey.

International travel lagged behind, racking up a score of 32, but that number still represents a 45 percent uptick from May's rating of 22. Business travel was up 24 percent, going from 29 in May to 36 in June.

When asked how safe they felt getting to their travel destination would be, the level of confidence is once again rising slowly. While transportation, in general, pulled in a score of 60 (up from 56 in May), there was a big difference depending on the mode of transportation. Not surprisingly, the family car was seen as the safest way to travel, with a confidence score of 74, while domestic flights (36) and rail travel (34) trailed far

behind. The trust in the safety of lodgings is also on an upward path, going from 35 in May to 44 in the new survey.

While trust in dining and entertainment overall rose from 33 to 43, the scores of individual options varied widely. Coming in at the top were going to a park (57) or the beach (50), followed by visiting a bar or restaurant (40).

On the whole, outdoor activities were preferred, with outdoor sporting events (38) outranking ones held indoors (30) and outdoor concerts/festivals (36) topping their indoor versions (28).

The perceived safety of cruises trails all other areas, but their reputation is nonetheless moving toward positive territory, up 39 percent from 18 to 25.

The Travel Safety Barometer survey is conducted monthly among 1,200 U.S. residents who have taken an overnight trip for business or leisure in the past 12 months (*for a more in-depth analysis of the Barometer's most recent findings, see pg. 12*). ○

PR news brief

Ad market plunged 31% in May

The U.S. advertising market fell 31 percent in May from the same period a year ago, according to national advertising revenue data released by the Standard Media Index, which is the industry standard for ad spend data.

It's the third consecutive monthly drop the U.S. ad market has experienced in light of the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to SMI's analysis, following a 35 percent decline in April and an 11 percent decline in March. SMI's data is derived from advertising sales figures supplied by the largest U.S. ad agency holding groups.

SMI attributed much of the faltering market to the loss of advertising suffered by a continued delay of major sporting events, which particularly hurt entertainment conglomerates WarnerMedia (which owns TNT) and ESPN (which is owned by Walt Disney Co.). WarnerMedia's ad revenues fell by 45.5 percent in May while Disney's ad revenues tumbled 39.6 percent, according to SMI's report.

The travel and tourism industry was the sector to witness the biggest losses, where ad spends experienced a punishing 87 percent drop. Ad revenues in the automotive world fell by 60 percent, followed by apparel and accessories, where ad spending declined 54 percent. Advertising from restaurants and retail outlets decreased by 52 percent and 45 percent, respectively. Tech ad spending slipped 25 percent and financial services dipped 13 percent. The only sector to see a year-over-year advertising uptick was the pharmaceutical industry, which spent four percent more in May than it did during the same period last year.

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Economic fever in the travel industry could linger

It's going to be a prolonged climb to recovery for the travel economy, as well as those of us who operate lifestyle-focused agencies whose clients have witnessed a sudden halt in their business. What can we do to weather this storm?

By Charles Mardiks

While there's no denying the tragic loss of life and suffering resulting from the global COVID-19 pandemic, it will be the economic repercussions that continue to plague the travel industry for some time.

The travel and tourism industry has enjoyed several years of impressive growth. According to recent numbers from the World Travel and Tourism Council, last year the tourism sector grew globally to a record \$8.9 trillion of the world's combined Gross Domestic Product, up from \$8.8 trillion in 2018. This represents a contribution of 10 percent of the global GDP. In 2017, the sector represented \$8.3 trillion of the combined worldwide GDP. Forty-four countries rely on the travel and tourism industry for more than 15 percent of their total share of employment. A total of 330 million jobs are supported by this industry around the world.

Early COVID-19 related headlines generally focused on passengers stranded on cruise ships and the closing of borders as well as the struggle of local businesses such as restaurants and retail. At the same time, the pandemic has knocked down many segments of the travel industry from airlines, cruise lines and hotels to attractions, museums and travel agency networks. Major travel players the likes of Hertz and LATAM Airlines have declared bankruptcy, and word on the street is there will likely be more economic casualties until a vaccine is widely available.

Other industries have been able to shift their operations to respond to the pandemic and changed consumer buying patterns, such as retailers and fashion companies selling masks, cosmetic and skincare companies producing hand sanitizer and restaurants and bars focusing on take-out and delivery. It's much more difficult for travel companies that are dependent on in person experiences and attract consumers from national and global markets to do so. Sure, some travel companies are able to shift more focus on local/regional drive-to-markets. As an example, a travel agency that specialized in safaris to Africa immediately shifted gears and created wildlife safaris to the U.S. National Parks. Some cruise lines are reimagining itineraries to call on smaller, less-crowded or remote

destinations. However, for island destinations and resorts or countries solely dependent on airlift, this is not as easy or fast of a fix. Similarly, hotels, destinations and airlines that generate the majority of their business from corporate travel and meeting and conventions the shift to an alternate business mix and the resulting climb out of the recession is no doubt going to be more difficult and take longer.

For many of us who operate boutique travel- and lifestyle-focused agencies and whose clients are grappling with this sudden crash of their business, the subsequent impact on our business is significant. Many of us have lived through an array of travel crises from 911, SARS and Ebola to such natural disasters as the volcanic ash cloud of 2010 to a myriad of hurricanes such as Katrina and even terrorist acts and wars. However, nothing compares to COVID-19 in its combined complexity, uncertainty and global scope.

So, what are some of the survival tactics that we can all employ to ride this economic storm out?

At this stage, we've all likely lost business or at the very least have had clients go on hiatus. As a result, we've likely trimmed all unnecessary overhead and probably had to make some painful staffing decisions. For some it might be time to consider diversifying our client portfolio beyond just travel. Now is the time to maintain contact with former clients and those on hiatus to reach out with suggestions, media and business leads, even without remuneration. It's about sustaining the relationships, so when revenue returns you'll be top of mind. It's the time to network—virtually, of course—like crazy; amp up your LinkedIn activity and other social outreach. Tap the professional organizations that you belong to. Participate in webinars and virtual events and panel discussions to remain visible. Share relevant, current client results with others.

It's also time to help these clients with strategies on how to target new local/regional markets and conceptualize “one-tank” and hyper-local vacation programs. This is also a time to laser-target past guests and visitors who are already loyal to the brand or destination and trust that they will be safe and well looked after by them.

Consider developing special value-added programs to reward their loyalty and incentivize them to return sooner than later and to recommend the brand to their friends and family.

It's a great time to align with strategic partners to jointly fund campaigns that clients might not be able to afford on their own. It's also wise to research niche and geographic markets that once medium- to long-haul travel is viable might be more likely to be the first to pack their bags. For example, adventure travelers who have a particular passion and a higher threshold for risk might be more apt to travel once things open up than families with young children or the mature market. As airlines announce return service from key gateway markets, this is the time to rollout geo-targeted campaigns.

Key influencers, travel writers and travel specialists will also want to get back out there early on to show their followers, readers, viewers and clients what it's like to travel now, and that it's safe to do so. As a result, the press trip, whether group or individual, might have a bit of a resurgence. It's also smart to align with locally-based media, freelancers and/or influencers who contribute to outlets in other key markets during the period when other media are not able to travel. Someone who's on-the-ground provides a trusted local perspective. Consider developing niche guided trips with noted influencers that they can sell to their followers. Reward the influencer with a trip and a possible commission on each trip sale.

While there's no telling how long the dark economic cloud will hover over the travel industry, there are bound to be a few showers and perhaps even a storm in the not too distant future. However, with a bit of tenacity, ingenuity and flexible planning that can pivot to the ever-changing nature of this pandemic, you are certain to weather this storm too.

Charles Mardiks is Founder and President of Mardiks PR. ◉



Charles Mardiks

Reopening strong

Steps travel brands can take as they return to business.

By Jennifer Baum

Just over four months ago, the world endured a tailspin that some of us saw coming but none imagined would take over so quickly. Our beloved hospitality industry has been decimated, leaving thousands of committed employees without jobs and the future on shaky ground. Restaurants and bars closed. Hotels shuttered. And our world morphed into something unfamiliar.

These are unprecedented, challenging times, words we hear more often than we'd like but true nonetheless. The world has changed, and the hospitality and travel industry has been enormously affected. This is the new normal, if you can even use the word "normal."

But hospitality is evolving and flexibility is key in order to be successful, especially in the immediate future. In recent months, we've seen businesses adapt to stay relevant during the Coronavirus pandemic. Hotels opened their doors to healthcare workers and patients, restaurants and chefs created care packages for those in need, and various fashion and hospitality brands adapted their business to make PPE masks when there was a shortage. In June, our agency also pivoted to offer three new services to better serve the needs of our hospitality colleagues and to help navigate the road ahead.

Now, as the world starts to reopen and we navigate each day and each new challenge that comes with this process, it's more important than ever to ...

Prioritize PR: Often during times of crisis, budgets are tightened, and PR is the first to be cut or downsized. However, this is precisely the time when your communications team is needed the most. Restoring and strengthening your brand's image by communicating with the press, crafting messaging to past guests, connecting with key partners, as well as developing internal lines of communications for staff and sales teams is essential.

Share health and safety standards: Travelers are ready to pack their bags and get back out there, but they need to be reassured that their health and safety are just as important to you as it is to them. Any and all new health and hygiene protocols should be listed clearly on your website so potential guests can easily find the information they need when booking. Language should be approachable, clear and easy to understand. If corporate brand guidelines aren't readily available, follow local/state templates as needed.

Stay nimble in static times: If you're unable to operate at full capacity, take a step back and identify areas where you have flexibility to adapt and be creative. Oftentimes, especially in hotels, food and beverage departments offer the opportunity to pivot business models and create unexpected revenue streams, as we've seen recently with to-go cocktails and take out only service offerings. Other great ways to think outside the box include transforming parking lots into beer gardens until indoor dining is allowed; offering hotel rooms at a special rate to be used as individual office spaces; expanding in-room services; and even pop-up burger bars or food trucks that bring the dining experience outside the hotel's walls.

Align with local partners: Taking care of others is what we do in the hospitality industry and one major lesson that we learned from this pandemic is that we're "in this together." That includes the recovery phase. I'll likely say this more than once, but your local community is your most important asset whether you're in crisis or not. When you support your community in a time of need, they will support you. Align with local partners and consider creating an overarching recovery campaign to win back consumer trust, increase audience reach and reinforce "open for business" messaging.

Get social: Maintaining a consistent social media presence and using it to communicate timely news and updates to consumers is an important step in engaging followers pre- and post-reopening. Your content can entertain and be informative: use it to show, not tell, what your brand and team are doing behind the scenes while you're not fully reopened (e.g. at-home cooking/cocktail demos, a short wellness session featuring yoga and meditation). Highlight what social distancing measures and hygienic practices you're implementing to ensure guests' safety. What can people expect from the arrival process? You can even share old photos and video content to remind and inspire people while they make plans to travel to your destination once things get settled. It's also important to give thanks to your supporters and community whenever you can and your social media channels provide a great platform to do just that.

Maintain your relationships with influencers and content creators: While you may not have the same budget to work with paid influencers as you did before, this is a good time to tap into existing relationships and strengthen those ties. Keeping your

digital network informed and ahead of the news, while also engaging feedback when applicable, creates a brand loyal community that will later be more willing to help amplify and share news on your behalf. There is also an opportunity to establish an affiliate relationship with these like-minded brands to swap content and leverage each other's audiences.

Adjust your focus on your immediate community: As you start to reopen, your biggest ally—and the first segment of business to come back—will be your local community. This group of local residents, press, influencers and partners should be the first you reach out to with reopening info and the first to be welcomed back on property. Also, where and when you can, continue to give back through charities, volunteering as well as providing local incentives and promotions to show your loyalty and support during troubling times.



Jennifer Baum

Incentivize guests: Travel now poses a clear risk due to required transportation and potential for exposure. In order for guests to be inclined to travel, they need to see an added incentive when booking, such as a value-add or package deal. These types of perks may include a free upgrade to a villa when booking one of the property's suites, or a travel package inclusive of F&B, spa, valet and activity offerings.

Offer private experiences: From aviation to villas, as well as dining and other experiences, privacy is going to be the most coveted amenity in the immediate future for travelers. Make privacy a priority and get creative with both programming and space. If you don't currently have private villas or dining rooms, try transforming unexpected locations into secret hideaways that travelers and guests could rent out for an afternoon or day, with added-value services to help attract clientele and boost revenue (e.g., transform an unused event terrace typically booked for cocktail events or weddings into an escape space with a fully loaded cabana and butler service).

Recognize new business sources: Unfortunately, for the immediate future, gone are the days of the quick cheap flight and the last-minute jet-set. As travelers pivot their focus away from air travel for the immediate future, they're redefining their idea of "local" and seeing longer road trips as a way to expand their travel experience. This

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Why a travel rebound may arrive sooner than expected

The data is in, and Americans are getting ready to get back out on the road again.

By Julie Freeman

It's no secret that the travel and tourism industry is among the hardest hit by COVID-19, and we'll feel those repercussions for a long time. The U.S. Travel Association has estimated that total travel spending in the U.S. is predicted to drop 45 percent by the end of this year, and since the beginning of March, the pandemic has led to more than \$237 billion in cumulative losses for the U.S. travel economy.

Numbers like these are demoralizing, but we're seeing an increasing number of destinations, hotels and attractions opening back up and providing glimmers of hope, leading us to confidently say the travel rebound will arrive sooner than originally expected. Our research shows the pent-up demand for travel is powerful, and it crosses all demographics. In fact, 66 percent of Americans expect to book their next leisure trip within the next six months, and more than half plan to do so in the next three months, according to our Travel Intentions Pulse Survey.



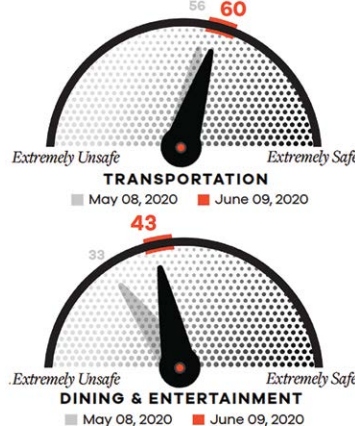
Source: MMGY Global Travel Safety Barometer; June 2020

An important signal of recovery is determining how safe travelers feel getting back out there. The MMGY Global Travel Safety Barometer, a first-of-its-kind measurement of travel sentiment, provides insights into how safe Americans feel across various categories of leisure and business travel. The newest data shows that perceptions of safety are rising across all sectors as the travel industry enters the summer season, and over the course of a month we saw the needle move a full 10 points, a strong move in the right direction. On a scale of 0 to 100, consumer confidence in domestic travel rose from 34 to 44 points, and trust in international travel moved from 22 to 32 points. We still have a long way to go—both in

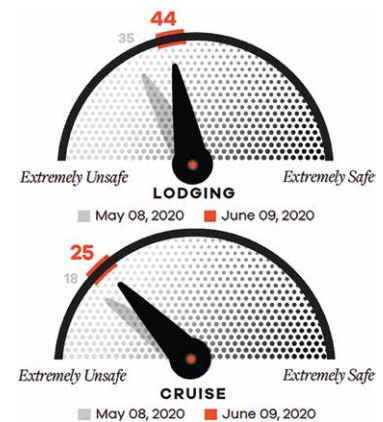
sentiment and logistics—but these upward trends suggest people have moved from just dreaming about traveling again to actively listening to messages about booking future travel and, in some cases, getting in their cars and starting to travel regionally.

With travel restrictions now being eased around the globe, we're leveraging our renowned proprietary research and insights in a signature "Ready + Set + Go" approach to recovery to help partners across the industry get back on their feet. While it's true that we're all in this together, every client is dealing with unique circumstances: varying shelter-at-home mandates and transportation capacities; different sets of assets they're able to leverage; limited staff and budgets; and other challenges that make it impossible to create a one-size-fits-all solution. That's why we rely on our data to inform our strategies through each stage of recovery.

In a downturn, it becomes important to be judicious about where destinations and travel brands should spend their money on PR, marketing and advertising. As we know, domestic leisure travel is recovering much faster than business and international travel. Within that realm we've learned that, right now, Americans are beginning to feel increasingly confident about all forms of transportation. They feel safest in their own vehicles, but trust in air travel grew 20 percent between May and June. There's a lot more interest in visiting state and national parks, as well as beaches, compared to other typical outdoor gatherings.



Our data shows an uptick in confidence in hotels and resorts, but overall Americans currently feel safer in a vacation rental. And while cruise bookings into 2021 are surprisingly robust, prospective cruisers need to be nurtured with messages of confidence.



We can measure those data-driven findings against other tools such as social listening, which checks the pulse on more emotionally-driven conversations across social media platforms.

Consumers are rapidly evolving from feelings of anxiety and fear to hope and anticipation, signifying that now's the time to move from top-level inspiration to mid-level consideration. We know from our research that people are most interested in hearing messages about safety and health protocols before travel deals or value adds. Having such insights in our arsenal puts us in an enviable position to create strategic PR plans to carry our clients across every stage of recovery.

Now that many destinations and brands are further into the Ready or Set stages, thoughtful campaign messaging is essential to drive both short-term and future bookings. As travel marketers, it's incumbent to move the needle toward the travel industry's recovery by reimagining travel, finding new ways to tell the story and utilizing the latest technology to get people traveling again:

- Now that Americans are ready to get into their cars and explore, we can leverage road trip content and "nearcations," health and safety tips and information on how to support locally owned businesses.
- We're amplifying outdoor recreation, RV and camping stories, secluded retreats and open-air experiences, all of which encourage people to explore the outdoors and maintain social distancing on their travels.
- The luxury travel space is ripe with potential story ideas as high-end travelers seek out inspiration such as chartered planes, villa rentals, vineyard visits and pri-



Julie Freeman

— Continued on next page

Travel PR COVID-19 recovery plans

Five insider tips to help the travel industry recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

By Melanie Brandman

With the world turned upside down and the travel industry weathering an unprecedented pause, the path to recovery can seem arduous at times. But we can always find a silver lining. We see the wave of recent and upcoming re-openings as a chance for hotels, resorts and destinations to adopt an “opening” mentality and be born anew.

As the saying goes, you’re only new once. This is why many of the world’s leading hotels, resorts and hospitality clients seek out travel PR experts as they prepare to reopen. Having the support of a seasoned luxury travel advisor working behind the scenes to curate a seamless—albeit different—travel experience will be critical. Most importantly, it’s our job to articulate why these moments and new offerings are newsworthy to our trusted media contacts to amplify the message.

Our agency has always believed in providing bespoke service to our clients. We’ve earned a reputation as one of the top travel PR agencies, due in part to our customized and innovative approach, where no two client plans or strategies are the same. Whether it’s a standalone project, 30-day quick lift or long term strategy, we take pride in our ability to develop smart, actionable coronavirus recovery plans that will help our travel PR clients re-open and get back to business, stronger than ever.

And while there’s no “one size fits all” solution, we’d like to peel back the curtain and share five insider tips that guide our thinking to help our clients re-enter the market and capitalize on being “new” once again.

Be sure to ask: “why now?”

As travel enthusiasts, it’s easy to get tunnel vision when approaching a hotel, resort or destination’s coronavirus recovery plan. But remember that in order to achieve your client’s goals—securing best-fit coverage to drive heads in beds and arrivals—we must

first demonstrate to the media why and how these offerings are newsworthy. Spend time thinking about your client—and how they relate to what’s going on in the broader national, regional and local conversation—and identify two or three “Why Now’s” that will anchor your recovery plan.

Re-evaluate your audience

While your hotel, resort or destination might have had an 80 percent/20 percent split of focus on national/international vs. regional/local pre-COVID, it might be time to invert these numbers and focus on travelers in your immediate backyard first. This can be a very real opportunity for our travel PR clients, but it requires a pivot in focus. To accommodate the rise in domestic road trips for our hotel and resort clients, we encourage them to think about their parking policies and ways to attractively package stays for guests arriving via car. How might their needs be new or different? What will a socially distanced welcome experience look and feel like with guests arriving via car?

We’re also advising our international clients to pay close attention to the airlines that service their destination for news about routes resuming and any increased airlift. Lean in on your resources—upstream tourism boards are often among the first to know about routes resuming—and focus your PR efforts on the markets who can now access your destination.

Examine owned assets

Does your photography show a bustling lobby, buzzing cafes or patrons elbow-to-elbow at the bar? In the pre-COVID era—where locals at your F&B outlets and a co-working style lobby were all the rage—these same images may now be red flags for today’s safety-minded travelers. Equally as important, are you showcasing a diverse clientele? If resources permit, use this time before you welcome guests back to audit your website and social channels and help fill in the content gaps.

an instant media trend in the early days of shelter-at-home mandates, is still resonating with audiences, as is digital content from chefs, artisans and other local influencers.

- For international travel, we know people feel more confident booking at least six months out, so we’re able to target long-lead publications to deliver inspiring content.

- As the cruise industry returns, it’s essential to push concrete messages about health and sanitization protocols, flexible rebook-

Pick a focal point and lean in

You’re excited to re-open and you want to deliver a WOW moment to leave a lasting impression on travelers. While it might be tempting to think about something bold and new—a grand re-opening event? a new signature offering?—this is one area in which we recommend looking to your past for inspiration. Distill the essence of what makes your hotel, resort or destination unique—whether it’s a signature arrival experience, a drink at the bar, an evening ritual or that perfect area to watch the sunset—and find a way to celebrate and subtly reinvent that experience for travelers with safety in mind.

Adjust tactics based on the timeline

Once a reopening date is established, your PR team will have a sense of how much runway you have to work with and what tactics can deliver the biggest impact in that time frame. For instance, if a hospitality PR partner is engaged 30 days prior to reopening, short-lead outlets—such as newspapers, digital outlets, e-newsletters and broadcast—should be prioritized over long-lead pitches to national outlets.

This can be complemented by a short-term social media strategy, whereby the property or destination creatively builds excitement and paints the picture of the experience to be had once the doors—or borders—reopen. This is where your new photography will play a critical role in visually communicating that your hotel, resort, or destination has traveler’s safety in mind.

Now more than ever, it’s time to pull together as an industry and demonstrate the true spirit of hospitality. You’re only new again once and we look forward to making the most of this transformative time in the travel industry—together.

Melanie Brandman is CEO and Founder of The Brandman Agency. ○



Melanie Brandman

TRAVEL REBOUND

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vately led tours.

- There’s a surge of interest in responsible travel in a post-COVID world, as we consider how to manage overtourism through reduced capacity.

- “Secondary” cities are getting attention as consumers look to travel to less-crowded or closer-to-home destinations.

- Virtual travel experiences, which was

ing and cancellation policies.

We anticipate travel will ultimately make a full comeback, and as it does, the marketplace will be more competitive than ever to attract visitors. Clients who stay the course now with focused, proactive and nimble PR programs that leverage insights and build on timely messaging will keep brand awareness high, putting them in the best possible position for total recovery.

Julie Freeman is EVP & Managing Director at MMGY NJF. ○

Roadmap for a 360-degree reopening strategy

Hospitality and travel brands have discovered a way to turn our current crisis into an opportunity, utilizing social media platforms in an effort to reinvent themselves while engaging and attracting new audiences.

By Jennifer Hawkins

It seems like ages ago that the travel industry came to a halt as the world locked down to flatten the curve of coronavirus. Yet, it's only been four months. Now, with local economies reopening and summer shining down on the Northern Hemisphere, it's high time for hotels, resorts, travel operators and other hospitality-related businesses to reach out and let travelers know they're ready to welcome them again, albeit with considerations.

Hotels have long strived to play host to travelers under all kinds of conditions, but in this time of uncertainty, that role must be executed with an unparalleled level of attention. Guests are eager to resume traveling, visit their favorite hotels and explore new destinations. And with this increased demand, we're witnessing an incredible transformation. Hotels are welcoming a new era of hospitality, reinventing themselves to ensure that today's traveler is safe, and at the same time, having a genuinely enjoyable experience.

Many hospitality companies have turned this crisis into an opportunity, using our "pandemic pause" to address necessary protocols and details—from instituting and training employees on new cleanliness techniques and technologies to remodeling public spaces such as lobbies, restaurants and pool decks—in an effort to welcome back guests in search of a much-needed change of scenery.

For the hospitality brands that dove deep into their local communities and offered assistance to first responders and others who put their lives on the line in the chaotic early days of the pandemic, their initial generosity is paying off in brand equity and positive awareness. While we've taken notice of the room giveaways and commitments to loyal staff, not all consumers have. Without an effective communications strategy, many travelers aren't aware of the incredible behind-the-scenes efforts that have taken place over the last several months, or the experience that awaits them in this new climate. We know from experience that one of the best ways to get the word out about your reopening plans is to embrace a smart and simple social media strategy from the C-Suite down.

Interestingly, with everyone in lockdown for so many months, one of the many effects of the pandemic was the deepening of users' immersion in social media at a moment when society had just begun to ques-

tion it. Remember "screen detoxes?" Well, connection-starved users are now turning to technology to socialize, learn new skills, keep apprised of local announcements and tune into the never-ending 24/7 news cycle. What's more, social media is the first stop for people to engage with their favorite brands. Worldwide, 44 percent of social media users say they're now spending more time on social media platforms. In March alone, Facebook saw growth of over five million new active users, while Instagram gained four million. Your target audiences are growing online and it's more crucial than ever to capture, inform and entertain them.

As an agency, we're spreading the word about upcoming hotel openings to the "traditional" travel, food and lifestyle media. But we're seeing that with things changing so rapidly, our hospitality clients are finding their social media platforms are the best way to communicate timely and immediate information—and their followers are rewarding them.

When relaying a reopening via social media, keep in mind that everyone has had their own personal experience with the pandemic. That experience may be ongoing and shaped by local policies in their state, so the details you communicate should be honed for general audiences. People emerging from lockdown are likely to be just as cautious as they are excited about travel, so there's no need to push them into booking a room, table or tour. It's always nice to offer some wanderlust travel content to get people thinking about their next getaway.

It's important to be both honest about your hopes to draw guests, and realistic about the pandemic-aware hospitality you'll provide them with upon arrival. If your resort now has socially-distanced seating around the pool or barriers to separate front desk personnel from arriving guests, let people know about it in a clever way that forms a connection and sparks a conversation.

There are a wide range of social media platforms that travel brands can utilize to grow and engage audiences, but the hottest at the moment—TikTok—isn't necessarily the best bet for luxury hotels. While your guests might be using it while they visit—especially if they have teens with them—the platform's demographic tends to skew very young. While the platforms your travel company used prior to the lockdown might seem like obvious choices given their already established audiences, the content

you provide now has likely changed, so don't be afraid to dip a toe into a different platform.

Start by identifying where the audiences you desire to attract spend the most time and engage most often. Here's a quick overview of the most popular platforms and tips to build engagement on each of them:



Jennifer Hawkins

Instagram is the darling of consumers and tastemakers and reaches everyone from Baby Boomers to Gen Z. Successful Instagram accounts unfold like a brochure with seamless imagery and vocabulary in keeping with branding. Be sure to emphasize unique selling propositions that might cater to nervous travelers, and use Instagram Live for content to appeal to wanderlust or a desire for space, such as waves crashing on the beach at sunset, or recently acquired selections from the wine cellar. These moments of travel bliss will help inspire your audience to book their next trip and keep you top of mind.

Facebook is beloved by Baby Boomers and allows for lengthier posts and in-depth information. Typical posts that do well are articles and items that link elsewhere. Facebook Live is good for promoting personalities in action: say, the Golf Pro offering tips on sinking a putt on 11, or the Exec Chef demonstrating a new dish to go with a perfect wine pairing.

YouTube is good for short video content to offer travelers an immersive glimpse before they commit. Engaging, high-quality video is key to conveying your offerings, though it's best to keep things under two minutes, as there's so much else out there. According to *Forbes*, companies that use video content see a 41 percent increase in traffic through web searches compared with those that don't.

TikTok has been on the minds of many of late for good reason: It's all about entertainment. The platform's popularity has skyrocketed among influencers trying to push themselves creatively during the lockdown. Though you may not want to allocate limited marketing and social media resources to a new platform now, you should at least be paying attention. Start by creating a TikTok

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Travelers still plan to hit the road in 2020

New findings suggest Americans may begin traveling again sooner than you think.

By Holly Zawyer

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated many businesses, perhaps none more visible than the effects it has had on the travel and tourism industry. Due to mandatory restrictions, the industry has been at a standstill with airlines, hotels and tourism boards around the world scrambling to adjust campaigns while reinventing themselves to come out on the other side prepared to welcome and serve would-be travelers in the new normal.

The good news is people will travel, and we'll regain confidence in the travel experience again. Zapwater surveyed more than 1,200 U.S.-based frequent travelers about post-COVID-19 travel to help our clients make informed, strategic decisions as the U.S. begins to reopen businesses and allow for some travel flexibility. The survey results shed some light on how travelers feel about future travel plans, which will help agencies and their hotel and destination clients better prepare to reopen.

Travelers are remaining optimistic during the COVID-19 pandemic and still plan to take trips in 2020. According to the survey, 65 percent of respondents are looking forward to traveling again, both internationally and domestically. 39 percent of travelers are hoping to travel within the first six months after travel restrictions are lifted. 56 percent of participants feel comfort-

able spending just as much on a trip as they would have before COVID-19. 80 percent of travelers surveyed said they're willing to travel for a length of three to seven nights during their first trips post-COVID-19.

Health and safety protocols are a priority among travelers. Resort and hotel safety protocols ranked the highest priority (75 percent) influencing immediate travel decisions, versus proximity to home (23 percent). The number of COVID-19 cases in a destination ranked among the top factors (63 percent) that would influence travelers when making their purchasing decision for their next vacation post-COVID-19.

When travel resumes, U.S. travelers will choose to travel by car and plane. Travel by car will become increasingly more popular, with 57 percent planning to drive for their first trip post-pandemic. Of those surveyed, 53 percent plan to fly for their first trip post-COVID-19. 35 percent of frequent travelers are very likely to take a short-haul flight (three hours or less) for their first trip post-COVID-19.

International travel to the Caribbean, Europe and Canada ranked highest for travelers to visit within the next six months. Internationally, Canada placed first, with over 36 percent of respondents, the Caribbean ranked second with over 35 percent and Europe placed third with 33

percent feeling most comfortable to visit within the next six to 12 months.

Other survey findings include:

- Domestic travel will become increasingly popular with 83 percent of those surveyed looking forward to staying within the U.S. for their first trip post-COVID-19.

- Adventure, wellness, and bucket list trips ranked highest among the type of trips frequent travelers are looking to explore during their next vacation.

- Top domestic regions of interest include the West Coast and Southeast.

- A majority of those surveyed travel most often with family or spouse.

It may feel like we haven't traveled in a lifetime, but one thing we know for sure is that the desire to travel is stronger than ever. We must continue to inspire travel by generating awareness about re-openings and driving bookings to help industry partners recover. However, it's also our responsibility to ensure recovery plans reach the right audiences within the right markets while being mindful of each target markets' unique situation with content that allows your client to stay connected in a positive and meaningful way.

Holly Zawyer is Managing Director, Miami, at Zapwater Communications. ●



Holly Zawyer

ROADMAP FOR REOPENING

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account for your brand so you can reserve your brand handle and activate a content strategy when the time is right.

Twitter holds a special place for messaging on leadership and brand news, but Twitter accounts take time, and if you don't have that time, your travel business could miss out on a lot of other opportunities. Nothing's more off-putting to a traveler than an abandoned social media account.

LinkedIn is the platform to build a thought leadership profile. Best for industry insights, assuming you can post regularly, by which I mean weekly. It's also a great place to see what others in your industry are up to and a place to share more formal company announcements.

Once you've selected platforms to invest your brand time toward reopening, plan your communications strategy. Start by mapping out FAQ documents, so when potential customers ask pointed questions about your

business—"What's your hygiene policy?" "Can you advise on cancellations?"—you'll have ready and consistent answers.

It's also important to remain transparent on social media. This means don't delete comments (negative or positive). Instead, respond publicly with the facts and offer an invitation to continue the conversation. Figure out in advance who should be notified to handle crises comments, and who will have final sign off on public responses. Keep things honest and transparent, and defuse situations rather than drag them out on a public page. And be sure to update your website with new protocols and link the COVID-19 FAQ page within your social media presence for easy access.

Reopening a travel business in the midst of an industry-crushing pandemic is a new challenge, but communications pros, just like any seasoned hotel manager, have seen their share of crises and know what they're doing.

Jennifer Hawkins is President of Hawkins International Public Relations. ●

REOPENING STRONG

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gives travel brands a unique opportunity to reimagine where their "drive markets" are, and expand their outreach to include more states, towns and cities. And with more time spent behind the wheel, the resurgence of the radio will be a great way to meet people where they are. A powerful radio ad or radio show appearance can either help persuade people to add a stop on their planned journey or help inspire them to plan future farther flung trips as they get a taste for travel again.

As we continue to move through reopening phases and travel rebuilds, there are still a lot of unknowns, and things can—and will—change in an instant. But uncertainty doesn't mean you can't have a strategy in place, so long as it's nimble and adaptable. With a plan, you'll be ready to welcome wanderlusters in no time.

Jennifer Baum is President and Founder of Bullfrog + Baum. ●

The future of travel and hospitality

Harnessing the power of adventure, transformation, sustainability, connections and places to redefine how we travel.

By Ali Lundberg

Travel, hospitality and experiential tourism has come a long way in the last decade, particularly in the last few years through a mix of creativity, passion, innovation and technology. In some ways, it feels like COVID-19 has put these advances on hold, most notably in the world of travel and hospitality. Sustainability is a prime example. Single-use plastics, once publicly shamed, are coming back into use as a health and safety measure. Mini bathroom amenity bottles, which were being replaced by larger multi-use containers, are now stocked on shelves and disposed of following each use. While we'll continue to see some of the industry's most exciting initiatives take a back seat for a bit, we'll also see scores of others brought to the forefront of the travel experience—and the potential to innovate in the “new normal” travel world is significant.

These current travel norms and expectations naturally create a very unique and exciting position for marketers. There are new stories to be told and different ways to tell them. There are new meanings and experiences to be shared. Through our work with hotels, destinations and leading travel experts, we have the power to help shape the future of the industry together and guide our clients to introduce programming and experiences that meet the demands of future travelers. We're able to share stories that shine the spotlight and encourage travelers to hit the open road to explore new destinations or perhaps more deeply explore nearby regions and dig beyond the surface to seek out those authentic moments. We have to smartly and sensitively navigate new marketing practices in order to support business growth and sustain the health and safety of guests and staff.

Global tourism will see seismic shifts in the post-pandemic era. Expect to become a more sustainable, mindful traveler, expect a gained appreciation for supporting small, local businesses and an understanding of how that support directly translates into impactful travel experiences. Expect travelers to seek out smaller crowds, hyper local destinations and giving back to the planet and the environment. There will be a surge of travelers who purposefully seek out journeys and experiences that put an emphasis on mindful, slow travel—travel that changes, that redefines. Travelers will naturally steer away from cookie-cutter experienc-

es—or, traveling for the 'gram—as traveling itself once again becomes more of a luxury, more studied and well thought-out. We'll see more sustainable and ethical travel experiences take shape and become available for explorers. As travelers rethink how they travel and how frequently they do so, there will be more desire to travel with purpose.

People have taken for granted the genuine connections they have with others; the pandemic really brought this to light, and many have been devoid of meaningful, intimate, personable interactions throughout the global health crisis. It will take time to bring those connections back. But what better idea than to begin with travel? The power of the place is such a tempting call. The places that we've never thought of, never heard of, never discovered call to us. The small cities, state parks, landmarks, remote and off-the-beaten-path locales and the coveted, once-in-a-lifetime bucket list trips that show up on our vision boards year after year will become a priority. The call to action that COVID-19 has created is that once it's safe to do so, we should seize the day and turn those travel dreams into reality.

While exploring, future travelers are seeking open spaces, privacy and spots that fewer people seek, allowing more room to explore and experience diversified cultures, and the opportunity to explore the unknown. The power of discovery and adventure will fuel the travel industry. It will ignite and inspire us to pack our bags and get back on the road. Yes, the great “American Road Trip” is making a comeback in 2020, and that's certainly no surprise. The safety of our own cars, filled with friends, loved ones and our pets, has never been more appealing. For the luxury travel sector, privacy is the new must-have amenity and the ultimate value-add, and we're seeing a surge of interest in buyouts, villas, residences and exclusive stay experiences at hotels and resorts.

One certainty that's emerged from the pandemic is the exhaustive impact of mass tourism: the effects on the environment, the planet, the people. The viral contrast of the “before-and-after” pictures that have surfaced throughout the pandemic has forced us to see the undeniable effects of mass tourism. We want to do better. We want to preserve. And we want to help—not just today, but for future generations. It will naturally take time for international travel to come back. Places like Venice and Santorini

that have been suffering under the crush of scores of international tourists for such a long time, are now on-track to welcome tourists back more responsibly and better than ever. There's a renewed appreciation for local culture and supporting small, local businesses. Smaller, historic, landmark cities will benefit greatly from this.

The pandemic hasn't only greatly impacted the economy, but has had a huge impact on our collective mental health. Throughout the pandemic, people have been isolated in more ways than one. In the absence of face-to-face connections, people have sought new ways to bond, mainly in the virtual space. Despite the isolation, individuals are finding new and unique ways to remain connected to travel and their communities. Travelers are taking advantage of the new industry norm of carefree cancellation policies, allowing us to book with confidence, knowing that if our plans change, they'll take care of us. The anticipation of a trip, speaking to travel advisors, planning ahead and ultimately booking a trip can be nearly as satisfying as the trip itself, providing an immediate, positive mental health experience. Once travelers arrive at their destinations in the future, many hotels, resorts and spas will be there to welcome visitors with new programming and experiences centered around mindfulness and wellness to combat the mental and physical toll that the pandemic has had on so many. Wellness and fitness will merge with nature and the outdoors more than ever, spa treatments will focus on recovery and expect to see an uptick in immune boosting therapies.

As we prepare for the future of travel, the importance of telling creative, inspiring and credible stories comes squarely into view. As new travel behaviors form, the industry will continue to come together to shape the new ways in which travelers inevitably see the world. As storytellers, we have the power to influence what our clients are doing and shape what travelers can expect and, most importantly, need. We're honored to be at the helm of a concerted industry effort to create that new form. The thrill of a new adventure, the powerful transformation a trip can offer, a new way forward for sustainable travel—and the genuine connection to people and place—will redefine how we travel and how we will want to travel in the future.

Ali Lundberg is Executive VP at J Public Relations. ●



Ali Lundberg

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How does a grand hotel stay grand during a pandemic?

A look at how some five- and six-star hotels have found remedies and solutions to staying open amid the obstacles presented by COVID-19.

By Geoffrey Weill

What do Berlin's Adlon, Copenhagen's Hotel d'Angleterre, the Baur au Lac in Zürich, the Beau-Rivage Palace in Lausanne, the Britannia in Trondheim and the Hassler in Rome have in common? All six not only survived World War I, they also successfully weathered the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918-20. (The pandemic is believed to have begun in Kansas and shipped to Europe with the doughboys. It earned the name "Spanish Flu" because King Alfonso XIII caught it and survived. When it finally petered out, it had killed an estimated 50 million worldwide.)

Sadly, none of these hotels seemed to have kept records of how they dealt with the Spanish flu, even if they actively did. Like the police in Philadelphia in 1919, did the staff wear masks? Did they rearrange the restaurant tables? All we do know is how these six hotels, plus many other "grand" hotels, have faced, analyzed and sought remedies to the horrific obstacles presented by COVID-19.

A recent segment on NBC Nightly News discussed how midlevel U.S. hotel chains are reopening, focusing on increased automation, the elimination of staff-guest interaction, a constant cleaning of "touch points," the closing of restaurants and the termination of room service. A "grand hotel" doesn't long remain a "grand" if you take away the smiles, the bows, the graciousness, the amenities, the service. So, these hotels—plus many other "grands"—have spent days and hours appointing committees and creating solutions to meet the challenge. And it has become our job not only to convey those solutions to the media but also to weigh in with ideas, suggestions and answers.

Most of the twenty or so "grand"—aka five/six-star—hotels on our roster shuttered when the pandemic lockdowns set in, giving them the luxury and leisure to come up with solutions for their eventual reopening. But the Adlon, the d'Angleterre, the Baur au Lac (and the Dan Tel Aviv) never closed down, so their solutions had to be wrought on the run. Yes, they closed off floors. Their restaurants were closed by government order, but room service continued full tilt. And now, as Europe cautiously reopens, they're being joined by more and more hotels that reopened in late May and June or are set to reopen in July, August and September.

The solutions have a lot of similarities: windows installed at reception and con-

cierge desks; rearranging tables and seating groups for social distancing; installing hand sanitizers everywhere; taking temperatures at the hotel entry; eliminating most buffets; no more cute little bowls of nuts and olives in the bar; sanitizing key cards or their gorgeous and clunky old-fashioned keys; no more stationery or pens in the rooms; clear disposable covers rolled onto TV remotes; minibars either emptied or massively sanitized between guests; packs of wipes and sanitizers in the rooms, and so on. One of the biggest quandaries is "yes, masks" or "no, masks," "gloves or no gloves." When governments don't set the rules, some hotels felt these would alarm guests. Our counsel was and is that Americans will be reassured by staff wearing masks and gloves.



Then there's the question of "cleaning." It's hard for an already hygiene-obsessed and spotless "grand hotel" to boast of additional cleaning measures, the inevitable implication being it wasn't formerly quite clean enough. What many are doing is deep-cleaning each room between guests, leaving rooms empty for 24-72 hours between guests, and twice daily opening the room windows to enable any lurking virus particles to escape. Indeed, opening windows may become another new must that post-COVID luxury hotel guests demand.

Beyond the opulence and grandeur, it's the service that makes a "grand hotel." People paying \$1,000 a night don't particularly care to schlepp their luggage to their rooms. The solution? When porters deliver the bags, they flamboyantly cleanse each case—especially the handles—with alcohol wipes in full view of the guests. Elevator operators are making a comeback, with gloves and masks beneath the pill-box hat, so guests don't need to touch elevator buttons. In-

stead of those open trays of chocolates or bowls of exotic fruit on the coffee table, everything will be wrapped. And then there's something as natural as tipping. Does the waiter or maid really want those euro notes you've snuggled in your pocket next to your used Kleenex?

Yet each of the "grand" hotels with whom we work seems to have come up with a way to go above and beyond government requirements and client expectations. Heckfield Place in England is enabling guests to have lunch or dinner at a private table anywhere they choose in the 400-acre grounds and



Geoffrey Weill

gardens. At Schloss Elmau in Bavaria, guests can reserve an hour for sole use of one of its six spas. At Ireland's Ashford Castle the banished breakfast buffet has been replaced by masked-and-gloved waiters pushing trolleys to carve ham or squeeze juices tableside. At the Orania.Berlin waiters wear masks as well as photo pins that show their smiles. Copenhagen's Hotel d'Angleterre has guests reserving half the pool for their private use. At the King David and all Dan Hotels, Israel's massive and iconic breakfast buffet has been retained, but it's behind glass, and a masked and gloved waiter fills your plate. At the Adlon in Berlin, staff wear dozens of pairs of white cotton gloves a day instead of latex. And at both the Adlon and Schloss Elmau, guests can opt for "privacy" that stretches way beyond a "do not disturb" sign. "Privacy" means no staff member will enter the room during a guest's stay, with room service trays, linens and towels delivered to the door. It's the guest's choice to turn the "grand" experience into "do it yourself." At resorts like the Beau-Rivage Palace in Lausanne and Ischia's Regina Isabella, chaise longues at the pool are arranged in couple- or family-groupings; the Regina Isabella's spa has taken on an even more clinical veneer, and in Lausanne, the brand-new Cinq Mondes spa is opening with built-in COVID protections. The least draconian "grand hotel" is the Britannia in Trondheim, where virus-sporadic Norway has required socially distanced tables but no masks.

When Americans can freely get back to Europe, they'll still find plenty of grandeur. But, until there's a vaccine, it will be a grandeur elegantly protected by sanitizer, glass, masks and gloves. What service staff will have to concentrate on is ensuring that their eyes are smiling.

Geoffrey Weill is President of WEILL. ○

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Engaging destination partners in uncertain times

Developing targeted programs encourages destination partners' involvement and participation.

By Lou Rena Hammond

Partners make the difference in marketing any destination. Their offerings—stores, restaurants, accommodations, institutions and attractions—that make up the fabric of a locale are essential in attracting visitors. We at LHG, representing some 20 destinations from cities to counties to states and islands, understand their important role. We believe partner involvement is essential in creating an ambience that leads to a destination's success. Over the years, we've established specific programs to encourage their participation. This outreach has created enthusiastic stakeholders that understand working together makes the difference for now and into the future.

This partnership has become an integral part of successfully promoting a destination. However, with the new environment of the pandemic and social change, a stepped-up program was needed immediately. Working closely with our clients, we forged activities that kept partners involved, knowledgeable and prepared to meet challenges never experienced in the past. Perhaps one of the biggest trials was no more meetings, trade shows and friendly get-togethers; now it was a virtual world. To the rescue, a pro-active agenda for partner involvement that was met with excitement and appreciation.

Some tactics we employed include: We immediately reenacted a communiqué as a call to action. This weekly communication, originally debuted during Desert Storm followed by 9/11, launched February 7 in response to COVID-19 as a valuable client resource during extraordinary times. The communiqué provided an overview of the situation throughout the pandemic with current statistics, industry reports, travel news, facts, suggested talking points and guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, AHLA, the U.S. Travel Association and more. Destination clients were able to quickly share this content with travel partners who expressed resounding appreciation of the support, which was an overarching success. Shifting outreach to media during this time proved to be paramount and worthwhile. Just because people weren't traveling didn't translate to ceasing pitching efforts on be-

half of our destination clients. Our team was particularly sensitive to the news and shifted strategy to meet the need of editors and journalists seeking content amidst the pandemic. Our relationships with the media were crucial in understanding their approach and supporting their evolving needs for readers. We implemented a partner dedicated hot tip program to share timely media requests and story leads, which resulted in national placements including *Business Insider*, *Town & Country*, *Vanity Fair*, *Forbes*, *Architectural Digest*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Washington Post*, *Bloomberg* and many more along with key local and regional outlets. Being proactive for our clients was imperative throughout the process. Examples of take-charge support included:



- Assisted with messaging, talking points, and content development for an array of communications channels including website copy, email content, newsletters, social media content themes, collateral and more.

- Created destination marketing toolkits that included visitor guidelines, safety protocols, messaging for community partners, commentary on the treatment of visitors and internal messaging adapted for multiple platforms.

- Provided thought leadership for evolving content opportunities. LHG brainstormed and joined forces with destinations to gather virtual partner offerings for pitching and integration into social media platforms. Sampling includes cooking classes, bartending tutorials, children's book readings, illustration workshops, guided meditations, street art tours and festival performances. One example of supporting a specific partner within a client destination was showcasing the American Quilters

Society as a leader in mask making, which led to a *U.S. News & World Report* story on "How to Make an Effective Face Mask."

- Offered destination marketing organization advocacy through grant programs offering hotels for frontline medical workers, branded destination small business relief programs and phased re-opening measures that educated local communities on integral safety implementations as travel began to resume.



Lou Rena Hammond

Our team, in tandem with our clients, devoted tremendous focus and effort into recovery webinars. We helped plan, organize and host webinars for destinations' industry partners. They showcased messaging tactics, public relations and marketing strategies, the hot tip program, partner tool kits and available resources. With webinars hosting more than 600+ participants, this tactic proved invaluable and a success for destination marketing organizations. As one CEO remarked, "thank you for pulling off the Zoom call today. I am hearing from our partners that the information was so helpful. It takes a great team to make it happen."

Throughout this entire period, beyond navigating the important day-to-day efforts, we continued to look to the future. By creating a phased recovery plan for each destination and remaining agile, we met the challenges as they unfolded. Plans outlined a strategic approach including a series of tactics that we could immediately implement in every locale as well as initiatives/projects to be rolled out when travel restrictions are lifted. Thankfully, as we saw travel and tourism in the rebounding phase, we delivered our final communiqué on June 12. It has been an unprecedented time but we firmly believe this is just the beginning as we go forward with destinations and their partners. We're in a new world, much learned and much more to be achieved. Yes, we came together as a family and that experience makes us stronger with renewed strength to face the future. We know travel is an essential part of American life and I personally say, we have a bright future together! As one client noted, "your insight and support was so appreciated throughout COVID, you are a valuable part of our team."

Lou Rena Hammond is Founder of Lou Hammond Group (LHG). ○

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Navigating the post-COVID-19 media landscape

Now that travel is beginning to reopen, it's paramount that travel brands reinvent themselves through engaging stories that appeal to the essence of travel while revealing their humanity. By Melanie Neff

Travel public relations professionals are well-versed in crisis communications, considering that working in the travel industry prepares you to expect the unexpected. With that said, no one saw COVID-19 coming, and for a while, it seemed like everything came to a halt. The global pandemic created a ripple effect that impacted all industries, and businesses had to move fast to reinvent their offerings in order to stay afloat. COVID-19 has created a significant shift for PR practitioners, especially in the travel industry. It has challenged our strategies, and now more than ever, we have to think outside the box during a time of crisis.

With many hotels and destinations closed, PR professionals had to get creative in approaching media and sharing relevant information for upcoming stories. We quickly became a source of information for our media contacts. Our clients became the expert voices leading webinars, podcasts and online trainings when information and future forecasts seemed to be lacking.

While a focus on crisis preparedness is essential, brands also need to look at ways to retain consumer loyalty for future travel peaks, especially considering many destinations and hotels will open at around the same time and competition will be fierce.

Now that travel is starting to open for business, brands need to develop flexible recovery plans to adjust to this new reality. The travel and hospitality industry is aware of the importance of showing travelers its commitment to safety without compromising a memorable vacation experience. We've heard this question in many of the travel industry webinars: how do we make cleanliness and safety protocols interesting and "mediable?" Like many COVID-19-related questions, the answer isn't simple; as storytellers, PR professionals have to go beyond the safety protocols and also tell the human stories that are so intertwined with the essence of travel. It's a people industry, after all. The goal is to amplify the good, engage the travel community and show the brand's humanity.

For the time being, trade events, media visits and media tours have been placed on hold, yet brands should continue to share updates with outlets through online press conferences, webinars and digital interviews. We held the first digital press conference with Barbados' Minister of Tour-

ism and International Transport the Hon. Kerrie Symmonds on April 28, where he briefed the media about COVID-19 tourism updates. Media from across the globe attended the press conference and left with a wealth of information regarding how the island has managed the pandemic.

As the world begins to return to some sense of normalcy, many travel writers are ready to visit destinations and experience all the new safety protocols put in place, from airport security to hotel check-ins. When it comes to press trips, the recommendation for the moment is to host individual visits and small family groups. A brand's biggest ambassador is someone who's already experienced it, which is why our agency will work with contacts that are already familiar with the properties and destinations we represent. Before scheduling these trips, brands should survey the media to understand what they're looking for as they venture into this new world of travel. As for the activities during their visit, itineraries should allow the media to see first-hand all the new safety protocols in the hotels, destinations and tours, as well as include wellness and nature-focused activities. Transparency is key at this stage. Studies have shown that individuals are excited to travel and want to have meaningful experiences and the opportunity to be surrounded by nature, and this is true for media as well.

According to Cisco, video is expected to make up 82 percent of all internet traffic by 2021. Video content will become essential as brands continue to develop their media and influencer strategies. By working with TV, Youtubers and Vloggers, brands will be able to amplify the message and showcase through their work the new experience of traveling post-COVID-19.

With influencer engagement increasing over 40 percent, influencer strategies will be crucial as brands begin to navigate through the next normal. Social media will continue to play a central role in recovery plans. Hotel and destinations' social media channels help these entities stay top-of-mind to consumers and inspire future travel, especially as many consumers are working from home and smartphone usage has increased. For example, Cala Luna, a boutique hotel in Costa Rica, used social media during lockdown to share recipes for virtual happy hours, meditation tips and nature videos to

stay engaged with their followers.

Trust and transparency should be a central focus when developing communications strategies. With this in mind, there will be value in working with influencers who have established a niche-within-a-niche, for example, a travel blogger that only stays in boutique hotels that give back to local communities. Likely, their following is also interested in those topics. By working with highly-engaged micro-influencers, brands can leverage the trust and relationship they have with their audience and have them answer—almost in real-time—some of the most frequently asked questions that will arise post-COVID-19 travel.

Brand partnerships and influencer relations need to strive for authenticity. Celebrations are a great way to showcase authentic storytelling. Many celebrations like birthdays, anniversaries and weddings had to be placed on pause due to the pandemic; these now represent a great opportunity to invite influencers to redo some of these significant milestones. At the same time, these initiatives may encourage followers to do the same.

With limited budgets and resources, tracking ROI will become more important than ever. To ensure brands can measure the success of campaigns, initiatives like providing each influencer with special booking codes they can share with their following with access to a special rate will need to be part of the strategy.

Recovery plans should also include giveaways with media partners and influencers to get people excited about travel. Giving back to the community will be crucial to showcase the brand's humanity. A great example is Palladium Hotel Group's "Capeless Heroes" promotion, which offers up to a 40 percent discount to first responders when making a reservation at any of the brand's 48 hotels. Another example of an initiative that gives back to the community is Barbados' "We Care" campaign, which will give away a seven-day vacation to Bajan first responders.

As we continue to navigate the new media landscape post-COVID-19, it's imperative to revisit and readjust plans. The industry is in a state of transformation, and brands need to reinvent themselves, explore new opportunities and try new things.

Melanie Neff is an Account Executive at CIIC. ○



Melanie Neff

shining light
on travel and tourism brands

For a free PR & Social Media Audit, email info@hemsworthcommunications.com.
Ask about our 'PR Stimulus Program,' which is earning global acclaim for helping
tourism brands and businesses impacted by COVID-19.

What's next for travel public relations?

Uncertainty has characterized today's travel environment. But if the last few months have taught us anything, it's that clients are looking to marketing partners to provide more of a "whatever it takes" content marketing approach, one that makes relevant connections with audiences and influences the decision that results in a meaningful conversion.

By Curtis Zimmerman

Travel is part of the human experience. And, although recovery from the pandemic remains uncertain at times as we fight to see more light at the end of the tunnel, we know that no matter what, people will travel again.

We're all reading—and in many cases, conducting the research that shows—COVID-19 fatigue has led to a pent-up demand that's ready to explode for many travelers. Leisure travelers are venturing out to domestic destinations, the road trip is now a luxury experience and hotels and resorts continue playing a guessing game when it comes to projections for rate, occupancy and revenue.

Business travelers are using Zoom in record numbers, and airlines are hungering for a time when face-to-face replaces device-to-device and whatever normal that transpires includes airline travel at a more robust level.

Although we project a level of confidence, and thought leadership, the truth is that uncertainty is the rule of the day. Clients know it. We know it. And, everyone involved in hospitality and travel reluctantly has to admit it.

During the pandemic, we've persevered through intelligent and timely crisis management and the ability to provide clients a path to follow when there was little or no prospect of success. So, what's next for travel public relations?

The digital revolution is now an ongoing evolution that shows no prospect of ending anytime soon. Platforms continue to shift, media professionals come and go at a sadly record pace. Relationships still matter, but the game has changed. Influencer marketing is a tool that's one-part public relations, one-part social media, one-part activation and one-part reality check. Tracking and analytics are critical parts of the equation.

For travel clients, the answer may be easier. The objective hasn't changed. Or, has it? Awareness, exposure, a path to a conversion, a level of engagement, website visits, positive sentiment. Sure, clients will still expect public relations to play a role in each of those elements. But, if the last several months has taught clients anything, it's the concept that making a relevant connec-

tion with the audience that can influence a decision that results in a reservation, a room night, increased revenue per available room, a meeting or whatever can drive revenue has a value. It's how we, as public relations professionals, make that connection that may have changed in the client's eyes.

To grasp what's next for travel public relations, we need to look at our counterparts in advertising, social media, digital marketing, influencer marketing, research firms and the media.

And, to a greater extent, we need to understand the role each of them play in the broader travel marketing mix. It's not really about integration. It's more about transformation. The answer to what lies next can be found in daily conversations with clients. Clients have adopted a "whatever it takes" approach to compete and in many ways to survive.

That doesn't mean we're now in full-fledged competition with our counterparts from other marketing disciplines, but it does mean clients will look to us to provide more of the "whatever it takes" and less of what's considered in the public relations scope.

As an agency, we're fortunate that we've been methodically building out and staffing a robust in-house content studio to accommodate the growing video and photography production needs of our clients. But, we know that's not enough. In fact, it's likely only a nod to what's next.

Certainly, content marketing is now a fully engaged part of travel public relations. Creativity, and the production and development of digital and ambient activations for travel clients are no longer the sole responsibility of ad agencies and digital marketing firms.

As a public relations firm with a focus on hospitality and travel, we've seen firsthand that clients are open to ideas and interpretations that push the boundaries of traditional PR, and tread sometimes not so lightly on digital and creative. Paid, owned and earned can proudly be all be delivered through public relations.

So, let's accept that anyone in public relations just getting into the content mar-

keting arena is likely a little late to the game. To be effective—and to provide an element of measurement that can connect our efforts to the client's bottom-line—means we have to optimize each effort and ensure our clients that we are held accountable to the same objectives that drive their business.

But, with content, the concept of optimization no longer begins during or following the launch of the event, the message, the activation, the site.

Now, optimization and in fact the entire focus of content marketing is shifting to become more agile. And, agile doesn't mean more nimble, although travel clients like that too. Agile content marketing is actually the method, and more often now the tools to allow us to produce content iteratively by using available data and audience insights to inform our approach as well as the content itself.

We're not saying that public relations will transform into a content only proposition. And, we're not saying that content is the only thing that will require agility. But, the prospect of agile content marketing will allow us to develop ideas that can move the needle for travel clients from the concept to the creation and development of the idea by measuring how each new piece of content performs based on what actually matters to the client. At the bottom-line.

Agile content marketing isn't new. But, embracing a more data-driven approach to developing content that can be measured isn't just agile—it's smart. I'm the first to admit that we successfully use creativity to gain the attention of travel audience. But, the ability to include the consumer in the process through data and insights mitigates risk, improves efficiency and enhances our ability to be relevant and timely. And, for our travel clients, it increases the potential to drive the conversions that drive their business.

Curtis Zimmerman is Co-Founder of The Zimmerman Agency in Tallahassee, FL. ○



Curtis Zimmerman

Restoring confidence in the travel, hospitality industry

Making travel safer and implementing new health and safety standards are among the top challenges the travel and hospitality sector now faces in reassuring and convincing Americans to venture out.

By Richard Williams

While the COVID-19 pandemic has caused turmoil and disruption for many industries, it's no secret that the travel and hospitality sector has been one of the most impacted, with estimates of more than \$900 billion in losses reported in the U.S. alone.

On the heels of virtually no travel during the months of April and May, as the country begins to open back up this summer, Americans are already starting to consider venturing out, and bookings for late summer and early fall are seeing increased numbers according to airlines and hotels.

For that trend to continue, people need to feel safe about the way they travel and places they visit and stay, which is why those in the hospitality industry are implementing stricter sanitation efforts in all facets of their business protocols. Under guidance from the World Health Organization and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, many airlines, hotels, resorts and attractions are undertaking increased safety measures to help reduce the risk of infection towards workers and patrons.

Hotels lead charge with hygiene officers

As demand for rooms rises, those in the hotel industry are trying to reassure potential guests that they've put additional measures in place to protect against coronavirus transmission and welcoming guests back with open arms.

Take Marriott International for example. As the third largest hotel chain in the world, with more than 7,300 properties and 1.3 million hotel rooms, the company has beefed up its efforts on cleanliness, hygiene and social distancing to ensure guests that their safety and well-being is of chief importance. Marriott has begun rolling electrostatic sprayers with hospital-grade disinfectant to sanitize surfaces at all locations.

Then there's Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, which last month entered into a partnership with Johns Hopkins Medicine International, to validate its new global health and safety program, Lead With Care, and provide ongoing, real-time guidance on the evolving COVID-19 situation.

Additionally, each Four Seasons property will appoint a hygiene officer focused on implementing enhancements to its already stringent procedures. This includes disinfecting rooms daily with U.S. Environ-

mental Protection Agency-approved products and will have blacklight inspection by room attendants; focusing on retraining programs for housekeeping teams on all cleaning protocols are being implemented across the portfolio; and cleaning public areas hourly with extra attention to frequent areas, including front-desk counters and public restrooms.

Communicating cleanliness as safety measure

It's not just the hotels committed to doing more. Most airlines are following and even exceeding in most cases, guidance from the CDC to help contain and stop the spread of the coronavirus, bringing in new layers of protection to help protect passengers throughout their journey.

JetBlue has increased its aircraft cleaning and is utilizing disinfectant that's effective against coronavirus across frequently touched surfaces, such as tray tables, seat covers, armrests and seatbelts. Additionally, common surfaces in airport terminals are also frequently disinfected with hospital-grade disinfectant.

Meanwhile, Virgin Atlantic has implemented new guidelines requiring planes to be cleaned after each and every flight using a high-grade registered disinfecting product that has been tested to be effective against viruses. Cleaning teams board prior to each flight and complete a rigorous checklist for cabin cleanliness including disinfecting cabin surfaces and customer contact areas such as seats, seatback pockets, door handles, tray tables, inflight entertainment screens and floors.

All of this technology used by these companies offer the highest classification of disinfectants recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization to treat known pathogens.

Quantifying cleanliness to staff, customers

That's where Hygiena comes in, offering rapid cleaning verification solutions to the hospitality industry, utilizing advanced technologies and patented designs with rapid, accurate, dependable and affordable test platforms. Hygiena helps travel and tourism companies find solutions and levels of cleanliness that's demanded in this new COVID-19 normal.

In order for travel to return to customary numbers, those in the hospitality industry need to restore consumer confidence through their innovative cleaning processes and sanitation protocols.

For instance, hotels and resorts have naturally increased their cleanliness and sanitizing processes but common areas such as restrooms, doorknobs, and other highly used places of contact are still a concern for travelers. Although surfaces may look clean, how do you know they are clean? Microbes are tiny and undetectable without a microscope. That's where ATP monitoring can help by quantifying your cleaning efforts and helping you define "clean." Best of all, it's quick and simple and can provide an answer in 15 seconds.

ATP monitoring works using bioluminescence to produce a Relative Light Unit, which can tell you how much organic matter is present on a surface. All organic matter, like mucus, saliva and food particles contain energy stored in the form of an ATP molecule. To test a surface for cleanliness a sample is collected using Hygiena's patented Snap-Valve ATP swab. After the sample is collected, the snap-valve is broken, and the patented eco-friendly chemistry is mixed with the collected sample and read by the luminometer. If an ATP molecule (aka organic matter) is present in the sample, then it will glow, producing an RLU on the luminometer. That RLU quantifies the cleanliness of the surface. Hygiena's system offers both surface and water tests to ensure hygienically clean environments.

This will keep germs out and instill more confidence among staff, guests and the hotels and resorts themselves.

Let's face it, COVID-19 has changed all facets of the way we live, work and travel, and for the hospitality industry to recover completely, it's going to take a high level of commitment and care to be actively communicated with transparency to all industry staff, passengers and guests.

Richard Williams is Global Marketing Manager of Hygiena. ○



Richard Williams

O'Dwyer's guide to TRAVEL AND TOURISM PR



Clockwise from top left: Melanie Brandman, Kristen Vigrass, Ty Bentsen & Stephanie Krajewski.

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Since 2003, New York City-based 5W Public Relations (5WPR) has worked with widely known and emerging brands, corporations and high-profile individuals. Our practice areas include Consumer Products & Brands, Food & Beverage, Health & Wellness, Beauty, Apparel & Accessories, Home & Housewares, Travel & Hospitality, Entertainment & Sports, Corporate, Technology, Public Affairs & Government Relations, Nonprofit, Crisis Communications, Events,

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The Brandman Agency is a dynamic, results-driven integrated communications and public relations firm specialized in travel, luxury and lifestyle. Founded by Melanie Brandman in 2000, The Brandman Agency is consistently ranked one of the top tourism and hospitality agencies in the industry. With offices in New York City (HQ), Los Angeles, London and Sydney, the Agency prides itself on the global lens we bring to our work, supporting some of the in-

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Carolyn Izzo Integrated Communications (CIIC) is an award-winning, highly respected full-service public relations and social media firm specializing in creating dynamic campaigns for the travel & tourism, real estate, hospitality, food & beverage and lifestyle industries. The CIIC team is made up of enthusiastic and connected PR professionals who bring 25+ years of combined experience from sev-



The CIIC team on location at an Aliz Hotel Times Square event hosted by Barton & Guestier Wines.

eral of the country's top PR firms.

For 24 years, CIIC has been dedicated to servicing the travel & tourism and real estate development markets with top-tier public relations campaigns and award-winning results. CIIC has represented leading hotels and resorts as well as independent hotels and hospitality brands in both the US and internationally including, Marriott International, Hyatt, Hilton, Palladium Hotels & Resorts, The Norman Estates at Rancho San Lucas, Vivo Resorts, Aliz Hotel Times Square, The Savoy Miami, and Cala Luna Hotel in Costa Rica to name a few. As destination experts, CIIC's roster of tourism clients includes, Los Cabos, Baja California Sur, The Mexican Caribbean, Surfside, FL and Barbados, among others.

CIIC's work is strategic, creative and results-driven, having been honored with Media Relations Awards by PR Daily, as well as numerous HSMIAI (Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International) Adrian Awards across Gold, Silver and Bronze categories. With offices in New York and Miami, CIIC is an esteemed member of LATAM PR and is a Certified Women's Business Enterprise by WBENC.

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The travel industry has been greatly impacted by COVID-19 and, in response, Coyne Travel is helping clients from the east coast to the west coast—including the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism and Outrigger Hotels & Resorts—navigate this unprecedented situation with on-going creative and strategic counsel. From developing rebound travel road maps, crisis and issues management, and offering creative solutions that will inspire people to travel again, once it's safe—our team has a pulse on the future of the industry. And while the landscape already looks and feels different,



D/R helped luxury river cruise company Uniworld make news of its first foray into the Peruvian Amazon. Launching this September, The Aria Amazon brings Uniworld's all-inclusive amenities and five-star cuisine by top chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino to this incredible river.

the transformative power of travel will never leave us. As we look ahead, we believe people will rely and seek out travel experiences to help them heal, connect with others and more deeply understand the world around them. After all, it's not about the destination or hotel—it's about who we are and who we can become along the way. With an understanding of the ever-changing consumer experience and critical needs within the travel/tourism and hospitality space, we invite you to come along for the journey.

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Decker/Royal is an integrated marketing and communications agency serving hospitality, travel, and tourism clients worldwide. Merging traditional public relations with a digital first approach, D/R connects, engages, and influences audiences wherever they are, whenever they are. It's why we understand that while a glossy magazine feature and major newspaper placement have their place, in today's PR space—a conversation surrounding SEO and strategic brand partnerships are just as key. We do storytelling for a new era—right now, and always with a singular objective: results.

And it begins with leadership. After running successful teams at a well-known agency, partners Cathleen Decker and Stacy Royal broke with tradition to open their communications workshop, the eponymous Decker/Royal, with offices in New York City and London. With decades of experience in the

evolving PR and travel industries, our modern approach to marketing has led the agency to numerous honors, including most recently the coveted Platinum HSMIAI Award and PRSA Big Apple Award for a socially conscious campaign targeting the Millennial and Gen-Z demos.

Clients: Abu Dhabi, The Affluent Traveler Collection, App in the Air, Bowling Green, KY, Brendan Vacations, City Wonders, Costsaver, Friendly Planet Travel, Le Barthélemy Hotel & Spa, NEST, Porter and Sail, Reno Tahoe, Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa, Trafalgar, TRAVELSAVERS, U River Cruises, Uniworld Boutique River Cruises.

DEVELOPMENT COUNSELLORS INTERNATIONAL (DCI)

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1 Adelaide Street East, Suite 3001
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647/276-1917

Karyl Leigh Barnes, Pres., Tourism
Daniella Middleton, SVP, Tourism

Our passion is places. Established in 1960, Development Counsellors International (DCI), is focused on elevating the lives of people living, traveling and working in the places we serve by engaging our passions for travel, exploring new cultures, and doing good. During the last half century, we have worked with more than 500 cities, regions, states, provinces and countries to help them attract visitors, busi-

ness investment (economic development) and talent. Our Tourism Practice partners with destinations to increase leisure, corporate and association visitor arrivals and spending. How? By winning the support of key influencers—media, digital influencers, meeting planners and the travel trade. We combine smart strategy with the right tactics to deliver powerful results. DCI's work has been recognized annually by the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International, achieving Best In Show and Platinum awards. The firm is globally connected through TAAN Worldwide, a network of 46 agencies in 29 countries. Over the years we have partnered with the world's strongest travel brands, from Visit California, Travel Texas and Visit Florida, to Tourism Australia, Prom Peru and South African Tourism.

ELEVEN SIX PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Katie Barr Cornish, Principal
Emma Silverman, Vice President

Eleven Six prides itself on creating a new normal in the PR agency world. It is not business as usual. Our media relationships are deep and varied. We seamlessly pitch across multiple verticals, placing our clients beyond the travel pages and in business, arts and fashion pieces. Our thinking is strategic and most importantly, creative. We push the creativity envelope, always aiming to spark the trends and not just stay ahead of them. Our innovative campaigns deliver tangible, profitable results.

With a focus that goes beyond just public relations and includes marketing and social media, we are driven not only by how much press we can secure for our clients but rather how we can positively impact their bottom lines. The marketing and social media tactics we employ are creative, cost-effective, and realistic to execute. And most importantly, they drive sales and impact the bottom line.

Highlights and successes over the past year include securing top-tier and buzzworthy partnerships for clients with brands such as Free People, Core Power Yoga, Topsy Scoop and Smorgasburg as well as handling digital engagement for select IHG's U.S. Open activations in New York City and securing broad-

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ELEVEN SIX PUBLIC RELATIONS

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cast coverage on Queensland, Australia with ABC and National Geographic to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. The agency signed on a variety of new clients including Andaz West Hollywood, Art of Living Retreat Center and Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort, Spa & Casino. Client work expanded beyond travel to working with Dairy Market, a new merchant hall opening in Charlottesville, VA as well as the Internal Family Systems Counselling Association. Additional clients include: Andaz Mayakoba Resort Riviera Maya, Craddock Terry Hotel, Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa, Kimpton Hotel Eventi, Kimpton Muse Hotel, Pestana Hotel Group, Remote Lands, Red Savannah, Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas, The Ritz-Carlton New York Westchester, Tourism & Events Queensland and Visit Richmond.

EVINS COMMUNICATIONS

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Mathew L. Evins, Chairman
Louise R. Evins, CEO
David Harrison, Executive Vice President & Head of Digital Content & Integration Practice
Drew Tybus, Senior Vice President & Head of Food, Wine & Spirits Practice
Chad Belisario, Vice President & Head of Travel & Hospitality Practice, Lifestyle, Health & Wellness Practice

Founded in 1987, EVINS has been consistently recognized for its creative excellence, strategic planning and tactical execution for industry innovators and pioneers in the travel and lifestyle space including, American Express, Colgin Cellars, Departures Magazine, Hotels & Resorts of Halekulani, Inspirato, Jet Linx Aviation, The Fifth Avenue Hotel, The Knickerbocker Hotel, The Lanesborough, The Lowell, Preferred Hotels & Resorts, Rosewood Hotel & Resorts and Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection amongst many others. In 2020, EVINS was chosen as a Brand Official by *Forbes Travel Guide*, the global authority on luxury travel.



The PR team for Fahlgren Mortine client TravelNevada gathers at the Haunted Ball media event in NYC.

EVINS uses media and influencer engagement, strategic partnerships, digital & social media, content creation & management and branding & brand language to make a significant impact on the development, growth and success of a client's business. EVINS also offers clients advice on corporate and executive reputation management; issues and crisis management; cause-related marketing; and affinity programs.

Mathew Evins serves on several philanthropic, professional and industry boards, including Luxury Travel Exchange International, ULTRA Luxury Exchange, the International Hotel Investment Forum and the International Luxury Hotel Association (ILHA). He has also contributed to numerous industry publications and business media including *Elite Traveler* and *HOTELS Magazine*.

FAHLGREN MORTINE

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Neil Mortine, President and CEO
Marty McDonald, Executive Vice President, Tourism Practice Leader

As an integrated communications company, Fahlgren Mortine represents five countries, six states, dozens of cities, food and beverage companies, numerous national attractions and countless local favorites, and is known as a firm that gets results. The agency has been recognized with dozens of national PR and tourism awards for enhancing brand perception, including Silver and Bronze Anvils from PRSA, Mercury and Destiny Awards from the U.S. Travel Association and many others. Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, Fahlgren Mortine has locations in Colorado, Florida, Idaho, New York, South

Carolina and West Virginia. Travel industry client experience includes Discover Dominica Authority; Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB; Travel Nevada; Destination Panama City; Coastal Mississippi; Airstream; Niagara USA; Monterey, CA CVB; Visit Sun Valley; North Dakota Department of Commerce/Tourism; and many other destinations, regions, hospitality properties and more.

Supported by trend research, insights, digital and influencer marketing, our team is unrivaled for award-winning creativity and bottom-line results. Our deep industry knowledge and skill sets put us in a unique position to develop thoughtfully conceived strategies to elevate client brands for immediate recognition and long-term success.

The agency's global travel portfolio includes clients in lodging, destinations, airline and cruise, design, health and wellness, attractions and travel related services. FINN's travel portfolio includes top destinations such as New York State, Jamaica, Hong Kong, South Africa, Iceland and Brand USA. Hotel brands include Kempinski, Raffles, Mandarin Oriental, and Accor. Airlines include Air France-KLM and Turkish Airlines.

In addition to communication strategies, FINN Travel & Lifestyle offers Trade Representation for clients such as Jordan, Taiwan, Belize, Dominica and Saint Helena. The agency also specializes in Responsible Tourism, Cruise Marketing Services and Economic Development.

Our commitment to our clients is to be an extension of their brands—a true partner in every way.

FINN PARTNERS

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Virginia M. Sheridan, Travel & Lifestyle Director, New York Travel
Debbie Flynn, Travel & Lifestyle, Global Director

Finn Partners is one of the world's fastest growing independent marketing and communications firms with an international Travel & Lifestyle practice operating out of three main hubs—United States, UK/Europe and Asia. With 100 professionals, the team offers client excellence,



FINN Partners Travel and Lifestyle team, on behalf of its Jamaica Tourist Board client, hosted wedding and bridal writers on a press trip to experience the romantic side of the island and learn about the latest trends and event resources at the Jamaica Bridal Expo & Conference. The annual event allows Jamaica to showcase why it's a continued top destination for weddings and honeymoons.

FISH CONSULTING

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Lorne Fisher, CFE, CEO / Managing Partner
Jenna Kantrowitz, SVP / COO
Lauren Simo, VP

Founded in 2004, Fish is a national communications consulting firm that has helped some of the fastest growing brands achieve their business goals. Our clients span a variety of industries, including the restaurant, retail, hospitality, home services, fitness, beauty, and health/wellness segments.

In 2020, Fish was named the global agency of record for Best Western Hotels & Resorts. This win is a result of several experienced travel and hospitality PR professionals joining the firm over the past few years. The Best Western account anchors Fish's newly formed Travel & Hospitality practice.

From brand building, national media relations and influencer marketing to local grand openings, crisis management and corporate communications, Fish's expertise in travel and hospitality runs deep and its creative, strategic approach to PR drives impactful results.

Our strategic media relations campaigns consistently land our partners coverage in the most widely read and watched consumer and business outlets nationwide. We love developing creative ways to get media talking about the brands we work with—and getting customers talking about them, too.

Fish is based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with operations in Dallas, Washington, D.C., and London.

FRENCH/WEST/VAUGHAN

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Rick French, Chairman & CEO
David Gwyn, President / Principal
Natalie Best, Chief Operating Officer / Principal
Leah Knepper, VP, Travel & Tourism Practice

French/West/Vaughan (FWV), the Southeast's leading public relations, public affairs, advertising and digital media agency, is home to one of the country's leading Travel & Tourism practices.

For more than two decades, FWV's dedicated Travel and Tourism

practice has worked with and helped grow a number of destinations, resorts, municipalities, attractions, museums, historic regions and event properties. We start by translating a client's assets into meaningful and emotional storylines and follow that up with meticulously crafted, research-driven campaigns that have been successful at increasing awareness, driving visitation and creating uniquely sharable visitor experiences.

Our experienced and passionate team of storytellers have helped travel, tourism, economic development and special event interests find their voice, from the mountains of Gatlinburg, Tenn., to the islands of the Dutch Caribbean.

Current travel and tourism industry clients include Concord Hospitality Enterprises, a hotel developer and operator of over 100 hotel properties across North America; the Wilmington and Beaches Convention & Visitors Bureau (Wilmington, Carolina Beach, Kure Beach and Wrightsville Beach N.C.); the Wilmington Convention Center; Visit Greenville, NC and the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, the state's most-visited attraction.

Prior travel and tourism work includes campaigns for Divi Resorts and its nine Caribbean properties; cooperative marketing campaigns for the tourism organizations of Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St. Croix (U.S.V.I. Dept. of Tourism) and St. Maarten; Dorothea Dix Park, a 308 acre destination park in Raleigh, N.C.; the Dude Ranchers' Association; Gatlinburg, Tenn.; Cabarrus County, N.C. (home to NASCAR's Lowe's Motor Speedway); Oakland County, Mich.; Branson, Mo.; the Old Salem Moravian Village (N.C.); America's Historic Triangle (Williamsburg, Va.); the Greater Raleigh CVB (N.C.); Tweetsie Railroad (N.C.); Trailways Transportation System (Fairfax, Va.); the National Cowboy Hall of Fame & Western Heritage Center; the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame + Museum; and the Washington Tourism Development Authority (N.C.).

Founded in April 1997, the firm is led by Chairman & CEO Rick French, President David Gwyn and Chief Operating Officer Natalie Best. Among its operating divisions are: FWV Fetching, a pet and veterinary PR and marketing agency based in Tampa; AMP3 PR, a fashion, beauty, luxury and lifestyle PR firm based in New York City; CGPR, an active lifestyle, outdoor, ski, fashion, technology and travel PR and consumer brand marketing agency based in Greater Boston;

and Prix Productions, the company's longform content feature and documentary film division, with offices in Raleigh and L.A. FWV employs more than 120 public relations, public affairs, social media, advertising and digital marketing experts between its Raleigh, N.C. headquarters and other offices around the country.

HAWKINS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Jennifer Hawkins, CEO, Founder

Founded in 2002 by Jennifer Hawkins, Hawkins International Public Relations is a bi-coastal, award-winning communications agency with offices in New York City, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Hawkins International's creative, integrated and tailored approach to public relations and digital strategies, has earned numerous accolades from industry peers, media and clients around the world. The agency's strong domestic footprint, coupled with its global reach and varied cultural sensibilities have afforded it the opportunity to work with a variety of hospitality-affiliated companies specializing in sectors including travel and tourism, wellness, design, culinary, real estate and more. Clients include Accor, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, Seabourn Cruise Line, Wilderness Safaris, among others.

HEMSWORTH COMMUNICATIONS

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Fort Lauderdale • New York • Atlanta • Charleston • Tampa • Los Angeles

Samantha Jacobs, Founder & President
Michael Jacobs, COO

Hemsworth Communications is a full-service global public relations agency that specializes in travel, tourism and hospitality. Capabilities include brand strategy, media relations, promotions, social media, event planning, thought leadership, crisis communications and more.

With an impressive global reach, Hemsworth leverages its Passion. Insight. Connections. to surpass client expectations at every turn. The agency has been hired by companies large and small because of its track record for delivering outstanding results with a distinctively personal touch. Under its innovative new 'PR Stimulus Program' launched in Q2 2020, Hemsworth now—in addition to ongoing, retainer-based work—offers three levels of customized, affordable PR, social media and marketing support designed to specifically help those in the lodging, cruise, destination and hospitality sectors who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ranked one of the country's fastest-growing agencies for five years running, Hemsworth has received numerous accolades including Adrian Awards, American Business Awards, "Best Places to Work" Awards and others.

Clients include Air Partner, AmaWaterways, Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line, Coral Hospitality's Georgia State Parks & Lodges, Cruise Barbados, Discover Dunwoody, Driftwood, Grand Hyatt Grand Cayman, Kenefick Ranch Vineyard & Winery, Margaritaville Hollywood Beach Resort, Massanutten Resort, Oasis Travel Network, Orion Span, SmartCruiser.com, Sonesta Fort Lauderdale, Waters Edge Wineries and others.

HERON AGENCY

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Noreen Heron, President
Lianne Hedditch, Executive VP

Heron is an award-winning hospitality communications agency. Our comprehensive results-driven campaigns are ROI-proven and help garner attention that leads to real bottom line results. Simply put, we go beyond producing glossy placements.

In our 20-year history, when we start with a client, our trajectory is that we grow with them and continue to represent them in various capacities, developing strong allegiances and partnerships.

Our robust local, national and international campaigns include not only Public Relations and Marketing, but digital elements including SEO tactics, social media/influencer relations, and the development

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HERON AGENCY

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of strategic long term alliances and promotions. We have the bandwidth to deliver unprecedented exposure for clients, who never question what we are up to. We provide constant communication, and have a reputation for organization and speed.

With an emphasis on hospitality throughout the 20-year history of the firm, Heron Agency has managed campaigns for over 30 hotel brands spanning over 500 properties. From Brand Relationship Management, Crisis communications, Grand Opening Event Coordination, FAM Trip Coordination and Execution, Outlet PR, Marketing and Social Media, and Influencer Relationship Management, our team has the experience and tenure to deliver.

HUNTER

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Grace Leong, CEO
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Samara Farber Mormar, Executive Vice President, Strategy + Partnership

HUNTER is an award-winning consumer products and services marketing communications firm with offices in New York, Los Angeles and London, staff located strategically across the U.S., and relationships for on-the-ground execution with like-minded agencies globally, including Mexico, Brazil, Japan, China, and others.

Founded in 1989, HUNTER has

grown to be one of the most recognized and resourced firms providing strategic communications counsel and services to major consumer brands, products and services. Our motto is “we earn it,” and at HUNTER we focus on doing so in three key areas: earning consumer attention, earning client relationships and earning staff dedication. With a broad range of expertise in many industries, we proudly serve brands across a variety of consumer sectors including Travel + Restaurants, Food + Beverage, Wine + Spirits, Home + Lifestyle, Health + Beauty, Retail + Ecommerce, Education, Fashion and Toys + Games.

HUNTER offers a suite of global services including communications strategy and architecture, creative campaigns, content creation and toolkiting, in-market counsel, and executional support. HUNTER understands there is rarely a silver bullet, and therefore looks for a balance between a consistent brand narrative and the need for flexibility in executing at a local level. We tailor turnkey global solutions to our client’s specific objectives. Our approach considers strategic stakeholders and their individual market challenges to understand and prioritize marketing communications needs. Solutions are scalable by-design and often supported with ongoing market counsel to ensure executional excellence.

IMAGINE PR

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Gabriele Sappok, Partner
Andreas Sappok, Managing Partner

IMAGINE PR is an award-winning hotel and travel public relations firm based in New York City with global reach. We are a creative



With our powerhouse insights team, HUNTER's senior-most strategists with expertise across various industries help our clients develop positioning and articulate a distinct brand identity that transcends borders and helps them show up with a unified voice around the world. For TABASCO® Brand we spearheaded the development of a global brand strategy, identified consumer + influencer targets and developed supporting programming to be better partners for the 195 countries and territories that sell their products.

communications agency with a modern approach to digital and traditional lifestyle & travel public relations. IMAGINE PR works with some of the most well-known hospitality, destination and travel brands. Our clients are leaders in high-end hospitality and experiential travel who value us for our ingenuity, love of travel and knowledge of the ever-shifting media & influencer landscape.

Clients include: Ellerman House, Cape Town; Maisons Pariente; Higashiyama Niseko Village, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve; Hotel Arts Barcelona, a Ritz-Carlton Company Hotel; Mandapa, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve; Quasar Expeditions; Fregate Island Private; Singita; The Ritz-Carlton, Koh Samui, Thailand; The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; The Saxon Hotel; ThirdHome; Tschuggen Hotel Group; Tswalu; YTL Hotels.

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Jamie Sigler O'Grady and **Sarah Evans**, Partners

J Public Relations (JPR) is a global communications, influencer management and social media agency specializing in travel, destinations, consumer, real estate, well-being and sustainable brands. The agency has four offices: New York City, London, Los Angeles and San

Diego, along with additional locations in Toronto, Denver, Nashville and Arizona. The company's global portfolio includes clients in the U.S., U.K. and throughout Europe, Mexico, Caribbean, Dubai, New Zealand, Asia and more.

Since launching in 2005, travel brands, destinations and hotels have been at the core of JPR's expertise and client portfolio. An integrated agency with an approach rooted in holistic marketing, storytelling and ROI, JPR approaches their client campaigns from all sides. JPR reaches beyond the headlines and into guest programming, brand partnerships and influencer management. Always innovating, JPR was the first agency in its space to launch a podcast in 2018, Priority Status, and the agency curates a quarterly industry newsletter for top travel media called Window Seat.

JPR is consistently listed on the *Observer's* annual “PR Power 50” as one of the country's most powerful PR firms and was in *Crain's* 2019 list of “Best Places to Work in New York City.” 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. JPR's client campaigns have won multiple HSMIA Adrian Awards and been named a finalist in The Shorty Awards.

Sampling of clients: Adare Manor; Bobby Hotel; Hotel Chateau du Grand-Lucé; Chewton Glen; Cliveden House; Eden Roc Cap Cana; The Ocean Club, A Four Seasons Resort; Four Seasons Resort Lanai; Grand Hotel Tremezzo; Great



J Public Relations partners Jamie Sigler O'Grady and Sarah Evans.

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—Robert L. Dilenschneider
The Dilenschneider Group

"A phemonmenal job-seeking aid."

—Marie Raperto
Cantor Integrated Marketing
Search

"Single most important source of information on PR firms."

—Thomas L. Harris, Author
Choosing and Working with your PR firm

J PUBLIC RELATIONS

Continued from page 30

Wolf Lodge; Helena Bay; Hotel del Coronado; Iconic Luxury Hotels; InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown; InterContinental, Washington D.C.—The Wharf; L'Auberge de Sedona; Perry Lane Hotel; Rancho La Puerta; Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa; The Jefferson Washington DC; The Palms Turks & Caicos; The Shore Club; Twin Farms; Utah Office of Tourism; Viceroy Sugar Beach; Visit North Carolina and Waldorf Astoria Los Cabos Pedregal.

LAURA DAVIDSON PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Laura Davidson, President
Leslie Cohen, Executive Vice President

LDPR is a dynamic and innovative travel and lifestyle PR agency headquartered in NYC with staff in California and Chicago. The firm has been at the forefront of integrated initiatives for destinations, international hotel companies, independent resorts, luxury tour operators and lifestyle products. We balance creativity with strategic thinking and hold ourselves accountable with KPIs to ensure we are tracking for success to support our clients' business goals. We have an in-house social media team that utilizes their network of influencers to avoid the 'cookie cutter' approach and instead shifts the narrative to a tailored partnership. Our team utilizes their hospitality expertise to implement impactful social strategies that provide a true ROI. LDPR's culture is defined by our collaborative approach - we create highly curated and individualized programs for clients we consider family, and who continue to partner with us for our proactivity, personalized strategies, and pure and heartfelt passion for this industry.

Our clients include Aman; Abercrombie & Kent; VisitScotland; Sydney/Destination New South Wales, Australia; Tahiti Tourisme; The Resort at Paws Up, Montana; Andaz Maui At Wailea Resort; Park Hyatt, St. Kitts; Ocean House, Rhode Island; Chatham Bars Inn, Cape Cod; Bequia Beach Hotel; Briggs & Riley, among others.



Lou Hammond Group worked with Space Center Houston on the Apollo 50th anniversary celebration, with fireworks to countdown when Neil Armstrong first stepped on the Moon.

LOU HAMMOND GROUP

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Lou Hammond, Founder/Chairman
Stephen Hammond, CEO
Presidents: **Terence Gallagher**, New York; **Gina Stouffer**, Charleston; **Ivie Parker**, Denver; **Amanda Hansen**, Houston

Lou Hammond Group (LHG) is a celebrated, integrated marketing communications firm with offices in New York, Charleston, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, and Miami. LHG has built a legendary reputation over the past 36 years as the leading mid-sized agency serving the travel industry. A few things to know:

- Independent: known for boundless creativity and enthusiasm
- Operates differently: no time sheets—clients get the attention they need when they need it
- Founder of the global PR World Network, 20-year organization
- Impressive client retention, serving partners over a decade; Charleston, Nassau Paradise Island, New Haven, Norfolk, Panama City Beach, Providence, Sonoma, Santa Fe

Results, our key to success. In 2019, LHG:

- Organized 270+ media visitors, 95% on-time production; 29 media missions, 240 participants and contracted 70 top influencers
- Clients recognized with 60+ magazine awards including #1, #2, #3 and #10, Top Small Cities, *Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice*
- Integrated campaigns for Space Center Houston, Visitor

Center, drove record attendance; produced Apollo 50th anniversary concert celebrating first steps on the moon, largest single-day ticket sales in history

- Provided social media services from strategic consulting to full community management for organic and paid social media campaigns

- Launched New Jersey's Anthony Bourdain Food Trail securing 175 million impressions, 40+ stand-alone features including NBC's Today Show, Afar, Eater, The Daily Meal

- In response to demand from destination clients, augmented partnerships to include economic development and placemaking

- Sampling of new travel clients: Sacramento, Marquette, Pearland Economic Council, McNair Interests/Houston, Fifth Avenue BID, Kimpton Key West, Cherokee Plantation, Divi Tamarijn Aruba, The Gant Aspen and, after competitive review, retained contracts for Collier County and Kentucky
- 2020—secured coverage, 117 million reach, March and April, COVID-19 Recovery

LHG clients know they are working with the most trusted, go-to media and influencer resource in the industry with a singular commitment to delivering quality, measurable results.

MAGRINO

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Susan Magrino, Chairman & CEO
Allyn Magrino, President & CRO
LeighAnn Ambrosi, EVP & CAO

Magrino offers a full suite of public relations and social media services, from media relations and strategic partnerships to platform

management, content creation and influencer and event marketing. Magrino is dedicated to maximizing the reach and power of earned media for our clients, putting over 25 years of strategic insight and intelligence into everything we do. Employing our 360° lifestyle approach to brand building and public relations, our campaigns are focused, strategic and assembled to balance cost-effectiveness with positive results. Our break-through strategies look beyond the silos of traditional PR and individual social channels; Magrino has a fluency in all mediums, understanding that each function serves as a launchpad for the other to shape perceptions and inspire change. That is the reason some of the world's most revered lifestyle brands turn to us—and return to us. www.magrino.com

MARDIKS PR

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Charles Mardiks, President/
Managing Director

At the intersection of creative and strategic, Mardiks PR is a marketing solution provider, specializing in travel and tourism. The agency leverages the power of storytelling to create engaging, integrated campaigns. Our multi-channel campaigns combine media outreach, social media and event activation along with strategic partnerships to build buzz and business for leading global travel brands, destinations and associations.

The agency was founded by Charles Mardiks. Charles has two decades of integrated marketing and public relations experience in global travel and tourism, and he brings together a highly networked,

nimble team of senior-level, hands-on strategists and creative thinkers. The dedicated Mardiks team is fueled by a love for travel, a nose for news and a scrappiness that gets the job done. As a true extension of our clients' teams, we work diligently to nurture, build and connect media and industry relationships to solve clients' marketing problems with smart, strategic and creative solutions.

Clients include: Athenaeum Hotel & Residences (London), Celestyal Cruises, Condor Airlines, My Greek Table with Diane Kochilas, Park Royal Beach Resort (Cancun), Safari Pros, Visit Guernsey, and Visit Sarasota County.

MMGY NJF

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Julie Freeman, EVP & Managing Director

Lauren Kaufman, SVP

Nancy Friedman, Founder

At MMGY NJF we are global connectors, storytellers and curators of travel experiences—inspiring people to view the world differently and then see it for themselves. As marketers specializing solely in travel and hospitality, we help put travel brands on the map and navigate their narrative through innovative thinking, creativity and storytelling. MMGY NJF offers boutique service and expertise in consumer and trade media relations, social media, corporate and brand positioning, experiential and event marketing, strategic partnerships and promotions, influencer engagement and crisis communications. We are the winners of the 2020 HSMIA Adrian Award Best of Show in PR for our work on the National World War II Museum's 75th Anniversary of D-Day campaign.

For those seeking senior level counsel, unwavering brand advocacy and unrivaled media savvy, MMGY NJF is a PR powerhouse and one-stop shop. Hundreds of hotel, destination, travel and lifestyle brands have entrusted their reputations to MMGY NJF whose "Leave No Stone Unturned" philosophy has catapulted the firm to the top. Our integrated PR and social media team prides itself on long-standing client relationships and an innate ability to move within many spheres: tapping media and industry influencers, forging creative partnerships, uncovering strategic advantages, and providing

global perspective. Our campaigns are rooted in research and insights, and we are master storytellers and content creators who know how to make news out of simple concepts or large-scale programs. We forge an emotional connection to reach our audiences where they live, work and play.

Industry innovators and thought leaders, MMGY NJF is the pioneer of Hotel Week NYC, and MMGY is the author of the widely acclaimed *Portrait of American Travelers*® annual research study. With offices in New York City, Los Angeles, Kansas City, Austin, London, Miami, Dubai, Vancouver and Washington, D.C. and an international partner network, Travel Consul, we serve many of the world's premier travel and tourism brands. Other MMGY Global areas of expertise include research and insights, strategic communications planning and implementation, brand marketing, traditional and social media buying, digital/social media strategy, website development and management, e-CRM, travel industry relations and international destination representation.

Clients Include: Amtrak, Aparium Hotel Group, Berkshire Hathaway Travel Protection, Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, Breezes Resort & Spa, British Virgin Islands, Cheap Caribbean, Costa Rica Tourism, Etihad Airways, Eurail, Fitler Club, Generator Hostels, Greater Palm Springs CVB, Hamilton Princess, HEI Hotels, Hotel Vermont, Intrepid Travel, ITC Hotels, Karisma Hotels, Meritage Resort Collection, Oceania Cruises, Pod Hotels, Refinery Hotel, Rhode Island Tourism, Sea Island, Shinola Detroit, South Dakota Tourism, St. Petersburg/Clearwater, The Asbury, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, The James New York Nomad, The National World War II Museum, Travel Texas, Visit California, Visit Dallas and Visit San Jose.

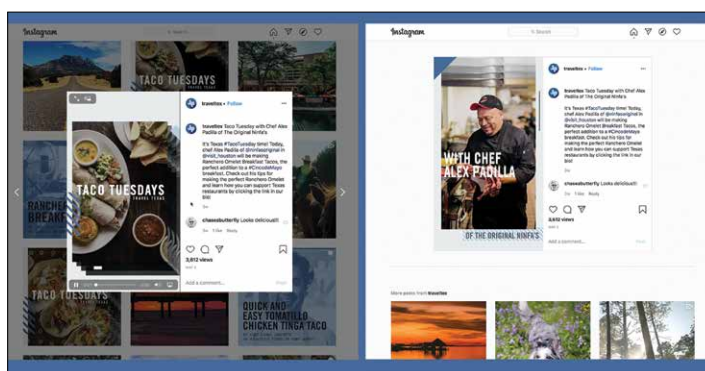
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TJM Communications is an award-winning lifestyle public relations firm servicing the travel,



How do you inspire people to travel when they're stuck at home? Through their stomachs! MMGY NJF leveraged the popularity of Taco Tuesdays to create a campaign during the COVID-19 crisis for Travel Texas that drove forward momentum to keep the Lone Star State top of mind for future travel. We got chefs around the state to share their taco recipes that we transformed into an IGTV series for consumers and media. Taco 'bout results: the campaign trended nationally on social media and generated placements in Food & Wine, Travel + Leisure and BuzzFeed, among others.

food, wine, convention and event sectors. We provide strategy, media and influencer relations, storytelling, crisis management and social media services for leading hospitality brands domestically and globally.

Our agency is distinguished by a committed team of passionate professionals who develop genuine long-standing relationships with media and clients and thrive on exceeding expectations.

We don't believe in PR for the sake of PR. We believe in public relations as a creative, strategic approach aligned with sales and marketing goals.

Clients Include: Walt Disney World (Disney Dreamers Academy, runDisney), Visit Sarasota, Cirque du Soleil, Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort, The Cove at Walt Disney World Swan, Ocean Prime Restaurant, Mandara Spa (Orlando), Shula's Steak House (Orlando), Todd English's bluezoo and Il Mulino

TURNER

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Christine Turner, President
Angela Berardino, Chief Strategy Officer

TURNER is an industry-leading communications agency with a 20+ year history representing lifestyle, heritage, outdoor, travel and hospitality brands, skillfully blending public relations and social media strategy, delivering boundless cre-

ativity supported by data-driven knowledge.

What We Do: Our capabilities span the mixed marketing spectrum—earned media strategy, digital communications, experiential & entertainment marketing, social media and travel trade representation. We specialize in building brands. We are creators at heart, always finding fresh ways to craft the right narratives.

Who We Work With: Our travel and tourism portfolio spans destinations including Bermuda, Houston and Toronto; hotels and resorts from major brands and independent stars. Our consumer portfolio ranges from emerging F&B brands like Tractor Beverage Co., to established heritage brands like Obermeyer, Duluth Trading Company and Red Wing Heritage Shoes. We also represent some of the biggest names in studio fitness and wellness: Mindbody, Pure Barre and CorePower Yoga.

Why We're Different: Boutique-minded with big agency resources, we deliver some of the best creative ideation anywhere. Authenticity is a core value for TURNER and we're proud to live the lifestyles we represent through our clients. Our bilingual team has helped us work with global brands in Latin America and our team's diverse backgrounds ensure we bring a worldly perspective to our work. Our Simply Give program encourages our team to get involved with volunteer efforts that will effect change in our world.

Where To Find Us: Our offices are in New York, Denver, Chicago and Miami, and we have a team of multilingual associates to best serve our worldwide client base.

VIVA LIFESTYLE PR

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Alison Sager, Founder

VIVA Lifestyle PR is a boutique creative consulting firm specializing in integrated public relations, communications, marketing, and branding services for international clients in the travel, lifestyle and wellness sector.

Clients: AG Group, AG Hotels, Boutique Journey, Elewana Collection, Manfredi Fine Hotels Collection and SIT Platinum.

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Beth Levin, Asst. VP

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, WEILL specializes in promoting luxury, exclusive travel experiences and national tourist offices.

Of our 25+ clients, more than 60% have been with us for more than 5 years, and 40% for more than ten. We specialize in across-the-spectrum communications, ensuring every client's messages are transmitted via all print, electronic, broadcast, digital, influencer and social media. For some clients, we also handle UK public relations.

Unlike most travel PR firms our staff ratio is 50% male, 50% female. We're single, married, straight, gay, Christian, Jewish, atheist, white, black and people of color.

We're also proud that many of our clients are owned and/run by women. AdventureWomen, a tour company for and by women, is owned by Judi Wineland and her two daughters, Nicole Wineland-Thomson and Erica Landerson. Heckfield Place, the sustainable country manor house in Hampshire, England, is commandeered by GM Olivia Richli; and the iconic Beau-Rivage Palace in Lausanne, site of such historic events as the Treaty of Lausanne and the Iran Agreement, is lead by GM Nathalie Seiler-Hayez. Nicky Fitzgerald and her daughter Kate



Nicky Fitzgerald and Kate Fitzgerald Boyd, owners of Angama Mara (a Weill client) in Kenya, celebrating the lodge's 5th anniversary, with Wilow and Anna Boyd.

Fitzgerald Boyd, founded, own and operate the 30-tented safari lodge, Angama Mara, overlooking the Great Rift Valley in Kenya; and Liz Biden is owner and co-founder of The Royal Portfolio, a collection of small properties in South Africa, that includes The Silo Hotel, La Residence in Franschhoek, and Royal Malewane in Kruger National Park. Red Carnation Hotels, which owns Ireland's historic Ashford Castle and The Milestone in London, to name a few, is owned by Beatrice Tollman and now overseen by her daughter Vicki Tollman; and the boutique Orania.Berlin hotel in the trendy neighborhood of Kreuzberg, is run by manager Jennifer Vogel.

Weill remains committed to being diverse and inclusive both in whom the company hires and whom it represents.

ZAPWATER COMMUNICATIONS

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Holly Zawyer, Managing Director, Miami
Stephanie Poquette, VP, Social Media and Influencer Programming

Zapwater Communications is an

integrated communications agency specializing in lifestyle brands, with a focus on travel, hospitality, and destination clients. Founded in 2005, the agency has grown into one of the premier creative firms in the United States. In fact, a leading public relations industry publication named Zapwater one of the five most creative agencies in North America.

With offices in Chicago, Los Angeles and Miami, we share a culture that fosters creativity, quality, collaboration and enthusiasm. Long-standing relationships and the determination to lead in a dynamically evolving industry distinguishes the agency's work.

Our agency integrates multidisciplinary services such as digital engagement, experiential tactics and media relations—to drive bottom-line results. To date, Zapwater has won 145+ industry awards for excellence, including some of the industry's most prestigious accolades, many for our travel and destination clients.

Zapwater is also a founding member of Travel Lifestyle Network (TLN), representing the United States within its international network of owner-managed marketing and communications agencies serving tourism and lifestyle clients. Network members collaborate to deliver international expertise to clients seeking connections and reach across the globe.

Our travel client roster includes a curated mix of destinations, hotels & resorts and airlines including: Visit Finland, Finnair, PrivateFly, Visit Maldives, Grenada Tourism Authority, Tourisme Montréal, Turismo de Portugal, Travel Manito, Bianca Sands, Buenaventura Golf & Beach Resort, Cayo Espanto, Frangipani Beach Resort, Grand Residences Riviera Can-

cun, Hacienda San Angel, Hyatt Regency Trinidad, National Tourism Office of Serbia, La Paz Tourism, Fairmont Mayakoba, CASA Kimberly, Mount Cinnamon Resort, Ocean Clubs Resorts, Hawks Cay Resort, Hotel Zachary, Hyatt Regency Sonoma Wine Country, Marriott Marquis Chicago, Pacifica Hotels, Swissôtel Chicago, The Kinney SLO, The Kinney Venice Beach, The Santa Maria Hotel & Golf Resort Panama, Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort and Casino, and Coco Collection Resorts Maldives

THE ZIMMERMAN AGENCY

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Carrie Zimmerman, Kerry Anne Watson, Principals

For more than three decades The Zimmerman Agency has been among the leading hospitality and travel public relations firms in North America. Today, the firm offers a highly creative and contemporary approach to public relations that includes the support of full-service social media, a 360-degree approach to digital channels, and proprietary analytics. The Zimmerman Agency teams utilizes proprietary Momentum Planning to drive creativity, strategy and technology to deliver relevant and timely content and communications for clients.

Hospitality/travel clients include: Belize Tourism Board, Bohemian Hotel Savannah, Brazilian Court, Blue Diamond Resorts, Brown Palace, Canyon Ranch Woodside, Champions Retreat Golf Club, Chateau Elan, Grand Bohemian Hotels, Grand Lucayan Resort, Hard Rock Hotels & Casinos, Hotel DuPont (Delaware), Innisbrook Golf Resort, Florida, Interstate Hotels & Resorts, Kartite (New York), Kessler Canyon Resort, Kessler Collection of Luxury Resorts, Little Palm Island, Mansion on Forsyth Savannah, North Carolina's Crystal Coast, Orlando World Center Marriott, Mahekal Resort (Playa del Carmen), Montage Palmetto Bluff, Pelican Grand (Ft. Lauderdale), Ritz-Carlton Dallas, Ritz-Carlton Destination Club, Reunion Resort, Streamsong Resort (Florida), TPC Network (Corporate), Visit Florida's Sports Coast, Visit Park City, Visit Tallahassee and Westgate. ○

O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

TRAVEL AND TOURISM PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2019)	Firm	Net Fees (2018)
1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$36,330,000	21. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	\$791,390
2. Finn Partners , New York, NY	12,498,000	22. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	625,256
3. Zimmerman Agency , Tallahassee, FL	12,000,000	23. Berk Communications , New York, NY	623,200
4. J Public Relations , New York, NY	11,149,000	24. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	508,000
5. Turner , a Fahlgren Mortine company, New York, NY	11,004,894	25. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	321,863
6. MMGY NJF , New York, NY	10,710,041	26. Violet PR , Montclair, NJ	314,189
7. Development Counsellors Int'l (DCI) New York, NY	9,976,317	27. Hunter , New York, NY	300,000
8. Lou Hammond Group , New York, NY	8,112,253	28. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	264,000
9. Hawkins Int'l Public Relations , New York, NY	6,000,000	29. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	200,000
10. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	4,806,932	30. Standing Partnership , St. Louis, MO	174,544
11. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	4,487,319	31. IW Group, Inc. , West Hollywood, CA	155,000
12. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	3,568,936	32. Marketing Maven Public Relations , Camarillo, CA	134,488
13. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	3,000,000	33. Singer Associates, Inc. , San Francisco, CA	132,068
14. Zeno Group , New York, NY	2,724,979	34. Bob Gold & Associates , Redondo Beach, CA	110,700
15. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	2,700,000	35. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	100,000
16. Moore, Inc. , Tallahassee, FL	2,465,825	36. Lawlor Media Group , New York, NY	54,500
17. Zapwater Communications , Chicago, IL	1,905,975	37. Stuntman PR , New York, NY	35,000
18. Hemsworth Communications , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,800,000	38. FrazierHeiby , Columbus, OH	15,449
19. Pineapple Public Relations , Chamblee, GA	1,336,144	39. Serendipit , Phoenix, AZ	8,531
20. Lion & Lamb Communications , New York, NY	999,000		

O'Dwyer's guide to INTERNATIONAL PR



Exchanging international learnings at 2019 Board Meeting of PR World Alliance in Paris are (left to right) Mari-
anne van Barneveld, The Netherlands; Anna Krajewska, Poland; Henry Feintuch, U.S.; Catherine Kable, France;
and Meike Grisson, Germany.

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Ronn D. Torossian, Founder &
CEO

Dara A. Busch, Matthew Caiola,
Presidents

Since 2003, New York City-based 5W Public Relations (5WPR) has worked with widely known and emerging brands, corporations and high-profile individuals. Our practice areas include Consumer Products & Brands, Food & Beverage, Health & Wellness, Beauty, Apparel & Accessories, Home & Housewares, Travel & Hospitality, Entertainment & Sports, Corporate, Technology, Public Affairs & Government Relations, Nonprofit, Crisis Communications, Events, Digital Marketing & Social Media. We have a 360-degree approach to PR, social media, branding and digital marketing that delivers game-changing results to our clients.

Our 150+ tenacious and creative communications practitioners develop and execute creative campaigns that connect our clients with

their target audiences in memorable ways. Every aspect of our programs are designed to impact our clients' bottom line, bringing leading businesses a resourceful, bold and results-driven approach to communication.

5WPR's diverse client experience includes Sparkling ICE, It's a 10 Haircare, jane iredale, Bowlmor AMF, CheapOAir, L'Oreal, SAP NS2, VIZIO, The Trade Desk, CareerBuilder, Santa Margherita, Topps, Retro Fitness, Welch's, LifeStyles, SodaStream and Zeta Global, among others. Our innovative programs have received recognition and we have won many awards including PR Agency of the Year, PR Executive of the Year, Product Launch of the Year and Business to Business Program of the Year.

FEINTUCH COMMUNICATIONS

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Launching your company/product into the U.S. market? We excel at that!

Feintuch Communications has a solid track record of supporting companies looking to internationalize into North America. And we do it in a smart and cost-effective way.

Our senior team of PR and marketing pros has helped all types of organizations to adapt their brand and messaging while providing the experienced, hands-on PR "street smarts" to help ensure local market success. Specialty market segments include ad/marketing tech; audio video/AV; consumer electronics; ecommerce; clean tech; fintech; manufacturing tech; and technology. We offer both project and retainer services.

For U.S. companies seeking to enter world markets, our global network—the PR World Alliance—is ready to assist. The network of best-of-breed independent consultancies is particularly adept at coordinating market entry public relations programs throughout Europe and North and South America and excel in coordinating multinational campaigns. We offer even broader reach—into 109 countries globally—through our membership in the networkone.

GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS PARTNERS

<https://www.globalcommunicationpartners.com/about>

Global Communications Partners is a specialist financial and corporate communications network bringing together leading independent public relations consultancies in the world's major financial markets. Since 1995, GCP member firms have been providing the skills needed to help clients successfully communicate their messages to financial and corporate decision-makers. GCP is represented in the United States by Lansons Intermarket, one of this country's ten largest financially-focused public relations firms, according to *O'Dwyer's*.

Other member firms include Honner (Australia), Interel (Belgium), Cunha Vaz Brazil, Argyle Public Relations (Canada), Grupo Albión (Columbia), Shan (France), Charles Barker (Germany), Adfactors (India), Twister Communications Group (Italy), Sharpe International (Netherlands), Cunha Vaz Portugal, Klareco Communications—Asia (Singapore, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Yanchon), Access Communications & Consulting (South Korea), Grupo Albión (Spain), Farner Consulting Ltd (Switzerland), Borouj Consulting (UAE) and Lansons (UK).

PROI WORLDWIDE

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Background

PROI Worldwide harnesses the collective power of the world's most ambitious entrepreneurial communications firms. By sharing global insights and best practices, PROI agencies remain best in market trendsetters, supporting the drive to deliver the most impactful communications campaigns for their clients. In 2019, PROI encompassed 78 partners with 7,300 employees in more than 165 cities and 50 countries. With combined revenue of nearly US\$ one billion, PROI ranked 4th among consolidated communications groups, and was the only one in the top ten that is based on a unique partnership of independent business people.

What distinguishes the PROI global partnership from 'networks' is that PROI Worldwide includes agencies ranging from very large, to medium and small—with staff numbers of 10 to 850 per agency. The size of PROI firms is usually directly related to the size of the market, the agency's regional or global reach and the broad integration of digital, marcom, public affairs, consumer, healthcare and other practice areas.

When you retain a local PROI Worldwide agency

They will help you plan a global, regional or local communications program and help you to recognize, prioritize and address differences in culture, custom, values and social mores, especially as the campaign is developed beyond your local market. Our local PROI Partners drive their own business based on proven local competence in their respective markets. Competence is not centralized at regional or global offices as can often be the case within multinationals.

PROI Worldwide's Americas Region

PROI Agencies with head offices in North and South America include Finn Partners (New York + Offices throughout the US), G&S

Business Communications (New York-Chicago-Raleigh), Jackson Spalding (Atlanta-Dallas), rbb (Miami- Fort Lauderdale), RF|Binder (New York-San Francisco), 360PR+ (Boston-New York-San Francisco), Falls Communications (Cleveland-Washington, DC), Lambert (Detroit-Lansing-Grand Rapids-New York), Jones PR (Oklahoma City), Crenshaw Communications (New York), Ground-Floor Media (Denver), MPRM (Los Angeles), c+c (Seattle-Portland-Boston), The Vandiver Group (St. Louis), Walker Sands (Chicago-San Francisco-Seattle), Brown & Cohen (Toronto), FWD Consultores (Mexico City) and Imagem Corporativa (Sao Paulo-Rio de Janeiro-Brasilia).

Global Footprint

PROI Worldwide has offices in virtually every European country, The Middle East, Africa, and Asia Pacific and includes some of the largest and leading Agencies in major markets including Germany, The Nordics, England, France, Spain, Italy, Hong Kong-China, India, Australasia and Japan.

PR WORLD ALLIANCE

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PR World Alliance is an international network of premier, independent communication consultancies. Our members—public relations, investor relations and public affairs firms—have well-developed competencies in a broad array of communication practice areas and industry sectors. Our skills and experience help us to form strong, productive partnerships with companies, institutions, governmental entities, non-profits/NGOs and industry and professional associations.

PR World Alliance provides clients with an extensive depth of knowledge in individual countries

as well as a solid understanding of the dynamic multinational marketplace.

We provide strategic communication, public relations and public affairs counsel, product promotion and introduction, social media programs and more.

Members can be engaged for support of an individual event, in-country support or a coordinated multi-national campaign. Our membership in the network connects us to 1,200 additional independent agencies in 109 countries; we continue to seek best-of-breed firms in strategic locations.

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The Public Relations Global Network (PRGN) is "the World's Local Agency." Clients across six continents depend on the combined resources of the Public Relations Global Network (PRGN) to deliver targeted public relations campaigns in markets around the world. PRGN is one of the world's largest international public relations networks measured by revenue. PRGN harnesses the resources of 51 independent public relations firms in 53 locations and more than 1,000 communications professionals to connect international companies and organizations with individual and culturally diverse markets globally. Visit PRGN online at www.prgn.com or on twitter at @PRGN.

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Worldcom Public Relations Group utilizes a trusted global partnership of independent firms to help clients create the perfect solution to any PR challenge or opportunity, regardless of geography, industry or discipline required. Worldcom's independently owned public relations firms boast 143 offices employing some 2,000 staff in 115 cities across six continents. In total, Worldcom partners reported combined revenue of US\$300+ million from 3,034 clients. Established in 1988 and recently celebrating its 30th anniversary, the average tenure of Worldcom partners is 13 years. Whether seeking a single firm or creating the ideal solution/team through a collaboration of Worldcom partners, brands have access to seasoned professionals dedicated to providing creative, strategic solutions that deliver results. Our firms are accustomed to working together and provide agility, strong media and local influencer relationships, deep industry and discipline experience and the knowledge and willingness to provide thoughtful, objective, results-driven counsel. Learn more about Worldcom at www.worldcomgroup.com or call Todd Lynch at 1/800-955-9675. Connect with Worldcom PR Group on Facebook and LinkedIn. ○

The *New York Times*' 'beat Trump' beat writer

By Fraser Seitel

About 100 years ago, when I graduated journalism school, there was no more respected standard bearer for everything the journalistic profession stood for than the *New York Times*. Not only were *Times*' reporters more accurate and informative than their competitors, they also demonstrated, more than any other journalists, that reportorial objectivity, impartiality and neutrality were, indeed, attainable.



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*.

No wonder the *New York Times* was the world's undisputed "paper of record." Every day, it demonstrated the construct of "fairness" that we learned about in J school wasn't just theoretical. It was, in fact, the way that really good journalists operated in their real world jobs. It was this quality—of reporting dispassionately, telling both sides and letting readers decide on the truth—that distinguished the *Times* as the beacon of journalistic integrity. But alas, all good things must come to an end. And so, too, has the *New York Times* surrendered its role as journalism's standard bearer for objectivity.

Today's *New York Times*, in fact, makes no secret of its downright loathing of most things Republican and all things Donald Trump. This isn't only apparent in its editorial pages—where op-ed writers run the gamut all the way from Trump haters like Tom Friedman and Maureen Dowd to Trump hysterics like Michelle Goldberg and Charles Blow—but also in its news sections. (Full disclosure: I think Donald Trump is an insecure, ill-informed, downright dangerous President. But Joe Biden ain't no bargain either.)

The fact is, today's *New York Times* in both news and editorial is 100 percent devoted to defeating Trump in November. Its clear bias no longer debatable, its dedication to objectivity no longer consequential.

The most blatant proof of this sad new reality is that the *Times* is the first news outlet to assign a fulltime reporter, Maggie Haberman, to the "Beat Trump" beat, her sole responsibility to help ensure the defeat of Trump in the 2020 election.

Ms. Haberman, a former tabloid reporter and daughter of longtime *Times* columnist Clyde Haberman, is tasked with reporting on every Trumpian negative utterance, malicious action, falsehood or personal defect to help convince voters to elect Biden President of the United States.

She dutifully fulfills that mission with every column she files, keeping the Trump personal and professional deficiencies constant and avoiding any reference whatsoever to any policy act that might be construed as a Trumpian success.

The *Times*, of course, would never admit that Ms. Haberman's job is to sink the Donald, but here's a sample of her recent handiwork—and the strategy behind it—from which you might draw your own conclusions.

Trump is racist

In the wake of George Floyd's death and subsequent protests, there's no more damning accusation today that one is a racist. Ms. Haberman not-so-subtly accuses the President of such bigotry with a withering fusillade of cherry-picked Trump quotes.

Typical was her June 11 news column highlighting Mr. Trump's "long history of making insensitive and tone-deaf comments on race, including remarks widely seen as racist." She noted that Mr. Trump "has harbored offensive attitudes on race for years, including his searing attacks on the Central Park Five and his idea, on 'The Apprentice,' for an all-white team competing against an all-black team." She added that in the wake of the Floyd protests, the President was "hunkered down at the White House," tweeting about injured protestors and describing demonstrators as "THUGS"

Ms. Haberman failed to mention that Trump's comments also referred to his support of "the rights of peaceful protesters," his denunciation of the way George Floyd was killed, his understanding of the "hurt and pain of people who have been through a lot," and that the "thugs" he castigated were those who lit fires, looted stores and wantonly destroyed private property. Nor did she refer to the President's call to the Floyd family to express the nation's sympathies.

There's no question that Donald Trump often says and tweets stupid and hurtful things that his advisors—to whom he never listens—never want him to utter. But branding him a "racist," without at least citing ample evidence to the contrary, is patently unfair.

Trump is secretly sick

Another recurring theme in the Haberman "Beat Trump" playbook is that the President is hiding health problems, which, if revealed, would jeopardize his reelection.

Most recently, after a mid-June speech to the graduating class at West Point, she wrote that Trump "faced new questions about his health on Sunday, after videos emerged of him gingerly walking down a ramp ... and having trouble bringing a glass of water to his mouth during a speech." She dismissed Trump's subsequent tweets about having to descend a long, steep, slippery ramp with no handrails as "defensive," noting that the videos upon which she based her reporting showed "clear skies and no evidence that the ramp was slippery."

Ms. Haberman went on to note that Trump, the oldest first-term President in U.S. history, "never fully explained his abrupt visit to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in November, saying at the time only that it was intended to get a jump on his annual physical." And for good measure, she added that while a White House doctor had released a June memo that the President's checkup indicated he was in good shape, it "provided little information beyond blood pressure."

The inference, of course, was clear that Trump may be hiding a potentially serious physical impairment. After that Haberman column, numerous print and broadcast media followed the *Times*' lead and dutifully reported on the President's suspect physical condition.

Trump is wounded and alone

As the Trump circus has rolled on and more associates have abandoned ship, a pervasive theme of Haberman's news columns has been the President's Nixonian isolation in the White House.

Most recently, after John Bolton's "kiss and tell" best seller was released, Ms. Haberman described the President as "acting trapped and defensive ... with destructive behavior so out of step for an incumbent in an election year."

She went on to reveal a man "wallowing in self-pity about news coverage of him since the coronavirus pandemic" ... "bristling at criticism that he hasn't sufficiently addressed the death of George Floyd" ... and "consumed, once again with leaks from the White House."

As to those "leaks," one wonders who in the Trump White House would be willing

— Continued on next page

Paycheck Protection Program updates

By Richard Goldstein

Updated Paycheck Protection Program loan forgiveness applications have been released by the U.S. Small Business Association and the Treasury Department in an effort to make the process easier for borrowers as well as reflect changes from the recent passage of the Payroll Protection Program Flexibility Act.



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

Two versions of the loan forgiveness applications are now offered to borrowers.

PPP loan application highlights

The full loan forgiveness application has been shortened from eleven pages to five pages.

Both applications give borrowers the option of using the original eight-week period—if the loan was made before June 5, 2020—or the extended 24-week covered period.

They include how to calculate forgiveness inclusive of the newly revised 60 percent payroll cost requirement.

Health insurance costs for S corporation

owners can't be included when calculating payroll costs; however, retirement costs for S corporation owners are eligible costs.

They also include the addition of a safe harbor for businesses that've been unable to return to the level of business activity they had before the COVID-19 pandemic due to compliance with health and safety guidelines for slowing the spread of the virus.

Loan forgiveness application form EZ

A new, shorter version of the loan forgiveness application is available for certain borrowers. It requires less calculations and documentation than the full application. The three-page form can be used by borrowers that:

Are self-employed, independent contractor or sole proprietor that had no employees at the time of the PPP loan application; or

Didn't reduce annual wages or salaries of any employee by more than 25 percent during the covered period or alternative payroll covered as compared to Q1 2020 and the borrower didn't reduce the number of employees and the average paid hours of employees between January 1 2020 and the end of the covered period (ignoring reductions from the inability to rehire individuals and reductions in hours offered to be restored and refused); or

Didn't reduce annual wages or salaries of any employees by more than 25 percent

during the covered period at the same level of business activity as before February 15, 2020 as a result of health insurance directives related to COVID-19 between March 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020.

The SBA issued a new, final rule on how to determine payroll costs and owner compensation when calculating loan forgiveness under the new 24-week covered period.

That new interim rule establishes the 24-week maximum amount for forgiveness at \$46,154 per employee or \$15,385 per employee for the eight-week covered period (plus covered benefits for employees). For owner compensation replacement, the forgiveness calculation is limited to 2.5 months' worth of 2019 net profit, up to \$20,383 for the 24-week period or up to \$15,385 for those electing eight-week period.

Some other important news

We know your business is facing unprecedented challenges right now with the coronavirus (COVID-19), and we're here to partner with you in any or all of it. We're available to discuss the new government requirements, tax deadlines and relief efforts, as well as how to approach the business impacts of the outbreak.

To help you stay informed about the ongoing issues impacting you, check out the Coronavirus Resource Hub on our website: www.buchbinder.com. ○

NYT'S 'BEAT TRUMP' BEAT WRITER

— Continued from page 38

to take the monumental risk of “leaking” anything to an arch Trump hater like Ms. Haberman. Wouldn't they worry that if found out, it could cost them their job? In fact, after all the bad things Haberman has written to bury Trump, one wonders how in the world she still maintains “sources” within the Trump White House. The real answer, on closer inspection, may well be that Haberman doesn't have any “sources” close to the President or even inside the White House, but rather, that her exposés about damning internal Trump interactions are fed to her by individuals far removed from the President, whose identity is never revealed and who, therefore, may or may not know what they're talking about.

Typical was her nuanced disclaimer in the recent post-Bolton column: “The *New York Times* interviewed more than a doz-

en people who speak or interact with the president frequently, including current and former White House aides, campaign advisers, friends and associates. Most spoke on condition of anonymity.”

Indeed, among the only critical individuals quoted by name in the defamatory column was Anthony Scaramucci, the publicity-seeking missile who Trump threw out as press secretary after 11 excruciating days, and Sam Nunberg, the slightly, um, “off center” media hound who last worked for Trump in the 2016 campaign. Scaramucci and Nunberg aren't exactly A-list Trump insiders. And if the two of them are typical of where Maggie Haberman gets her “inside dirt,” you have to wonder how authoritative Haberman's reporting really is.

And that's really the point in considering today's *New York Times*' Trump coverage. The fact is that any semblance of accuracy, fairness or objectivity has been sacrificed in favor of one simple rallying cry: Beat Trump! Somewhere, Walter Lippmann is crying his eyes out. ○

PR news brief

Brand trust on the rise

Consumers, whipsawed by the COVID-19 crisis and demonstrations for racial equality, are putting a greater emphasis on brand trust when purchasing a product, according to a special report of the Edelman Trust Barometer released June 25.

Trust is now the second most important factor in buying a new brand (53 percent) or becoming a loyal customer (49 percent), trailing only price and affordability, according to the survey. That's a jump from fifth place a year ago, when trust ranked behind product performance, customer service, retail presence and ingredients.

Edelman found that 44 percent of consumers started using a new brand “because of the innovative or compassionate way” it has responded to the virus. That's a seven-point jump from an April poll.

Forty percent (up six points) stopped using a brand because it did not act appropriately to the pandemic.

Earned media (44 percent) only trails personal experience (59 percent) and nearly doubles advertising (23 percent) in building trust in a brand.

The survey found that influence is built through authority and empathy.

The three most credible spokespersons for building trust are an industry expert (60 percent), “a person like yourself” (59 percent) and brand technical expert (49 percent).

State Dept. lobbyist resigns

Mary Elizabeth Taylor, one of the highest-ranking Black officials in the Trump administration, has resigned to protest the President's handling of racial issues.

"Moments of upheaval can change you, shift the trajectory of your life, and mold your character," she wrote in a letter to secretary of state Mike Pompeo. "The President's comments and actions surrounding racial injustice and Black Americans cut sharply against my core values and convictions."

As special assistant for legislative affairs at the State Dept., Taylor shepherded the nominations of Supreme Court justice Neil Gorsuch, CIA Director Gina Haspel and Pompeo through the Senate, as well as more than 400 other nominations, according to her State Dept. bio.

The *Washington Post* called Taylor "a pivotal behind-the-scenes figure in the administration." At 30, she was the youngest person to hold her State Dept. job and the first Black woman to do so.

Prior to joining the Trump team, Taylor worked in the office of Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, serving as his liaison to Democratic leaders on legislative and executive matters. ○



Mary Elizabeth Taylor

H+K hires Tony Blair's ex press secretary

Hill+Knowlton has hired Tanya Joseph, who served as UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's Press Secretary and is a trustee at the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, as Managing Director of its specialist services unit in London.

Trained as a journalist, Joseph did a stint as Managing Director for Public Affairs at Grayling and ran her own consultancy for nine years.

She also was Director of Campaigns and Public Policy at the Nationwide Building Society, Vice Chair at the Fawcett Society and while at Sport England, Joseph crafted the award-winning "This Girl Campaign" to encourage girls to be physically active.

At H+K, the specialist services group includes corporate advisory, behavioral science, executive coaching, internal communications and crisis/reputation management services. ○



Tanya Joseph

Lott, Breaux go to Crossroads

Former Mississippi Senator Trent Lott, who was fired from Squire Patton Boggs on June 8 after it got wind of his plans to leave the lobbying firm, has arrived at Crossroads Strategies with his colleague and ex-Louisiana Senator John Breaux. They sold Breaux Lott Leadership Group to SPB in 2010.

Lott, 79, and Breaux, 76, said they look forward to new challenges at CRS, where they will work with their sons, Chet and John Jr. The younger men were staffers at BLLG.

"Senators Lott and Breaux joining our firm ensures our clients



Trent Lott



best-of-class counsel across multiple disciplines of regulatory and legislative public policy," said Stewart Hall, CRS Chairman. ○

Ballard cuts ties with D.C.

Trumf-tied Ballard Partners cut ties with its Government of the District of Columbia client due to the escalating feud between Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser and the President.

That tension rose following the deployment of active-duty U.S. troops to the D.C. area in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protest. Bowser, who has marched with the demonstrators, on June 7 called the deployment an "invasion" and demanded the withdrawal of the troops.

She also had "Black Lives Matter" painted on two blocks leading to the White House.

Trump attacked the Mayor on Twitter May 30, saying she's "always looking for money and help" and falsely charged that Bowser withheld DC police from demonstration.

The president on June 7 said he ordered the National Guard to withdraw from D.C. now that "everything is under perfect control." This followed criticism from retired generals about Trump's militarizing the response to the protests.

There are about 5,000 National Guard soldiers in Washington. About 1,200 of them are members of the D.C. National Guard.

Brian Ballard, who chaired the Trump Victory fundraising organization in Florida during the 2016 presidential campaign, headed the three-person lobbying team for Washington. ○

Vectis pitches for LA police union

The Los Angeles Police Protective League, the union that represents Los Angeles Police Department officers, has retained Vectis D.C. to handle police reform legislation.

The LAPD has been a focus of public scrutiny amid nationwide cries for police reform in the wake of the George Floyd protests. Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti in June announced a proposal to slash the LAPD's annual \$1.2 billion budget by up to \$150 million. LAPPL Director Jamie McBride responded by calling Garcetti "clearly unstable," and being "more interested in his image and how he's looked upon, as opposed to being a leader in difficult times."

According to a June 25 *New York Times* analysis of police groups' influence in Congress, a half-dozen police organizations have spent a combined \$2.9 million lobbying the federal government since 2017.

Vectis is the firm founded by former California Democratic Rep. and Whip Tony Coelho, along with Ron Packard, a Republican who was Chairman of the Appropriations Committee on Energy and Water. ○

Ruder Finn inks \$1.7M pact for Saudi mega-city

Ruder Finn has a \$1.7 million one-year contract with Saudi Arabia to develop a website and social media campaign for Neom, the \$500 billion mega-city that is supposed to be the centerpiece of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's plan to diversify the Kingdom's economy.

The independent firm will station two to three employees in Saudi Arabia to work on the campaign. Staffers in New York and Asia will support them.

The campaign will pitch Neom as a model for sustainable living and a city of the future, "a place that is focused on setting new standards for community health, environmental protection and the effective and productive use of technology," according to RF. The PR push also may shape U.S. public opinion and members of Congress about the development of Neom.

RF's contract includes a COVID-19 provision calling for it "to use all reasonable endeavors to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among its personnel, the employer's work site and any person at the employer's work site."

The Saudis also have Teneo working to promote Neom. It signed a six-month \$840,000 contract in January to manage the communications department of Neom. That followed a \$2.1 million pact inked in 2019. ○

Finn Partners opens up Italy

The Italian Tourist Board has hired Finn Partners in London to lure travellers from the UK as the country opens up to visitors.

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.

Steptoe & Johnson, LLP, Washington, D.C., registered Jun. 4, 2020 for **Gonzalo Castillo**, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, regarding pro-bono work to assist the presidential candidate of the Dominican Liberation Party.

Myriad International Marketing, LLC, Kansas City, MO, registered Jun. 18, 2020 for **Visit Finland**, New York, NY, regarding event coordination and stakeholder interviews in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York to promote Finland and Estonia to North American travelers.

AF International, LLC, Bethesda, MD, registered Jun. 22, 2020 for **Iran Transition Council**, Washington, D.C., regarding government affairs and media relations services for the council which was formed by the main pro-democracy Iranian political groups to enlist the cooperation of all leading opposition groups.

Coast to Coast Strategies, LLC, Lansing, MI, registered Jun. 4, 2020 for **Qatar American Institute**, Washington, D.C., regarding strategic planning, recruitment of participants and development of an alumni program for the Qatar-America Leadership Program throughout the US.

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.

Rubicon Advisors, LLC, Washington, D.C., registered Jun. 24, 2020 for **Pure Blue Diagnostics**, Toluca Lake, CA, regarding FDA COVID-19 testing.

SL Strategies, LLC, Washington, D.C., registered Jun. 24, 2020 for **Coalition to Stop Flu**, Washington, D.C., regarding federal funding and policy issues related to seasonal and pandemic influenza.

Van Scoyoc Associates, Washington, D.C., registered Jun. 24, 2020 for **Altimmune, Inc.**, Gaithersburg, MD, regarding vaccine and therapeutic development and manufacturing capacity issues.

ML Strategies, LLC, Washington, D.C., registered Jun. 24, 2020 for **SHAB Holdings, LLC**, New York, NY, regarding issues related to guidance on summer camps by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Effective June 3, Italy said Brits could travel there without the need to quarantine.

The Finn Partners push will include trade representation, digital media and a dedicated influencer strategy to generate buzz about Italy as the country recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. ○

Xenophon touts Uzbek progress

Xenophon Strategies has a nearly \$600,000 contract with Uzbekistan designed to highlight its progress on improving human rights with the goal of ending the cotton boycott erected against the former Soviet republic.

More than 300 U.S. and European fashion and apparel companies have pledged not to knowingly use cotton from Uzbekistan because of the use of forced labor during the cotton harvest.

Xenophon will produce an environmental, social and governance report for Uzbekistan, create a branded communications campaign centered on its governmental reforms, international trade and economic development, and pitch the U.S. media on behalf of Uzbekistan's export promotion agency. Xenophon's sister shop, Germany-based Cometis, is handling outreach for Europe.

Foreign Policy magazine recently ran dueling op-ed pieces related to Uzbekistan. A March 28 piece called for an end of the boycott due to Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's March move to eliminate cotton production quotas that were put into place during the 1920. That system encouraged the use of forced labor, bringing more than two million workers into the fields to pick cotton by hand. Due to mechanization, that number dropped to more than 100,000 last year.

A May 28 commentary argued that ironclad commitments for responsible sourcing and investment that respects labor and human rights must be in place before ending the boycott. ○

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Agency Statement:

J Public Relations (JPR) is an international luxury PR, influencer management and social media agency specializing in hospitality, travel and luxury lifestyle brands. With 75 team members across four offices in New York City, London, Los Angeles and San Diego, plus a presence in Denver and Arizona, JPR is a trusted leader in media relations and brand strategy, trend forecasting, brand partnerships, influencer relations, digital and social strategy. JPR is an innovator in all things travel, being the first travel PR agency to launch a podcast in 2018, Priority Status.

Established in 2005, JPR has consistently risen to become the world's fastest growing agency in the travel and hospitality spaces. JPR's global roster includes more than 150+ hotels in the U.S., U.K. and throughout Europe, Mexico, Caribbean, Dubai, New Zealand, Asia and more. JPR represents destinations such as North Carolina and Utah as well as brands including Marriott, Relais & Châteaux, Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, Vail Resorts Hospitality and multiple 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 and *Crain's* "Best Places to Work in New York City." 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:

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San Diego

2341 Fifth Ave., San Diego, CA 92101
619/255-7069

Los Angeles

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

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