

# O'Dwyer's

Communications & new media

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January: *Crisis Comms. / Buyer's Guide*  
February: *Environmental & P.A.*  
March: *Food & Beverage*  
April: *Broadcast & Social Media*  
May: *PR Firm Rankings*  
June: *Global & Multicultural*

July: *Travel & Tourism*  
August: *Financial/I.R.*  
September: *Beauty & Fashion*  
October: *Healthcare & Medical*  
November: *High-Tech*  
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## Food safety becomes top concern for Americans

**F**ood for thought: In February, the GOP House approved its historic budget resolution, a whopping \$61 billion federal savings package that slashes spending in virtually every domestic program, from Planned Parenthood to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Politics aside, it was the cuts to health and nutrition programs that seemed particularly callous, like cutting \$760 million from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), a program that supplies nutritional aid to the children of low-income parents. Get a heart, folks.

Now on to the good news. Several important food-safety and food-labeling regulatory overhauls from 2010 are finally becoming law. First, under President Obama's healthcare law passed last year, Section 4205 requires major retail restaurants to clearly post calorie content information on their menus. The rules officially go into effect in March. This, coupled with the news of the "Nutrition Keys" labeling system that U.S. food and beverage manufacturers hope will better illustrate front-of-package nutrition information (see full story on pg. 18), means 2011 will be a big year for food labeling.

Arguably a bigger news item: Last December, during one of its last days in session, the 110th Congress managed to finally do something right when it passed a new food-safety bill, the Food Safety Modernization Act. Signed into law by President Obama in January, the new law grants the FDA unprecedented authority in ensuring that our food remains safe.

Notably, for the first time the FDA now has the authority to mandate product recalls — instead of simply reacting to them after an outbreak occurs. This important distinction increases the responsibilities of food safety for our federal regulators, who can now work to prevent food contamination instead of simply responding to it.

The new bill also gives the FDA the power to enforce preventive controls within food facilities. Food plants and manufacturers must institute preventive controls, list potential safety hazards and enact steps to prevent them from happening. The bill also requires the FDA to increase inspections of both domestic and imported foreign foods, forcing all to meet new, frequent accountability requirements.

In total, the FDA will be responsible for more than 50 new regulations, guidance procedures and periodic Congressional report duties. As such, it's an oversight rehaul that won't come cheap. Total cost of implementing the new rules are expected to run \$1.4 billion over the next five years. It still isn't clear how the agency will pay for such a massive overhaul. Members of agricultural appropriations committees — the very bodies that fund the FDA — have already begun aping their colleagues in the Republican House, threatening no new resources for the agency.

Food safety has become a top concern for Americans. According to an annual food survey commissioned by Hunter Public Relations, each of the top three food stories voted by Americans as the biggest food stories of 2010 involved food safety.

The BP Oil spill's impact on the regional seafood industry took the number-one slot. According to the Hunter survey, it was also the first time in the survey's eight-year history that an environmental story was also top food story.

Coming in at a close second was the August 2010 national outbreak of salmonella in eggs distributed by Iowa egg producer Wright County Egg. The salmonella outbreak spread to nearly 380 million chicken eggs and sickened hundreds, leading to a national recall.

The third biggest food story was the massive June recall of 35,000 pounds of beef as a result of potential E. coli contamination at Southern California meat distributor South Gate Meat Company. The U.S. Department of Agriculture — who initially discovered the contamination through microbiological sampling — later said that that no illnesses or deaths were reported as a result of the beef.

While beef recalls used to be a rare occurrence, it's now routine to see millions of pounds of recalled meat on a yearly basis. Between November and December of last year alone, alfalfa sprouts were linked to more than 90 cases of salmonella. About 350 separate outbreaks of food borne illness now occur every year in the U.S. According to a January report published in *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, this is responsible for an estimated 9.4 million episodes of food borne illness in the U.S. each year; about 3,000 Americans die from this annually.

Safety is the top food issue of the decade. It's also a global issue: if there's a food scare in China it impacts pet food in the U.S.; Mad Cow outbreaks in the U.K. recently stymied marketing efforts by the American Beef Council. Like it or not, increased safety under the "big government" umbrella of federal regulations is often the only way to protect us. ●

— Jon Gingerich



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# PR revenues, profits rose in 2010

By Greg Hazley and Kevin McCauley

**A**s PR agency holding companies and services providers reported their final 2010 figures in February, a tangible economic rebound in the second half of 2010 was evident, especially for the fourth quarter, as the doldrums of the economic downturn began to give way to reports of increased client spending.

Omnicom (OMC) on February 15 reported a 7.4% rise in fourth-quarter profit to \$246.5 million on a 9.8% jump in revenues to \$3.6 billion. That compares with February 2010, when the company posted a 15.3% decline in profit over the year earlier.

Full-year profit for 2010 rose 4.4% to \$827.7 million on a seven-percent jump in revenues to \$12.5 billion.

OMC's Fleishman-Hillard, Ketchum, Brodeur Partners, Kreab Gavin Anderson and Porter Novelli-led PR group showed a 7.9% revenue rise in the quarter to \$299 million. It was up 6.5% to \$1.1 billion for the full-year, compared with a 14.8% drop in 2009.

Food & beverage accounted for 16% of Omnicom revenues last year. That category was followed by pharmaceutical/healthcare (13%), technology (11%), consumer products (11%) and automot-

tive (10%).

CEO John Wren spent \$184 million for acquisitions in '10. Fourth-quarter pick-ups included Ketchum's purchase of a controlling interest in Greater China and acquisition of Maslov PR in Russia, The Modellers (Salt Lake City-based analytics and design operation), Nancy Bailey & Assocs. (Atlanta-based licensing firm), Art Meets Commerce (New York City new media agency with a theatre specialty), Excerpta Medica (medical communications), Core (branding), and DDB's buyout of a controlling interest in Colombia.

Omnicom ended the year with 65,500 staffers, up from 63,000 on December 31, 2009. Its stock hit a 52-week high of \$50 on Feb. 15. On February 14, OMC added a nickel to its 20-cent quarterly dividend.

## Profit soars at Publicis

Publicis on February 10 reported a 23% rise in fourth quarter revenue to 1.56 billion Euro. For the full year 2010, profit soared 30.5% to 526 million Euro.

Maurice Levy, CEO of the Paris-based ad/PR conglomerate and owner of PR agency MSLGroup, said growth showed a "marked acceleration" in the fourth quarter, compared with the year's overall mark of 8.3%.

Levy said the results have "put an end to the impact of the global financial crisis," adding that the company has "emerged from this difficult context considerably stronger."

In North America, Levy noted a "remarkable turnaround" as revenue ticked up more than 24% to 2.6 million Euro for the full year, bolstered by digital. In Q4, North America was up 25.2% to 683 million Euro.

European '10 revenue, which was battered in 2009, increased 11.5% from 2009 to 1.8 million euro.

## Vocus revenue up 14%

PR software provider Vocus on February 8 reported an 18% increase in fourth quarter 2010 revenue over 2009, as new subscriptions doubled to 822 during the period and sales of its social media software accelerated.

Net loss narrowed to \$397,000 for the quarter, compared with \$821,000 in '09, although its net loss widened to \$3.7 million for the full year.

Revenue ticked up 14% to \$96.8 million for 2010. The company forecasts 2011 revenue from \$112.1 million to

\$113.1 million. Vocus also said it spent \$12.2 million last year buying back stock.

## Cision revenue slips, sees Q4 increase

PR software provider Cision said fourth quarter 2010 revenue fell 17.5% from 2009 to 268 million Swedish kroner (or about \$41.4 million) on costs from the sell-off of its Monitor operations, as well as negative currency exchanges and organic growth.

Organic growth improved in the fourth quarter but remained negative at -1%, narrowing from -16% for the fourth quarter of '09, but down 5% for the full year '10. The company said U.S. operations showed positive organic growth of 2% for the fourth quarter.

CEO Hans Gieskes said the company is optimistic due to improved market conditions as well as "continued strengthening of the competitiveness of our company."

The company, which has significantly revamped its operations since 2006, sees growth in its continued rollout of the CisionPoint software platform in Europe, while up-selling its U.S. customers and launching new features.

For the full year, revenue declined 30% from 2009 to 1.1 billion SEK as Cision continued to streamline its business and fend off the economic downturn. Profit swung positive for 2010 to 56 million SEK from a 368 million SEK loss in 2009, when the company took large charges for restructuring.

Cision implemented its restructuring effort in 2006 and said that the process was largely concluded at the end of 2010. It will no longer report restructuring charges but said it could occasionally report one-off costs.

Cision finished the year with 1,298 staffers, down from 1,629 in 2009 due mainly to the divestiture of its German unit and its 235 employees.

In North America, 2010 revenue slid 5.2% to 767 SEK (or about \$118 million) as profit was hit by currency swings. The company outsourced its broadcast monitoring to Critical Mention in the second half of 2010 to reduce costs.

As of press time, Interpublic, WPP and FTI Consulting had not yet reported fourth quarter and full-year earnings for 2010, but IPG showed a strong turnaround in Q3 of 2010 as profit soared 88% over a year earlier. WPP also posted a strong Q3 as revenue jumped 12.2% as CEO Martin Sorrell in October cited a turnaround in the U.S. and U.K. for the improvement. ●

## PR News Briefs

### LOBBYING FALLS FLAT IN '10

Washington lobbying outlays were flat last year as the Great Recession took a toll on K Street, according to a report released in February by the Center for Responsive Politics.

The Center tracked \$3.47 billion in lobbying in 2010, comparable to the record \$3.49 billion spent in the previous year. It expects last year's numbers to edge up a bit after late filers are documented.

Sheila Krumholz, Executive Director of the Center, says though "special interests have finally hit the brakes in Washington's high-stakes big-dollar influence game, it's no surprise that they are as deeply entrenched as ever."

The Center notes that lobbying hit a feverish pitch in 2009 as the bulk of the work was done on key categories such as climate change, economic stimulus, student loans, financial regulations and healthcare reform.

The top lobbying spenders last year were U.S. Chamber of Commerce (\$132.1 million, -8.6%), PG&E Corp. (\$45.5 million, +623.9%), General Electric (\$39.3 million, +43.8%) FedEx (\$25.6 million, +53.3%) American Medical Assn. (\$22.6 million, +8.9%), AARP (\$22.1 million, +5.0%), PhRMA (\$21.7 million, -16.9%), Blue Cross/Blue Shield (\$21.0 million, -11.2%) and ConocoPhillips (\$19.6 million, +8.6%).



# Gluten-free diet sparks newest food marketing craze

For those suffering from serious allergenic or medical conditions, a gluten-free diet may be the only path to gastronomic relief. For others, potential weight loss benefits has led some to adopt the gluten-free lifestyle, sparking a national diet fad that has food brands lining up to cash in.

By Jon Gingerich

Food marketers and manufacturers are finding a golden calf in products promoting a gluten-free diet, or foods devoid of gluten proteins, which are found in wheats, barleys, ryes and derivatives of these grains.

Gluten-free foods and beverages are expected to become a \$2.3 billion industry this year, and account for a \$2.6 billion market in 2012, according to a recent report titled "Gluten-free Foods and Beverages in the U.S.," released by consumer food market research group Packaged Facts.

The Packaged Facts report, which polled nearly 1,900 adults in a national online poll during the fall of 2010, found nearly 300 — or about 16% — now consider themselves regular consumers of gluten-free foods. The study concluded that gluten-free products amassed an attractive compound annual growth rate of 30% between 2006 and 2010.

America loves to diet, almost as much as we love to eat. Atkins, South Beach, fat-free, sugar-free. Gluten-free appears poised to take the title of the next big food fad.

Blogs like [glutenfreegirl.com](http://glutenfreegirl.com) and [elanaspantry.com](http://elanaspantry.com) have helped propel the gluten-free lifestyle from critical mass to household topic, amassing a dedicated readership and advertising roster in the process, and even leading its authors to sign national book deals.

Gluten-free eateries in notorious foodie towns like New York City have exploded in the last two years; upscale Italian eateries in Hell's Kitchen and the East Village now offer menu substitutions of pasta made with rice or quinoa. It's a tactic that has spread to many popular chain restaurants: Olive Garden has introduced a new line of gluten-free items, and others — PF Chang's, Outback Steakhouse, Chili's — are now specifying on their menus which items are devoid of gluten. Fast food chain Subway is now in the process of testing a gluten-free bread option for their line of sandwiches.

Food manufacturers are following suite. Betty Crocker recently unveiled a line of gluten-free baking mixes now available on grocery shelves nationwide. Supermarkets are now erecting displays — sometimes entire sections — devoted to gluten-free foods.

"Food allergies are a big business," said

Grace Leong, Partner at New York based PR firm Hunter Public Relations. "It's a great marketing button for grocery stores to set up new aisles and new displays. Retailers are realizing that more and more people are seeking out those products — and it's good for retailers because it adds more excitement in the grocery store."

As popularity of the diet increases, production and innovation yields better gluten-free products. Brick-like loaves of rice bread that had to be stored in the freezer are being replaced with noticeably more edible substitutions. Sacrifice among gluten-free consumers grows less palpable; taste improves.

In December, gluten-free snack Jungle Grub Snack Bars won ShapeYou.com's annual Gear Awards for great taste and nutrition, in a competition that pitted the gluten-free snack against hundreds of other gluten-heavy items.

Many disciples of the gluten-free lifestyle claim a diet devoid of wheat can result in weight loss. Gluten thus, is shaping up to become 2011's high-fructose corn syrup. But therein lies a potential for confusion. For most Americans, wheat gluten is hardly a "bad" thing. Unlike most food fads, reasons for adopting a gluten-free diet are grounded in actual medical legitimacy for many.

Specifically, many followers of a gluten-free diet suffer from Celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder of the small intestine where enzymes essentially treat gluten as a foreign invasion, resulting in an inflammatory reaction. This inflammation interferes with the intestine's ability to properly absorb nutrients, and can result in symptoms ranging from fatigue and malaise to rapid weight loss, abdominal pain and chronic diarrhea. Others show no symptoms whatsoever. It is estimated that Celiac disease currently affects about one in every 130 Americans. As such, it may be the most undiagnosed disease in the United States. Adopting a gluten-free diet is currently the only known effective treatment for those suffering from Celiac disease.

According to Dr. Dana Cohen, M.D., who treats Celiac patients at her integrative medicine practice in New York, it's also common for many who do not suffer from Celiac to still possess varying forms of gluten sensitivity. For these people, adopt-

ing a gluten-free diet may be an effective way to "feel better," even if they don't have a medical condition like Celiac, or Dermatitis Herpetiformis, where gluten allergies cause blisters to occur on the skin.

"Gluten is a very highly allogeneic food and because of this I think a lot of people might benefit from a gluten-free diet," Cohen said. "I do believe (Celiac disease) is grossly undiagnosed. That is changing as more doctors are becoming aware of it and the old, classic symptoms no longer hold true."

In the consumer world, new findings suggest many of the gluten-free diet's most ardent disciples may not suffer from Celiac, or any gluten or wheat sensitivity. Indeed, the Packaged Foods survey found that only between eight and 12% of gluten-free consumers polled said they bought gluten-free foods because they or a member of their household suffered from a medical intolerance toward gluten. Instead, 46% of those polled who adopted a gluten-free diet said they did so because they believed these foods to be generally "healthier." About 30% of gluten-free consumers said they did so to lose weight, and 22% said they believed gluten-free foods were of "generally higher quality" than other foods.

In total, only about 13% of those polled said they bought gluten-free foods to treat a medical condition associated with the diet.

"Once regarded as a niche product that was only of interest to people who couldn't tolerate wheat, gluten-free foods and beverages have quickly transformed into a mainstream sensation, embraced by consumers both out of necessity and as a personal choice toward achieving a healthier way to live," Packaged Foods said in a statement.

Gluten-free's sudden popularity then, may be its own self-fulfilling prophecy. Some consumers may be disappointed if and when a gluten-free diet doesn't yield the weight loss associated with yesteryear's Atkins or South Beach. The Packaged Facts report projects gluten-free foods will continue to grow over the next five years, possibly hitting its peak of approximately \$5.5 billion by 2015.

"I don't think it is a weight loss miracle, but I do think inherently a gluten-free diet incorporates less carbs and that may contribute to weight loss," said Cohen. "I do know it can't hurt." ●

# First Lady's campaign 'moves' food industry

**A year-long campaign by First Lady Michelle Obama has been a key catalyst in the changing nature of food and marketing.**

By Greg Hazley

**A**fter years of studies and media coverage of the widening waistlines of American children and adults, the last 12 months have seen significant strides in both awareness and action on the parts of food marketers, government and consumers.

The First Lady kicked off "Let's Move" in February 2010 with a media flourish, outlining an ambitious campaign to eliminate childhood obesity within a generation. While former President Bill Clinton had taken up the cause earlier, the effort was one of many under the umbrella of his Clinton Global Initiative. The PR-savvy Obama made a key calculation to separate the push from government as much as possible, whether because of a conservative-led public backlash against all things bureaucratic at the time or because she genuinely intended to create a grassroots effort that would simultaneously bring a skeptical food industry, and business in general, into the fold.

"There's no expert on this planet who says that the government telling people what to do actually does any good with this issue," Obama candidly told Robin Roberts of "Good Morning America" in rolling out "Let's Move" on Feb. 9, 2010. "This is going to require an effort on everyone's part."

While President Barack Obama did his part to support the push in creating a federal public-private task force and signing a reauthorized child nutrition bill later that year, the next 12 months would see the First Lady's PR machine influence a groundswell of change in how food is marketed, purchased and viewed by the public and industry.

"Creating awareness is the first step to affecting any significant change, and with all the mixed messages and misin-

formation swirling around out there about nutrition, it's going to take a movement the size of Michelle Obama's campaign to break through the clutter," said Emily Valentine of CRT/tanaka.

## **Influence in packaging changes**

A key development showing the ripple effect of Obama's effort came in late January when food marketers and

content like calories per serving, sodium and sugar on the front of a package, rather than the side or rear, as has been the norm. The labels will be phased in this year according to "seasonality and production schedules," according to the GMA, which is backing the change with a \$50 million consumer education campaign that includes advertising, PR and in-store marketing.

## **A giant gets onboard**

Perhaps the biggest PR splash in the campaign came a few weeks earlier than the label initiative, when Obama participated in a press conference with the country's largest retailer, WalMart, as the Bentonville Behemoth made a pledge to sell healthier food to its massive consumer base.

Leslie Dach, the former Edelman vice chair who is executive VP of corporate affairs for WalMart, kicked off a large Washington, D.C., press conference announcing the push on Jan. 20, opening his remarks with a nod to the First Lady.

"Almost two years ago a garden was planted in this city on a lawn on Pennsylvania Avenue," he said in a reference to Obama's White House

vegetable garden. "In that garden were the seeds of a movement, an initiative that would grow and focus this nation as never before on improving the health and nutrition of all Americans."

The executives that followed Dach also paid tribute to Obama and outlined an ambitious plan to provide better food and an affordable cost. It was a rare endorsement by the First Lady of a corporate initiative, a fact that gave the campaign significant leverage, as well as media attention. It also gained significant attention because of WalMart's polarizing place in national economic debate just a few years earlier, when Barack Obama was a candidate criticizing its policies.

Janet Helm, Chief Food and



**Within the past year, Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign has brought childhood obesity to public attention and has encouraged producers of packaged foods to create healthier alternatives.**

grocers announced a voluntary plan to display nutrition information more prominently on packaging. While the industry is likely trying to get out ahead of Food and Drug Administration-imposed labeling guidelines that could be released this year, top executives cited Obama's influence in bringing forth the changes.

"We would not be here today if she had not defined the common objective," said Pamela Bailey, who heads the powerful D.C. trade group, the Grocery Manufacturers Association, in announcing the new label initiative on Jan. 23. "Mrs. Obama challenged our industry to move farther and faster providing consumers with healthier product choices and more information."

The industry calls its reformed labeling "Nutrition Keys," which displays

Continued on next page





The “Let’s Move” campaign inspired food and beverage manufacturers and retailers to develop an industry standard nutritional labeling system to help consumers make informed decisions. The result was the Nutrition Keys initiative, a front-of-package labeling system that provides nutrition information. The Nutrition Keys labeling system uses a series of icons to summarize important information, including calories, saturated fat, sodium and sugars.

Nutrition Strategist, North America, for Weber Shandwick, said the effect of WalMart’s initiative would be felt beyond the 140 million weekly customers of the retailer. “The real significance is the trickle down factor,” she said. “Walmart is the largest customer of practically every food company in the country. The pressure is on to reformulate or innovate — or you’re shut out of getting on the shelf at WalMart.”

Acknowledging skeptics of the company, Helm added: “Whatever you think about the country’s largest retailer, this was a big deal. Sure, we can argue that this was a PR stunt, and it’s

all about making money. But still, these changes can make a huge difference.”

#### Child nutrition reauthorized

A key focus of the First Lady’s push on the governmental level was the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act, the law originally signed by President Lyndon Johnson that governs the national school lunch program feeding 30 million students.

The measure, which must be reauthorized every five years, received bipartisan support as guidelines for including more fruits and vegetables in school lunches were included, as well as

implementing nutritional standards for all food in schools, including what is served in vending machines.

Grace Leong, Partner at New York-based PR firm Hunter PR, said Michelle Obama’s focus on school lunches and the revamped legislation will have ripple effects on fresh food producers and farms. “The new regulations won’t impact the major food makers so much as it will the dairy producers and livestock farms, because it’s all about safety meant to clamp down on rogue farms who aren’t doing it right,” she said. “You’re going to see produce boards and meat boards asking ‘how are we going to deal with this?’”

Obama marked the one-year anniversary of “Let’s Move” on Feb. 8 at a Georgia church, acknowledging the effects and changes the campaign has had on various levels of society and vowing to continue spreading its influence. “Over this past year, we’ve seen the first signs of a fundamental shift in how we live and eat,” she said. “We’ve seen changes at every level of our society — from classrooms, to boardrooms, to the halls of Congress ... And if we can do all this in the first year ... just imagine what we’ll achieve next year, and the year after that.” ●

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# Analysis, reactions to USDA's new dietary guidelines

For the first time in five years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, working in concert with the Department of Health and Human Services, updated its Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The new guidelines state that obesity is a big problem in America, and discuss what needs to be done to improve our food environment.

By Marion Nestle

I've now had time to look at the full report of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and it's well worth reading.

The take-home messages are this: balance calories (enjoy your food but eat less, avoid oversized portions); increase your intake of certain foods (make half your plate fruits and vegetables, switch to fat-free or low-fat milk.); reduce intake of others (compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals — and choose the foods with lower numbers); and drink water instead of sugary drinks.

I'm in shock. I never would have believed they could pull this off. The new guidelines recognize that obesity is the number-one public health nutrition problem in America, and they actually give good advice about what to do about it: eat less and eat better. For the first time, the guidelines make it clear that eating less is a priority. Let me share a few thoughts about selected issues.

**Solid fats and added sugars (S.O.F.A.S.).** The report translates its advice to “cut back on foods and drinks with added sugars,” a nutritional euphemism for: Drink few or no regular sodas, sports drinks, energy drinks, and fruit drinks. Eat less cake, cookies, ice cream, other desserts, and candy. If you do have these foods and drinks, have a small portion.

But it translates “Cut back on solid fats” in yet another euphemism: “Select lean meats and poultry, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.” This, no doubt, is to avoid the politically impossible “eat less meat.”

**Added sugars.** The report lists synonyms for added sugars that you might find on a food label. The 2005 Dietary Guidelines included “fruit juice concentrates” on that list. The 2010 guidelines do not. The Table lists “nectars” but not fruit juice concentrates. Why? It doesn't say.

**Food group patterns.** The report describes healthy patterns for diets ranging from 1,000 to 3,200 calories a day. For a diet containing 2,000 calories, you are only allowed 258 calories a day from S.O.F.A.S. That's all? One 20-ounce soft drink contains more than that and so does one table-

spoon of butter and a 12-ounce soft drink. No wonder the guidelines don't want to be specific about foods when they mean “eat less.”

**Sodium.** The recommendation to reduce sodium intake to 2,300 or 1,500 mg per day is addressed to the wrong people. Individuals cannot do this on their own since most salt is already added in restaurant and processed foods. The report recognizes the following:

- Consume more fresh foods and fewer processed foods that are high in sodium.
- Eat more home-prepared foods, where you have more control.
- When eating in restaurants, ask that salt not be added.

**Vegetarian and vegan diets.** The report includes diet plans for lacto-ovo vegetarians and vegans. Applause, please. When I was on the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee in 1995, we tried to say something useful about vegetarian diets but were forced to add something about their nutritional hazards, minimal as they are. Not having to do this is a big improvement. But you too only get 258 calories for S.O.F.A.S.

The report makes it clear that the food environment strongly influences the food choices of individuals, and it urges efforts to improve access to healthy foods, empower people with improved nutrition literacy, gardening and cooking skills, develop policies to prevent and reduce obesity and, for kids, fix school meals, encourage physical activity, and reduce screen time. In short, there is plenty to work with here. You just have to look hard and dig deep to find it.

## Food industry reacts

Just for fun, I've been tracking some of the industry reactions. The soy people love it. The report mentions soy along with nuts and seeds in the USDA's meal patterns, and soy has its own category in the vegetarian and vegan diets.

The meat people don't love it so much. They're worried that seafood is pushed more than meat, but the American Meat Institute is giving it a nice spin, pointing out that the overall meat recommendation has not changed since 2005.

And the Salt Institute? Their statement: “Dietary Guidelines on Salt Drastic,

Simplistic, Unrealistic.” I rest my case.

My two personal quibbles:

First, the USDA still talks about foods (fruits, vegetables, seafood, beans, nuts) when they say “eat more.” But they switch to nutrient euphemisms (sodium, solid fats and added sugars) when they mean “eat less.”

They say, for example: “limit the consumption of foods that contain refined grains, especially refined grain foods that contain solid fats, added sugars, and sodium.”

This requires translation: eat less meat, cake, cookies, sodas, juice drinks, and salty snacks. That's politics for you.

Let's give them credit for “drink water instead of sugary drinks.” That comes close.

Second, this is all about personal responsibility. What about the “toxic” food environment? Shouldn't these guidelines be directed at the food and restaurant industries?

Overall, the new guidelines aren't perfect, but they are a great improvement.

## Guidelines: why we need them

A recent *Los Angeles Times* article about fast food marketing clearly illustrates why Dietary Guidelines matter so much.

Why would fast food chains still want to offer hot dogs, hamburgers, and burritos ranging from 800 to 1,600 calories each? Beth Mansfield, Spokeswoman for CKE Restaurants Inc., which owns the Carl's Jr. and Hardee's chains, offered this candid answer:

“The bottom line is we're in the business of making money, and we make money off of what we sell,” she said. “If we wanted to listen to the food police and sell nuts and berries and tofu burgers, we wouldn't make any money and we'd be out of business.”

You want to help people stay healthy? That makes you food police. If you care about public health, you can expect to be called names. But that shouldn't stop you from trying to create a healthier food system.

*Marion Nestle is a professor of nutrition, food studies and public health at New York University. She runs the food blog [www.foodpolitics.com](http://www.foodpolitics.com) and is the author of books “Food Politics” and “What to Eat,” among other titles. ●*



# Where's the beef? Taco Bell responds to lawsuit

By Lee Dawson

**W**e've all heard or maybe made a few jokes about the assorted fast food we eat from time to time (do any of us really know what's in what we eat?). Recently an Alabama law firm filed a lawsuit against Taco Bell on behalf of a customer claiming that only 35% of what Taco Bell claimed was beef was technically beef. The rest, according to the suit, was made up of filler and other assorted additives. Despite ever-present fast food urban legends, no one in my recent memory has ever come out so strongly and publicly with such a claim. The news of course rapidly spread around the world with many claiming a "gotcha" moment for Taco Bell. At last! The truth has been revealed! Just how was Taco Bell going to respond?

Many were expecting a dry company statement filled with a lot of legal terms and scientific mumbo jumbo about what could legally be considered "beef" nowadays. Surprisingly, Taco Bell came out fast and strong with a totally unexpected response. The company took out national ads thanking the law firm for suing them and went into detail about their meat and

what they claim it actually contains. (According to Taco Bell, 88% beef and other seasonings.) The company also wisely took to YouTube and Facebook to present their side of the story.

The social and legal debates regarding what's in those tacos will continue for a while, but there are several important lessons any organization can learn from this incident. First, we all must never forget that in today's digital age, it takes only a few minutes for a "news" story to spread around the world. It doesn't have to be true; it's out "there" and will take on a life of its own very quickly.

That's why Taco Bell's "Thanks for suing us" ad campaign was a brilliant counter move: the news of those ads went around the world just as quickly as news of the initial lawsuit. It's very hard to counter a sensational story, but Taco Bell did just that and got people talking in the process.

Today's electronic world has leveled the playing field for better and worse and every company today has a web page and some sort of social media component. If your company faced a similar crisis, how quickly could you respond? Is your messaging strong and known to all employees? Who in your company would manage

that crisis? Do you have a company spokesperson you'd feel comfortable putting in front of the media? You don't need the resources of a corporate giant like Taco Bell to get your word out.

While Taco Bell likely didn't anticipate the exact type of lawsuit they are facing, they clearly had a crisis plan and messaging in place and it showed. They weren't still trying to figure out YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. They weren't unsure who would appear before the cameras or what they might say. So when the question was asked, "Where's the beef?" They came back quick and strong and said: "right here in our tacos."

*Lee Dawson is Director of LT Public Relations in Portland, OR. ●*

## Thank you for suing us.

Here's the truth about our seasoned beef.

**REAL-BEEF**  
The claims made against Taco Bell and our seasoned beef are absolutely false. Our beef is 100% USDA inspected, just like the quality beef you buy in a supermarket and prepare in your home. It is then slow-cooked and seasoned in our unique recipe of seasonings, spices, herbs, and other ingredients to provide Taco Bell's signature taste and texture.

**Plain ground beef tastes boring.**  
The only reason we add anything to our beef is to give the meat flavor and quality. Otherwise, you'd end up with nothing more than the bland flavor of ground beef, and that doesn't make for great-tasting tacos.

**We have the REAL percentages.**  
88% beef and 12% beef tallow.

**In case you've forgotten, here's our not-so-secret recipe.**  
We start with USDA-inspected quality beef (88%). Then add water to keep it juicy and moist (2%). Mix in Mexican spices and flavors, including salt, chili peppers, onion powder, tomato powder, sugar, garlic powder, and onion powder (1%). Combine a little salt, caramelized sugar, yeast, citric acid, and other ingredients that contribute to the flavor, moisture, consistency and quality of our seasoned beef (2%).

**We stand behind the quality of our seasoned beef 100% and we are proud to serve it in all our restaurants. We take any claims to the contrary very seriously and plan to take legal action against those who have made false claims against our seasoned beef.**

**Taco Bell's response to a recent lawsuit was as rapid as it was unexpected.**

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# New dietary rules require PR messages worth their salt

**A survey of registered dietitians offers insight regarding how food makers can escape a sodium PR minefield.**

By Louise Pollock

If you have a client in the food industry, you may be feeling the “pinch” when it comes to salt.

Health experts have been raising alarms about excess salt in processed and restaurant foods for years, but the January release of the federal government’s 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans put the issue in clear terms: Americans should eat more whole foods and significantly limit the amount of sodium in their diet.

The guidelines reinforce the concerns of America’s Registered Dietitians, who strongly believe the food industry must respond to the overwhelming data, suggesting that diets high in sodium increase the risk for hypertension and stroke, and contribute to premature death.

In fact, dietitians believe only trans fats and excess calories pose greater health risks than excess salt. A full 65% of Registered Dietitians believe excess sodium is as harmful, or more harmful than high fructose corn syrup. And many say they recommend avoiding processed foods as the most effective way to reduce sodium intake.

These findings emerged from a national survey of 100 Registered Dietitians conducted recently by Pollock Communications. We investigated the opinions of Registered Dietitians because they’re key influencers in food and nutrition; they help shape consumer food shopping decisions, guide health policy, impact nutrition trends in the media with statistical recommendations.

Our survey results also found:

- Nearly 90% of respondents say the food industry is not doing enough to reduce sodium levels in their products.
- Only a minority believes the answer should come from new lower-sodium food options; nearly half say the primary solution should be widespread sodium reductions in available foods.
- A majority of the respondents (54%) want to see the government take some type of action to encourage manufacturers to make sodium reductions in their products.

Meanwhile, the national media has kept up a steady drumbeat of hard-hitting coverage about the risks of excess sodium. Since last April, there were more than 300

national and regional news stories about salt, far exceeding the level of media attention on many other dietary risks, including sugar-sweetened beverages.

Faced with this assault on salt, companies that produce foods Americans love to eat — snacks, soups, prepared entrees, pizza, fast food, chain restaurant meals and more — may find themselves in the public relations cooker. After all, no food manufacturer can afford to ignore the proven health risks of excess sodium, but reducing salt in processed foods without affecting consumer acceptance of the products is a difficult, costly and lengthy process. The good news is the sodium minefield can be navigated successfully.

Let’s start with a deeper analysis of results from the Pollock survey. While we found that the vast majority of respondents believe sodium is a real health threat at the amounts normally consumed by Americans, (3,400 mg/day), most also believe that the current guideline for sodium (2,300 mg/day) among healthy individuals is adequate, and nearly 50% believe this guideline can be achieved with wise food choices. In other words, most dietitians believe healthy Americans can meet established sodium guidelines with reasonable moderation of their diet.

The survey also found that dietitians don’t think Americans can reduce sodium intake to 1,500 mg/day, which the Dietary Guidelines recommends for people over 51 years of age, African Americans, and those with hypertension, diabetes and chronic kidney disease — a group that collectively makes up about half of the U.S. population. In addition, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Committee Report and the Institute of Medicine’s Strategies to Reduce Sodium Intake in the United States Report both recommend a gradual reduction in dietary sodium. Thus, while some in the media may be demanding fast, dramatic sodium reductions, dietitians and other experts appear to understand the need for gradual reductions to avoid negative effects on product flavor, taste, texture and consumer acceptance.

Also, while our survey respondents felt that some kind of government action on sodium is warranted, very few backed increased taxes or an outright ban on high-sodium foods. For now, at least, dietitians

appear open to industry-led initiatives for reducing sodium in food.

This point was reinforced in our survey’s questions on brand recognition, in which respondents were asked which companies are doing a good job helping consumers meet sodium guidelines. The most frequently cited brand was Campbell’s, with 21% mentioning the soup maker. More than 10% cited Progresso, and 9.5% identified Healthy Choice. In all three cases, it appears dietitians recognize the well-publicized efforts of these brands to reduce sodium levels in their products.

The brand recognition findings are significant from a public relations perspective. Registered Dietitians are on the front lines of the salt issue, playing a key role in translating and communicating product label and nutrition profile information to confused but knowledge-hungry consumers. They are emerging as the trusted source in the conversation about sodium, providing perspective via influential blogs, media appearances and one-on-one educational engagements.

The lesson to the food industry is clear: if you want to influence public awareness of your brand’s approach to sodium reduction, you must find ways to engage with Registered Dietitians. If they believe you are taking meaningful, effective steps toward reducing salt in your products, they will help lead you out of the sodium minefield.

Companies and brands that take proactive steps to reduce the salt content of their products will shine in a broader media spotlight as well. With the recent issuing of the Dietary Guidelines, 2011 will likely be a year of heightened media coverage of dietary health, including sodium content. Companies can seize the opportunity to get out in front of this issue through innovation. Then they should convey their success stories through credible, third-party experts — such as Registered Dietitians — who appear in the media as well as engage with consumers directly.

Food manufacturers need to affirm their commitment to lowering the sodium content of their products, demonstrate their progress in that endeavor through credible spokespersons, and give consumers the information they need to make smart choices. Such communication will go far to enhance brand loyalty and reputation in consumers’ hearts and minds.

*Louise Pollock is President of Pollock Communications in New York City. ●*



# Reputation management, 2.0

By Shannon M. Wilkinson

**Q**uick. What hit the PR industry just as it fully absorbed the transition from traditional to new media? The era of forced transparency — also known as the end of privacy as we know it.

How can you help your clients protect — and maintain — their reputations when two-thirds of the online content about their company was posted by consumers, or even competitors? When anyone can create a Web site accusing the CEO of a publicly traded company of any number of questionable actions, even if all of the accusations are false? When internal e-mails and confidential documents are not only routinely leaked, but quoted in the *New York Times*?

Corporate and professional reputations were once easily managed. Companies maintained a carefully controlled image through advertising and public relations. Most of the time, it worked. When it didn't, crisis management specialists stepped in to fix it — or at least try to.

Online technology, the rise in influence of the citizen's voice and forced transparency have expanded role of the public relations industry in every phase of the professional (and often, the personal) world.

Here's what you need to know to be prepared.

Your role as a counselor has broadened. Helping your clients understand the reputation issues they will potentially face is essential to helping them prepare for and navigate this new terrain.

Develop a reputation protection checklist to review with your clients. Focus on three areas: creating, updating or expanding the online information about them; monitoring that information daily so you are aware of what is being posted about them in online forums, blogs and media; and having a crisis response plan ready to enact — including on holidays and weekends, when many online issues develop.

If your clients do not already have an in-house system for cultivating online dialogues with their customers, help them assess whether they would benefit from one. When they can't easily and immediately engage with a company's customer support system, dissatisfied and frustrated customers will vent

online. Software package Get Satisfaction allows a company to quickly build an online area where customers can connect with each other and company representatives to report problems, share ideas and build a sense of community.

Understand there are few laws in place to regulate or address what is posted online. Web site operators currently have legal immunity over what is posted on their sites. That makes it difficult, if not impossible, for you to remove inappropriate or inaccurate content, even if it is biased.

It's usually a waste of time to try to identify an anonymous poster, as much as a client may want to do so. There are many ways posters to forums and blogs can conceal their identity. In some cases, legal action can result in a court order and subpoena for an internet service provider (ISP) to identify the user's IP address. However, that is no guarantee it can be found — especially if posts were made at an internet café or other public setting.

Know that many reputations suffer needlessly. Much damage to the online reputations of executives and other professionals could have been prevented by simply erecting a "digital wall" around their name. Ideally, the first two pages of a Google, Bing, Yahoo or other search of a client's name will contain verified, factual information. If you haven't worked to ensure there are enough online sources of factual information about your clients, start now.

Contrary to popular opinion, social media is not an appropriate reputation management tool for everyone. Facebook, blogs and Twitter can be effective online reputation tools. Twitter can be especially useful if a client can secure their own name as a Twitter handle (user name). That's because handles and tweets are indexed by Google and other search engines — and placed online permanently. Every time you tweet, you are building our prominence in search engine results.

That said, Twitter — and a myriad of other tools — isn't appropriate for many executives, such as those in highly regulated fields like banking, pharmaceuticals and financial services. And some clients just aren't comfortable using social media. There are many other tools you can explore with them, including a

variety of publishing and information platforms. Help your clients realize there are many ways to establish an online presence, and that they are not necessarily living in the stone age if they do not have a Facebook profile.

Realize that concerns raised by privacy issues can extend beyond the traditional realm of public relations into security. For instance, a company is in the midst of a series of layoffs and photographs of a high-profile executive's home, with its address, are appearing at the top of Google searches. As a communications professional, you may be asked to help create online content that will drive such information far lower on search engines (if the information cannot be removed altogether).

Be 2.0 conversant. The 2.0 world is famously generous with free and easily accessible information about every aspect of online and social tools. Seminars, courses and new media conferences abound. Participate. If you want to learn more about online reputation management, check out the FAQ and Glossary sections at [www.reputationcommunications.com](http://www.reputationcommunications.com).

*Shannon M. Wilkinson is Founder and President of Reputation Communications, a New York City-based firm helping clients in the professional and private sectors create, monitor and repair their online reputations. ●*

## PR News Briefs

### U.S. ARMED FORCES TO REVIEW AFGHAN PR

The public affairs operation supporting U.S. forces in Afghanistan plans to review its PR support contract with an open competition next month.

SOS International is the incumbent contract for the media monitoring and PR support pact, which was previously handled by The Rendon Group. SOSI, which is based in Reston, Va., and operates out of Kabul in Afghanistan, won the business in its last open review in 2006, a pact initially capped at \$67M but extended in October for an extra six months.

Fulcra Worldwide, the former Lincoln Group, has also provided military PR support on Afghanistan.

Army contracting will oversee the RFP process. The RFP is slated to be released on or about March 4 with a 30 day open period. A base contract with up to four options years was outlined in preliminary descriptions of the upcoming RFP.

The work is described as strategic communications advisement and support services, as well as foreign media analysis for U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

A contracting representative declined to comment pending release of the RFP.

# New outreach tactics for restaurant communications

By Jane Grant

Nothing says it better than the popular “Cheers” theme song: Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name. For the food and beverage industry, this simple observation is the most powerful marketing principle of all.

Sharing all the exciting news about your restaurant — new menu items, promotions, special events, charitable involvement and more — is the foundation of solid food and beverage PR. Print, broadcast and digital media devote substantial real estate to restaurant news, since most people love to eat! However, these are all “push” tactics. If PR’s goal is to “pull” people into the restaurant, then one-way marketing alone won’t do. Here’s some food for thought:

**New is not enough.** Sure, most people want to hear about what’s new and enjoy sharing new products and experiences with friends and family. However, with so many dining options to choose from, guests can get their fill of “new” by going to a different restaurant every day. Your

goal, of course, is to get them to come back to your client’s place, time and again. So while new items are great, you also need to engage your guests on a more personal level.

**What makes you so special?** The average restaurant customer has countless other restaurants to choose from, all of which serve great food with outstanding service at acceptable prices. Can you tell me precisely what makes your restaurant better than all the rest? Perhaps the one thing that can make your restaurant special is how it makes me feel.

**Share the love.** Restaurant owners may be in love with their beautiful restaurants and wonderful food, but their most important assets are their guests, so showing customers some love needs to be part of the PR strategy. Can they count the ways they love their customers? It can take many forms, such as already having repeat customers’ phone numbers on file when they call for reservations, acknowledging their birthdays or engaging them in some small talk when they arrive. Little gestures go a long way in building relationships that last.

**Rewards are powerful motivators.** Guests reward restaurants by returning time and again with their friends and spreading the word. How do restaurants reciprocate and reward guests for their loyalty? Many successful restaurants leverage the power of VIP memberships and offer their most loyal customers premium service that other guests aspire to attain. This might come in the form of a surprise complimentary appetizer, dessert or after dinner drink, invitations to special events or other relationship-building tactics. The crucial thing about rewards is that they need to be genuinely enticing to customers. In the grand scheme of marketing and PR, thoughtful little gestures deliver far greater ROI than most other actions.

**One size does not fit all.** The cardinal rule of marketing is to know your customers, and it’s obvious that all customers are not alike. Some are jazzed by a free appetizer, others appreciate a restaurant hosting a reception for their charity of choice and still others light up simply because you know their name. Truly great PR is flexible enough to offer many different ways to engage guests, all with the same goal of building loyal relationships.

**There’s a lot of social in social media.** Restaurants are inherently social places

and traditional PR typically highlights social activity around food, drink and entertainment. Regarding online media, chances are that your restaurant client, especially if it’s well known, already is the subject of online chatter. Twitter, in particular, is the real time watering hole for all types of chatter. Other sites like Urbanspoon and Yelp have enormous influence. Joining the conversation shows that a restaurant is listening and learning from guests and potential guests. Responding to the good and the bad shows that the owner cares about what people think. Social media platforms offer many creative ways to converse with the dining public and get them actively involved with what’s going on at a restaurant.

**Embrace and prepare for mobile.** Speaking of conversations, with the advent of the iPhone and the mobile digital revolution, mobile marketing is here to stay. Custom applications allow restaurants to inform customers about special events, new menu items, promotions and everything that’s going on. Customers carry the restaurant’s messages with them in their pockets and purses. This only scratches the surface of the potential for staying connected through guests’ smartphones.

**Is the crew on board?** All the PR in the world won’t work without positive support from front-line personnel. There is no shortage of service horror stories about aloof hostesses or oblivious servers. The manager or owner may have all the best intentions in the world, but the service team has the most guest contact. While training the crew is more of an operations responsibility than a PR function, it is profoundly important to a restaurant’s relationship with the public and can sink a good PR program like the Titanic. Public relations professionals can work with restaurateurs to make sure their service teams fully understand their role as PR ambassadors.

There’s never been a more important time to engage your guests than these days. Customers have many other choices and loyalty is hard to build. Engagement should be one of the goals of every restaurant’s PR plan. After that, it’s vital to maintain those relationships in the long run.

*Jane Grant is Co-Founder and President of Pierson Grant Public Relations and High Impact Digital. ●*

## People in PR

### SEMANOFF PICKED TO LEAD QUINN’S FOOD/BEV. TEAM

New York based PR firm Quinn & Co. announced in February it has picked Associate Vice President David Semanoff to lead the company’s food, wine and spirits division.

Semanoff has worked in Quinn’s FWS division for three years, leading the team in a number of campaigns, including the opening of Co., celebrity-baker Jim Lahey’s NYC restaurant and the launch of his book, “My Bread.” Semanoff also helped Chef Tony Mantuano drive business to his Chicago restaurants, Spiaggia and Cafe Spiaggia, and spur sales of his book, “Wine Bar Food,” which is now in its second printing.

Semanoff is also a current member of Quinn’s travel group and leadership committee.

Semanoff previously worked at Ruder Finn’s Israel office. He graduated from New York University with bachelor’s degrees in journalism and anthropology.



Semanoff



# Some things never change in PR

By Arthur Solomon

Just as good work certainly doesn't necessarily mean a client will be happy, the following scenarios are certain to happen in the PR world this year.

How do I know? Because I've seen it happen time-and-time again during my years in public relations.

**A client** will reject numerous rewrites of a story and finally say, "I'll show you what I wanted," and send a version that is almost the mirror image of what was initially submitted.

**A management "pet"** will get a promotion that a more talented individual deserves.

**An account executive** will receive a poor performance review by a supervisor, leave for a position at another agency and become a star.

**Management** will cry poverty when asked for a salary increase but suddenly find the money when told the person is giving notice

**An account supervisor** will disparage an underling's work but will be unable to offer suggestions when requested.

**A new hire** will be surprised to discover that much of what he learned in communications school doesn't transfer to the real world.

**A new hire** will be surprised to discover that quite often promotions are based more on managing a budget than on good PR work.

**An account executive** will be given a meaningless title in lieu of a salary increase.

**An account person** will be talked out of leaving for another agency and will regret it when promises made do not materialize.

**Many people** will be told "it's for your own good" when being let go.

**An account person** will be labeled as "not a team player," when complaining about not getting credit for bright ideas; conversely, a team player who comes up with the big ideas will never receive credit when the program is presented as a "team effort."

**An account person** who is denied a promotion will blame it on "office politics" and a person who gets a deserved promotion will be accused of playing "office politics."

**An account executive** will make a client happy by getting great results, but the AE will be lambasted for not doing it "the company way."

**Supervisors** who do it by the numbers

and cannot think out-of-the box will resent underlings who can.

**Creative ideas of an underling** will be rejected by a supervisor who will inject the ideas into another program and take credit for them.

**A "star"** will be told by management that "what you bring to the agency is invaluable and you have a lifetime job here," but find out that the dictionary description of "lifetime" isn't the same as it is for management.

**Too many AEs** will be disappointed

when, at evaluation time, they learn that "hard work" is not as important as "good work."

**A client** will be upset about a quote being used that he gave during an interview, and demand that the account person involved get a retraction. But the reporter taped the interview and refused, making for an unhappy client.

**And sure to happen**, an individual who was thought to be trustworthy will turn out to be a management informer and a person who was thought to be a spy was actually trustworthy.

*Arthur Solomon, a former newsman, was Senior VP at Burson-Marsteller. ◉*

## A Nutrition Facts Panel to Meet Your Brand's 2010 Dietary Guidelines Needs

### pollock communications **Nutrition Facts**

**Serving** Independent Agency of Specialized Experts in Health & Wellness

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# The politics behind America's food labeling system

By Jon Gingerich

In January, the trade groups that represent U.S. food and beverage manufacturers announced a new plan to change the way their food packages reveal nutrition information.

The result was the “Nutrition Keys,” an industry-standard labeling system to be displayed on the front of food and beverage products. With a series of easy-to-read black and white icons revealing nutritional content — calories, saturated fat, sodium and sugars, as well as a to-be-determined list of “nutrients to encourage” — food manufacturers said they hoped the new labels could guide consumers to make healthy, informed choices. The new labels are slated to appear on approximately 70% of food products by next year.

Consumers and the press alike hailed the announcement. Editorials and food blogs the country over practically gushed praise for food manufacturers and their K Street thought leaders for being so unusually proactive, so responsible to take on something as transparent as a universal labeling initiative.

In truth, the writing had been on the wall for some time, and the big trade groups that represent our food and beverage manufacturers — namely, the Grocery Manufacturers Association and the Food Marketing Institute — had found themselves slowly backed into a corner. The White House had turned nutrition disclosure on its head when First Lady Michelle Obama kicked off her anti-obesity “Let’s Move” initiative last year, and current food labeling was a rumored first target. Meanwhile, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has been involved in a years-long quest to update our nation’s labeling guidelines with improved science-based criteria — the first major update to food labeling since the now-ubiquitous Nutrition Facts system was implemented under the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act in 1990.

In PR terms, the options were simple: take control of the conversation before someone else does, draw the line before someone draws it for you. What followed after the announcement of the Nutrition Keys system was a round of bureaucratic backslapping: the White House issued a friendly — though noticeably tepid — statement claiming the new labeling initiative was a move in the right direction. The Grocery Manufacturers Association praised

the “Let’s Move” campaign for opening the industry’s eyes to the needs for new nutrition disclosure standards, stating food groups like the GMA “share First Lady Michelle Obama’s goal of solving childhood obesity.” A \$50 million PR and advertising campaign informing Americans of the Nutrition Keys initiative is set to coincide with the labels’ unveiling within the coming months.

In reality, the resulting Nutrition Keys initiative signaled less of an alliance of food manufacturers and the Obama administration than a split in the road. Many experts believe the new food labeling system offers little aside from misleading, inconsistent and often contradictory information, the result of surreptitious marketing disguised as nutrition facts.

“Front of label packaging is obviously critical in selling products,” said Sally Greenberg, Executive Director for Washington D.C.-based consumer rights group the National Consumers League. “But all this gets very confusing for people, and I think it gets away from the simple and honest messages that we think consumers ought to have. People who are shopping are in a hurry, they want things they can understand quickly. Right now I’m looking at the back of a bag of Cheetos and you’d think it was the world’s best health food.”

## Nutritional interests

This isn’t the first time in recent years our federal regulatory bodies and the trade groups that represent U.S. food and beverage makers have butted heads.

As a stipulation of the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act enacted twenty years ago, manufacturers were allowed to boast on packages any positive benefits the product may have. Not surprisingly, front-of-package designs have become a sort of canvas for snake oil medical claims in the years since. “Low fat!” “High in fiber!” “Cholesterol free!” “A good source of protein!”

Two years ago, after warning letters were sent by the FDA to food manufacturers regarding misleading labeling claims, the agency conducted a series of reviews before issuing a guidance letter recommending a voluntary labeling system that uses standardized, science-based claims as criteria on front-of-package labels. In the letter, the agency stated it was only interested in a voluntary system, but warned that if such a plan failed it would consider the implementation of a new mandatory system similar to the current Nutrition

Facts.

In response, the same food giants that would later be responsible for the Nutrition Keys initiative came together to offer their labeling solution, titled Smart Choices.

Proponents of the Smart Choices system proposed a labeling system the highlighted what ingredients in their foods are healthy for consumers. From an advertising perspective this makes sense: it’s much easier to flaunt your positive attributes than it is to admit your nutritional shortcomings. From an objective, informational standpoint however, the tactic is clearly flawed: under such a system, practically every product could make a health claim. Predictably, regulators balked at the idea, saying such a system could trick consumers into buying “bad” foods that incidentally contained healthy ingredients. A September 2009 *New York Times* article reported that sugary foods like Froot Loops had reportedly been labeled as one “healthy” food item. The Smart Choices program was voluntarily suspended shortly thereafter.

Fast-forward two years. The Institute of Medicine released an FDA-commissioned consumer study concluding front-of-packaging labels should only list the necessities: calories, sodium, trans-fats and saturated fats per serving. The FDA, during preliminary meetings regarding the enactment of a new voluntary labeling system, then brought recommendations regarding how food manufacturers could provide accurate nutrition facts. One recommendation was that U.S. food manufacturers use a labeling system similar to Britain’s, where “healthy” foods receive a green label and “unhealthy” foods receive a red label — a sort of nutritional stoplight for shoppers. The food industry immediately rejected this idea, stating such a system would drive away consumers.

The Obama administration tried their hand at another suggestion: food manufacturers could voluntarily adopt a labeling system that emphasizes what ingredients may be unhealthy for consumers. Again the food industry disagreed. Just like the Smart Choices program, food manufacturers said they wanted labels that also laud a product’s healthy contents.

When packages bearing the Nutrition Keys system hit shelves later this year, it may prove efficacious in showing consumers how much saturated fat, how much sodium, how many calories exist in a food product. However, this information will

Continued on next page



now be bookended by a list of up to eight completely unregulated “positives”: fiber, potassium, omega-3s and vitamins. Conceivably, an “unhealthy” product could be loaded up with vitamins and nutrients and passed off as a “healthy” choice.

In a statement to the press, the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a Washington, D.C. nonprofit consumer advocacy group that specializes in nutrition and health, referred to the Nutrition Keys system as a “scheme consisting of confusing icons that will be largely ignored by consumers.”

“It’s unfortunate the industry wouldn’t adopt a more effective system or simply wait until the Food and Drug Administration developed a system that would be as useful to consumers,” said CSPI Executive Director Michael Jacobson. “The whole point of front-label nutrition information or symbols should be to convey quickly and simply how healthful a food is ... (the) Nutrition Keys system appears to be designed to distract consumers’ attention from, not highlight, the high content of sodium, added sugars, or saturated fat in all too many processed foods.”

FDA spokesperson Siobhan Delancy said the FDA remains “fairly neutral on the Nutrition Keys system,” but said the FDA has voiced concerns regarding the labels’

addition of a “positive” nutrients emphasis.

“We have similar concerns that there would be a risk of label clutter,” she said. “We’re a science-based regulatory agency. Therefore, our goal is to have a front-of-pack label that is evidence-based, and our ultimate goal is for consumers to have a tool that is useful to them.”

#### Label when convenient

Today, it seems there’s a label for everything. We can currently find out if our food has aspartame, trans-fats, MSG. We know when something is “low-fat,” “high in fiber” or “cholesterol free.” And under President Obama’s healthcare reforms, Section 4205 will now require restaurants and retail food establishments to post calorie content information on their menus. In 2011, expect to see labels everywhere.

If studies are any indication, we like labels. A 2008 national FDA survey found that more than half of all Americans now look at labels when they buy a food product, an increase of 10% since 2001.

The questions remain: If nutrition labels are going to be used to laud a product’s positive features, how are they any different from an advertisement? How can consumers rely on them to have any accuracy? And when do they go too far? In February, the National Consumers League filed a formal complain with the Federal Trade Commission regarding labeling claims

made by beverage Vitamin Water. The consumer group alleges the sports drink uses deceptive statement in its marketing and packaging tactics with claims like “vitamins plus water, all you need,” and “flu shots are so last year.”

It should also be noted that much of the information to be printed on the Nutrition Keys label will essentially be the same as what already appears on today’s involuntary Nutrition Facts labels, minus particularly useful information like the Daily Values percentages. At the end of the day, it remains to be seen whether the guides will offer anything new aside from marketing messages disguised as nutritional symbols.

According to Delancy, the implementation of an FDA mandated, front-of-package labeling system that would supercede the Nutrition Keys system is still “absolutely a possibility.” However, the agency has not yet gathered evidence showing anything other than a voluntary labeling system would be beneficial. A second front-of-package IOM study is due later this fall.

“Our goal has always been to allow the labeling system to be voluntary. When you do regulation it’s a much longer and involved process,” she said. “We’ll look to see how things unfold. We hope that if our recommendations are different this fall, the industry would adapt.” ●

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# O'Dwyer's Guide to: FOOD & BEVERAGE PR

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Coyne PR whipped up a three-phase PR program for the 44th Pillsbury Bake-Off that included a Grand Prize winner announcement on "The Oprah Winfrey Show." Media coverage included more than 3,000 print, online and broadcast placements with a reach of 306+ million media impressions.

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**Scott Allison, CEO**

Clients with a passion for food turn to Allison & Partners for marketing and public relations

programs that drive trial, preference and sales. Whether it's launching products, reaching the crème-de-la-crème of influencers, maximizing sponsorship ROI, or making a restaurant the place to see and be seen, our team of consummate foodies bring fresh ideas to influencers in the media and beyond. With experience growing some of the world's leading food, restaurant, beverage, wine and spirits, nutrition and CPG brands and eight full-service offices, our capabilities



Members of the Carmichael Lynch Spong Food and Beverage Practice Group develop strategic plans leveraging relationships with high-profile individuals such as Michael Symon, Alton Brown and Dr. Oz. Pictured are team members and Dr. Oz (second from right) at a media event sponsored by Martek Biosciences.

include product launches, positioning and branding; publicity and media tours; events and promotions; openings; sampling and tasting events; social networking; retail marketing; sponsorships and cause marketing for clients including B&G Foods, Francis Ford Coppola Winery, Johnny Rockets, KIND Healthy Snacks, Masi Agricola and Tenuta dell'Ornellaia.

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**Julie Batliner, Managing Director**  
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If you can no longer stomach the same stale, tasteless ideas, perhaps it's time for some fresh thinking. Carmichael Lynch Spong leads the food, beverage, nutrition and wellness arena—representing some of the biggest brands.

Our list of envied food and beverage clients includes: retail (Noodles & Company); packaged goods (Jack Link's Beef Jerky); ingredient brands (Martek); food processing (Cargill) and cookware (Calphalon).

We work with food industry leaders, consumer groups, chefs, nutritionists, commodity groups, regulatory organizations and experts in general, on a regular basis. Our relationships go beyond media. We know the right people to target with the right program, product, campaign or cause. And they know us.

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Cohn & Wolfe, a subsidiary of WPP, is a leading communications firm with an impressive food and beverage offering led by talented professionals who have represented clients in every aisle of the supermarket as well as some of America's favorite food-service establishments. We've launched hundreds of new products, developed nutrition education programs for consumers of all ages and know how to engage media, influencers and consumers on and offline. Cohn & Wolfe works with some of America's most beloved brands and food/beverage clients include: The J.M. Smucker Company, Folgers, Jif, Crisco, Pillsbury, Hungry Jack, New World Pasta, Corner Bakery Cafe, and Taco Bell.

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For over three decades, Cone has earned a reputation for building strong brands in the food and beverage industry. We provide best-in-class communication strategy, talent and creativity to drive business growth for leading brands, such as Nestlé Waters North America, Lindt and General Mills. Extraordinary results come from experts who are passionate about your business, and possess a keen understanding of the category, your brand and its connection to society. With two registered dietitians on staff, we are in a unique position to communicate not only distinct brand messages that resonate with key audiences but also to translate science and leverage trends to optimize their impact.

The depth of our experience in working with associations and marketing boards and our carefully tailored approach to communications



allow us to deliver campaigns that are authentic, credible and relevant.

We are ready to share our creativity, passion and expertise. With teams fully entrenched in the food and beverage space, our specialty areas include product launches, new media executions, influencer engagement, media events, brand positioning, promotions and celebrity campaigns.

**THE CONNECTED TABLE**

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**Melanie Young, Founder**

The Connected Table specializes in the creation and management of marketing and promotional campaigns and special events for global brands and destinations. Areas of expertise include: wine, spirits, specialty foods, destinations, and lifestyle products and services. We are widely connected in the food and beverage industry throughout the U.S. We work with many overseas organizations and governments to connect them with business contacts, consumers and the U.S. media, and to promote awareness of their products and regions.

Clients include several wine and food regions of Spain, Italy and France, and the wine brands Georges Duboeuf and Bodegas Fariña.

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**Stacy Becker, Assistant Vice President**

Coyne PR is one of the nation's leading independent public relations agencies with extensive expe-

rience in the Food & Nutrition category. Coyne PR combines sound strategic counsel with cutting edge creative elements to achieve superior communications goals for its clients. The agency represents some of the world's largest food and nutrition companies and brands, including General Mills, the Hershey Company, AMP Energy drink (Pepsi Beverages), McCormick, Solae, and Egglund's Best. The team is comprised of experts in product launches, brand building campaigns, tradeshow support, events, sponsorships, contests, promotions, cause marketing, influencer outreach, crisis management and social media. The agency has also worked with General Mills to create an extensive blogger network, MyBlogSpark, which helps connect brands with bloggers.

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**Jim Dublin, CEO**  
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Dublin & Associates is a full-service strategic communications firm with extensive experience serving food industry clients. We have worked with food and consumer companies including Pioneer Flour Mills, Pace Foods (Campbell Soup Co.), the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of the Southwest, NatureSweet Tomatoes, Luby's Cafeterias, Taco Cabana, the Culinary Institute of America, the New Braunfels Smokehouse, and food / entertainment promotional firms such as Hispano USA. We provide national and regional media coverage, special event planning, online and social media outreach/programs, and Hispanic market outreach. We work closely with clients to develop strategic initiatives and publicity campaigns that focus on client marketing goals and bottom line results.

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**Christine Deussen, President**



**Italian Wine Masters February 8, 2011, Hilton New York, produced by The Connected Table.**

Photo: Jennifer Mitchell Photography

**Jacqueline Long, Vice President**

Internationally recognized Deussen Global Communications is particularly noted for its depth and breadth of experience and contacts in the wine and spirits sector. A business partner and trusted ally for some of the world's leading and fastest growing brands — as well as national governments and the European Union — Deussen delivers research-based, compelling, effective programs. Clients enjoy the excitement of being ahead of trend, backed by the security of strict reporting and quantitative analysis. Over the years, clients have commended the agency's strategic approach; transparency; innovation; drive; and dedication to providing top-level expertise, while media regularly praise the agency's imagination; attention to detail; intelligence; and speed. An arsenal of tactics — including media relations, digital interface,

celebrity partnerships, and special events — combined with ready access to the country's top sommeliers, mixologists, chefs, authors, and other leading brands, allows Deussen to quickly create campaigns that accelerate awareness and growth for their clients.

**EDELMAN**

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**Janet Cabot, Executive Vice President, Managing Director US Food and Nutrition Practice**

Food has been part of our DNA since Dan Edelman opened the doors 58 years ago. And, never has there been a more dynamic and changing food environment. As a society, we are literally re-

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**Christine Deussen, President of Deussen Global Communications.**



**Talking turkey pardons**

**Yubert Envia, V.P. of Foster Farms Turkey Operations, stands with the First Family the day before Thanksgiving when the President traditionally "pardons" a turkey. Fineman PR was charged with publicizing Foster Farms' role and communicating the message that the company takes great care of its poultry, fit for a President.**

**EDELMAN**

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defining our relationship with food. Food is culture, self-expression, politics and ethics. It's about the convergence of good health and great taste, of convenience and sustainability.

Our Food & Nutrition Practice includes food bloggers, digital food strategists, food and consumer health brand specialists, researchers, nutrition, food policy and agriculture experts all who help clients master this complex narrative to succeed.

**Unparalleled Expertise**

We connect with today's stakeholders all along the food chain continuum. We have the insights, experience and resources to reach influencers developing policy or moms making dinner decisions. Our Nutrition Solutions Group is comprised of 12 registered dietitians led by senior nutrition strategist Mary K. Young MS, RD. We attend and speak at industry and professional meetings enabling us to stay ahead of the curve on such important issues such as food marketing to children, front-of-pack labeling, obesity legislation, reimbursement and sustainability.

**Knowledgeable**

We follow the trends and understand the touch points that impact brands and business. Through StrategyOne, we conduct research that gives us and our clients valuable insights and knowledge. For example, our Food Insights Beltway Barometer uncovered how decision-making consumers and Washington, D.C.

opinion elites view modern food production, and provides a snapshot of the U.S. consumers' relationship with food and their expectations from Field to Fork. Passionate Brand Builders

Our nutrition and wellness expertise has created longstanding client relationships with Starbucks, Dairy Management, Inc. (DMI), Kraft, Butterball, American Egg Board, Quaker, the American Heart Association and the Mushroom Council among others.

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**Michael Fineman, President**  
**Lorna Bush, Vice President**  
**Heidi White, Vice President**

Fineman PR, founded in 1988, specializes in Brand PR and crisis communications for food and beverage clients. Our strength is in building strong and appealing brand identities for our clients.

Recent client experience includes work with Foster Farms Poultry for its comprehensive "Say No to Plumping" communications campaign to reinforce the company's "fresh and natural" messaging; media relations for the 2010 Presidential Turkey Pardon which garnered more than 300 million media impressions for the story of the selected turkey's birth, growth and White House news conference; for the company's first West Coast Chicken Cooking Contest that

brought it unprecedented ties with food media and culinary associations; and for the company's first foray into production outside the West Coast that, with Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, helped save the economy of Northeast Louisiana. Agency work this past year also included assignments for a number of wineries, including the launch of world renowned winemaker Stephane Derenoncourt's first American grape-to-bottle label. Issues management work included an assignment for Annie's Homegrown foods.

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Communicating within the food and agribusiness industries has never been more challenging. Globalization and demographic shifts are ushering in an exciting new world of foods and flavors. The explosion of chronic health issues caused by aging and obesity demand a better understanding of food's roles in health and wellness. New regulatory policies and guidelines around nutrition create a complex landscape that defies easy navigation. Our desire for a safe, secure food supply is bringing greater scrutiny about how our food is produced, packaged and shipped.

Fleishman-Hillard's Food & Agribusiness practice has a unique perspective that flows through the entire food chain and embraces the more urgent need to link nutrition to a level of consumer awareness. This practice is dedicated to help identify, understand, and manage the increasingly complex trends and issues affecting business. The practice offers a full range of integrated communications services — including public relations, public affairs, digital communications, advertising and event marketing — on a global scale. The practice is integrated with the firm's Sustainability, Healthcare, and Consumer prac-

tices to build communications around relevant consumer issues and touch points.

Clients include: Bumble Bee Seafoods, California Table Grape Commission, California Raisin Marketing Board, ConAgra Foundation, Desert Glory, Dow, AgroSciences, Fisheries Council of Canada, Flour Fortification Initiative, Gatorade, Hamdi Ulukaya, IHOP/Applebee's, Kansas Beef Council, Kubota Tractor Corporation, Mars, Maple Leaf Foods, Midwest Dairy Association, Mirassou Winery, National Mango Board, Nutrients for Life Foundation, PepsiCo, Perdue Farms, SunSweet Growers, Texas Sweet Citrus, Tri-Lamb Group, Tropicana, U.S. Potato Board.

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A food and nutrition company that harnesses science, public affairs and communications, FoodMinds' vision is to be a trusted partner in producing novel food and nutrition positions and programs that shape the future for its clients. We apply knowledge, critical thinking and industry connections to help our clients build and tell a better story that makes a difference. We pride ourselves on providing the right mix of talented, seasoned and motivated professionals — registered dietitians, consumer marketers, media strategists, PhDs, science writers and policy experts — to challenge the status quo and achieve great things for our clients.

Clients include: Applegate Farms, Bunge, Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, Dairy Management Inc., Hass Avocado Board, Kashi Company, Kellogg Company, National Confectioners Association, National Potato Council, Noodles & Company, University of Colorado, Denver — Health & Wellness Center, U.S. Dairy Export Council, Welch Foods Inc., and Western Dairy Association.



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From launching new food and beverage products to the grand openings of quick serve, casual or fine dining establishments, Hope-Beckham has done it all.

Hope-Beckham Inc. excels in public relations, experiential marketing and business consulting. The agency provides a variety of services to its clients on a local, regional and national level. In 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 Hope-Beckham was awarded *O'Dwyer's* Top Independent PR Firms in Food & Beverage.

How does public relations relate to the food and beverage world?

Communication, as with any food or beverage, is only as good as the ingredients that go into them ... Hope-Beckham has the perfect blend of experience in a variety of communications strategies to create the perfect recipe for success.

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Hunter Public Relations is an award-winning, top-ranked marketing communications firm specializing in consumer brands and lifestyle public relations with particular expertise in food, beverages, wines and spirits. Our 75-person, independently owned and operated firm offers strategic marketing PR services including: creative brainstorming and facilitation; traditional and social media relations; special event production and sponsorships; product introductions and anniversaries; nutrition and recipe

initiatives; local market events; talent negotiations and spokesperson media tours; and crisis counseling.

Clients include some of the strongest and most respected consumer packaged goods companies and brands including Kraft Foods (Jell-O, Kraft Macaroni & Cheese), E&J Gallo Winery, Diageo (Johnnie Walker, Ketel One Vodka), Kellogg's, Campbell's, Arby's, and Tabasco, Hunter PR's first client 21 years ago, and still a client today.

Revitalizing mature brands, creating buzz around new products and building awareness among key influencer groups (including the epicurean, dietetic and medical communities) are among the firm's specific areas of expertise. Named in 2010 as both a "Best Digital PR Firm" and a "Best Place to Work," Hunter Public Relations is proud to be a communications firm where the best brand teams and companies want to place and keep their business and where the best talent in the business wants to work.

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Cluttered categories and overstocked retail shelves — in a market flooded with competing products and messages, companies face the challenge of standing out, selling-in and selling-through: this is what we are hired to do!

For more than 25 years, JB Cumberland Public Relations (JBC PR) has been helping clients distinguish themselves from competitors and imitators, while helping them achieve their ultimate goal: selling products!

We achieve this goal through strategic media campaigns, constantly leveraging our outstanding contacts with key editors, writers, producers and bloggers in the industry; through social media and online projects; through special events, seminars and TV appearances — always adapting our strategy and tactics according to the client's needs.

We understand our clients' markets, their businesses and their products — whether beverage, specialty food or housewares — so much so that one client's wholesale business has tripled since our



**Hunter PR helped launch KRAFT Macaroni & Cheese newest variety, Cheddar Explosion, with a bang. Here, 11-year-old Casey Rogers of Terrell, TX, gets ready to trigger the implosion of Texas Stadium in front of thousands of spectators, setting off a media frenzy generating 1,430 placements, 914 million media impressions, and attracting more than 180,000 Facebook fans.**

partnership began, and another client's wholesale business has quadrupled. Two other clients have become category leaders without dropping a dime on advertising, and with our help, another client is in the process of creating a new niche market.

This is what we have done and continue to do for brands as diverse as Australian Lamb, ZeroWater, Bodum Coffee, iSi Espuma Cuisine and Whippers, Curious Chef, Twinings Tea, St. Dalfour Fruit Spreads, Nambé, Fusionbrands, Joseph Joseph, Starfrit and Cat Cora Cookware.

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Founded by Jill Sandin and Jeff Smith in 2001, JS<sup>2</sup> Communications is an award-winning, bi-coastal PR agency dedicated to strategic solutions, candid counsel and tangible results. The largest of its four practice areas, the Food & Beverage Division, boasts AAA+ clients in both its Los Angeles and New York offices including the west coast division of the Patina Restaurant Group, which includes more than 30 award-winning locations, Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, the oldest and largest U.S. based, privately held, global and specialty coffee and tea retailer, Chicago-Inspired bar and restaurant Rush Street and fast casual

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**Starfrit, a JB Cumberland PR client, unveiled the Cat Cora by Starfrit collection at the Atlanta International Gift & Home Furnishings Market in January 2011.**



Lee & Associates principal/VP, Howard Pearlstein (left) and Steve Kasmar, Los Angeles Trade Tech Culinary School Director (right) congratulate the student chef winners in the school's 13th annual Mrs. Cubbison's Thanksgiving Stuffing Cook-off. The event was created and is produced each year as a major media event by Lee & Associates for Mrs. Cubbison's Foods, a client for over 60 years.

**JS2 COMMS.**

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regional restaurant group Tender Greens.

New F & B clients on both coasts include multi award-winning California craft beer bar/restaurant, Tony's Darts Away; its sister Echo Park bar/restaurant, Mohawk Bend; Culver City Gastropub, Waterloo & City; contemporary Korean restaurant, Cham Korean Bistro; California Artisanal restaurant/market, FARMSHOP; multiple locations of the Grill Concepts classic, upscale grill, The Grill on the Alley; Omni Los Angeles Hotels' signature fine-dining restaurant, Noé; Culver City Bar/Restaurant, City Tavern; fast casual New York pasta concept, Hello Pasta; New York sushi restaurant and to-go concept, Mai Cuisine and New York kosher premium ice-cream, Chozen.



JSH&A greeted mommy bloggers around the campfire at the Hershey's "S'mores Snackivity Suite" during BlogHer. Hundreds of women visited the suite meeting with Hershey's representatives and later blogging about their delicious experience.

**JSH&A**

Member of IPREX  
2 TransAm Plaza Drive, Suite 450  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
630/932-4242  
www.jsha.com

**Jonni Hegenderfer, CEO**  
**Jim Kokoris, President**

JSH&A is known for innovative, cross-media PR strategies delivering award-winning campaigns for industry leaders such as The Hershey Co., McDonald's, Beam Global Spirits and Wine, and ConAgra. The agency's trademarked LIF™ Style PR and Social LIF™ approach drives 360-degree programs launching brands and supporting marketing promotions both online and offline.

Whether working with celebrities, fitness and nutrition gurus, hot new chefs and master distillers, or mommy and daddy bloggers, the food and beverage team at JSH&A knows the magic

of building buzz to build sales. We've roasted marshmallows with bloggers around the S'mores campfire at BlogHer. We've hosted Great Whiskey Debates and cookie exchange parties for thousands of holiday bakers. Facebook contests, NYC media events, Times Square consumer meet-ups and Twitter parties are just the beginning of a full-circle PR initiative connecting brand-thusiasts in an interactive community.

Our clients have appeared on Rachel Ray, Martha Stewart, Today, Fox & Friends, Squawk Box, HGTV, E! and a long list of popular TV programs. They've been featured in the dailies, the weeklies, the womens magazines, the business pages and, of course, they've engaged in unending conversations in the Blogosphere.

As a member of the IPREX network, JSH&A provides best-in-class PR capabilities for clients around the globe.

**KAPLOW**

19 West 44th Street, Suite 601  
New York, NY 10036  
www.kaplowpr.com

**Liz Kaplow, President and CEO**

An award-winning, full-service PR agency founded in 1991 with vast experience in the consumer sector, Kaplow changes conversations building brand momentum and producing measurable results that impact the bottom line.

Kaplow's Retail, Food and Wine practice has developed and executed strategic programs for major, best-in-class brands, including: Constellation Wines — Robert Mondavi Private Selection and Woodbridge brands, to Newman's Own, to our long-standing work for Target's diverse collection of proprietary consumable brands from Archer Farms to Choxie Chocolate.

In a changing media landscape, Kaplow and our K:Drive specialty division take clients' brands beyond the edges of traditional media into social media, blogs, and other emerging platforms.

Kaplow intimately connects clients to the people, industries, and opinion influencers who count. We're not just sparking conversations; we're changing them.

**LANE PR**

905 SW 16th Avenue  
Portland, OR 97205  
503/221-0480  
www.lanepr.com

**Wendy Lane Stevens, President**  
**Kristen Siefkin, VP, Food and Beverage Practice**

Nationally recognized LANE PR shapes opinions, drives sales and builds brands from the influential food and beverage hubs of New York and Portland, Ore.

Our passion and our focus: turning buzz into business. Our strengths lie in our strategic approach, extensive media contacts and collective expertise in connecting clients to the audiences that matter most. We fuel the zeal of java junkies online, growing a drive-through coffee company's Facebook fan base to more than 100,000 in one year. We revitalize time-tested brands by giving the media a new way to experience them, such as in a hands-on "Cab Lab" at a legendary Napa winery. We introduce and grow the awareness of unique origins and their products, whether cocoa beans or olive oils. We take a story, we run with it and we enthusiastically share it with key media and influencers.

Our team of business-driven marketing professionals shares an obsession for all things related to the food and beverage industry. Since our inception in 1990, LANE PR has represented food & beverage, restaurant, hospitality and retail clients on a regional, national and international level, including Moonstruck Chocolate Co., Tully's Coffee, Whole Foods Markets, Pacific Seafood, International Olive Council, Wines from Spain, E&J Gallo Winery, Hood River Distillers, Dutch Bros. Coffee, Burgerville, Redhook Ale Brewery and Widmer Brothers Brewing.

**LEE & ASSOCIATES**

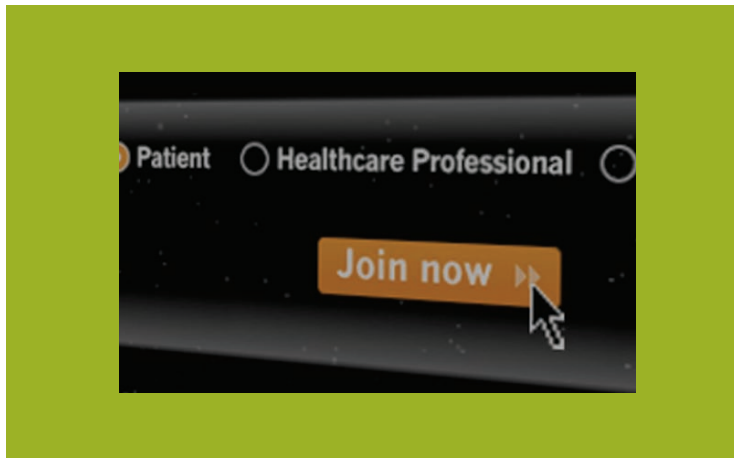
145 S. Fairfax Ave., #301  
Los Angeles, CA 90036  
323/938-3300  
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**Howard Pearlstein, Principal**

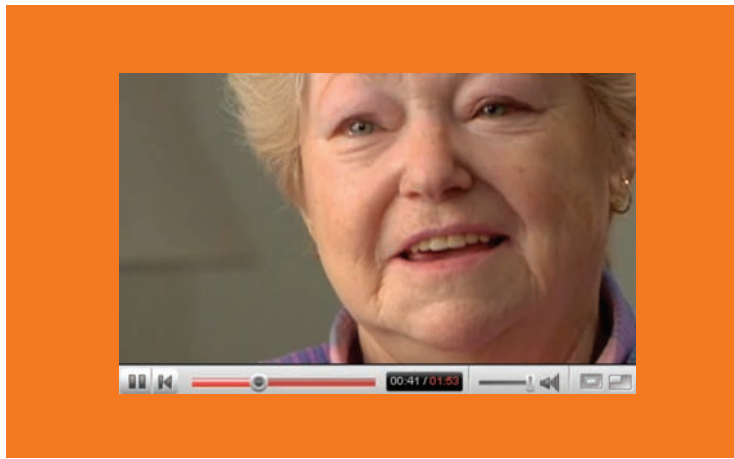
Lee & Assoc. offers strategic planning, program evaluation, media relations, product launch-

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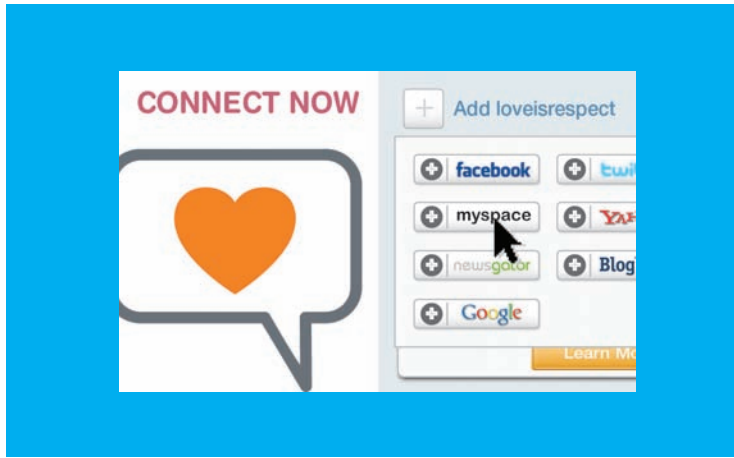




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rfrelate@ruderfinn.com



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**More than 300 Detroit commuters were treated to a free breakfast during the launch of McDonald's Fruit & Maple Oatmeal. Marx Layne & Company conceptualized the event and managed all details including a comprehensive public relations and social media campaign, coordinating Health Department approval, securing food & paper supplies, ordering tenting and other rentals, hiring entertainment, purchasing branded giveaways and distributing coupons to drive traffic back to stores.**

**LEE & ASSOCIATES**

Continued from page 24

es, consumer education, recipe development, special events, crisis management and corporate PR services to its food & beverage client roster.

Founded in 1950, the agency is proud of its Western Research Kitchens division, which features home economists, nutritionists, dietitians, chefs and medical doctors. The firm has represented PepsiCo, Del Monte, American Home Foods and Suntory Int'l, as well as brand names like John Morrell, Florida's Natural Fruit Snacks, Morehouse Mustard and Mrs. Cubbison's Foods (stuffing and croutons — a client for 60 years). Additional clients include trade associations and marketing boards, from California apples, eggs, figs, prunes, seafood and tomatoes to Hawaiian papaya, Oregon potatoes and the New Zealand Trade Commission.

**MALONEY & FOX**

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**Brian Maloney, Margie Fox,**  
*Partners*  
**Hal Bienstock, New Business**

Whether creating a series of consumer cocktail classes throughout

the US for Hendrick's Gin, developing a supper club titled "The Tupper Club" for Tupperware Brands, or producing a simultaneous three-city auction for world-renowned Glenfiddich with Christie's, Maloney & Fox (M&F) packs a strong punch using its collective creativity, passion for pop culture and deep insights into consumer behavior to make leading food and beverage brands relevant to people's lifestyles. Since establishing our Food & Beverage practice six years ago, we've revitalized brands after decades of declining sales, launched new products to niche audiences and helped bring to life some formerly staid favorites.

M&F's expertise in the Food & Beverage space covers Wine & Spirits brands, including Hendrick's Gin, The Balvenie Single Malt Scotch Whisky, Sailor Jerry Rum, Milagro Tequila, Hudson Whiskey and Lillet. As the agency representing 15 brands within the William Grant & Sons portfolio, M&F has taken its love for cocktails and turned it into a passion for creating award-winning PR campaigns, experiential events throughout the country like The Balvenie Roadshow, The Hendrick's Enchanted Forest of Curiosities and The Delightfully Peculiar Cocktail Academy, in addition to effective social media strategies through avenues including Facebook and Twitter.

Most recently, M&F has entered the world of food storage as AOR for the world-famous Tupperware Brands taking it to new audiences

through smart partnerships with fashion designers and celebrities to chefs and musicians, amplifying its general perception and massively raising media awareness.

M&F also created and managed; The introduction of the Italian beer, Peroni, to the U.S. market; Developed a picnicking program for Mercedes-Benz USA and its partner, The James Beard Foundation; Revitalized Drambuie through the Drambuie Den and Drambuie Pursuit experiential marketing efforts; Launched Bacardi's Rubi Rey rum and Vanille Royale crème liqueur in multiple test markets; Developed a guerilla marketing campaign for Bob Evans Restaurants, and created media campaigns for gourmet food brands Ile de France cheese and Robert Rothschild Farm.

M&F, a Waggener Edstrom Company, has won more than 60 marketing and PR awards including the 2010 Bulldog Awards Small PR Agency of the Year, 2007 Gold Mercury Award, the 2006 Silver Creativity Award and the Platinum Marcom Creative Award for our work with Drambuie and the 2007 American Business Award for Best Creative Organization.

**MARINA MAHER COMMUNICATIONS INC.**

Member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group  
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www.mahercomm.com

**Nancy Lowman LaBadie, EVP**  
**DeLisa Harmon, Managing Director, Food & Beverage**  
**Loren Fisher Coleman, SVP, Food & Beverage**

The Food & Beverage Practice at Marina Maher Communications, Inc. (MMC) creates delicious pop culture and lifestyle relevance for food, wine and spirits brands. With an expertise in marketing to women, the team partners with industry insiders — celebrity chefs, mixologists, and nutritionists — to craft five-star communications programs that lure consumers to the table. MMC works with Bimbo Bakeries USA on Thomas', Boboli, Arnold and Oroweat Bread as well as Post Cereals on adult and children's brands: Post Shredded Wheat, Raisin Bran, Grape Nuts, Honey Bunches of Oats, Great

Grains, and Pebbles. For Pernod Ricard, MMC represents the whiskey portfolio including Jameson, The Glenlivet and Chivas Regal. MMC also partners with Terlato Wines International on Santa Margherita and Markham Vineyards.

MMC's expertise in traditional and social media and special events result in high profile media coverage rarely seen in the category.

**MARX LAYNE & COMPANY**

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**Michael Layne, Managing Partner**

Marx Layne has been providing cost-effective marketing, public relations and social media services on a local, regional and national basis to the food and beverage sector since 1987.

Services offered to clients include media relations, product publicity, crisis and issues management, internal communications, special events planning, social media, online reputation management, direct mail, e-blasts, graphic design, Web development, and brochure and newsletter production.

Clients include fine dining restaurants, quick service restaurants, supermarket chains, and food and beverage manufacturers and suppliers.

**M BOOTH & ASSOCIATES**

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better4you.mbooth.com

**Margaret Booth, President**  
**Rich Goldblatt, SVP, Group Director**  
**Joyce Yaeger, SVP, Group Director**  
**Lauren Swartz, SVP, Director, Wine & Spirits**

M Booth's innovative Better4You offering continued to score success in its third year of outreach to food and nutrition brands seeking to communicate healthy innovations, functional benefits and product revitalizations to the mar-



ketplace.

In addition to its expanding client roster, Better4You designed and fielded a groundbreaking study on consumer attitudes and behaviors in the dynamic marketplace of healthier products that found most parents rank family health a top priority, but have trouble making it work, balancing pressures of the economy and the demands of fussy family members with a concern for healthier eating. The research also determined six distinct better for you consumers and the most effective ways to develop messages and select channels as means of reaching them.

M Booth's Better4You practice added a tenth advisor, a patient management expert, to its board of leading national authorities in consumer nutrition, health, medicine, pediatrics, fitness, weight management, and well-being. Better4You also relies on a national network of 25 registered dietitians who provide message guidance as well as vehicles for local market media amplification for a range of products in the healthy consumer marketplace.

The Better4You team created and implemented campaigns for Schwan's Home Service's new line of health management products called LiveSmart, specially formulated for people coping with specific medical conditions. The team created a multi-tiered, media-driven campaign on the nutritional benefits of Pirate's Booty snacks over the leading potato chips. For Mrs. Dash, the salt-free, flavor-full blend of seasonings, Better4You created the Women's Heart Health Dash, an online benefit program to benefit the National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease. The practice has also engineered campaigns for margarines, salad dressings, pasta, frozen food and low carb products, as well as nutraceuticals and eye care.

The agency's dedicated wine and spirits team added to its top-shelf portfolio Kahlúa®, imported by Pernod Ricard USA. As agency of record for eight years representing the Scotch portfolio of Rémy Cointreau USA, Inc. including The Macallan® Single Malt Scotch Whisky, Highland Park® Single Malt Scotch Whisky, and The Famous Grouse®, the team continues to reach key influencers and tastemakers through luxury brand partnerships, promotional events and intimate tastings. The team partnered The Macallan with charity: water in a global tour reaching high net worth individuals and

broke the world record for a bottle of whisky sold at auction. Our work for NOLET'S® Finest Gins, and HARLEM® Kruiden Liqueur included introductions from the Nolet Spirits USA. Social media continues to be the vehicle to reach new consumers for The Macallan, exemplified by the brand's SXSW Interactive sponsorship, where we asked social media influencers to "Tweet what you taste," as part of The Macallan Tasting Note Project. We increased the conversation about The Macallan by 139% over 5- days and reached a followership of more than 1.4 million.

**M&P FOOD COMMUNICATIONS INC.**

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312/201-9101  
www.mpfood.com  
**Brenda McDowell**, Principal  
**Lisa Rigney**, Senior Account Manager  
**Jessie Vicha**, Senior Account Manager  
**Liz Rytel-Mudroncik**, Senior Advisor

M&P builds buzz for clients via social and traditional media when communicating about food products, nutrition stories, recipe contests and more. Successful, strategic and on-budget, our programs reach influencers whether they broadcast, blog or tweet.

Innovative activities and events move audiences to action, drive trial and build loyalty per success stories for current clients including Wilton Enterprises, Dreamfields Pasta, Seneca Foods, Pepsico and Safest Choice Pasteurized Eggs.

M&P has provided public relations/communications services to consumer food and beverage clients for 20+ years. We are food-focused, consumer-connected, and client-centered.

**MWW GROUP**

One Meadowlands Plaza  
East Rutherford, NJ 07073  
201/507-9500  
www.mww.com

**Michael W. Kempner**, Pres. & CEO  
**Alissa Blate**, EVP, Global Consumer Marketing Practice Leader

Consumer Lifestyle brands



Pierson Grant Public Relations handled publicity for the 25-market Blizzardmobile tour celebrating the 25th birthday of Dairy Queen's iconic treat. The Blizzardmobile stopped in Omaha, where Warren Buffett, seen here with Dairy Queen CEO and President John Gainor, signed a DQ spoon to be auctioned for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.

turn to MWW Group because we continually raise the bar for our clients by developing creative solutions in a constantly shifting environment. At MWW Group, we establish relationships between brands and consumers through integrated public relations and marketing activities that drive awareness, engagement and consideration. We expand media coverage beyond the food pages and into influential lifestyle outlets, creating lifestyle relevance and developing emotional connections to culinary brands that drive trial and brand loyalty. Whether it's establishing a restaurant as a top-choice for dining or creating demand for coffee at an unlikely destination, we capitalize on trends to position our client brands as a vital ingredient in consumers' lifestyles. Our experience includes: McDonald's, Sara Lee, Sbarro Italian Eatery, The

Hershey Company, The Popcorn Factory, Fannie May Chocolatier, Nutrisystem, Jimmy Dean, Ball Park Franks, Gallo Salame, among many others.

**PIERSON GRANT PUBLIC RELATIONS**

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www.highimpactdigital.com

**Maria Pierson**, CEO  
**Jane Grant**, President

Pierson Grant PR is a full-service agency with offices in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. and Raleigh, N.C., serving a wide

Continued on page 28



Just in time for the holidays — and just months after a nationwide egg recall — consumers learned how using raw eggs can be safe, if pasteurized. Registered Dietitian Dave Grotto preps the WGN-TV set prior to a holiday eggnog demonstration on behalf of M&P client, Safest Choice Pasteurized Eggs.



**Pollock Registered Dietitians attend a brand-focused reception orchestrated by Pollock Communications during ADA FNCE 2010. The reception, attended by over 250 nutrition influencers, communicated key brand messages through interactive culinary demonstrations, branded recipe sampling stations and impactful visual branding elements.**

**PIERSON GRANT**

Continued from page 27

range of clients with strategic and tactical planning, media and community relations, superior Web-based and social media, crisis communications and special events.

Restaurant clients include Dairy Queen, Olive Garden and Morton's The Steakhouse.

The firm's fresh thinking helps clients build brand identity, generates publicity for openings and food and beverage introductions, brings creativity to special events and community relations, and leverages the power of Internet marketing through its High Impact Digital division.

**POLLOCK COMMUNICATIONS**

665 Broadway  
New York, NY 10012  
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lpollock@pollock-pr.com

**Louise Pollock, President**

Pollock Communications, is an independent PR and marketing communications agency that offers cutting edge expertise for food, nutrition, health & wellness and beverage clients. Founded in 1991, Pollock pioneered the functional food movement, creating some of the major food trends of the past 10 years including making tea the healthy drink of the new millennium and making chocolate a healthy indulgence. We know how to capitalize on emerging health and wellness trends in a credible way, with media, consumers and health professionals.

Our knowledge of the latest research and science in the health & nutrition arena and our understanding of food policy, enables us to deliver actionable consumer and market insights and practical health & lifestyle wellness benefits for brands and commodities. Our staff includes credentialed registered dietitians with on-air and editorial experience who can address the health & nutrition issues that are top-of-mind for today's editors and reporters — including those who serve as



**Quinn & Co.'s David Semanoff at the 2010 US Open with "Top Chef Masters." L to R: Barbuto Chef Jonathan Waxman, Guest, RM Seafood Chef Rick Moonen, Chef Carmen Gonzalez, STREET Chef Susan Feniger, David Semanoff, Quinn & Co.'s Head of Food, Wine + Spirits, and Q&C Client Spiaggia Chef Tony Mantuano.**

trusted "watchdogs" for family gatekeepers.

We have developed and executed innovative social media programs to reach the key health & nutrition influencers online, including blogging initiatives for a global cheese brand and a new juice beverage for children.

The company represents Ajinomoto Food Ingredients, LLC, Brassica Protection Products, LLC, Cranberry Institute, First Juice, Gourmet Garden Herbs & Spices, Presidents Brand Cheese, Tea Council of the USA, Unilever Promise, Country Crock & I Can't Believe It's Not Butter brands, the USA Rice Federation, and Wish-Bone Dressings.

**PUBLICIS CONSULTANTS USA**

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steve.bryant@publicis-pr.com  
www.publicis-pr.com

New York:  
1675 Broadway, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10019

**Steve Bryant, President, Publicis Consultants USA**

Publicis Consultants USA, part of MSLGROUP, creatively engages consumers and professionals through lifestyle marketing in the always-on conversation world. MSLGROUP is one of the world's top five PR and events networks, offering the best strategic advice, insight-guided thinking and big, compelling ideas — followed by thorough execution — in 83 countries.

Publicis Consultants USA delivers major marketing success through its specialized staff, extensive influencer contacts, social and traditional media services, print & digital design team, healthcare and nutrition expertise, and trade show marketing force. An in-house Publicis Culinary & Nutrition Center, led by two registered dietitians, is a unique asset available to clients and delivers award-winning work.

With offices in New York City and Seattle, Publicis Consultants USA is a full-service public relations and marketing agency representing top-tier brands such as

Nestlé and sanofi-aventis, and emerging brands of national interest. Visit us at [www.publicis-pr.com](http://www.publicis-pr.com)

**QUINN & CO.**

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**David Semanoff, Associate Vice President and Head of Food, Wine + Spirits**

Quinn & Co.'s Food, Wine + Spirits division, led by David Semanoff, has a goal of making Quinn & Co. the go-to firm in FWS. All team members think like owners and brand managers to help clients achieve their goals. We drive creative campaigns, A-list media results, digital/social media initiatives and important partnerships. Our friends include many clients, chefs, journalists and industry colleagues.

The team conducted the PR for the high-visibility opening of Jim Lahey's celebrated Co. in NYC. Placements reached over 264,000,000 potential diners and increased sales. After Lahey appeared on "MARTHA" almost the entire audience flocked to Co. We helped propel Chef Tony Mantuano to national acclaim; drive business to his Chicago restaurants, Spiaggia and Cafe Spiaggia, and spur sales of his book, "Wine Bar Food," which is now in its second printing. Over-the-top placements include Chef's run on Bravo's "Top Chef Masters" season 2, a guest judge on "Top Chef: All Stars," "Nightline," *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times* (4X), *Wine Enthusiast*, *New York Magazine*, *La Cucina Italiana*, *Huffington Post*, *Associated Press*, *USA Today*, *Food & Wine* (2x), *O, The Oprah Magazine*, *People*, *Vanity Fair Italy*, "The Early Show," "Today Show," "The Martha Stewart Show" and "ABC News Now."

Chef Mantuano turned to us to open his latest restaurant, Terzo Piano, at the Art Institute of Chicago's Modern Wing. Press to date includes: *Food & Wine*, *New York Times*, \*Wallpaper,

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At recent event at Club Macanudo in NYC to introduce its new product line are (L to R): Brian Johnson, Northeast Regional Manager, International Beverage Holdings, Ltd. USA Inc.; Samantha Santos, Field Marketing Manager, International Beverage; and Mauricio Cordoba, General Manager, Club Macanudo. International Beverage is a Rosica client.

**QUINN & CO.**

Continued from page 28

Details, National Geographic Traveler, Eater, Huffington Post, Tasting Table, Chicago Tribune, NYMag.com, WSJ.com, and other outlets.

Last year's New York City Wine & Food Festival called upon Quinn & Co. to handle the online auction benefitting the Food Bank for New York City. We have orchestrated client events and partnerships with organizations such as: Share our Strength; Feeding America; US Open; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; The New Yorker; and Cowgirl Up!, Chef Gina DePalma's Ovarian Cancer research charity.

For the new The Grande Dalles winery in Oregon the team has already secured coverage in Zink, Snooth, Food & Wine.com, and BehindtheBurner.com.

Quinn & Co. also represents Rome's only three-Michelin starred restaurant, La Pergola, which is located at the Rome Cavalieri, The Waldorf Astoria Collection; Ithaa Undersea restaurant at Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, which is the world's first underwater dining venue; Chicago-based Levy Restaurants, C-House at the Affinia Chicago; Celsius at Citi Pond at Bryant Park and World Yacht, both in New York.

The firm's culture of teamwork, innovation and accessibility fosters a highly productive atmosphere among the 40+ pro-

fessionals, from account staff to partners. The focus is on results for FWS, Real Estate and Travel clients.

**RF | BINDER**

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**Amy Binder, CEO**  
**Atalanta Rafferty, Executive Managing Director**

With the prevalence of celebrity chefs, the expansion of TV programming on cooking and food, and the explosion of food bloggers on the one hand and the increasing scrutiny of health and nutrition from regulators on the other, the food industry is facing new challenges as well as new opportunities. Competition for the consumer mindshare is stronger than ever, and concerns for nutrition and dieting are a permanent dimension of food and beverage marketing. Social media is well entrenched as a powerful tool for both consumer information and marketing. RF|Binder has worked in every aspect of food and beverage marketing and public relations from Dunkin' Donuts to Cargill, from the 100th anniversary of the Fig Newton to Wines of Germany.

RF|Binder brings market and industry insight, research-based strategic and creative programming, as well as access to the key influencers who shape pub-

lic opinion. We provide a wide array of services from consumer promotions, influencer outreach, social media, issues management, trade relations and investor relations. Our staff has extensive experience in promoting consumer packaged goods, prepared and imported foods, ingredients, supplements, grocers, restaurants, quick service restaurants, wine, beer, liquors, and coffee. We promote products, but we also routinely deal with the most challenging issues — recalls, labeling, FDA actions, organics, ingredients, health and nutrition, safety, and regulation.

As one example — over the last year, RF|Binder created a series of unique consumer engagement events to drive trial and awareness of Malaysian food, including the first-ever Malaysian food truck serving free samples of Malaysian dishes to over 36,000 consumers. Thanks to this and other consumer events, awareness of Malaysian cuisine has never been higher in New York, and Laut became the first Malaysian restaurant to earn a prestigious Michelin star.

Current and recent clients include ARAMARK / 1st & Fresh Catering, Atkins Nutritionals, Bob Evans, Cargill's Truvia™ natural sweetener, Chilean Specialty Foods, The Culinary Trust, Dagoba Organic Chocolate, Dr. Praeger's, Dunkin' Brands, Edible Schoolyard NYC, the European Union (European Rieslings), Hershey's Scharffen Berger Chocolate, Kayem Foods, The Malaysian Trade Association (Malaysia Kitchen for the World), Miller Brewing (Pilsner Urquell), Wegmans, Vinho Verde, Wines of Germany, and YoCrunch.

**RICHMOND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

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**Lorne S. Richmond, President**  
**Jason Hamilton, Sr. Vice President**

Richmond Public Relations, a WorldCom Public Relations Group Partner and an award-

winning food and travel public relations firm, has coordinated numerous restaurant openings, developed corporate strategies and branding campaigns, handled crisis management, and food-related launches for companies including: Nabisco, Snackwell's, Odwalla Juice Co., Noah's Bagels, Jamba Juice, Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, Da Vinci Gourmet, Woodinville Wine Country, Tully's Coffee, Krispy Kreme Doughnuts.

In addition, RPR has coordinated numerous nationwide food events such as the Hawaii "Chef's of Aloha Tour," Sheraton's World Wide Global Food Summit in New York and the Dinner of the Decade featuring celebrity chefs Wolfgang Puck, Jean Louis Palladin and Michele Richard, and more than 20 James Beard Dinner's in New York City.

Current food and beverage clients include: Canlis Restaurant, Cedarbrook Lodge, Fortune Foods, Panera Bread, Seattle Sounders FC, Skamania Lodge, Suncadia Resort, Tom Douglas Restaurants, Taco Time NW, Tap House Grill, The Rock Woodfired Pizza & Spirits, Zeeks Pizza, Tulalip Resort Casino, and more.

**ROSICA PR**

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www.theauthenticbrand.com

**Chris Rosica, CEO**

Established in 1980, Rosica PR has successfully established national brands and generated national and regional media coverage for its food, beverage and hospitality industry clients. Company president Christopher Rosica's background and training as a chef, food safety expert, food writer and hotel experience gives the agency further leverage in the industry.

The Rosica team put the "fame" in Famous Amos Chocolate Chip Cookies and introduced various product lines for the Uncle Wally's Muffin Company, making it the #1 branded in-store bakery muffin today.

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**The Schneider Associates team at Baskin-Robbins' Brand Central in Canton, MA for the brand's 65th anniversary celebration and retirement ceremony for five classic ice cream flavors.**

**ROSICA PR**

Continued from page 30

The agency has conducted long-term PR campaigns for such clients as J.R. Watkins Spices and Extracts, Keebler and Egglad's Best. In addition, it has represented several supermarkets, including Stew Leonard's in CT, Big Bear in Columbus, Ohio and West Virginia, and ShopRite stores throughout New York State. Present clients include Grill Daddy and such spirits brands as anCnoc, Balblair, Old Pulteney, Speyburn, Mekhong, Caorunn Gin, and Thailand's number one selling beer, Chang Beer.

Rosica's services include media relations, Internet marketing, (i.e., social media, blogging, search engine optimization and online reputation management), media events, cause marketing, new product introductions, and crisis communications.

The April issue of *O'Dwyer's* will feature a company profiles section on social media PR, and a separate profiles section showcasing video and broadcast services.

If you would like your firm to be listed, contact Editor Jon Gingerich at 646/843-2080 or jon@odwyerpr.com

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**Scott Schneider**, *Digital and Social Media*, 212/593-6463

The Food and Beverage industry is constantly evolving. Although taste remains important, health benefits, functional and locally sourced foods, packaging innovations and "green" products have become the latest media darlings. Our targets are no longer just food and wine editors and the trade press, but also everyday consumers that become social media ambassadors, celebrity influencers, health and lifestyle reporters in consumer lifestyle outlets and food, wine and entertainment bloggers.

Our food and beverage expertise at the heart of our Life+Style specialty, allowing us to tap not just our traditional PR knowledge, but our connection to celebrity chefs, master sommeliers and health and wellness experts. We have a passion for what's new — tracking in real time the latest social media trends in the food and beverage space and closely following food-focused reality television — and transforming ourselves

into fervent brand ambassadors for your product. Whether the task is creating a digital campaign with true viral appeal or a multi-market mobile marketing tour, our team is prepared to embrace the challenge.

Among the food and beverage clients we have championed are Mountain Dew, Propel, Nestlé cereals, Weightwatchers, Chateau Margaux, Moët Hennessy Diageo, Kellogg's and Gerber.

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When leading CPG companies, quick service restaurants, and artisan manufacturers seek a partner to raise awareness for new or existing products, they turn to the Launch Public Relations® experts at Schneider Associates. A full-service public relations and integrated marketing communications firm, we specialize in launching new products, re-launching icon brands, and building and sustaining visibility with our proprietary launch process.

In 2010, we helped to celebrate the 65th anniversary of client Baskin-Robbins when the brand retired five classic flavors. The campaign resulted in national and regional print and broadcast media coverage, including ABC Evening News with Diane Sawyer.

Agency services include messaging, media relations, social media strategy and execution, special events, crisis communications, spokesperson training, influencer outreach, brand development, launch consulting, Immersion Marketing® and creative services. Learn more about how Schneider Associates launches products, services, companies and communities at www.schneiderpr.com

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Trevelino/Keller has become one of the most sought after food and beverage agencies in the country for emerging and established corporate and franchise multi-market concepts. Specializing in public relations, social media and brand communications, the firm works closely with its clients on brand positioning, store experience, industry relations, national and local media relations, executive visibility, social marketing and crisis communications, in support of business and consumer sales. Experienced in fine dining, casual, fast casual and quick service, the firm also works directly with food and beverage packaged goods and retailers. With a changing marketplace, the firm's ambition is to get out in front of the market in relation to supporting more responsible food society, promoting companies with healthy nutritional strategies, organics, sustainability and farm to table. As an example, the firm conceived and is launching on behalf of TCBY, "Super Fro-Yo," a super nutritional classification that distinguishes the brand from others in the category.

**TRUTH BE TOLD, INC.**

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Truth Be Told, Inc. is a premier public relations, brand development, event manage-

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Zenzi's cause marketing campaign for Dreyer's & Edy's supplied Fruit Tree Orchards to communities in need of a fresh fruit source for years to come.

**TRUTH BE TOLD, INC.**

Continued from page 32

ment, and entertainment agency with offices in New York and Los Angeles. Founders Stacy Kaplan and Amanda Schuon are perfectly contrasting and complementary in their approach to clients, demonstrated by the partnership they have forged.

In its ninth year, Truth Be Told is a front runner among communications agencies as public relations pulls up its chair and takes its rightful place at the marketing table. Known for their professionalism, integrated, strategic and creative programming, Truth Be Told focuses primarily on luxury lifestyle brands including: wine and spirits, publishing, youth and baby, travel, hotels, hospitality, entertainment/celebrity, cultural institutions, beauty, fashion and accessories.

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Service offerings include: media relations, brand building events, social media utilization, product launches, integrated

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**Paul Giguere, Sr. Director of Academic Initiatives**  
**Mark Krumm, Director of Communications**

Tufts Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy announces graduate-level online courses which award a certificate in Nutrition Science and Communications for Public Relations Professionals. Accredited courses are taught by the renowned faculty of Tufts and maintain identical academic standards to those offered to our degree-track students. The Nutrition Science and Communications program builds on the strength of the School's communications graduate programs, recognized by the food industry as the leading program in the United States.

The online courses provide an opportunity for midcareer professional to advance their knowledge while they work. FoodMinds LLC, is the founding Dean's Circle sponsor of the program. Weber Shandwick is

also a Dean's Circle supporter. Edelman, Pollock Communications, PMK Associates, Inc., Fleishman-Hillard, and Ketchum have also supported the creation of the program.

Courses begin September, 2011. Information, including scholarship opportunities and tuition for corporate groups is online at [nutrition.tufts.edu/certificates](http://nutrition.tufts.edu/certificates) or by email at [nutritioncertificates@tufts.edu](mailto:nutritioncertificates@tufts.edu).

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Weber Shandwick has built one of the largest food and nutrition practices in the country — with proven expertise in brand building, consumer education campaigns, influencer outreach, scientific communications, issues management and crisis counseling.

The Food & Nutrition practice is staffed by some of the industry's most strategic senior counselors and content experts — including registered dietitians, PhD nutrition scientists, former and current journalists and trained chefs. These imbedded experts have extensive experience in public-private partnerships, alliance building, food and agriculture policy, food regulations, sustainability and food safety.

Weber Shandwick has created a unique niche as nutrition community managers by building and supporting the Nutrition Blog Network, the first aggregator of blogs written by registered dietitians. The firm has provided social media training for the American Dietetic Association and maintains a proprietary network of dietitians across the country that is deployed on behalf of clients.

Whether launching a new product or repositioning a brand, Weber Shandwick uses an insight-driven approach to build

advocates in this new era of engagement. Clients include many of the world's leading food companies, such as Kraft Foods, Campbell Soup Company, McCormick, Mars, Inc., Ocean Spray, Yum!, Unilever, Pinnacle, Nestle and ALDI. Programs include the iconic Weinermobile, Pepsi Refresh (digital), the first-ever “face from space” for KFC and the introduction of Weight Watchers PointsPlus with Jennifer Hudson.

Weber Shandwick also has deep expertise in turning commodities into brands with award-winning campaigns for the Milk Processor Education Program (National Milk Mustache “got milk?” campaign), National Pork Board and Cherry Marketing Institute.

**ZENZI**

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**Sarah Hardwick, Founder & CEO**  
**Julie Lyons, Vice President of Food/Beverage**

Zenzi is an integrated PR and social media agency dedicated to helping companies of all sizes cut through the clutter, stay ahead of the competition and “Be Known.” Founded in 2002, the Zenzi team is passionate about all things food and adept at leveraging innovative tactics including cause marketing, crowdsourcing and mobile. On behalf of Dreyer's Fruit Bars, Zenzi's Communities Take Root campaign successfully built brand awareness, loyalty and engagement through a partnership with the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation. In less than three months, 70,000 people went online to vote for an orchard in their community. Zenzi took crowdsourcing to a new level for Chiquita Brands, promoting a contest for consumers to design the iconic blue stickers featured on millions of bananas and garnering top-tier coverage in *New York Times*, *TIME* and *Fast Company*. Whether it's sampling a product on college campuses, industry thought leadership, blogger outreach or online marketing, Zenzi has the connections and expertise to do it all. ●



# O'DWYER'S RANKINGS OF FOOD & BEVERAGE PR FIRMS



<b>1.</b> Edelman	New York	<b>\$51,947,570</b>	<b>28.</b> Lambert, Edwards & Assocs.	Grand Rapids, MI	<b>419,728</b>
<b>2.</b> APCO Worldwide	Wash., D.C.	<b>6,546,408</b>	<b>29.</b> Trevelino/Keller Comms.	Atlanta	<b>300,000</b>
<b>3.</b> Hunter PR	New York	<b>5,669,985</b>	<b>30.</b> Kaplow	New York	<b>300,000</b>
<b>4.</b> FoodMinds	Oakbrook Terrace, IL	<b>5,651,110</b>	<b>31.</b> Catalyst PR	New York	<b>300,000</b>
<b>5.</b> Regan Communications Group	Boston	<b>3,800,000</b>	<b>32.</b> Richmond PR	Seattle	<b>292,352</b>
<b>6.</b> RF   Binder Partners	New York	<b>3,500,000</b>	<b>33.</b> IW Group	W. Hollywood, CA	<b>284,000</b>
<b>7.</b> 5W Public Relations	New York	<b>3,055,177</b>	<b>34.</b> Morgan & Myers	Waukesha, WI	<b>275,699</b>
<b>8.</b> Coyne PR	Parsippany, NJ	<b>2,571,000</b>	<b>35.</b> Seigenthaler PR	Nashville	<b>274,911</b>
<b>9.</b> RL PR & Marketing	Los Angeles	<b>1,902,034</b>	<b>36.</b> Levick Strategic Comms.	Wash., D.C.	<b>255,582</b>
<b>10.</b> Dye, Van Mol & Lawrence	Nashville	<b>1,602,615</b>	<b>37.</b> BizCom Assocs.	Addison, TX	<b>230,000</b>
<b>11.</b> Zeno Group	New York	<b>1,336,662</b>	<b>38.</b> BLAZE	Santa Monica, CA	<b>181,140</b>
<b>12.</b> O'Malley Hansen Comms.	Chicago	<b>1,319,000</b>	<b>39.</b> Red Sky Public Relations	Boise	<b>170,566</b>
<b>13.</b> Linhart PR	Denver	<b>983,794</b>	<b>40.</b> Maccabee Group	Minneapolis	<b>170,207</b>
<b>14.</b> Kohnstamm Comms.	St. Paul, MN	<b>857,869</b>	<b>41.</b> TransMedia Group	Boca Raton, FL	<b>170,000</b>
<b>15.</b> zcomm	Bethesda, MD	<b>825,792</b>	<b>42.</b> Luckie Strategic PR	Birmingham, AL	<b>157,559</b>
<b>16.</b> Lane Public Relations	Portland, OR	<b>816,627</b>	<b>43.</b> Zeppos & Assocs.	Milwaukee	<b>154,917</b>
<b>17.</b> Schneider Assocs.	Boston	<b>772,750</b>	<b>44.</b> The Kotchen Group	Hartford, CT	<b>150,930</b>
<b>18.</b> Allison & Partners	San Francisco	<b>651,859</b>	<b>45.</b> CooperKatz & Co.	New York	<b>150,476</b>
<b>19.</b> JS2 Communications	Los Angeles	<b>642,000</b>	<b>46.</b> McNeely Pigott & Fox	Nashville	<b>115,851</b>
<b>20.</b> Lee & Assocs.	Los Angeles	<b>636,000</b>	<b>47.</b> New West	Louisville	<b>115,091</b>
<b>21.</b> The Kotchen Group	Farmington, CT	<b>513,431</b>	<b>48.</b> Rosica Public Relations	Parsippany, NJ	<b>91,146</b>
<b>22.</b> The Rogers Group	Los Angeles	<b>504,232</b>	<b>49.</b> Travers, Collins & Co.	Buffalo	<b>73,052</b>
<b>23.</b> VPE PR	S. Pasadena, CA	<b>501,370</b>	<b>50.</b> Vollmer PR	Houston	<b>64,501</b>
<b>24.</b> M/C/C	Dallas	<b>500,000</b>	<b>51.</b> Boardroom Comms.	Plantation, FL	<b>50,000</b>
<b>25.</b> Pierson Grant PR	Ft. Lauderdale	<b>478,050</b>	<b>52.</b> Rasky Baerlein	Boston	<b>48,373</b>
<b>26.</b> Charleston   Orwig	Hartland, WI	<b>457,428</b>	<b>53.</b> Intermark Group	Birmingham, AL	<b>37,000</b>
<b>27.</b> Gregory FCA Comms.	Ardmore, PA	<b>435,000</b>	<b>54.</b> rbb Public Relations	Miami	<b>20,000</b>



# PR ethics (or lack thereof)

By Fraser Seitel

Some years ago, a friend of mine worked for the biggest public relations agency in the world.

A dreaded vice chairman at the firm was notorious for “stepping on” the time sheets of subordinates, i.e. adding his \$500/hour billing rate on top of an account’s monthly statements, even though he had done nothing to assist in the account’s management.



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

The end result was that clients would unknowingly be billed an extra couple of thousand clams a month for work that was never done.

My friend brought this up at lunch one day with the long term CEO of the agency, who was aghast. “I’ve heard reports of this before. I’ll look into it,” he promised. But months later, the vice chairman was still steppin’, and the kindly CEO, who was subsequently canned, hadn’t said a word.

This tale of yore comes to mind in the sudden outbreak of ethical lapses among public relations agencies.

This year alone:

- The former head of Fleishman-Hillard’s Los Angeles office was ordered to start serving three and a half years in the slammer for padding consulting bills.

- The SEC charged an employee of investor relations firm Market Street Partners with taking money to provide acquaintances inside information about Google earnings.

- Greenpeace alleged that two PR firms, Ketchum and Dezenhall Resources, waged a campaign to steal confidential information, to benefit clients Dow Chemical and Sasol North America.

- Lawyer-turned-PR man Lanny Davis of Lanny Davis & Associates belatedly resigned as spokesman for Ivory Coast strongman Laurent Gbagbo, after pocketing \$200,000 to defend the defeated president, whose death squads terrorized the country and infuriated the international community.

Obviously, such ethical transgressions reflect poorly on Fleishman, Ketchum, Dezenhall and Davis. An agency culture that encourages, or even permits, bill padding, insider trading, illegal surveil-

lance or rationalizing the defense of thugs is seriously flawed. And one would hope that in retrospect, each firm conducts its own internal soul-searching to determine how much retainer income its reputation is worth.

Soul-searching would also be wise for those associations that look over the practice of PR, in particular the Public Relations Society of America and the Council of Public Relations Firms. Both are fine organizations, run by competent individuals.

But both have been sadly silent not only in response to these four most recent cases of PR agency ethical abuse, but in the cause of PR ethics generally. Both PRSA and the Council have wonderful Codes of Ethics. But these codes are toothless if the leaders of these groups refuse to stand up when one of their members violates the standards established.

What could PRSA or Council of PR Firms leaders do relative to ethics enforcement? How ‘bout these for starters?

## #1. Speak

The first thing an association executive should do when a member has violated association ethical policy is to speak out about the infraction.

Acknowledge as to how the conduct violates what the association and its industry stand for. Other professional organizations — the advertising industry or the medical or legal profession, for instance — aren’t reluctant to speak out or write about members who violate ethical precepts.

Talk may be cheap, but in cases of PR agency ethical violation, silence — particularly for a profession that carries the mantle of ethics as a basis for its relevance — is far worse.

## #2. Censure

When Charlie Rangel thumbed his nose at Congressional ethical rules and refused to acknowledge the severity of his abdication of the public trust, the House censured him.

Some decried the censure as “toothless,” in that the 40-year congressman was allowed to keep his seat and his rent-controlled apartments, and otherwise emerge unscathed.

But even the obtuse Rangel himself admitted that the censure was an “embarrassing and painful experience” that had left a blot on his record that would never be wiped away.

Similarly, if PR associations publicly “censured” ethical violators, this would serve a similar purpose, of letting agencies know that in an industry based on ethical

comportment, no transgression goes unpunished.

## #3. Sanction

It’s probably unlikely to expect a trade association that is too timid to even mention a dues paying member’s ethical failings to be willing to penalize that member for its questionable conduct. But what a signal it would send to the PR business and the vast army of PR skeptics abroad in the land.

“Impossible,” you say.

For inspiration, the PRSA or the Council of Public Relations Firms need only look at a sister organization in, of all places, the Middle East.

Yes, the Middle East, where the Middle East PR Association fined a Dubai member firm \$4,000 for doctoring and then distributing a photo from the group’s awards banquet, that removed the logos of competitors.

MEPRA put the firm on probation and required its staffers to sign the association’s ethical code and receive ethical training. The head of the agency acknowledged its “undeniable mistake.”

In this country, the birthplace of PR, PRSA apologists argue that the association has never been successful at sanctioning members and has abolished its mechanism for prosecuting or persecuting malpractice.

“Do we want to be known,” they ask, “for the number of practitioners we try to kick out each year, or rather, by the thousands of practitioners we help to be more ethical and more appropriately professional each year?”

How ‘bout both?

## #4. Study

Finally, if nothing else, the associations responsible for the PR business should lead the charge to examine how PR professionals regard the issue of “ethics.”

The last serious study of PR ethics was done 11 years ago by *PR Week* magazine, which interviewed 1,700 public relations executives and found, among other astonishing conclusions, that “44% were uncertain about ethics in the field” and that “25% lied on the job.”

These findings were so unnerving to a field that prides itself on ethical conduct, that no association, university or agency since has summoned up the courage to repeat the study — perhaps fearful of the notoriety that similarly damaging findings would have on the practice.

But the time for new research is now.

If PRSA or the Council of Public Relations Firms is interested at all in “standing up” for what they claim they “stand for,” a good place for them to start would be to dust off and update the *PR Week* ethics study. ●



# What to know about 2010 tax relief act – Part II

By Richard Goldstein

Last month's column discussed changes made by The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization and Job Creation Act.

This month's column will discuss some additional provisions.

## Employer transportation changes

PR agencies can provide their employees with transportation benefits that are tax free within limits. There are three categories of benefits: bicycle commuting reimbursements, parking, and transit passes and commuter transportation in a van, bus or similar highway vehicle. An employee may receive benefits from each category as long as the monthly limit is not exceeded. If benefits do exceed the monthly limit, the excess is treated as wages subject to income and payroll taxes. Transit passes/commuter transportation benefits and parking benefits may be provided through a salary-reduction arrangement. If this is in effect, employees can receive tax-free benefits for commuting.



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

**Transit passes**

The combined value of employer provided transit passes plus commuting ... is tax free up to \$230 per month. If the value of benefits for a month does not equal \$230, the unused amount is lost and may not be carried over to other months.

The exclusion above only applies to regular employees. Partners, more than 2% shareholders, and independent contractors who are provided passes can exclude from income taxes up to \$21 per month as a tax-free de minimis benefit.

## Parking

For regular employees, the value of employer-provided parking spots or subsidized parking is tax-free up to \$230 per month. The parking must be on or near the employer's premise, at a mass transit facility such as a train station or

car pooling center. The value of the parking exceeding \$230 per month is taxable.

## New tax law

The 2009 Stimulus Act increased the tax-free transportation limit to \$230 as discussed above. This \$230 limit was set to expire at the end of 2010. The new tax law extends the increased limit for transit passes and/or van pooling through 2011. Also, the IRS recently announced that the 2011 tax-free monthly limit for transit passes and/or pooling is \$230 (same as 2010).

If your agency does not have a transportation program in place, consider the benefit. When an employee pays part or all of the cost of public transportation by a pre-tax payroll deduction, he or she can set aside up to \$230 monthly on a pre-tax basis. The employee saves federal withholding and FICA payroll taxes on the amount deducted. The PR agency saves paying FICA on the amount deducted.

## Estate tax

You may remember that as a result of Congress not dealing with the estate tax laws, it allowed the estate tax to be repealed for estates of individuals dying in 2010. Prior estate tax law allowed a step up in basis to fair market value on the date of death for assets inherited from individuals dying before 2010. By way of example, an individual owning 1,000 shares of ABC PR at a cost basis of \$1,000 dies in 2009. The stock is transferred to a friend, fair market value \$100,000 at the date of death. The friend receiving the stock subsequently sells it for \$200,000 in 2011. The capital gain is \$100,000 not \$195,000.

Prior to the Tax Relief Act, individuals dying in 2010 were not subject to the estate tax and permitted a modified stepped-up basis for assets inherited. (This provision is not discussed in the column.)

The new tax law establishes for estates of individuals who die in 2011-2012 a \$5 million federal estate tax exemption with the 2012 amount indexed for inflation. (Note, an election can be made for certain descendants dying in 2010 to follow the 2011-2012 changes.) Large estates will be taxed at 35% above the

\$5 million threshold. Unfortunately, after 2012, the exemption reverts back to \$1 million.

For the first time, married individuals who don't use up their estate tax exemption will be able to pass along unused amounts to the surviving spouse. For example, if a husband dies and uses \$3 million of the estate tax exemption, the remaining \$2 million will pass to his surviving spouse whose estate tax exemption will now be \$7 million. In other words, unused exemptions of individuals who die in 2011 and 2012 (but not 2010) will be "portable." Unfortunately, unless Congress acts, this new provision will sunset after 2012. In fact, for now, all the provision will revert back to old law if you live past 2012.

## Gift changes

Good news here. The Tax Act sets the lifetime gift tax exemption for 2011 and 2012 at \$5 million — with 2012 indexed for inflation. Thus, the gift and estate tax are equalized for 2011 and 2012. This is a significant improvement over the previous \$1 million exemption (which continues to apply for 2013). Therefore, an unmarried person can give away up to \$5 million in property and married persons \$10 million. The tax rate on 2011 and 2012 gifts in excess of the \$5 million exemption is 35%, same as the estate tax rate.

By way of an example: Mary, a very successful 70-year-old owner of a PR agency wants to transfer 50% of her PR agency to her son John, age 35 who works for mom. The value of the 50% interest is \$4 million. Assuming Mary made no prior gifts and ignoring the annual gift tax exemption, there will be no gift tax on the transfer. Assuming Mary dies three years after the gift, only the value of the remaining stock will be included in her estate. If Mary waits to 2013 to make the gift, it is possible the gift tax exemption will only be \$1 million. Caution: there can be a state gift tax. States are not obligated to follow any of these changes. For example, New York State estate tax provisions do not follow the federal changes. However, New York does not have a gift tax. ●

# Bill-O blitzes Obama

By Kevin Foley

**B**ill O'Reilly used to be a mediocre TV reporter who found marginal fame hosting a gossip show called "Inside Edition," which he once claimed had won a prestigious Peabody Award until Al Franken discovered he was fibbing.

Later O'Reilly became the big dog at Fox News, where he vents his spleen Monday through Friday in the guise of a serious journalist, usually targeting anything Democratic or progressive.



**Kevin Foley** is President of KEF Media Associates, an Atlanta-based producer and distributor of sponsored news content to television and radio media.

Bill-O is brassy, bullying and opinionated. In other words, a perfect fit for Fox. So why President Barack Obama would give this insufferable lout the time of day is anyone's guess. But there he was, sitting for an interview with O'Reilly before the Super

Bowl. The result was another glaring example of why Obama's PR team is butchering their man's presidency.

By one count, O'Reilly — predictably — cut the President of the United States off more than 40 times, surpassing even Fox colleague Bret Baier's record for rudeness when he sat down to interrupt Obama last year.

It was a performance that went well beyond disrespectful. Impartiality was blown away in a hurricane of O'Reilly hubris.

"That interview ... is the most widely viewed interview, I think, of all time because of the Internet," O'Reilly crowed after verbally mugging Obama. "I wanted people who don't know Fox News and all they hear about is the liberal media defining us to know that we don't have any personal animus against the President of the United States."

O'Reilly? Serious journalists interested in facts and insight customarily let the interviewee complete his thoughts. That, and it's just



O'Reilly grills Obama during a Super Bowl Sunday interview.

common courtesy not to interrupt. One should especially mind their manners when talking with the most powerful man in the world.

So how is it Fox's blowhard-in-chief ever got through the front door? In fact, why is Fox News still afforded White House press credentials at all? Where's the upside?

Fox has long since dropped the pretense of being anything other than a 24-7 communications organ for the far right wing of the Republican Party, according to a former Fox News employee who came forward this week to confirm what many have known for some time.

"It is (Fox's) M.O. to undermine the administration and to undermine Democrats," the anonymous source told MediaMatters for America, a liberal media watch dog group. "They're a propaganda outfit but they call themselves news. You have to work there for a while to understand the nods and the winks."

The nods and winks seem to be coming from the very top, where former GOP operative and Fox News president Roger Ailes recently called Obama a "socialist."

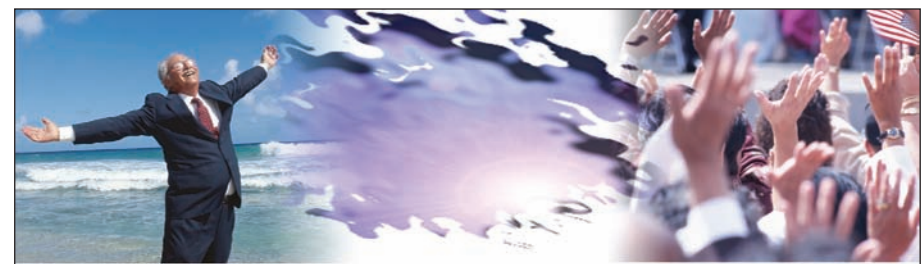
"... if you watch most of the programming on that channel, I don't think you would find many of those comments surprising," responded Robert Gibbs, former White House Spokesman.

The president has admitted he's having trouble getting his messages across to Americans. So why pretend Fox is objective and wants to help? It's like Burger King inviting McDonald's to review its newest sandwich. No good can come of it.

Yet the president's PR people let the "fair and balanced" Fox "reporter" make a Bozo bop bag out of Obama.

It's all red meat for an audience who mostly didn't vote for Obama and mostly hate him and all he represents, thanks largely to Fox and its on-air news and opinion talent. The president was a heavy underdog going in and the field was tilted in Bill-O's favor.

Obama never had a chance. ●



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## Simmons trades Disney for DC Comics

**C**ourtney Simmons has moved from the VP/Communications slot at Disney Interactive Media Group to head publicity for Warner Bros.'s DC Entertainment in Burbank, Calif.

WB last fall moved to integrate DC Entertainment more closely into Warner Bros. to build more platforms for DC Comics characters like Green Lantern and Batman.



Courtney Simmons

Simmons takes a Senior VP role to handle PR strategy for DC Comics' characters, in addition to overseeing media relations and internal communications for the company. She also

has oversight of its New York-based publicity team.

She reports to Executive VP John Rood, who said Simmons is joining at a time when the company is working the comics business into WB's films, video games, TV and consumer products.

Other DC properties include *MAD* magazine and Vertigo Publishing.

Earlier in her career, Simmons was at Sony Online Entertainment on the PR launch of DC Universe Online, a gaming venture with Warner Bros.

She previously headed media relations and government affairs for The LEGO Group and headed PR for The Six Flags Theme Park in Los Angeles.

WB rival Disney bought DC rival Marvel comics in a \$4 billion deal in 2009. ●

## Schoen, Otto advise Weber Shandwick

**W**eber Shandwick has tapped pollster Doug Schoen and longtime Procter & Gamble PR chief Charlotte Otto as senior advisors and members of its corporate strategic advisory board.

With Burson-Marsteller chief Mark Penn, Schoen is founding partner of WPP's Penn, Schoen & Berland. He has counseled Bill Clinton, New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg, ex-Indiana Governor/Senator Evan Bayh, Time-Warner, AT&T



Charlotte Otto & Doug Schoen

and P&G.

Schoen is a Fox News contributor and author of 10 books, his latest being "Mad As Hell: How the Tea Party Movement Is Fundamentally Remaking Our Two-Party System." He will counsel clients on issues management, corporate reputation and PA.

Otto stepped down from P&G in 2010 after a 13-year stint as its top global PA and external relations officer. She handed media relations, product publicity, employee/shareholder communications, government affairs and philanthropy under five CEOs of the Cincinnati-based consumer powerhouse. ●

## PR pro hits jackpot in Florida

**N**ew Florida Governor Rick Scott has named Florida Lottery PR chief Cynthia O'Connell head of the nation's No. 3 lottery. She is upped from the Director of Research and Promotions post.

O'Connell ran O'Connell Consulting before joining the Lottery. Earlier, she was at Hill & Knowlton, where she worked as senior VP and GM of its Tampa office, and Weber Shandwick.



Cynthia O'Connell

The widow of Florida Supreme Court Justice and University of Florida president Stephen O'Connell

is a UF trustee.

Scott praised O'Connell's "impressive record of leadership and brand management." He is confident that O'Connell will improve the Lottery's goal of "maximizing revenues for the enhancement of public education."

The Lottery had ticket sales of \$3.7B during last year, of which \$1.2B went to

schools. It employs 400 people and has a budget of more than \$130M.

The Florida Lottery is currently rolling out instant ticket sales machines throughout the Sunshine State. ●

## Canna checks in at GCI Health

**E**lisia Canna, who was Executive VP and Deputy GM of Porter Novelli's healthcare practice, is now at GCI Health. Assuming the Director of Consumer Health slot, Canna reports to CEO Wendy Lund.



Elisia Canna

Lund says Canna's role will be to make sure GCI considers the "patient's point of view" in its outreach efforts.

Canna has handled campaigns for Nicorette, Great American Smokeout, Benadryl and AdvilPM. She also did PR for prescription brands dealing arthritis, dermatology and mental health.

GCI, which is a WPP property, has more than 80 staffers. ●

## Lieberman press sec to NBC

**E**rika Masonhall, Press Secretary for lame duck Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.), has left for a PR slot at NBC News.

Masonhall has been tapped to manage communications for "NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams," "Meet the Press" and the network's political reporting unit.

She was previously a communications staffer for the Democratic Leadership Council before joining Lieberman in 2007.

Amid a difficult political climate for the Democrat-turned-Independent, Lieberman said last month that he would not seek a fifth term.

NBC has also promoted Meghan Pianta to publicist under Masonhall and upped "Today" publicist Megan Kopf to director.

All report to Lauren Kapp, Senior VP, NBC News Marketing and Communications. ●

## Carney debuts as White House Press Secretary

Former Time correspondent and bureau chief Jay Carney made his White House press secretary debut on Wednesday, drawing praise with a relatively uneventful but well-attended briefing.

Carney's first question from the White House press corps asked how he sees his role as a press secretary and former journalist.

"We obviously all here serve the President. I work for him," he said. "But the press secretary is a unique position within a White House. And not just because I'm a former journalist, because I think every press secretary understood this and understands it — I work to promote the President and the message that he's trying — the messages he's trying to convey to the American people."

Carney added that he also works to help reporters do their jobs. "So I think it's been said before that the office that the press secretary has is somewhat symbolically located about halfway between the briefing room and the Oval Office, and I think that says something about what the nature of the job is," he said.

Keith Koffler, the veteran W.H. correspondent who pens the White House Dossier blog, called Carney's debut "smooth and unruffled" and said he "sounded like he'd been press secretary for about six years."

He added that "overall, as a professional matter, an excellent performance. Carney was under extreme pressure, and he pulled through. Even made it look easy."

Writing for *GQ*, Ana Marie Cox called the debut "less a news event than a ritual."

She wrote: "He performed as well as anyone in the position can be expected to: He made no news — not-making-news is in the press secretary's job description. He was minimally charming and maximally on point. He wore a dark maroon tie with blue stripes."

The White House also said that deputy press secretary Bill Burton is leaving the administration to set up a political consulting shop with former Rahm Emanuel adviser Sean Sweeney in D.C. ●

## SBA eyes web overhaul

The U.S. Small Business Administration is overhauling its online communications and improving its website functionality and engagement with citizens.

The Obama administration is promoting small business and SBA programs to boost economic recovery, although some members of Congress, which controls the agency's budget, have said they are eyeing cuts to the SBA.

The 60-year-old federal agency plans to spend between \$500K and \$30M for its duration, which could stretch from 10 months to more than four years.

A firm will be awarded the business on an "all or none" basis, but joint ventures can pitch if declared before the proposal deadline.



Jay Carney



The scope of work is wide-ranging, from strategic planning and content development to social media management, web design and technical analysis of its online operations. ●

## Cassidy goes to bat for Bangladesh

Cassidy & Associates is working for the Institute for U.S.-Bangladesh Relations (Leesburg, Va.) to improve the relationship between the two nations.

Bangladesh has been rocked last month by clashes between riot police and investors upset with the big price declines at Dhaka Stock Exchange. The Muslim country, which bills itself as the "undiscovered gem of Asia," is eager to offset the drop in remittances by Bangladeshis abroad.

Perched between China and Pakistan, Bangladesh woos U.S. businesses by touting its strategic location, low-cost workforce and expanding information technology sector.

Cassidy's COO Gregg Hartley is working the Institute's business. He is assisted by Senior VP Mark Clack, a veteran of Sen. Ben Cardin's (D-Md.) staff, and Molly Mark, who worked for former Sen. Jim Jeffords (I-Vt.).

Cassidy had worked for Pakistan, which Bangladesh split from in 1971 after a bloody civil war, until last January. ●

## Ketchum's Martin to PhRMA

The drug industry's top trade group has recruited Ketchum senior VP Josephine Martin to head communications.

Martin took up the Executive VP, Public Affairs, post on March 1 at the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America's Washington, D.C., headquarters overseeing communications and alliance development.

PhRMA chief Bill Tauzin stepped down last year. He was replaced by John Castellani, who previously headed the Business Roundtable. Ken Johnson, a former aide to Tauzin, previously served as Senior VP of Communications for the group.

Martin was Senior VP of Public Affairs at Ketchum and held agency posts at GolinHarris and National Media Inc.

She was VP of Communications for the American Red Cross and also has trade association experience as a former Senior VP of PA for the Federation of American Hospitals.

PhRMA has added Cassidy & Assocs. to its lobbying line-up to deal with Food and Drug Administration issues and comparative effectiveness research matters, according to its federal filing.

Cassidy Vice Chmn. & COO Gregg Hartley spearheads the five-member PhRMA team. ●



## Livingston helped squelch Egypt reform bid

Livingston Group, the D.C. firm of former Speaker of the House-designate Bob Livingston, received \$132K from Egypt during the second-half of last year.

A major effort was to help squelch support for an Egypt democracy and human rights resolution (Senate Resolution 586) that was put forward by Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Russ Feingold (D-Wisc.).

The non-binding resolution called for election monitors and release of political prisoners. It attracted a dozen co-sponsors but failed to make it out of the Foreign Relations Committee.

According to federal records, Livingston personally led the charge against the measure, contacting staffers in the offices of Republicans Jim DeMint (S.C.), John Barrasso (Wy.), Chris Bond (Mo.), Roger Wicker (Miss.), Jim Inhofe (Okla.), Robert Bennett (Utah), Johnny Isakson (Ga.) and David Vitter (La.).

Introduced in July, the resolution rapped the government of Hosni Mubarak for continuing to "harass, intimidate, arbitrarily detain, and engage in violence against peaceful demonstrators, journalists, human rights activities, and bloggers."

The resolution said "unconditional support for governments that do not respect human rights undermines the credibility of the U.S. and creates tensions, including in the Muslim world, that can be exploited."

The firm contacted various think tanks and NGOs on U.S./Egyptian ties and regional security matters in the Middle East.

That roster includes Carnegie Endowment for International

Peace, CATO Institute, Freedom House, Israel Policy Forum, Hudson Institute, Center for American Progress, Foundation for Middle East Peace, Human Rights Watch and Americans for Peace Now. ◉

## PPG introduces Kosovo politico to D.C.

Prime Policy Group has an agreement to represent Agim Ceku, the former Prime Minister of Kosovo and chief of the Kosovo Liberation Army.

As leader of the Social Democratic Party of Kosovo, Ceku is to brief policymakers on the post-election landscape in his country.

PPG's agreement calls for a range of meetings in D.C. for Ceku with members of the National Security Council, State Dept., House and Senate Committees on Foreign Relations, U.S. Helsinki Commission, think tanks and media.

Special outreach is slated for New York Democratic Congressman Eliot Engel, who "maintains a keen interest in Kosovo," according to the engagement letter written by Lisa Cotter Colangelo, Senior International Consultant at PPG.

The current work is conducted on a pro bono basis, but PPG looks to provide more service to the SDPK as the year progresses.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008. Serbia has charged Ceku with war crimes.

PPG is part of Burson-Marsteller. ◉



Agim Ceku

Photo: State Dept.

### 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.

**Alston & Bird LLP**, Washington, D.C., registered February 4, 2011 for **Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States**, Washington, D.C., regarding promoting travel by members of the U.S. Congress to Taiwan, facilitating meetings with members of President Obama's Cabinet and other senior Administration officials, and more.

**Blank Rome Government Relations LLC**, Washington, D.C., registered January 13, 2011 for **Moroccan American Center for Policy**, Washington, D.C., regarding supporting the work of the principal, Embassy staff and other consultants to advance the interests of the Government of Morocco with U.S. foreign policy decision-makers and opinion leaders.

**The Fratelli Group**, Washington, D.C., registered January 14, 2011 for the **Government of the Republic of Korea**, Embassy of the Republic of Korea, Washington, D.C., regarding providing public relations and consulting services.

### 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 <http://sopr.senate.gov>.

**Brown Rudnick LLP**, Washington, D.C., registered February 4, 2011 for **Amazon.com**, Seattle, Wash., regarding Internet security.

**Capitol Hill Strategies, LLC**, Washington, D.C., registered February 9, 2011 for **Mortgage Bankers Association**, Washington, D.C., regarding reform of Government Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs) and residential mortgage interest deduction.

**Crowell Strategies, LLC**, Chevy Chase, Md., registered February 11, 2011 for **Google, Inc.**, Mountain View, Calif., regarding energy, green technology, wireless policy, copyright and telecomm competition.

**The Glover Park Group LLC**, Washington, D.C., registered February 14, 2011 for **BNSF Railway Company**, Fort Worth, Texas, regarding representing an array of issues whose outcomes will be influenced by the reauthorization of the surface transportation bill.

**Greenberg Traurig, LLP**, Washington, D.C., registered February 11, 2011 for **National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA)**, Alexandria, Va., regarding healthcare legislative and regulatory issues affecting independent community pharmacies.

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<b>Public Relations Account Executive</b> Miller Brooks	Zionsville, IN, United States	9/09/2010 <a href="#">save job</a>   <a href="#">view/apply</a>
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Christine Milton, Chair/CEO

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