

## CONTENTS

Education .....1,3,5,6  
Measurement .....1,4  
What's Trending In PR .....2  
Digital PR .....2  
Events Calendar .....2  
Data Dive .....7  
The Week in PR .....8



## EDUCATION

### Report Card From the Academics: Next Wave of PR Pros Lacks Sharp Writing, Presentation Skills

No matter how many years it's been since matriculation, with the passing of Labor Day images of school starting flood the database known as our brain. It's in this spirit that we conclude our 2-part series about how PR and communications are taught in colleges and universities. It is our intention that examining trends in this area will help both PR pros and academics improve the quality of their work.

To foreshadow what's ahead, we found plenty of agree-

ment between what our PR and communications pros told us and what the quartet of academics we interviewed said.

Writing—specifically, writing for PR vehicles that is clear, concise, creative and persuasive—was among the skills both the pros and academics emphasized. Several of the academics said students lack familiarity with PR writing, which, they said, is different from writing term papers. Our academics said this is an area they stress extensively with students.

*Continued on page 3*

## MEASUREMENT

BY MARGOT SAVELL, SVP, HEAD OF GLOBAL MEASUREMENT, HILL+KNOWLTON STRATEGIES' RESEARCH + DATA INSIGHTS

### Image Analytics Emerges as Vital Measurement for Communications

In the world of PR, September is Measurement Month. My use of the word "world" in the previous sentence was intentional. Measurement Month activities are designed to spotlight measurement on the world stage.

This month marks the third annual global program to showcase the importance of PR measurement. Each region of the world has one week designated for events; the America week begins Sept. 19 and runs through Sept. 23. The international **Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication** (AMEC) again is the sponsor.

With that in mind, it seems fitting as we approach next week to take a look at one of measurement's hottest topics: image

recognition in social media.

But first, let's be clear: The importance of images in media is far from new. For more than 100 years, the inclusion of photos alongside text in newspaper and magazine articles has enhanced brand awareness and the value of brands' PR efforts. This value has been reflected in analytics; measurement professionals have always given higher scores to print coverage (and later, online articles) with images.

Mainstream photojournalism dates back to the late 1880s, coincidentally the same time **BurrellesLuce** started

*Continued on page 4*



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## UPCOMING EVENTS AND WEBINARS

**PLATINUM PR AND  
AGENCY ELITE  
AWARDS LUNCHEON**  
OCTOBER 19, 2016  
NEW YORK CITY, NY

**SOCIAL MEDIA  
CONFERENCE AND  
CRISIS MANAGE-  
MENT WORKSHOP**  
OCTOBER 19-20, 2016  
NEW YORK CITY

**DIGITAL PR AWARDS  
LUNCHEON**  
NOVEMBER 16, 2016  
NEW YORK CITY

# How My Team Combats the Noise to Reach Reporters



*[Editor's Note: In this recurring feature we ask PR pros to spot trends and discuss how they are reacting to them. In this edition we hear from Discovery SVP Kristin Brown, who oversees communications for the Investigation Discovery, Destination America and American Heroes Channel.]*

**Excessive Noise:** One of the biggest trends my team faces is too much noise. I mean this for reporters who are inundated with pitches that might not be appropriate for them as well as the competition we face within the television industry for viewers. We've developed three strategies for facing this competitive environment.

**1.** The cardinal rule for working with reporters hasn't changed: Do your homework. What has changed is how we research what might appeal to a reporter. Not only does that mean knowing what the reporter is writing about, but with so many entertainment reporters now living their professional lives on social media it's become part of our job to know what they're personally interested in and talking about throughout the day.

Don't tell the boss, but it's fun to follow reporters...comment on their stories...become fans of their work and, increasingly, pitch them via their favorite social platforms.

In addition to working differently with traditional reporters, the crowded entertainment marketplace

means we have to change our own communication tools.

**2.** When we have hundreds of television channels and streaming services all heralding their next big show, how do we make our networks stand out? We are constantly trying new things, from **Facebook Live** direct-to-consumer events with talent to embedded video and photo elements in releases to digital media tours. Experimentation is critical. We have a culture of innovation on my team. It's a safe space where some degree of failure is okay as long as you're learning. Then we take these new best practices and implement them across our projects.

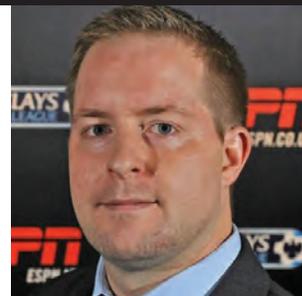
**3.** I place an enormous value on fantastic writing. We're in a creative industry and our releases, pitches and other materials need to reflect the quality of the shows we're promoting. Can we lead with nostalgia that ignites a personal connection? Can we tug those heartstrings? Can we write something really clever or funny to make a reporter laugh? Dust off those creative writing skills. Maybe you can't take these liberties with traditional releases but you can likely infuse them into an email, pitch or tweet. ■

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## DIGITAL PR

BY PAUL MELVIN, SR DIRECTOR, COMMUNICATIONS, ESPN

# ESPN Team Building Tip: If Writing Is There All Follows



Do hiring practices change when building a digital team? We asked ESPN's Paul Melvin, senior director, communications, what he seeks in a digital hire. Here's what he said:

"I think people make a mistake if they hire for a 'digital' or 'social' communications role based on the idea that criteria are fundamentally different than what you look for in any communicator. I always look for the ability to write, passion, a combination of self-confidence and self-awareness, and emotional intelligence. Yes, they must have a base knowledge about modern media and communication landscape, but my assumption

is that if they have all of the above, they will have that knowledge. Passion is key."

Writing is still important? "Writing is more important than ever, actually. The ability to write in an array of formats, voices, contexts and lengths is critical. I've found the better somebody writes, the better they'll be at speaking and creating other content if they're willing to work at it." ■

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# Combo of Hard, Soft Skills Critical to PR Success

Both the pros and the academics also mentioned that aspiring PR pros need to have a reasonable grasp of business concepts. Analytics found its way into the responses of both groups, too. Developing critical thinking skills was another area where both the pros and the academics agreed. Last, softer skills, such as how to present in front of a group, were noted as an area that students are working on in the classroom and which pros felt was necessary.

## WHAT WE ASKED THE PROS

To refresh your memory, in our previous edition, August 29, we asked in-house communicators and agency professionals to:

- Assess the readiness of young PR and communications professionals when they begin their careers.
- Tell us whether or not there is a significant difference in effectiveness between young pros who studied PR and communications in college or post-graduate programs and those who had not.
- Assume they had the ear of an academic. What would you tell him/her to emphasize to students?



The PR pros' answers were fairly consistent. All touted the digital prowess of incoming professionals. Charlene DeBar, manager, corporate communications, **Toshiba America Medical Systems**, was representative of many of our pros who said young hires "are incredibly adept at digital and social communication. It's the world they've grown up in, and seasoned professionals can learn a lot from newcomers in this area."



Written and oral communications were skills our pros found were wanting, however. In addition, hard and soft skills were mentioned. Eric Hollreiser, VP, corporate communications, **Amaya Inc.** and **PokerStars**, urged academics to "teach business fundamentals" to enhance young PR pros' understanding of the impact communications has on the bottom line." It will improve their counsel, he added.



Turning to soft skills, Linda Rutherford, CCO at **Southwest Airlines**, said, "I have seen several collegiate programs begin to offer courses in executive presence, confidence in presenting at

all levels of an organization and influencing beyond positional authority." With much work sent to cross-functional units, "even a junior member of the communications" team could be participating in projects with senior staff, she added. "How you show up" and other soft skills "are becoming more critical...as we become" chief integrators.

Last, our pros were split about whether or not study in college or grad school made a significant difference for young hires. Some said the students came in knowing the language of PR and the basics. Others agreed, but said the students' edge vs. non-students was slight.

**"Those who've studied PR in college require less training and are more prepared to assume responsibility than those who haven't...[yet those with] a well-rounded education that encourages creativity and independent thought...are the ones running agencies and becoming invaluable strategic partners to brand clients."**

**Paul Englert**  
**VP, C. Mondavi & Family**



As Paul Englert, VP of marketing, **C. Mondavi & Family**, said, those who've studied PR "require less training and are more prepared to assume responsibility than those who haven't...they are quicker to jump right into their work. They are more confident, empowered with formal PR training and are quick to produce effective, concise communications and assume client management responsibilities." Still, he put a premium on "a well-rounded education that encourages creativity and independent thought...these professionals ultimately are the ones running agencies and becoming invaluable strategic partners" to brand clients.

*Continued on page 5*

## PRNews' CSR AWARDS

PR News' CSR Awards is the industry's best showcase for the most impactful, socially responsible and green campaigns from the past year. Enter this program to shine the spotlight on the people and campaigns driving your organization's success in corporate social responsibility.

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Winners will be honored in D.C. in March 2017

# Listening Tools Up the Ante in Image Recognition

media monitoring, including for images of spokespeople, logos and subsequent branding.

“When consumers have text and an image, they automatically create an association that provides greater overall retention. This translates to a higher return on communication influence,” says Johna Burke, EVP at BurrellesLuce and North America co-chair of AMEC. “It’s not a surprise to see the visual demand rise in social media. The better you understand all implications of your coverage, including image association, the more accurately you will be able to understand and predict shifts and changes in brand awareness.”

## 3.25 BILLION PHOTOS DAILY

In Mary Meeker’s *Internet Trends* report (2014), it was estimated that 1.8 billion photos were shared on select social channels daily. The channels were **Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram** and **Snapchat**. In her latest report, for 2016, Meeker of **Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers** estimates the figure for 2015, now including Facebook Messenger, to be 3.25 billion photos daily. There are a bit more than 7 billion people on Earth. Think about how often every person on Earth, even those without internet access, would have to upload and share a photo each week to reach that figure. So the longtime practice of image analytics in traditional media has become a hot new topic in social media, and listening tools are starting to add image recognition to their capabilities.

## BRAND LOGOS WITHOUT BRAND NAMES

Up to 80% of posts with logos do not mention the name of the brand in the text, according to **Talkwalker**, an analytics tool. For example, a consumer complains about his car on Facebook, Instagram and **Twitter**; he doesn’t include the make or model in the text, but he provides a photo of his vehicle showing a large brand logo. A post like this would be missed by systems solely analyzing text.

So if you are basing your understanding of brand awareness only on the volume and outcomes of text posts, you could be missing “hidden” mentions of your brand—meaningful conversations that use visual language—and therefore, deeper brand insights. You could be missing up to 80% of the true picture (pun unintended).

Think about the potential influence on your campaign or

Instagram, Youth and Photos
<b>40 billion:</b> Number of Instagram photos shared (Nov '15) *
<b>91%:</b> The percentage of Instagram posts containing images (March '16) **
<b>90%:</b> Percentage of Instagram users younger than 35 (June '15) ***
<b>106 million:</b> Number of U.S. Instagram users by 2018 (March '15)****
Sources: *Instagram ** Locowise *** PA State University **** eMarketer

crisis management program should you fail to catch every mention of your brand. Conversely, think about the potential insights into your brand strategy that you will gain when you capture every mention of your company.

Talkwalker was one of the first social listening tools with image recognition. Its technology recognizes 30,000 brand logos in images posted on social channels.

“They say a picture’s worth 1,000 words. On social you can probably multiply that by 100,” says Todd Grossman, Talkwalker’s CEO for the Americas. “For brands, knowing when, why and who is using your logo is critical to understanding the true reach and power of your brand.”

## THE VALUE OF PHOTOS ON SOCIAL

A senior executive at another popular listening platform **Brandwatch** reinforces that opinion. “Considering the continued success of Instagram, **Snapchat, YouTube** and **Periscope**, a social media picture or video is worth much more [than 1,000 words] to brands—it’s filled with valuable consumer insights, preferences and unsolicited public opinion,” says Thomas Schmidt, a Brandwatch VP. “We believe visuals are the next essential piece of the social data landscape.”

Another player in the image recognition arena, **Signal Labs** is partnering with **Ditto Labs** to leverage advances in computer vision technology. Signal offers several use cases, including face detection, and logo and product recognition.

“Face detection capabilities are utilized to know when celebrities, politicians and other influential individuals are interacting with a brand’s products,” says Adam Beough, Signal Labs’ president and co-founder. “Face detection can also be used for interpreting emotion, sentiment and even better, understanding of audience demographics. Similarly, logo and product recognition capabilities are leveraged for visual reputation management and crisis communications.”

This becomes more important daily as visual content grows in popularity and generates higher engagement with users. The consumer shift to image-based social platforms is a global phenomenon. Instagram said not quite one year ago that more than 80 million photos are uploaded daily on it by the platform’s 400+ million users. How many of those have a brand logo but no text to accompany them?

Think about the massive numbers of users on some of the most visually oriented social platforms: Facebook (almost 2 billion users), Instagram (400 million, as we said earlier), Twitter (320 million) and Pinterest (100 million). Consider how many visual stories they are sharing, and think about what you might be missing with text-based-only analytics.

By harnessing the power of image analytics, PR and marketing organizations can uncover hidden posts, have a better picture of how brands are perceived online and use that social intelligence to drive future strategy. ■

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## WHAT WE ASKED THE ACADEMICS

But now, on to this week's focus, the academics. To be more strategic, the academics we spoke with all are former or current PR pros. The questions we submitted to them were related to those we asked of the PR pros. For example, we asked the academics:

- How do you incorporate the latest PR and communications trends into your classes?
- What areas are students least proficient in when they enter your classroom?
- What 2-3 skills or pieces of knowledge do you hope students have when they leave your classroom?
- Without concern for budgets, what 2-3 things would you add to the curriculum to produce better PR and communications pros?

## INCORPORATING TRENDS INTO THE CLASSROOM

With one of the major criticisms of professional education being that it can be static and behind the times, we felt it important to ask our academics how they infuse their classrooms with the hottest PR trends.



For Lawrence Parnell, associate professor and director of the Master's in Strategic PR program at **The George Washington University**, trends are included in his program "by updating the curriculum on an annual basis – e.g. texts, discussion topics and assignments. This is based on student evaluations and our assessment of the current state of the practice of PR."

In terms of digital skills, Parnell's program has "cooperative arrangements with software companies to give our students access to media monitoring, influencer tracking and social media analytics during their time in the program."



Deborah Brown, an adjunct professor at **Stern College for Women, Yeshiva University**, brings trends into the classroom from her position as partner, managing director, **Peppercomm**. "One trend is storytelling," she says. "It's important for

students to learn how to tell a compelling story, whether it's for a pitch or a piece of content for a website." She adds, "Students need to learn how to present well and tell a story as opposed to reading slides." Another trend she's introduced recently in her classroom is the ability to "get across a key message succinctly by creating 6-second videos...audiences today are so distracted and it's challenging to keep anyone's attention."



Like Brown, the emphasis for Kristen Heflin, the PR program director at **Kennesaw State University's** School of Communication & Media, is on student assignments and lectures. "We require our students to develop websites, blogs and social media campaigns," she says. "We also require many of our students to conduct keyword research, learn the principles of search engine optimization and become certified in Hootsuite and Cision." To keep up with trends, Heflin and her colleagues, in addition to reading and conducting academic research, "attend professional development workshops, PRSA meetings and technology-focused webinars."

**"It's important for students to learn how to tell a compelling story, whether it's for a pitch or a piece of content for a website. Students need to learn how to present well and tell a story as opposed to reading slides."**

**Deborah Brown, adjunct professor, Stern College for Women, Yeshiva University, and partner, managing director, Peppercomm**



Jessica Nielsen, adjunct professor at **Georgetown University's** Global Strategic Communications program, assigns her students readings in industry publications and on newsworthy sites. These resources "provide our students with ongoing crisis examples and information about campaigns, which we then discuss in-depth."

Both Nielsen and Parnell emphasize giving students access to PR pros to keep the curriculum sharp. Says Nielsen, "We bring practitioners to our classes through hybrid learning formats that pair in-person intensive residencies with ongoing virtual classes. These platforms allow us to remove global boundaries and let students speak directly with CCOs and thought leaders who are managing major campaigns."

Similarly, Parnell's program, also based in D.C., "has a constantly changing list of guest lecturers representing the media,

*Continued on page 6*



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government, nonprofits and associations.” In addition students can hear guest lecturers from the D.C. offices of global PR firms and corporate communications professionals from area companies. There’s also a virtual aspect via Webex, he says.

## WHERE STUDENTS ARE LACKING

Many of the skills and abilities that the PR pros noted in the August 29 edition—writing, presentation skills, for example—resurfaced when we asked the academics where their students were lacking. Writing was mentioned a lot.

For Brown of Stern, who teaches undergraduates, “It’s more about what students need to be taught” than what they lack when they arrive at college. “Writing for communications often is different from what they learned in high school, and it needs to be succinct, compelling, and newsworthy.”

In addition, Brown says presentation and oral skills “are key so [young pros] can do well in an interview or have a conversation with a client. This comes from learning various techniques and practice.”

Parnell of GW echoes Brown on the type of writing students need to master. Students, he says, need to gain “the ability to write persuasively as opposed to writing academic papers.”

Heflin of Kennesaw State, referring to incoming college students, says “many students struggle with the rules of grammar and clarity.” She says time devoted to writing basics is time missed “discussing strategic message development.”

Related to writing issues, “some students also struggle with critical thinking,” Heflin says. “Many are so focused on memorization or asking professors for the right answer that they lack confidence in their ability to come up with a solution.”

In addition, Parnell says students often lack an “understanding of the fundamental role of research in strategic communications planning and program evaluation.” Training in ethics and PR law also are areas of need, he says. Core courses with a practical emphasis in these areas are required in GW’s Master’s program, he says.

Nielsen of Georgetown, who, like Parnell, teaches graduate students and students who already are in the work world, says, “One area that we focus on carefully to accelerate our students’ progression into the CCO position is emotional intelligence within a global environment.” Nielsen urges her students to think about communications “in the broadest sense and not just about the U.S.” In addition, the Georgetown program covers investor relations and financial communications, two areas that are not always offered in academic settings.

Parnell also feels students upon entering school “should have a better understanding of the career paths in PR—agency, corporate, nonprofit and government/politics—and what skills they need to develop to succeed in each.”

## DEPARTING SKILLS

Speaking of skills, we asked what skills and knowledge the academics hope their students depart with.

In addition to the skills he noted above, Parnell wants his students to depart his program with “an enhanced ability to think critically and apply communications theory and strategy to real-life communications challenges.”

They’re asked to prove this ability at the program’s end, he says, when students must complete either an in-depth case study or a comprehensive strategic communications plan. Students who choose the latter option add more practicality to the equation by choosing a communications plan related to their employer. “This often results in a new assignment and/or a promotion,” he says.

**“Students often lack an understanding of the fundamental role of research in strategic communications planning and program evaluation. Training in ethics and PR law also are areas of need.”**

**Lawrence Parnell, associate professor/  
program director, Master’s in Strategic PR,  
The George Washington University**

Brown’s response to this question seems to stem from her full-time position at Peppercomm: The skills she hopes students take from the classroom include “knowing how to work in teams, understanding how to conduct research to uncover a white space for a client, and how to develop strategic and creative ideas to solve a client’s challenge.”

Heflin pushes solid writing skills. “It’s crucial,” she says. “It’s also important that students leave our program as critical thinkers with the ability to ask good questions and the research skills to find the answers.” How to plan and manage a campaign also are critical skills. “That way they know how to implement effective, research-driven, ethical campaigns instead of just focusing on isolated tactics.”

Nielsen was succinct on this question: “a heightened self-awareness, a global view. and a deep understanding of the role of a communications leader within business strategy.”

## ACADEMICS’ WISH LISTS

Last, we asked what our academics would add to the curriculum if budgets were not an issue. Nielsen says she’d emphasize “research and analytics to develop insights.” Heflin also would push analytics, social media and SEO and video production.

Nielsen also would add courses that emphasize leadership and self-awareness and classes that will help future CCOs collaborate “across an entire organization.”

Parnell says his graduate program would be helped if undergrads “did more practical skill development, such as persuasive writing, basic communications research, public opinion work and ethics.”

Brown would add classes on storytelling “so they learn how to effectively communicate orally as well as...craft compelling, succinct content. This is very different from speech classes.” ■

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# IMG Dominates Consumer Engagement With B2B Instagram Videos, Actions Up 168% in Q2

It's hardly a surprise for loyal Data Dive readers that video is one of the main ingredients driving consumer engagement for B2C and B2B brands. Media companies are catching on.

The latest evidence is *BuzzFeed's* reorg, announced August 23, when founder Jonah Peretti told employees, "Having a single 'video department' in 2016 makes about as much sense as having a 'mobile department'... as digital video becomes ubiquitous, every major initiative at BuzzFeed around the world will find an expression as video...."

Many other media brands, both new media and traditional mass media, such as the *NY Times*, also are betting heavily on video. Not so for many B2B brands, as you'll see below.

Turning to consumer engagement with U.S. B2B brands on **Instagram** for Q2 2016, the subject of this week's **Shareable** data provided exclusively to *PR News Pro*, we find brands generated almost 1.63 million video actions. This was a 168% increase year over year. Actions are defined as the sum of consumer likes and shares. The bad news is that the top 30 brands listed below accounted for 99.7% of the video actions. Top brand, **IMG Models Worldwide**, ac-

counted for 92% of the video engagement, with nearly 1.5 million video actions.

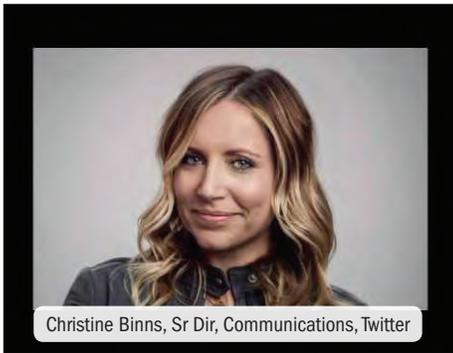
**UPS** saw the most significant growth in video actions (+4135%), followed by **Speedglas Welding Helmets** (+1141%).

Some things don't change much. During Q1, videos of supermodels Gigi and Bella Hadid had boosted IMG to the top spot on the B2B chart for Instagram engagement. Once again a post about a Hadid, a 10-picture video of Gigi canoeing with a sleek young man in Italy, was the brand's most-engaged content. The brand had nearly 8 million actions, almost nine times more than the second highest brand, **Pantone**, which had 830,000. The total for IMG represents a 178% increase compared with the same time period last year. Note that several brands listed in this chart have popular B2C units.

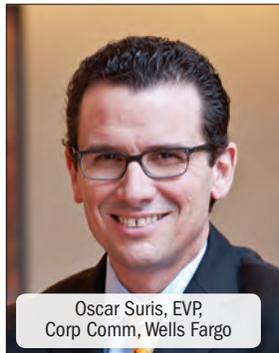
Overall for Q2 2016, total actions on Instagram for U.S. B2B brands increased 159% year over year. Since January the average number of posts published grew by 11%. ■

Shareable		SOCIAL SCORECARD				
TOP B2B BRANDS – Q2 2016						
Based on Total Actions (likes and comments)						
Data provided exclusively to PR News by Shareable. Source:						
Rank	Brand		Total Actions	Total Content	Actions per Content	Total Audience
1	IMG Models Worldwide		7,687,399	1,430	5,376	813,372
2	Pantone		829,462	108	7,680	580,832
3	Sotheby's		798,320	306	2,609	295,020
4	Lockheed Martin		98,930	36	2,748	95,836
5	Zillow		90,675	90	1,008	127,507
6	Caterpillar	Cat Products	66,563	35	1,902	121,864
7	IBM		43,840	38	1,154	81,783
8	Kickstarter		41,352	97	426	116,367
9	FedEx		35,456	33	1,074	46,348
10	The Corcoran Group		35,293	118	299	22,639
11	Northrop Grumman Corporation		18,983	35	542	20,838
12	HubSpot		15,956	79	202	41,758
13	Oracle		15,426	41	376	56,210
14	UPS		14,929	27	553	25,548
15	Pulte Homes		13,508	55	246	14,679

Shareable		SOCIAL SCORECARD				
TOP B2B BRANDS – Q2 2016						
Based on Total Actions (likes and comments)						
Data provided exclusively to PR News by Shareable. Source:						
Rank	Brand		Total Actions	Total Content	Actions per Content	Total Audience
16	Siemens		13,147	32	411	17,123
17	SAP		12,466	47	265	9,611
18	Lennar		12,287	40	307	30,729
19	wix		11,457	70	164	26,429
20	US Postal Service		9,703	38	255	11,110
21	Monsanto Company		9,217	34	271	11,400
22	Hootsuite		8,543	48	178	26,831
23	Huge		6,831	13	525	45,157
24	Thomson Reuters		6,229	60	104	8,133
25	Speedglas Welding Helmets		5,622	17	331	25,892
26	3M Commercial Graphics		5,572	43	130	23,212
27	KPMG		5,303	29	183	15,463
28	Stantec		5,086	180	28	1,976
29	SAS Software		4,820	115	42	1,814
30	REMAX		4,734	22	215	15,569



Christine Binns, Sr Dir, Communications, Twitter

Oscar Suris, EVP,  
Corp Comm, Wells Fargo

Andrea Johnston, CEO, Pure Communications

**1. Binns There Done That:** A few words about **Twitter's** hiring of **Kristin Binns** as senior director of corporate and consumer communications Sept. 7. She replaces the recently arrived and more recently departed **Natalie Kerris**, who joined the microblogger in late February (*PRN*, Feb. 29) and left after just six months Aug. 2 (*PRN*, Aug. 8). That was only days after the brand's disappointing financials were released July 25. The former **Apple** hand was supposed to represent one of the key parts of the new Twitter under CEO **Jack Dorsey**. Ironically, Binns arrived Sept. 7, one day before Twitter's board met, supposedly to discuss the company's future as an independent entity or perhaps cost cutting via layoffs and other austerity measures. Twitter has nearly 4,000 employees. Should Twitter be sold, presumably we'd see the new, new Twitter. Enough with the Twitter jokes, though. Communicators know the platform's 313 million active users punch well above their weight, particularly when prominent people like **Hillary Clinton** and **Donald Trump** practically run their entire campaign on it. Brands respect the platform, too. Based on **Shareablee** data provided exclusively to *PR News Pro*, the 30 most-engaged B2C brands registered gains of more than 300% in consumer engagement year over year during Q2 (*PRN*, Aug. 8). Engagement is defined as consumer retweets and likes. Binns, who has an impressive resume, including a recent 6-year stint running PR at health insurance behemoth **Anthem**, will report to **Leslie Berland**, freeing Berland to focus on CMO duties. While you could argue Binns comes to Twitter at a precarious time, particularly for a communicator who might have to explain layoffs, the optimistic viewpoint will focus on how quickly she was hired. Ironically, for a platform that

values brevity, Twitter is known to linger before hiring replacements (see austerity measures, above?). Another point: Perhaps the Twitter is acknowledging the important role communicators play. Yeah, we'll go with that.

**2. Wells Far to Go:** Not a great stretch for **Wells Fargo**, the country's largest bank by market value. You probably know it had to admit Sept. 8 that it's fired 5,300 employees who created more than 1 million fake credit card and bank accounts. The details of how they did so, which we omit for space reasons, are shocking. Yet those details are relevant, as they will make Wells Fargo communicators work harder as they attempt to regain trust in the brand. The bank did itself few favors with its apology, which was cold and somewhat off point. It's worth a read.

The other Wells Fargo incident, which seems trivial by comparison, is puzzling. Publicizing its Sept. 17 Teen Financial Education Day, the bank ran ads that seem to urge teens to forego the arts in favor of jobs in science and technology. Needless to say, the artistic community blasted the bank and its ads on social, resulting in a quick and full apology from Wells Fargo Sept. 3. We're wondering, of course, if communicators were involved in the creation of those insensitive ads. We also asked **Oscar Suris**, EVP, corporate communications at Wells Fargo and chair of the **Institute for Public Relations**, how the brand will prevent such incidents in the future. To his credit, Suris returned our call promptly Sept. 6. He didn't answer our questions, however.

**3. Lauer the Boom:** The Sept. 7 Commander-in-Chief Forum with the

presidential hopefuls raised useful points for communicators. As you know, Democrats, Republicans and journalists whacked **NBC Today** host **Matt Lauer** heavily on social for being an inept moderator. What caught our eye, though, was criticism from Lauer's NBC colleagues. Due to NBC's social media policy, we're guessing, they didn't attack Lauer by name, but their displeasure with his work was obvious. Regarding **Donald Trump's** assertion that he was against the war from the start, NBC News senior political editor **Mark Murray** (@mmurraypolitics) tweeted, "That's not true." After Trump hit **Hillary Clinton** for her "terrible mistake" in Libya, **MSNBC** host **Chris Hayes** (@chrishayes) pinged Lauer for failing to challenge Trump on his support for intervention in Libya. "Two of Trump's biggest critiques of Clinton are Iraq and Libya, both of which he supported," he tweeted. The takeaway for communicators: Have a social media policy that's clear regarding criticism of colleagues and the brand. And make sure the policy adheres to **National Labor Relations Board** rules re free speech, as our item on **Chipotle** highlights (*PRN*, Aug. 29).

**Note to Subscribers:** NLRB documents and other resources pertaining to social media policies were added recently to the PR News Pro Essentials Page at: [prnewsonline.com/pr-news-pro-essentials/](http://prnewsonline.com/pr-news-pro-essentials/)

**4. M&A: W2O Group** said it acquired med tech firm **Pure Communications** Sept. 7. Pure founder **Andrea Johnston** will continue to lead the firm. ■

**PRNews'**

# PLATINUM PR AWARDS

October 19 | Marriott Marquis, NYC

11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

*Luncheon*

**Congratulations to this year's finalists!**  
**View the full list: [platinumprawards.com](http://platinumprawards.com)**

## Hall of Fame

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Preparedness 101: Zombie Apocalypse
- Coca Cola Company – #ShareACoke
- United Nations Foundation and 92nd Street Y – #GivingTuesday
- T-Mobile – Un-carrier

## PR Professionals of the Year

- Mia Carbonell, Forbes Media
- Steve Ertel, World Wildlife Fund
- Heather Feit, PMK•BNC
- Janice Kapner, T-Mobile
- Wendy Lund, GCI Health
- K. Sara Robertson, National Education Association
- Adriana Stan, W Magazine
- Jon Sullivan, Aflac
- Brad Burke & Adam Woullard, Weber Shandwick / FleishmanHillard

## Large PR Firm of the Year

- Burson-Marsteller
- Cohn & Wolfe
- Finn Partners
- LEWIS
- Ruder Finn

## Midsize PR Firm of the Year

- Coyne PR
- Eastwick
- GCI Health
- ICR, Inc.
- InkHouse
- Matter Communications
- Marina Maher Communications LLC
- Peppercomm
- PMK•BNC

## Small PR Firm of the Year

- Hawkins International Public Relations
- HCK2 Partners
- Henson Consulting, Inc.
- High10 Media

- INK Public Relations
- Murphy O'Brien Public Relations
- Schmidt Public Affairs
- Singer Associates, Inc.
- Solomon McCown & Company
- Warschawski

## Team of the Year

- Bayer Corporation
- Cisco Corporate Communications
- FleishmanHillard - Aflac
- G2A.COM
- IW Group, Inc. - CODE
- Ketchum - Mastercard
- Procter & Gamble - Internal Communications
- Salesforce Corporate Communications - Dojo
- Tableau Software – global PR Team

## Anniversary

- Bayer Corporation
- Cargill, Inc.
- CITGO Petroleum Corporation
- Coyne PR
- Edelman
- Kiwanis International
- Ruder Finn on Behalf of The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
- Southwest Airlines
- SolarWinds and Text100

## Annual Report

- COHN Marketing
- Digital Kitchen
- Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
- Hydro One Limited
- National Association of Insurance Commissioners

## Blog

- The Creative Group
- PadillaCRT
- Regional Transportation Authority Northeastern Illinois

- Tableau Software
- Voce Communications

## Branding

- Activision with PMK BNC / Step 3 PR
- DFW Airport & PAVLOV Agency
- IBM with Text100
- Molina Healthcare, Inc.
- New England Development
- Story Partners
- WPP

## Cause-Related Marketing

- American Heart Association and Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation with Cohn & Wolfe and Edelman
- Coburn Communication
- American Lung Association & CVS Health, Edelman
- Esurance
- Finn Partners
- Grey New York
- Havas PR North America
- Ketchum on behalf of Michelin
- Mohawk Flooring
- PwC LLP

## Community Relations

- Aspen Dental Management Inc.
- Cohn & Wolfe with Bayer
- CSX and APCO Worldwide
- Elefante
- Finn Partners
- IBM with Ketchum
- MSLGROUP for The Home Depot

## Crisis Management

- Clapp Communications
- Booz Allen under the Veterans Choice Program (VCP) Communications Support Task Order with the Department of Veterans Affairs
- HCK2 Partners
- Porter Novelli New York

# Congratulations to this year's finalists! View the full list: [platinumprawards.com](http://platinumprawards.com)

## Employee Relations

- Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
- FedEx Ground
- IBM
- The Home Depot Foundation
- MerchantCantos LLC
- Ruder Finn on Behalf of GSK
- SAP North America
- Singer Associates, Inc.

## Event Marketing

- Allison+Partners
- AMN Healthcare and Finn Partners
- Bayer Corporation
- Brand USA
- Burson-Marsteller
- eBay with Edelman
- GSK Consumer Healthcare
- Inspira Marketing Group
- Team Epiphany

## External Publication

- Best Friends Animal Society
- Cherokee Nation Businesses
- Clapp Communications
- Henson Consulting, Inc.
- Makovsky
- PepsiCo
- Raytheon Company
- Sabre Corporation
- US Postal Service

## Facebook Campaign

- Belstaff with Weber Shandwick
- Food Lion
- Loyola University New Orleans
- Molina Healthcare, Inc.
- UN Foundation
- Weber Shandwick and GSK

## Financial/Investor Relations

- Booker.com
- Financial Profiles, Inc.
- Hydro One Limited
- Porter Novelli
- Strategic Public Relations Group

## Global PR Campaign

- AGT-agency, LLC
- Cohn & Wolfe with Bayer
- CONRAD HOTELS & RESORTS
- Current Marketing
- Edelman
- Grey Activation & PR
- Ketchum on behalf of Mastercard
- Tableau Software
- Thomson Reuters

## Green PR

- Experiencias Xcaret and The Agency at UF
- Havas PR Global Collective
- Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA)

## Influencer Communications

- Coyne PR
- FleishmanHillard Vanguard
- H+M Communications
- Ketchum on behalf of Michelin
- LINKS Worldgroup
- Munchkin Inc.
- Porter Novelli
- Responsibility.org & SOMA Strategies
- TogoRun

## Internal Publication

- JLL
- Molina Healthcare, Inc.
- Montreal Children's Hospital
- Procter & Gamble
- United States Postal Service/Eastern Area
- US Postal Service

## Marketing Communications

- Cohn & Wolfe
- Esurance
- Food Lion
- GOLD PR
- Hampton by Hilton
- Hill+Knowlton Strategies
- PadillaCRT
- rbb Communications
- RF Binder
- WE Communications

## Media Event

- Chevy West Coast Communications
- Coyne PR
- Flashpoint PR
- GCI Health
- Grayling PR
- Hilton Worldwide With Edelman
- New Era Cap
- PMK•BNC and PepsiCo
- Porter Novelli
- Republican National Committee
- Ruder Finn, Inc.
- Sparkpr

## Media Relations

- Bayer Corporation
- Cohn & Wolfe
- Creation

- Hanna Lee Communications, Inc.
- Hill+Knowlton Strategies
- Ketchum on behalf of Mastercard
- MSLGROUP
- MWWPR
- National Geographic Channel
- The Quaker Oats Company
- Reebok International Ltd.
- Weber Shandwick & PMK•BNC

## Multicultural Campaign

- Cohn & Wolfe
- Coyne PR
- ESPN Deportes' Virtual Reality Press Mailer
- Flowers Communications Group
- Imprenta Communications Group
- PRecise Communications
- Republica, LLC
- TELEMUNDO Creates Nostalgia for Legendary "Queen of Salsa" Celia Cruz
- UPRAISE Marketing + Public Relations

## On a Shoestring Campaign

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Archer Malmo Public Relations
- ASU Cronkite PR Lab
- Coyne PR
- Creation
- Deveney Communication
- Fingerpaint
- Hawkins International Public Relations
- Molina Healthcare, Inc.
- Trefoil Group

## Online Communications

- Abbott
- Accenture
- Activision with PMK BNC / Step 3 PR
- Coyne PR
- Edelman
- PepsiCo
- Weber Shandwick with Milk Processor Education Program

## Online Press Room/Media Center

- Cherokee Nation Businesses
- Ferguson
- Food Lion
- Hilton Worldwide
- Sharp HealthCare

## Podcast and/or Videocast

- APCO Worldwide
- broadhead

# Congratulations to this year's finalists! View the full list: [platinumprawards.com](http://platinumprawards.com)

- Discovery Education and Alcoa Foundation
- Just Not Sports

## Press Release

- Finn Partners for Fujitsu America
- FleishmanHillard
- JDC Healthcare Management LLC

## Pro Bono Campaign

- Deveney Communication
- FleishmanHillard Vanguard and Orta Communications Group
- LEVICK

## Product Launch

- Alpaytac PR
- Arby's Restaurant Group and Edelman
- The Coca-Cola Company
- Coyne PR
- Homewood Suites by Hilton
- Inner Circle Labs
- PMK•BNC and PepsiCo
- Taylor
- Thomson Reuters
- Weber Shandwick
- WPP

## PSA

- Area 23
- Bayer Corporation
- Burson-Marsteller
- Deveney Communication
- GCI Health
- Goodwill and Ad Council
- Just Not Sports
- MSLGROUP University of Iowa, and National Safety Council
- MWWPR

## Public Affairs

- Burson Marsteller
- Glen Echo Group
- Ketchum on behalf of Michelin
- MSLGROUP University of Iowa, and National Safety Council
- National Education Association
- Resolute Consulting
- SOMA Strategies & CHPA
- TriNet
- U.S. Green Building Council

## Re-Branding/Re-positioning

- ChanceLight Behavioral Health, Therapy & Education
- Coyne PR
- Inspira Marketing Group

- Lockheed Martin
- MWWPR
- DFW Airport & PAVLOV Agency
- Peppercomm
- Türk Telekom

## Research & Measurement

- Aflac
- American Heart Association and Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation with Cohn & Wolfe and Edelman
- AMN Healthcare and Finn Partners
- Flashpoint PR
- Hill+Knowlton Strategies
- Infinite Global
- Paul Werth Associates

## Satellite Media Tours

- AbbVie - Nutrition Resource Launched with Joy Bauer Spotlights Under
- Bayer Corporation
- Burson-Marsteller
- Coyne PR
- MerchantCantos LLC
- Strauss Media Strategies

## Social Media Campaign

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- FamilyShare Network | Deseret Digital Media
- FleishmanHillard
- Hilton Worldwide
- Mars, Incorporated
- MSLGROUP for The Home Depot
- Transurban
- Ruder Finn on Behalf of The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
- SAP
- SOMA Strategies & CHPA

## Speeches

- Burson-Marsteller
- The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company
- Qlik
- Susan Davis International

## Trade Show/Event PR

- Consumer Technology Association
- Lambert, Edwards & Associates
- PAN Communications
- Raytheon Integrated Defense Systems
- Scott Public Relations

## Twitter Campaign

- The Bait Shoppe
- MMC

- Mars, Incorporated - M&M'S and Red Nose Day: #MakeMLaugh
- Mars, Incorporated - M&M'S 1 Million Tastes of Crispy Giveaway: #NashHasCrispy
- DFW Airport & PAVLOV Agency
- WE Communications

## Video Program

- American Heart Association FDA
- Business Wire
- Consumer Technology Association
- FleishmanHillard & Avaya
- Happy Family
- Ketchum on behalf of Michelin
- Porter Novelli
- Sparkloft Media
- Trafalgar
- Viacom
- Weber Shandwick & National Pork Board

## Web Site Marketing

- eBay with Edelman
- Jersey Central Power & Light
- JLL - Office ReNew
- JLL - Skyline
- PepsiCo
- Walker Sands Communications
- Weber Shandwick & The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

## Word of Mouth/Viral Campaign

- Area 23
- Creation
- FleishmanHillard Vanguard
- Just Not Sports

## Wow! Award

- BWK New York
- Coyne and Goodyear Set Epic World Record
- Creation
- Hanna Lee Communications, Inc.
- Ketchum on behalf of Mastercard
- WE Communications

*Winners will be announced at the October 19 awards luncheon in NYC. Register online at [platinumprawards.com](http://platinumprawards.com)*

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