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CREATIVITY

How GE Digital Uses Group Activities to Foster an Atmosphere of Curiosity That Leads to Creativity

Everyone in business wants to find the next big idea. The question: How do you do it? In previous editions of *PR News Pro*, we've included examples of how big ideas were generated. **Starbucks** CCO Corey duBrowa, for example, mentioned during the **Arthur W. Page Society** New CCO podcast that the idea for the brand's *Upstanders* campaign came when an employee, during a town hall with then-CEO Howard Schultz, urged the company to be more vocal on social issues (*PRNP*, Mar. 6). As promised last

week, we asked Steve Swanson, creative director at **GE Digital**, how he fosters a creative atmosphere at his shop.

For Swanson, the key is maintaining an environment that encourages curiosity. This is not only for design teams. "We need to design a culture within our organizations that encourages curious exploration without any type of pushback."

There are two things Swanson does with his team that he's found helpful. This first he calls a weekly Creative Sync.

Continued on page 3

BY KATIE PAINE, CEO, PAINE PUBLISHING

IMAGE PATROL

A Tale of Two Apologies: Colbert's Authenticity Works, Fyre's Hype Fails

Lord knows we don't have to look far these days to find examples of people and organizations screwing up. So as tempting as it may be to pile onto **Uber**'s woes or the latest airline mess [see page 8], we wanted to focus on the follow-up. What you do is very important, but so is how you respond, ie, the way people and brands say they're sorry – or don't.

First a tip of the hat to Josh Bernoff, who writes a wonderful daily blog called *Without Bullshit* (withoutbullshit.com). His examples of apology letters are models we can all learn from and use. If you can't figure it out from the name, Bernoff is an advocate for plain speaking.

What I like most about his advice is that he urges us

to say what we know we want to hear and what needs to be said. We've all seen corporate apologies so full of lawyer-induced double speak and passive tense obfuscation that even my cat knows they're BS.



FYRE FESTIVAL

This brings us to the **Fyre Festival** – an overhyped event set on an obscure island in the Bahamas that left hundreds of attendees who had paid thousands of dollars for tickets stranded with little food and fewer facilities.

Continued on page 4



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UPCOMING EVENTS AND WEBINARS

WEBINAR: CRAFT A CRISIS PLAN FOR HIGH-SPEED NEWS CYCLES
MAY 17, 2017
 1:30-3PM ET

THE SOCIAL SHAKE-UP
MAY 22-24, 2017
 ATLANTA, GA

DIGITAL HOW-TO CONFERENCE & VISUAL STORYTELLING BOOT CAMP
JUNE 22-23, 2017
 CHICAGO, IL

Offer Openness, Culture, Thanks to Keep Millennials

We have all seen articles talking about perceived downfalls of the millennial generation. Often mentioned is the fact that this cohort is known to be flighty, with a penchant for leaving a job after perhaps two years.

As a person who falls within the millennial bracket, I can discuss for days the merits of my generation.

TIME FOR GRADUATION

For now, though, it's nearly time for colleges and universities to send out into the work world a cadre of fresh, new graduates. As I expect many *PR News Pro* readers soon will be interviewing and contemplating hiring some of these new graduates, I provide here what I trust will be valuable information. Below is a peek inside the millennial psyche. What I think millennials—like me—find important in a career and workplace and ultimately what drives us to stick around.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO FAIL

The greatest thing that happened to me right away in my first communications job was a sink-or-swim situation. Whether I proved myself or not, the point was that I had a leader who gave me a project that allowed me to test the waters and either succeed or fail.

It's imperative to know there are opportunities for you to shine and showcase your skill set, but also opportunities for you to learn, grow and stretch your skills. For the record, I failed, but that's beside the point.

CREATIVE FLOW

My boss often tells the story of an employee who would come up with a new idea every day—just one. Sometimes the idea would result in something concrete and other times it wouldn't.

Still, the fact that a new idea was welcomed every single day creates an openness in the workplace where ideas are heard, tried and tested and employees are free to speak up with a good idea...or a bad one.

REPUTATION OF THE WORKPLACE

As you likely know, there is plenty of research that says millennials want to work for companies that make a difference in society and take CSR seriously. While I believe that's true, I want to provide a slightly different take on things.

I take a lot of pride in telling people where I work. I'm not shy, embarrassed or quiet about it. The company's mission fulfills me. I get a sense of purpose from going to work every day.

Even though I work at a brand that I believe takes part in amazing, thrilling and life-saving missions, it doesn't necessarily have to be that way. It could be the culture that creates this fulfillment.

The fact that a new idea was welcomed every day creates an openness in the workplace where ideas are heard, tried and tested and employees are free to speak up...



A company known for hiring talented people with capable leaders will excite most any employee, millennials included.

FINANCIAL REWARDS, THANKS

And, of course, this goes without saying, but a thank you will go a long way.

Millennials want to work at a company where they are acknowledged for their work. In the daily grind, things sometimes get messy, but a thank you and recognition for your contribution will drive employees (again, this likely applies to any employee) to stick around.

While I will say this is from a millennial point of view, I think much of what I've written here applies to employees at any stage of life, generation category or what have you—these ideas and concepts extend across the workforce. ■

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How Group Sessions Foster GE Digital's Creativity

"We go around quickly and pull up an inspirational design that we saw during the week," he says.



Steve Swanson,
Creative Director,
GE Digital

The shares can be a photograph, an interactive design on a web site or an environmental experience, Swanson says. "There are no rules." Sometimes what is shared has "immediate implications for something we're working on," other times not. The point is "to disconnect from what we're doing daily...be curious and think differently."

Swanson believes the weekly Creative Sync can be applied to communicators. "Regardless of your discipline, you should have the ability to think differently about what you do," he says. For communicators, Swanson says, "You might look at brands' tone and voice in their writing. Or look at the news and compare the various ways brands are responding to conflict." Again, the point is to spur communicators to think differently about what they do.

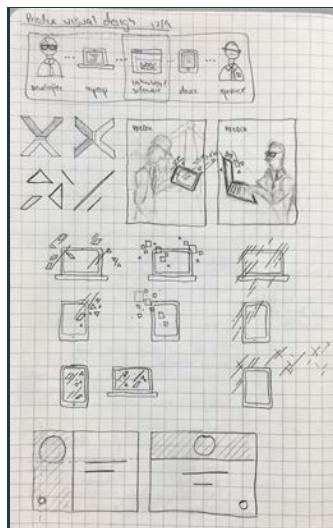
Mini Case Study: Recently one of GE Digital's designers shared a motion design with the group, Swanson says, and "we decided to try to use it with an inbound ad that we were running for food & beverage." The traditional ad and the animated, motion-based design ad are being performance-tested now, he says.

The second thing Swanson does to push creativity he calls Sketch Friday. "I encourage the designers to carve out one hour in their week to sketch in a notebook." Sketching "is the fastest way to get an idea out of your head and into fruition...It's amazing how fast we can iterate on a design purely by sketching it out and communicating it quickly."

For communicators, a helpful similar exercise might be to encourage your team to carve out one hour weekly to put ideas on paper. Pushing yourself to put an idea down on paper is tantamount to sketching a design. ■

Editor's Note: Swanson will keynote PR News' Digital How-To Conference, June 23, in Chicago: bit.ly/2orzikl

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PREDIX

How To Brainstorm: GE Digital's design team had developed a logo for its Predix product, but still needed a broader visual design system that was unique and ownable. Such systems help communicate a consistent message across multiple platforms.

With deadlines approaching, Swanson pulled in a few designers for a fast-paced brainstorming session. The exercise began by defining a long list of words that reflected the characteristics, impressions and goals of the project. The team then moved into a quick white board sketching session where there were no rules or bad ideas. Next the team split up for 15-20 minutes of individual sketch time (some of the sketch work is seen above, left). After coming back together, the team shared ideas and identified the strengths among the ideas.

As the team looked at the Predix logo, it realized the X could be a defining element. The team "started to lean on the X as the foundational element of design for the broader system," Swanson says. After deconstructing the X and looking at its core design elements, the team built a system around the Predix diagonal (at right), which mirrors the angle of the X. This became the foundation of a design system that was ownable and flexible enough to activate across a wide variety of mediums.
Source: GE Digital

May 22-24, 2017 | Atlanta, GA

On May 22-24, 2017, hundreds of digital, social media, marketing and PR professionals will gather for the annual Social Shake-Up conference in downtown Atlanta. PR News is hosting this event in partnership with Social Media Today.

Questions? Contact Jessica Placencia at jessica@accessintel.com; 301-354-1641

Colbert's Authenticity Wins, Fyre's Hype Loses

Anyone seeing Fyre's promotional slide deck (assuming the viewer was drug-free and sober at the time) should have at least suspected something based on the verbiage.

The ultimate irony was that concert organizers had paid **Instagram** influencers hundreds of thousands of dollars to hype the festival. So, followers of the Instagram accounts of models/influencers such as Kendall Jenner, Bella Hadid and Emily Ratajkowski were enticed with pictures of gorgeous beaches and luxurious accommodations. Upon arrival they found blown-down **FEMA** tents and cheese sandwiches.

The concert was cancelled quickly and all those attendees, armed with mobile phones and Instagram accounts, were more than happy to post photos of the disaster on social media.

The resulting publicity guaranteed that the Fyre brand, an entertainment-booking platform, would become the butt of every comedy show and podcast in at least the Western Hemisphere. The image of wealthy millennials getting stiffed was just too tempting to resist.

And festival organizers made the entire situation worse by waiting days before offering an apology that was just as convoluted and full of hype as the initial promotional video.

Phrases used included "it's not my fault" and "due to circumstances out of our control...." Organizers added fuel to

The ultimate irony was that concert organizers had paid Instagram influencers hundreds of thousands of dollars to hype the festival as a luxurious getaway. Upon arrival attendees found only blown-down FEMA tents and cheese sandwiches.

the fire (pun intended) by allegedly sending cease-and-desist orders to attendees to take down their social media posts. The reason given: They could "incite violence, rioting or civil unrest...if someone innocent does get hurt Fyre Festival will hold you accountable and responsible."

As I write this, there are at least seven separate lawsuits that have been filed against Fyre.

Fyre Festival

Criteria	Grade	Comments	Advice
Extent of coverage	F	You get what you pay for – and Fyre organizers paid for a lot of buzz and eyeballs in the lead up to the festival. So, it wasn't surprising that these social celebrities quickly let it be known around the world that their promised bliss was pure disaster.	Investing more in promotion than in the product you are delivering is never a good idea. If your goal is enhancing a brand and you deliver a lousy product or service you will fail.
Effectiveness of spokespeople	F	The two prime movers behind the festival couldn't even agree on an apology, with Ja Rule saying it wasn't his fault even though he took full responsibility Be real, folks. If your name is on it and you promoted it, the fact that people came was in fact your fault.	Saying that something isn't your fault but that you take "full responsibility" sounds to most people like it's partially your fault but that you don't want the lawyers on your back.
Communication of key messages	D	The promotional videos certainly got the messages across but were followed quickly by jokes and critiques of the disaster. The awful execution quickly buried any messages the videos were trying to convey.	Messages are best delivered through actions, not videos.
Management of negative messages	F	The aggressive promotion via Instagram and other social media influencers ensured that a large number of people would see the backlash and negative experience.	Social media celebrity influencers come with their own baggage. They are human and if you disappoint them, they have a very wide audience that will quickly find out.
Impact on ratings/advertisers	F	When you have given people a terrible experience, offering them a chance to repeat it one year later is not what anyone would consider a good option. Chances are people will be avoiding the Fyre brand for years	Issuing apologies and refunds is a generally accepted practice, but if you want to turn the situation around quickly, listen to your victims first and find out what would make them feel better. Then provide them a solution.
Overall score	F	Anyone with half a brain could have seen this coming and avoided it. But ego, money and celebrity status got in the way of common sense.	Overpromising and underdelivering is a fast way to destroy brand value.

STEPHEN COLBERT AND THE LATE SHOW

For months Colbert's *The Late Show* has dominated late night with its harsh critiques of the new presidential administration in Washington, D.C. But when President Trump insulted Colbert's friend, **CBS News** political director John Dickerson, the entertainer decided it was time to respond with the best weapon he had: Humor.

Colbert launched into a series of insults aimed at the president, one of which was considered by some to be over the top. This tit-for-tat was too much for some on social media who retorted quickly by launching a #firecolbert hashtag and calling for an **FCC** investigation, accusing Colbert of homophobia because his rant included a reference to homosexual sex between Trump and Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

Not a big surprise that news outlets and social media picked up the kerfuffle and magnified it. For two days there was no response from **CBS** or Colbert.

Then Colbert addressed the controversy during his show's opening monologue, doubling down on his comments. When the president retorted, Colbert got what he'd wanted for

years – a presidential response. "Yayyy!" he giggled. "Mr. Trump, don't you know I've been trying for a year to get you to say my name? But now you did it! I won!"

THE GOALS AND TAKEAWAYS

There is a lesson here for all of us: Keep the end goal and the target audience top of mind at all times.

For the Fyre Festival, the goal was to enhance the brand, which would only be accomplished by giving attendees a great experience. Instead Fyre spent money, probably a great deal of it, on promotion and gaining eyeballs so when experience time arrived, there was nothing left in the budget to deliver on what had been promised.

For Colbert, the goals were to please his audience, grow his show's **Nielsen** ratings and gain the satisfaction of knowing that POTUS was paying attention. And he manipulated the president and his followers into delivering exactly what he wanted. ■

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Stephen Colbert

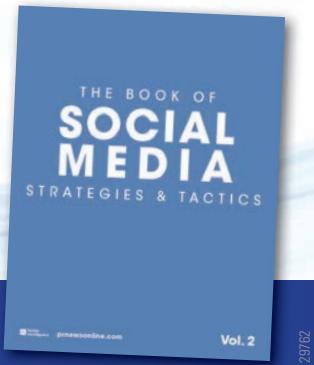
Criteria	Grade	Comments	Advice
Extent of coverage	A	Thanks to the conservative trolls that went to war against Colbert, the episode got far more exposure than most.	Whenever you do anything vaguely political, expect trolls on both sides to pile on. They're probably bots and not real people anyway.
Effectiveness of spokespeople	A	While CBS was mum, Colbert was his own best spokesperson. His apology didn't stray from his core values, but was just soft enough to say he might have used nicer language.	If the crisis revolves around a celebrity or a personality, he/she will be the spokesperson everyone looks to whether they want to be or not. Make sure they are authentic, not just apologetic.
Communication of key messages	A	Colbert's message was that he was defending a friend and as a comic, he used his best weapon, which was humor.	When your audience can identify with your message, it will be remembered.
Management of negative messages	B+	While many people called Colbert's comments homophobic, those who did were identified quickly as conservatives and were then called out for their own hypocrisy.	In these polarized times, the political identity of one's opponents can have a huge influence on the credibility of their criticisms.
Impact on ratings/advertisers	A	The video clip may be one of Colbert's most watched ever and apparently, the more Colbert criticizes Trump the higher his ratings. While the FCC was asked to investigate, the day part, the nature of the program and the fact that the segment was taped and the words were bleeped makes a fine unlikely.	Keep the end goal and target audiences top of mind always.
Overall score	A-	Compared to other TV celebrities caught in the cross fires of recent weeks, Colbert nailed it.	By sticking to one's guns, being authentic and keeping key stakeholders happy, you can survive most crises.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDEBOOK

In PR News' Social Media Guidebook, the challenges of planning, executing and measuring successful social media campaigns are met with eight chapters on everything from Snapchat to live streaming to blogging.

Chapters include:

- Measuring and Communicating Social Success
- Facebook
- Snapchat
- Live Streaming



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Few Agree on Definition of an American Brand

Brands are grappling with several issues that have become political with the new administration in Washington, D.C., including energy policies and immigration. Data from **APCO Worldwide**, shared with *PRNews Pro* exclusively, illustrate the complexities of the desire to buy American.

As part of its *APCO Insight* effort, APCO examined Americans' attitudes toward President Donald Trump's Buy American, Hire American policy. The data show that in an era of globalization, Americans have overlapping definitions of what they consider to be an American company.

As the first chart shows, 48% of Americans consider a company American if it has a workforce and manufacturing facilities in the U.S., even if its headquarters is outside the states. This sentiment is strongest among Democrats, men and millennials. Conversely, women and baby boomers are unlikely to consider these companies to be American.

U.S. operations = American company	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	Women	Men	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
Agree	48%	52%	51%	46%	41%	56%	58%	46%	38%
Disagree	43%	40%	44%	46%	49%	37%	32%	46%	55%
No opinion	9%	8%	6%	8%	10%	7%	10%	9%	7%

These results compare favorably with the fact that 53% of Americans consider a company American if it has a U.S. headquarters, even if it has substantial manufacturing facilities outside the U.S.

Interestingly, every subgroup examined, with the exception of women, agree this is an American company. It is fascinating that fewer Republicans consider a U.S.-headquartered company American compared to the foreign-headquartered company. At the same time more millennials consider this company to be American, as do generation-xers and baby boomers.

U.S. headquarters = American company	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	Women	Men	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
Agree	53%	59%	49%	55%	43%	62%	61%	47%	48%
Disagree	38%	33%	44%	38%	46%	29%	26%	45%	45%
No opinion	9%	8%	8%	8%	10%	8%	13%	8%	7%

Previous APCO data show 69% of Americans support encouraging the federal government to buy American-made products, even if they cost more; 64% say they support requiring companies to use American-made materials and components in the goods – such as toys, medicines and personal computers – they sell to U.S. consumers. APCO's research showing that people seem flexible on defining what is an American company would seem to make it more challenging for the Trump administration to communicate what these policies really mean and who benefits from them.

What is the private sector's role in supporting American companies?

The chart below shows 56% of Americans believe U.S. companies doing business overseas should follow a buy American, hire American philosophy. There is support for this commitment across gender, age and political affiliation. Notably, Republicans, men and generation X adults are most likely to believe U.S. companies should buy and hire Americans; Democrats appear a bit more skeptical.

U.S. MNCs should Buy, Hire American	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind	Women	Men	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
Yes	56%	44%	80%	56%	51%	61%	50%	62%	57%
No	26%	37%	13%	24%	29%	24%	35%	20%	22%
No opinion	18%	19%	7%	20%	21%	15%	16%	17%	21%

A plurality of Americans similarly believe that foreign companies doing business in the U.S. should also apply a buy American, hire American policy to their operations. While significantly fewer – 42% – feel this way and Americans hold more mixed feelings on this policy applying to foreign companies, it is still a significant finding. Recall that APCO found 48% of Americans consider a foreign-headquartered company an American company if it has a workforce and manufacturing facilities in the U.S. The differences in attitude are far from clear.

In addition, a majority of Republicans and men want to see global multinationals applying the buy American, hire American philosophy to their operations. On the other hand, a plurality of Democrats and women disagree. ■

CEOs See Chief Communicator's Role Expanding Across the Enterprise

CEOs get it. There has been a significant shift in their perception of the value of corporate communications and the role of the chief communications officer (CCO).

CEOs increasingly are relying on CCOs not just for occasional counsel and advice, but also as key leaders and contributors playing a critical role alongside other C-Suite members in creating and implementing company-wide strategy.

Studies from the **Arthur W. Page Society** found communications to be an embryonic part of CEO thinking about company strategy (2007), and then, later, an important contributor (2013).

Findings in the Arthur W. Page Society's *The CEO View: Communications at the Center of the Enterprise* (2017) show CEOs now also view the CCO as a key driver of corporate character.

In the view of CEOs, the CCO should function as an integrator across the enterprise to ensure that corporate character—its unique and differentiated identity—is defined, permeates the entire company and is consistently practiced and communicated at all levels.

Similar to earlier Page research mentioned above, the new report consists of phone interviews with 24 CEOs of member companies from a variety of industries and revenue levels. The interviews were conducted between November 2016 and January 2017.

Owing to this CEO view of the importance of the role, many CEOs now require their CCO to have total business knowledge—from strategy to operations—in order to provide strategic input on issues that span business functions.

CCO NEEDS TO BE PROACTIVE ON RISKS

CEOs also want their CCOs to proactively identify and mitigate risks before they become threats by shaping stakeholders' engagement in the brand.

The results in this report are encouraging for those of us who

believe that a CCO who functions as an effective senior strategic leader is able to help her enterprise build the corporate character and stakeholder relationships that create enduring value, not only for customers and shareholders, but for society, as well.



BAKE IN CSR

In earlier studies CEOs acknowledged the importance of social value as manifested in corporate social responsibility, but didn't view it as a key component of communications or top of mind when thinking about strategy.

In 2017, they believe it should be baked into the business plan and integrated into the enterprise's mission and strategy. CEOs want all stakeholders to know that the enterprise is making a positive difference in the communities in which it operates.

The report highlights other key ways in which CCOs are proving essential in the C-suite:

- ▶ Living in a world where transparency is paramount, CEOs are feeling pressure from stakeholders to have a larger public profile, especially on important social issues. In turn, CEOs are leaning on their CCOs to help them use the right channels, craft the correct messages and achieve the desired outcomes.
- ▶ CEOs now regard digital platforms as more important means for demonstrating the authenticity and transparency of their personal brand and that of their enterprises. For this reason, CEOs expect CCOs to set meaningful and strategically-relevant goals for digital systems, oversee them and strengthen digital communications.
- ▶ The growth and scope of social media in particular have transformed employees into spokespeople, meaning that employees often are confronted with communications challenges in non-work spaces, in-person and online. For this reason, CEOs want CCOs to be sure that systems are in place to engage and understand employees. This includes ensuring they are educated about company basics and have the tools to communicate about the company consistently, legally and effectively.

As communicators, we understand the radical transformation happening to our roles and to our enterprises, but we wondered if CEOs shared our view. The results are clear: CEOs see more value than ever in corporate communications and the role of the CCO. ■

CEOs See CCO as Three-Dimensional Communicator

In 2016, the Arthur W. Page Society polled its members to understand how the CCO's role has changed. Its findings, in a report called *The New CCO*, found three main elements of today's CCO.

1) The Foundational CCO: The CCO serves as a strategic business advisor, builder of corporate reputation and public trust, and manager of stakeholder relationships.

2) The Integrator: The CCO works across the C-Suite to ensure that a brand's corporate character is real, understood and practiced at all levels.

3) The Builder of Digital Engagement Systems: The CCO helps develop dedicated, data-driven systems and processes for engaging stakeholders. The CCO uses insights from data to identify stakeholder issues, understand attitudes and behaviors and deliver relevant information. The goal is to build trusted relationships with stakeholders.

The new report, *The CEO View: Communications At The Center Of The Enterprise*, essentially confirms that CEOs agree with the earlier research.

Source: Arthur W. Page Society

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Samantha Leotta, Senior Brand Manager, The Macallan



Victoria Fort, SVP, Market Leader, GCI Health



Courtney Reynolds, VP, Communications, Corporate Affairs, Northwestern Mutual

1. A Touching Scotch: We were intrigued to learn **The Macallan**, a single malt scotch, unveiled late last month what it calls the first touchable, interactive video “created by a brown spirit brand.” The brand, whose distillery was founded in 1824, collaborated with photographer **Steven Klein** on a movable piece of art in the form of a 60-second video [<https://cinematique.com/watch/1860>]. The touchable part comes when the consumer presses a portion of the mural as it scrolls by on his/her mobile platform, such as a smartphone. When one of 13 touch points is activated, the technology catalogues the area touched and later provides the user with information corresponding to that touch point, **Samantha Leotta**, The Macallan’s senior brand manager, tells us. Information includes background on the whiskey, the distilling process and what inspired Klein. In addition to the added experience, consumers who may not be able to afford the whiskey still can engage online with the brand via the video. The Macallan and its agency **M Booth** found there was a demand for knowledge about whiskey. Indeed, followers are spending “40% more time” with the touchable video compared to the brand’s other short-form videos. A tip for brands interested in deploying touchable video for storytelling: “You can have the best technology...but if there isn’t a demand for the information [or story it’s conveying] people won’t care...they won’t engage with it for very long...that’s a good filter [for brands] to use,” Leotta says.

2. United We Stand, But Not on Descent: It's hard to estimate the shelf life of the **United Airlines-Dr. Dao** cri-

sis, but at the moment nearly every move the airline makes is scrutinized. United seems to be responding responsibly, though. Not long after the unfortunate Apr. 9 incident came to light, reports appeared about **Simon**, a 3-foot-long bunny, found dead in the cargo hold of a United flight from London to Chicago. The airline apologized and began an investigation. Last week brought a video of a United ticket agent who cancelled passenger **Navanaugh Oza**'s reservation because Oza was videotaping the interaction. United apologized. Another incident came to light last week when **Nicole Harper** told a **Fox** affiliate flight attendants denied her entrance to a bathroom during an Apr. 10 United flight. She was given paper cups to relieve herself and used them in view of nearby passengers. United apologized. It also noted the flight was making its final descent when Harper rose to use the facilities. **FAA** mandates passengers must remain seated during final descent. United tried to make nice on **Twitter** last week but that flopped. Attempting to piggyback on the good fortune of teen **Carter Wilkerson**, whose record 3.6 million re-tweets of his request for a free year's worth of **Wendy's** chicken nuggets topped **Ellen DeGeneres'** selfie tweet from the 2014 Oscars. In a May 10 tweet, United reminded Wilkerson of an offer of a free flight to the Wendy's of his choice. The twitter-sphere exploded, with one tweeter urging United to invite Dr. Dao on the trip. Last week wasn't all bad for United: Shares rose 5% May 9 to a new high on reports of strong April traffic.

3. Mis-Comey-nication: PR and communications lessons from last week's

ouster of **FBI** director **James Comey**. **1.** As was said on this page and by **Adriana Stav** of **W Magazine** (PRNP, May 1), there's no longer a distinction between internal and external communications. **2.** A high-profile dismissal is best done with dignity and face-to-face. That this one wasn't may hurt the president's standing with FBI employees and the public. **3.** Sing from the same hymnal. Various explanations for the firing are weakening the White House's strength.

4. News Bits: Props to **Reuters** for its Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request revealing brands and influencers who received Apr. 20 letters from the **Federal Trade Commission** warning them to disclose paid relationships in social media endorsements (PRNP, Apr. 24). **Adidas, Johnson & Johnson, Dunkin' Brands** and **Hasbro** were among the 40+ brands. Influencers included **Sofia Vergara, Heidi Klum** and **Allen Iverson**. – More than 75% of marketers polled by the **Association of National Advertisers** and the **USC Center for PR** say they'll increase spending on PR during the next 5 years. 54% say PR will become more closely aligned with marketing. Not surprising: social listening, digital storytelling and real-time marketing were seen as important PR trends.

5. People: **GCI Health** named **Victoria Fort** SVP/market leader in its D.C. office. – Former **Obama** appointee **Jordan Valdés** joined **APCO Worldwide** as a senior director. – **The Human Rights Campaign** named **Chris Sgro** its communications director. – **Northwestern Mutual** added corporate affairs to the title of **Courtney Reynolds**, VP, communications. – Former **Ogilvy** VP **Nick Lendum** joined **CTIA** as its CCO. ■