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## INTEGRATION

### 6 Tips for Effective Meetings That Will Facilitate Integration of PR, Marketing and Sales

Integration, or the lack of it, is something customers brush up against all the time, often without realizing it. A customer is online with a brand representative and asks, “Have you done business with us before?” “Yes, for years,” is the customer’s response. The customer’s next thought: “Why didn’t you know that?” It might be an integration issue.

A recent integration issue nearly cost **Uber** dearly. CEO Dara Khosrowshahi apologized to London last month for his

brand’s past mistakes. This effective charm offensive—London’s mayor agreed to a meeting with Uber this week—was nearly derailed when a senior Uber executive, clearly speaking from different talking points, told the **BBC** he was unclear what mistakes Uber had committed that prompted authorities to halt renewal of the business’s permit in the city (*PRN*, Sept. 26, 2017).

*Continued on page 3*

## IMAGE PATROL

BY KATIE PAINE, CEO, PAINE PUBLISHING

### Facebook’s Russia About-Face Is Costly; So’s Equifax’s Crisis Avoidance

The lesson learned from the most recent PR crises is that the length of time you sit on a problem is directly proportional to how long it will take people to forgive you. Had **Facebook** CEO Mark Zuckerberg not ignored the impact of Russian trolls since 2015, he might not be facing a hostile Congress and Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s probe. Similarly, had **Equifax** not sat on the news of its data breach for six weeks, it might not be facing nearly two dozen class-action lawsuits and this week’s congressional hearings. The second corollary is that the more pervasive you are in a person’s life, the more people will pay attention to your scandal. Had Equifax been cursory to borrowing money and

getting credit for more than 40% of Americans, and had 70% of Americans not been Facebook devotees, both scandals might have disappeared from the headlines by now.

#### FACEBOOK

As far back as 2015, pro-Ukrainian Facebook users were complaining to the company that Russian trolls were flooding the site with fake pro-Russian news and fabricating complaints against Ukrainian users that caused their ac-



*Continued on page 4*



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**OCTOBER 11, 2017**  
 1:30-3:00PM ET

**THE DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS MARKETING SUMMIT**  
**OCTOBER 17 - 19, 2017**  
 MIAMI, FL

**PUBLICITY BOOT CAMP**  
**NOVEMBER 7, 2017**  
 HOLLYWOOD, CA

## DATA DIVE

# Jocks and Geeks: A Look at Top Influencers Ranked by Total Actions

We've introduced a pair of influencer categories in this week's *Data Dive*, with data supplied to us by **Shareablee**. New to these pages are U.S. Athletes and perhaps their polar opposites, what Shareablee calls Geeks. While basketball's **LeBron James** is known as King James, and it's good to be the king, former *Star Trek* actor **George Takei's** 20.5 million actions, or consumer engagements, slam dunked James's 15.3 mil-

lion actions (up 61% vs. July) in August on **Facebook, Twitter and Instagram**. Shareability is the sum of shares and retweets. Consumer engagement with Takei's social posts rose 29% vs. July, says Shareablee's Ron Lee. Next month's look at U.S. athletes should be interesting what with the social activity of James, **Odell Beckham Jr.** and **Steph Curry** surrounding the **NFL's** issue with standing during the national anthem. ■

Shareablee		SOCIAL SCORECARD			
TOP 5 GEEK INFLUENCERS BY TOTAL ACTIONS: AUGUST 2017					
Based on Total Actions (reactions, likes, comments, shares and retweets on content)					
Sources:					
RANK	GEEK INFLUENCERS	TOTAL ACTIONS	TOTAL CONTENT	TOTAL AUDIENCE	SHAREABILITY
1	George Takei	20.5M	1K	14M	4.1M
2	Robert Downey Jr	6.3M	37	54.2M	103K
3	Jack Septiceye	5.6M	108	8.7M	123K
4	Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg - PewDiePie (UK)	5.2M	42	31.9M	216K
5	Chris Hemsworth	4.4M	13	19.6M	25K

shareablee.com | info@shareablee.com | @shareablee

Shareablee		SOCIAL SCORECARD			
TOP 5 ATHLETES INFLUENCERS BY TOTAL ACTIONS: AUGUST 2017					
Based on Total Actions (reactions, likes, comments, shares and retweets on content)					
Sources:					
RANK	ATHLETES INFLUENCERS	TOTAL ACTIONS	TOTAL CONTENT	TOTAL AUDIENCE	SHAREABILITY
1	LeBron James	15.3M	95	92.9M	769K
2	Odell Beckham Jr	13.4M	139	12.8M	355K
3	Nikki Bella	9.5M	131	14.1M	7K
4	Stephen Curry	8.4M	33	35.2M	37K
5	Floyd Mayweather	7.6M	204	37.2M	622K

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# Integration: Moving Staff to a Comfortable Spot

Integration, of course, also is spoken of often in PR, marketing and sales circles. It's such an important trend that **Hubspot** coined the term "smarketing" to signify aligning PR, sales and marketing. As you know, PR, marketing and sales departments increasingly are merging; still, with all the talk about integration, crafting a seamless relationship between departments is easier said than done. Egos, territoriality and budgets come into play (*PR News*, Oct. 26, 2015).



**Nikki Hotveidt**, Senior Director, Internal Communications, *Dow Jones and The Wall Street Journal*

For Nikki Hotveidt, senior director, internal communications, **Dow Jones** and **The Wall Street Journal**, though, integration is far from an aspirational goal. Part of her job is to facilitate integrating employees in 40 countries.

Since integration often starts with meetings, Hotveidt offers tips to facilitate such sessions. Her philosophy is internal communications "is all about personalization...reading between the lines...having empathy..." and approaching staff as PR pros do audiences. "Who are they? What are their communications styles? Reaching a comfortable spot with [an employee]" is your goal.

**1. Shake Up the Basics:** Hotveidt often begins with the roots of an issue. As we noted above, meetings are an inevitable part of the integration process. Ask: "Do I need to hold these meetings in a conference room?" More and more Hotveidt opts to gather teams in cafés or outdoors. People relax "immediately when they get outside a conference room." As a result, Hotveidt often uses "odd spaces" to hold meetings where integration will be discussed.

**A tip:** Another way to improve the results of difficult meetings about integration when international personnel are involved, she says, is to "note the times" they occur. When teams in various time zones need to be accommodated, the resulting meeting time usually will be less convenient for one group or another. Hotveidt counters this issue by briefing groups individually at a convenient time for them.

**2. The Invitation:** This is another chance to influence behavior, Hotveidt says, specifically "to set positive expectations."

She advocates "introducing the players...say who will be attending the meeting...talk about their hobbies and interests as a way to relax them." Important: At the meeting never assume people know each other. Reintroduce them.

**3. Pre-Meeting Work:** When you know there's a sensitive player who'll be attending the meeting, "meet with him or her first, before the meeting," and let the person express his or her opinion. "They'll be much more collaborative during the meeting," she says. To garner insights on these players, Hotveidt urges communicators to "make friends with B-level" people, the top executive's deputy and/or executive assistant..."nurture these relationships."

**4. Take the Lead:** Hotveidt urges communicators experienced in running meetings direct the conversation's flow. "Get in the director's chair...keep people on topic...make sure everyone gets to speak." She allows long-winded executives latitude to make lengthy comments, but eventually asks them to wrap up. She then summarizes their points and re-asks the main question to see if others have comments.

**5. Shared Vision:** The communicator should be the meeting's "eyes and ears," listening for similar comments so you can "move the group to a shared vision...when you hear similar views say them, repeat them and make them clear."

**6. After the Meeting:** Leverage technology such as **Google** docs, **Slack** and email to distribute notes, summarize the shared vision and "keep momentum going." **Note:** follow-up on meetings often is where things fall apart, she says. ■

**NOTE:** *PR News* asked 24 PR leaders to answer the question "How can public relations leaders become stronger strategic business advisers as the lines between PR, digital and marketing continue to blur?" Visit: <http://tinyurl.com/y973u6g8>

Contact: @nikkihotveidt

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# Facebook and Equifax Face the Music Late

counts to inexplicably be shut down. When Facebook was accused of spreading misinformation during the U.S. elections in 2016, Zuckerberg dismissed the notion as “pretty crazy.”

Nine months later Zuckerberg was forced to admit Facebook sold at least \$100,000 worth of ads to Russian “advertisers” and those were just the ads it could track easily because they were paid for in rubles. While Facebook is pledging cooperation with Congress and revamping its policies to bar fake accounts, it is highly unlikely the issue will go away soon.

## EQUIFAX

Before last month’s crisis broke, Equifax was a company most of us only heard of if we were trying to correct our credit score.

But then news broke that hackers infiltrated its data and accessed the credit and other personal information of nearly 50% of Americans. If that weren’t enough to send consumers into a panic, it was revealed that the breach occurred nearly two months earlier; Equifax was only getting around to announcing it now.

To make matters worse, the website that Equifax set up so consumers could check to see if their accounts were sullied didn’t work and could be used easily in a phishing scheme.

On top of that, the Equifax site required users to surrender the last six digits of their Social Security numbers to use it, *and* required victims to surrender all their legal rights to sue. Then whoever was running the company **Twitter** account tweeted out the wrong URL, using the phishing URL instead.

A few days later it confessed to another, previously undisclosed breach in March.

## Facebook

Criteria	Grade	Comments	Advice
Extent of coverage	F	Rumors about Russian hackers using Facebook have been around since 2015. The story made headlines in 2016. Chances are good that Americans and probably most Facebook users around the planet have been exposed to the news.	The last thing you want to do when you are accused of meddling in an election is to call allegations “pretty crazy.” If you want to avoid a congressional investigation, deal with the issue as quickly as you can.
Effectiveness of spokespeople	C-	CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s initial statement was inept and interviews since then have revealed a cluelessness that is a bit frightening when you think of the power his network has wielded over time. His most recent utterings, though, show an increased inclination to help fix the problems.	Do we need a reminder that no quote, no matter how stupid, is forgotten in this social media age? And the first quotes after a crisis tend to be the ones that are etched most deeply in the media lexicon. Make sure that your first statement contains a clear message, abject apology and a tangible fix.
Communication of key messages	C	Facebook’s messaging has been all over the map from the start. First it was “this is all crazy.” Then it was “we believe that freedom of expression will fix everything.” Only later was it “we will crack down on bad apples.”	Frequent change of messages leaves readers and the media skeptical and suspicious that whatever you said today will probably be reversed tomorrow.
Management of negative messages	F	By not addressing the concerns when they were first brought to light, Facebook ensured that the various rumors and conspiracy theories took a firm hold in people’s minds.	The best way to address rumors and negative messages is to meet them directly. Admit them if they’re true, show data or take action to prove they’re not. Above all be honest about the level of control you have over the situation. In a natural disaster or a legal crisis, where you are under a gag order, you might get away with inaction or not answering questions. When the crisis is of your own making, the assumption is that if you don’t take action, you’re guilty.
Impact on employees and potential employees	C+	Many of Zuckerberg’s comments and earlier interviews seemed to be directed at employees and potential employees to ensure their loyalty and raise their comfort level with the situation. Whether he succeeds to retain talent in a highly competitive labor market remains to be seen.	In today’s tight labor market, it makes perfect sense to keep employees and potential employees top of mind as you craft your crisis response. If, however, you’re dealing with Congress, you might want to consider how a Senate investigatory committee will interpret your statements.
Impact on stakeholders and customers	C	Selling ads is how Facebook makes money, and until advertisers begin to exert pressure on the company to change, chances are the company’s responses will lack real substance.	In today’s environment customers and shareholders expect ethical behavior, not just a profit motive.
Overall score	C-	Ultimately, Zuckerberg and Facebook are revealing the essential truth about the company. They are young, inexperienced and have failed to think through the implications of what they do and say.	Being bold and brash can be a winning strategy, but shouldn’t be the only approach in a crisis. To survive, the addition of a little wisdom and expertise are essential.

Augmenting the bad news, it was revealed senior Equifax executives sold nearly \$2 million in company stock in August, days after the brand discovered the data breach but weeks before the Sept. 7 public announcement.

By the time the CEO was replaced and the brand got

around to a decent apology, (including a promise of a better website and free credit freezes) its credibility was gone and its trust bank was empty. ■

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## Equifax

Criteria	Grade	Comments	Advice
<b>Extent of coverage</b>	<b>F</b>	Sitting on the breach for six weeks, followed by inept apologies, continued missteps, executive stock sales and management changes have kept the story on page 1 for far longer than it would have if they'd just come clean in the first place.	First, we know that in a crisis, you rip off the proverbial Band-Aid all at once and get the news behind you. Trickling out a crisis only prolongs the agony. Second, any company housing data should be including potential data breaches and hacks in its crisis communications plans. That plan should include a well-vetted and tested solution to the problem that is running within hours (not weeks).
<b>Effectiveness of spokespeople</b>	<b>F</b>	Equifax's bad decisions were compounded by the initial silence of its CEO. He then penned an op-ed that played down the attack's severity, which only served to raise alarm levels higher.	No matter how your internal team perceives the severity of a crisis, the people it touches will perceive it as far more severe. Downplaying a crisis will be perceived with skepticism at best and fury at worst.
<b>Communication of key messages</b>	<b>F</b>	There is no evidence that Equifax had a coherent messaging strategy around the crisis. While communications was issuing statements, its web, legal and security teams seemed to be operating on different planets.	To survive a crisis, you need cohesion and consistency above all. When the eyes of the media from several continents are focused on your every word, it is critical for everyone to be on the same page. The media, the opposition and victims' attorneys will pounce on any movement away from the agreed-upon message.
<b>Management of negative messages</b>	<b>F</b>	Equifax created most of its negative messages through its bumbling. Contradicting your statements will perpetuate the bad news and ensure that the media reinforces those negative messages. If the crisis reveals systemic incompetence around the things you are supposed to be good at, it will take years, if not decades, to rebuild your credibility.	When an absence of coherent and consistent communications during a crisis creates a vacuum, negative messages will fill it. If that crisis reveals significant weakness in what should be a core strength, the messages will persist for a very long time.
<b>Customer impact</b>	<b>F</b>	When you let down and tick off 143 million consumers, there are no good answers. But had Equifax made better choices in how it responded, it might have a chance of repairing the relationship. Equifax has become the Enron of security and privacy failure.	When a crisis is seen to touch someone personally, he or she gets scared and loses trust. When that happens to millions of someones, trust erodes on a national scale, and congressional action is sure to follow.
<b>Impact on employees and future hires</b>	<b>D</b>	As might be expected, whistleblowers within the company have leaked "I told you so" stories of how the breach and the incompetence handling it weren't particularly shocking. My guess is Equifax will be known for its culture of misplaced priorities. What data geek with talent wants to jump into that mess?	With platforms like Glassdoor, never mind Twitter, it's easy to let the world know that your latest crisis is cultural and systemic and not just an accident.
<b>Overall score</b>	<b>F</b>	Although the letter of apology and promise of reform issued last week was a vast improvement over earlier attempts, it followed so many mistakes and bad press that it was simply too small an offering to satisfy customers or mollify the media.	Trickling out bad news is never the right answer. Your apology must be as big a news item as the crisis that put you in the headlines in the first place.

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# PR Alchemy: Promoting a Project When Basic Details Are Unavailable

During more than a decade as a professional BMX rider, Kris Bennett learned exactly what it meant to take risks. Day after day, competition after competition, he put his skills and body on the line, competing on the circuit and in televised events including **ESPN's X Games**.

In recent years, Kris applied what he'd learned about competition, risk and acquired skill to a new field: residential rehab and construction. Starting with a friend, Kris began rehabbing and flipping houses across greater Pittsburgh.

As he gained experience, he and his wife, Tara, went out on their own to create **K Bennett Development Group**, a renovation company geared toward young professional homebuyers. Kris quickly became a shrewd handicapper of real estate risk and reward, seeing potential in Pittsburgh's up-and-coming neighborhoods when others didn't.

K Bennett's popularity on social media attracted the interest of television producers **Bodega Productions**, which found the company while searching for the next variation on **HGTV's Flip or Flop** or **Fixer Upper** on **Instagram**. Together, Kris, Tara and their close-knit team landed the opportunity of a lifetime: the chance to film a national television pilot in their hometown.

## LAYING THE FOUNDATION

In reviewing the overall framework for launching the pilot (now known as *Steel City Rehab*) Kris learned the key to a successful first run on national TV is high viewership numbers. Once a pilot runs on HGTV, the network reviews the ratings along with a variety of factors to determine whether or not a show will be picked up for a full series. Understanding his objective, Kris engaged PR firm **WordWrite** to maximize the pilot's exposure within local markets.

The firm developed a strategy that aimed to attract the widest potential pool of viewers from the Pittsburgh region. Evaluating the audience is especially important in these scenarios. Pittsburghers are loyal to their community, which meant messaging needed to be authentic and hyper-local. This also meant the PR team needed to go deeper than traditional media outlets to reach viewers.

In the case discussed here, the goal was to secure media coverage in at least one print and one broadcast outlet, along with influencers' social media and blog mentions.

For community groups, the goal was to leverage K Bennett's social media following as well as its email list by providing them with pre-written content to be shared through their channels at their discretion.

## THE BLUEPRINTS

Once the strategy was established, the first step was to de-



velop a contact list. Projects like this one only further emphasize the need for PR pros to maintain strong relationships in the business world, not only with media personalities, but with community groups, trade organizations and influencers. Whether it's a new business prospect, a former colleague or a close media contact, there always is the potential for collaboration. The final list included contacts from every major media outlet in Pittsburgh along with high-value community and social media influencers (e.g. **The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership**, the mayor's office, local lifestyle blogger and podcaster networks, etc.).

After the list was finalized, the team began drafting corresponding outreach materials. In an effort to control the message and offer contacts as much information as possible, the team created a variety of documents based on possible requests from recipients.

For example, while a journalist might appreciate receiving information via a press release, members of community organizations might prefer a fact sheet or pre-written social media posts. As PR pros know well, the key is to tailor the information to the end reader.

The team developed four pitch outlines, two pilot launch press releases, a background document outlining Kris's story, a sample email blast, a photo library and two social media calendars organized by target audience. By drafting these materials in advance, it allowed for a much smoother outreach process once the news was released.

## THE TIMELINE

Next, the team developed an outreach timeline. It's important to note that because of scheduling constraints with the network, the final air date was released just four weeks in advance, forcing the team to stay on track with its plans with little room for error.

At this point, the team was three weeks out from the pilot show's launch date and time was of the essence. The team decided to spend the first week reaching out with an informal pitch to top-tier targets; the second week would be dedicated to follow-up communications and outreach to second-tier targets; and the third week leading up to the launch would be reserved for press release distribution, additional follow-up communications and tracking.

Allowing time for targeted outreach in addition to more broad-based communications is an excellent strategy when pitching promotional launches or events. The initial pitch gives the recipient a first look at what you're touting (opening up the potential for early hits), while the more formalized press release acts as a follow-up and an additional layer of information.

## COURSE CORRECTION AND CHALLENGES

The initial plan was to organize contacts into tiered groups based on topical relevance and/or personal relationships, assuming recipients on the list with a connection to the story or our teams would be most likely to respond favorably. We learned quickly, however, our approach would need to be adjusted.

When working through a national television network or a major production company, be prepared to include additional time to review materials. Timing proved to be the ultimate challenge throughout the entire launch. For legal reasons, Kris and his team, Bodega Productions and HGTV needed to approve every detail before anything could be shared externally, which delayed the PR team's progress significantly.

## PROMOTING WITH FEW DETAILS

With three weeks to the air date, PR still had not received clearance to release the name of the show, the network it would run on, the plotline of the first episode or any of the artwork associated with the launch. While this seems an incredible circumstance, PR pros in the television field know this scenario well.

Using embargoed information was not an option, though such an approach is certainly recommended under different circumstances. Given the time crunch, however, the PR team decided to move forward with outreach to top-tier contacts using the limited information available.

As you might guess, the first round of outreach was unsuccessful. Recipients either requested information that we were unable to provide or claimed the story wasn't a fit.

Finally, the team received approval to release all information about the pilot and its efforts gained momentum.

## ASSESSING THE STRUCTURE

*Steel City Rehab* ran on HGTV at noon Eastern time, Sunday, April 30, 2017. In the days leading up to the release, combined efforts generated more than one dozen local media hits, including two long-form broadcast segments from the local **CBS** affiliate featuring in-depth interviews with Kris and his team.

Influencer and community outreach efforts helped attract viewers locally as well. The pre-written social media and email blast content was utilized by groups including **VisitPittsburgh** (a part of the **Greater Pittsburgh Convention and Visitors Bureau**), **Allegheny County** and influencers with large followings, such as TV news personalities and bloggers.

Aside from the pre-event promotions, tactics also helped generate a groundbreaking 1.6 million pilot views—an ideal outcome for a series trial. The show, which ran during a *Fixer Upper* marathon, achieved a 94% retention rate from viewers who watched the 11 a.m. *Fixer Upper* episode.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Though the pilot launch was a resounding success, there were still several key learnings that surfaced.

First, it was clear after the initial push that the majority of news outlets needed more information to draft a story; a



Last-Minute PR: Details for *Steel City Rehab*, starring (from left) Jesse Wig, Tara and Kris Bennett and Cameron Nicols, were held until weeks prior to the show's debut. Source: HGTV  
Photo Credit: Frank Vilsack

promise to provide more details later would not suffice. In fact, we were able to attract the most attention only *after* the press release was distributed during the final week of the launch. Given that background, relying on a traditional press announcements is sometimes the best way to get results. News releases are not dead when utilized appropriately and are still viewed as the accepted vernacular through which PR teams can communicate with journalists.

Early on in the planning process, the team also discussed devising a launch event or stunt to generate buzz. Some of the ideas included partnering with a local professional sports star to host a meet-and-greet at a restaurant or working with the mayor's office to hold a city-wide pep rally in the heart of Pittsburgh. With adequate time and proper planning, such events can help drum up support for initiatives of this nature and would be a solid addition to promotional campaigns.

As this project demonstrates, PR is changing constantly. Regardless of the project, finding opportunities to build relationships, connect with the community and engage audiences organically where they live is the most effective way to achieve measurable, impactful results. ■

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### Takeaways

1. Knowing your audience means understanding what messages will resonate and what platform should be the delivery mechanism.
2. Sometimes you lack enough information to adequately promote a product. In such cases be nimble enough to react at the last minute when more information is available.
3. Consider using a 2-part approach for reaching out to media. Begin with an informal heads-up followed by a more formal release of materials.



John Stumpf, former CEO, Wells Fargo

**1. Wells Fargo Redux:** How long is the long tail of scandal? For **Wells Fargo** it's at least one year. You'll no doubt recall the bogus credit card scandal that the bank found itself engulfed in during late August and early September 2016. Has it atoned for its misdoings? Well, it forked over a record \$185 million in fines to settle three federal lawsuits in September 2016 as well as the head of its then-CEO **John Stumpf**, who reluctantly resigned after repeatedly stumbling in front of congressional committees and, prior to that, failing to admit there was much wrong at Wells Fargo, despite firing 5,300 workers over the sham accounts. Yet since the scandal broke and eventually fell off the front pages, stories have surfaced about additional improprieties at the bank. Not more than a few weeks after the scandal broke, stories arose about Wells Fargo forcing wronged customers into arbitration instead of permitting court cases to be heard. There was a spate of mortgage stories, the most recent coming last month when a Nevada plaintiff accused the bank of improperly handling interest-rate locks. The bank also admitted more than 500,000 cases of customers unknowingly enrolled in its online bill payment plan. The crescendo on Capitol Hill rose to a shout during the last week of August 2017, though, when the bank unveiled that its estimate of 2.1 million bogus accounts was off...by more than 1 million accounts. The number of phony accounts now stands at 3.5 million, off 70% from the bank's initial estimate. End result: Wells officials will be back on Capitol Hill this week defending themselves against charges that Stumpf misled lawmakers one year ago. Stumpf's successor, **Tim Sloan**, faces the Senate

Banking Committee at our press time. His prepared remarks contrast with Stumpf's previous Hill appearance. "I am deeply sorry," Sloan will say.

**2. Misery Loves... Wells Fargo** won't be the only brand playing defense on the Hill this week because of inept crisis management. **Equifax**, which must have gotten hold of Wells' crisis playbook, will also be making a congressional visit. No need to replay details of its crisis miscues. **Katie Paine** does it well in her *Image Patrol* on page 1 of this edition. (The only detail Paine missed occurred near press time: Similar to Wells Fargo, Equifax missed on its estimate of victims, saying late Sept. 2 that its data breach touched 2.5 million *more* people than initially estimated, bringing the total to 145.5 million.] Hopefully Equifax takes note of Wells' continual misery and for starters opts to be transparent and remorseful. At least its former CEO, **Richard Smith**, departed quicker than Stumpf did and apologized sooner. Smith, who received an estimated \$90 million departure package, is set to appear this week in front of House and Senate committees. Beyond Smith's contrition and the ouster of its CIO and chief security officer, though, Equifax at minimum needs to make preparations for a future crisis. It should develop a crisis communications plan, designate an official spokesperson and make plans for an online resource center. Although Washington is gorgeous this time of year, one of Equifax's goals should be to avoid needing to book a trip here in September 2018.



Richard Smith, former CEO, Equifax

**3. CEO to the Rescue:** Last week we complimented new **Uber** CEO **Dara Khosrowshahi's** good PR move, admitting the brand had "got things wrong" and apologizing to the government and people of London. That earned Uber



Laura Macdonald, SVP/Head of Consumer, U.S., Hotwire

a meeting with officials of London's **TfL**, the unit responsible for not renewing Uber's license. In a show of leadership, **Khosrowshahi**, at our press time, was said to be in London, taking the meeting. Uber is a three-ring circus, though. So as the TfL meeting was occurring in the center ring, ousted Uber boss/cofounder and board member **Travis Kalanick** was performing in one of the side rings. Kalanick, who retains a board seat, issued a statement saying he'd recruited **Ursula Burns**, the former **Xerox** CEO, and erstwhile **Merrill Lynch** boss **John Thain** to the Uber board. In a statement, Uber said the appointments were a "complete surprise." In other Uber news, the brand's northern Europe boss, who oversaw London, said Oct. 2 she's departing. **Jo Bertram** insists she had decided to leave Uber well before the London situation arose.

**4. Growth:** Congrats to former **Hotwire** exec **Rebecca Honeyman** and **Greg Mondshein**, who've opened **SourceCode Communications** in NY, catering to tech businesses.

**5. People:** A huge congrats to our friend and PR News Hall of Famer **Southwest Airlines** VP and CCO **Linda Rutherford** (picture 3, p. 1), promoted to SVP and CCO. – The **American Physical Therapy Association** named Capitol Hill vet **Katherine Beh Neas** EVP, public affairs. – **Hotwire** upped **Christa Conte** (picture 2, p. 1) to SVP/head of its NY office; and **Laura Macdonald** to SVP/head of consumer, U.S. – **Dawn Bridges** was named EVP, communications, **Fusion Media Group**. ■