



THE HOLMES REPORT 2018

The Best Agencies, Campaigns, Influencers and Stories of the Year





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THE HOLMES REPORT

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Foreword



At a time of remarkable change — across the political, economic and information landscape — it seems safe to say that public relations has never been more important. So, it has once again been an enthralling affair to chart the global PR industry's continued evolution over the past 12 months, particularly as it elevates its efforts to meet the challenges facing organizations in the 21st century.

Those challenges come in myriad forms, as documented by our coverage and events in 2018. There is, of course, the worrying rise of populism and disinformation, combined with considerable volatility in economic terms and the continued disruption of conventional business models by rapid technological development. All of which is contributing to the increasing expectation that brands stand for something rather more substantial than a pure profit motive.

Indeed, if one trend defined this year, it was the call for purpose, a mantra that — by the end of 2018 — had begun to itself seem like the latest marketing bandwagon upon which companies could conveniently hop aboard. Yet even amidst the cynicism,

it has become clear that organizations can no longer sit on the sidelines when it comes to taking a stand on the momentous political and economic issues of the day, something that was highlighted by the best work as ranked in our Global Creative Index.

All of these learnings, and many more besides, emerged from our series of events this year, spanning more than eight markets across five continents, and captured in this book for your convenience. They are brought home by the sheer wealth of groundbreaking work that we see at our various SABRE Awards, along with the carefully curated conversations that take place at our Innovation Summits, which this year included New York, Amsterdam, Dubai, Johannesburg and Singapore. And, of course, they effectively formed the main event at our Provoke18 Global PR Summit, which shifted to Washington DC with remarkable success, drawing top-tier speakers and a sold-out crowd at the Watergate Hotel.

That backdrop made for a rather more interesting year than usual for the global PR industry. The year's biggest story was the Burson Cohn & Wolfe merger, evidence of how sweeping agency consolidation has taken hold across the holding group model. And while big agency networks are being challenged like never before, there remained plenty of evidence that midsize and independent PR firms are performing handsomely in terms of picking up the slack, illustrating how this tier of agencies have come to lead the market in terms of both growth and innovation.

Those were just some of the lessons from our Global Top 250 agency ranking, and from our exhaustive Agencies of the Year research, which again saw us benchmark some 450 PR firms from across the globe, in a bid to recognize the top 1% of the world's PR consultancies, which are analysed in this book.

Those research efforts remind us that this industry is driven by the people within it and — in some cases, of course — those that play a pivotal role from other sectors. And they are all rightly celebrated too, in our seventh Influence 100 and in our Innovator 25 listings across three regions. Both of those groups are emblematic of the wider public relations community that supports the Holmes Report and helps drive this industry forward, with an unflagging mixture of piercing insight, enthusiasm and good humour. And that, of course, has fuelled the Holmes Report's own, considerable, expansion in recent years, whether in terms of our geographic footprint, our editorial output or our broader global relevance. Thank you all for your support and engagement. We are already looking forward to 2019.

Arun Sudhaman
CEO/Editor-in-Chief
The Holmes Report





2018 Review

Top 10 Podcasts

The Echo Chamber's most popular discussions of the year, featuring Richard Edelman, Karen van Bergen, Michael Frohlich, Nik Govier, Tim Sutton and more.

We kick off our 2018 Review with our top 10 Echo Chamber podcast episodes. Remember, you can subscribe to the show via iTunes or the direct feed. And a big thank you to Markettiers, which produces the show, and our sponsors this year: March Communications and the Bulleit Group.

1. The 'emergency podcast': Cohn & Wolfe takes over Burson-Marsteller

Fittingly, the biggest PR story of the year, in February, was also the most popular Echo Chamber hit of 2018. As the drama unfolded, Paul Holmes and Arun Sudhaman explored what the mash-up of one of the oldest firms in the business and its younger, sassier sister might mean for both firms — from the heritage of Burson to the extraordinary leadership of C&W boss Donna Imperato — and the broader PR industry.

2. Omnicom PR chief Karen van Bergen on agency performance and what makes a great CEO

Karen van Bergen made her long-awaited Echo Chamber debut in February, two years since taking on the top PR job at Omnicom. It was worth the wait: in a wide-ranging conversation with Arun Sudhaman, a “cautiously optimistic” van Bergen covered the performance of the PR agencies in her stable, the challenging market conditions, collaboration, diversity in all its forms, funding start-ups, and what she thinks makes an ideal agency CEO.

3. Unity founder Nik Govier launches her new agency, Blurred

After Unity's Nik Govier suddenly left the highly-regarded agency she had co-founded with Gerry Hopkinson in 2005, the London PR community was watching closely to see what the passionate polymath did next. She joined me in the Echo Chamber to talk about her new venture, Blurred, pitched as a new kind of agency that sits in the third way between fully-employed and virtual, with an

equal focus on strategic counsel and creativity. Fellow founding partners Katy Stolliday and Stuart Lambert also came along for the ride.

4. Torod Neptune's first year at Lenovo

Lenovo chief communications officer Torod Neptune joined Arun Sudhaman in the Echo Chamber in May to chat about his first year with the technology giant and driving the reputation of — and culture within — a global brand with Chinese roots, in interesting geopolitical times. Neptune also talked about the state of diversity in the industry after choosing to incorporate D&I criteria into his high-profile agency search last year, as well as discussing the changing nature of the CCO role and what it means for agencies.

5. Robert Phillips returns to the Echo Chamber

Former Edelman EMEA CEO Robert Phillips returned to the podcast he used to host with Arun Sudhaman, to chew over what this lively political era means for companies and their

leadership. Phillips, who now heads Jericho Chambers, also talked about his firm's Responsible Tax Project with KPMG, and why PR agencies still need overhauling. Institute of PR president and CEO Tina McCorkindale then joined the show to discuss the latest PR trends, including purpose, gender equality and behavioural science.

6. Michael Frohlich: PR guy turns ad agency boss

Michael Frohlich joined the Echo Chamber for the first time, five months after his appointment as UK CEO of Ogilvy, to chat to Arun Sudhaman about his rise from PR practitioner to leading one of the UK's largest advertising agencies. Frohlich also explored what the PR world can learn from adland, including craft, what advertising creatives can learn from PR, including cultural immersion, and why PR agencies have struggled to build planning departments.

7. Behavioural scientist Richard Shotton on consumer bias

Richard Shotton, head of behavioural science at Manning Gottlieb OMD, published *The Choice Factory* early in 2017, outlining 25 common biases that affect consumers' responsiveness to brand messages and advertising. He joined me in the Echo Chamber to talk about his distinctly unstuffy book — described by Ogilvy's Rory Sutherland as “a Haynes Manual for understanding consumer behaviour” — and to look at how these biases, and the broader field of behavioural science, are relevant to PR and comms.

8. Tim Sutton talks global agency consolidation

Tim Sutton, Weber Shandwick's chair of EMEA and Asia Pacific, joined Arun Sudhaman in the Echo Chamber to discuss the state of the global PR market, agency growth — including the slowdown in China and the end of “wild west” double-digit growth — and the increasing trend of consolidation, while also defending the holding group agency model. To the enduring relief of our many American listeners, cricket was barely mentioned.

9. The end of the Sorrell era

Sir Martin Sorrell may be back in bullish acquisition mode at new venture S4, but in May the marketing world was reeling from his dramatic exit from WPP, the firm he built from the ground up over 30 years. Arun Sudhaman and Paul Holmes reflected on his enormous influence on marketing, his largely accidental acquisition of leading PR firms, his impact on the agency world, and how the industry reacted to his departure.

10. Richard Edelman at PRovoke18

It might be one of our most recent podcasts but the pull of Richard Edelman ensured this unedited session from our Global PR Summit leapt straight into the top 10. In an expansive conversation with Arun Sudhaman, Edelman talked about the state of the PR industry, the cultural challenges facing his agency, opportunities for growth and why PR firms need to transform if they are to compete with advertising shops for CMO budgets.



Top 10 News Stories

One particular agency merger dominated your attention this year, along with senior leadership moves at Edelman and MSL, major account shifts at IBM and Tata, and more agency consolidation from across the globe.

We continue our 2018 Review with our 10 most-read news stories of the year. As ever, we've excluded awards and ranking stories as they skew results. So what grabbed your attention this year? Well, one particular agency merger reigns supreme — to little surprise — along with senior leadership moves, major account shifts at IBM and Tata, and more agency consolidation from across the globe.

1. WPP Creates 3rd Largest PR Firm With Burson Cohn & Wolfe

February's dramatic reverse takeover of iconic PR firm Burson-Marsteller by smaller WPP sibling Cohn & Wolfe was not a total surprise, given that rumours of such a move had been swelling in the market for months. Regardless, the news broke with a resounding bang, pushed up thanks to an internal

leak — and snowballing rapidly into the year's biggest PR story, generating, for us at least, a veritable trove of content that dominates our other year-end lists. And while the headline announcement topped this list, several other BCW merger news pieces would also have cracked the top 10, but are instead consolidated here to give some other stories a chance:

[Burson Cohn & Wolfe Unveils New Brand \(September\)](#)

['The Big Prize Is Revitalising Burson': PR Industry Responds To Blockbuster Merger \(Feb\)](#)

[Burson Cohn & Wolfe Names Regional Leadership Following Merger \(March\)](#)

[\\$700 Million Burson Cohn & Wolfe 'Will Be A Challenger Brand' \(March\)](#)

2. IBM Selects Weber Shandwick To Lead New Global PR Lineup

Ray Day's arrival at IBM in 2017 was one of last year's top stories. And the new IBM CCO wasted little time in shaking things up, triggering the year's biggest account review in early 2018, and putting long-term incumbents Ketchum and Text100 on

alert. Diana Marszalek travelled up to Armonk in early May to reveal the results of the blockbuster pitch, which saw Weber Shandwick take on lead duties for the \$15m remit, supported by SKDKnickerbocker, Spectrum and Civic Entertainment Group.

3. Digital Chief Kevin King Quits Edelman After 14 Years

Edelman is no stranger to this annual list, particularly where senior talent moves are involved. And of the firm's major departures this year, none attracted more attention than the exit of global digital chair Kevin King, following a 14-year run during which he oversaw the agency's growth into the PR industry's largest digital player. He was soon snapped up by Citizen Relations as that firm's chief digital officer, and few would bet against him taking on broader leadership duties.

4. Diana Littman Leaves MMC To Become US CEO Of MSL

Ordinarily, a domestic leadership appointment would not trouble this list unduly. But Diana Littman's departure from MMC to MSL was no ordinary move, particularly when

you factor in the unexpected nature of the news (which also heralded the exit of MSL's Ron Guirguis) and Publicis Groupe CEO Arthur Sadoun's honest appraisal of the revitalisation required at his US PR unit. As one of the key architects behind MMC's meteoric rise over the past decade, meanwhile, Littman's decision to leave the Omnicom firm was always likely to raise eyebrows; her progress at MSL will be keenly observed.

5. Tata Picks Adfactors To Lead \$5m PR Remit After Parting With Rediff/Edelman

With neat symmetry, the Tata review that gave rise to this blockbuster account shift ranked in the same position on last year's list. Asia's largest homegrown PR assignment ultimately changed hands from six-year incumbent Edelman to Adfactors, but not without some controversy, thanks to the absence of a conventional pitch process. Regardless, India's biggest PR firm took charge of one of Asia's most coveted PR assignments, with the mandate including most of Tata's 29 companies

6. Wells Fargo's Jennifer Temple Replaces Henry Gomez As HPE CCO

Probably the year's biggest in-house talent move saw Wells Fargo's Jennifer Temple head to HPE to become the company's new chief communications officer, replacing Henry Gomez who had been both CCO and CMO since HP split into two companies in 2015. Gomez's own exit followed the departure of HPE CEO Meg Whitman, for whom he had worked for much of his career. Temple, meanwhile, left Wells Fargo as it continued to grapple with the fallout from its fake accounts scandal.

7. Omnicom To Merge FleishmanHillard, Ketchum & Porter-Novelli In Singapore

Agency consolidation remains one of the more compelling trends in the marketing communications world. And Omnicom PR Group has been more active in this regard than most, effectively rolling out a doctrine that seeks to merge its agency brands in countries where their individual scale doesn't measure up to the market leaders. In 2018, that meant Singapore, after executing similar mergers in four European markets last year. The big question, as ever — where will this model be deployed next? Industry rivals are rarely short of suggestions, but OPRG's leaders have remained tightlipped about future plans.

8. Aedhmar Hynes Exits As Text100 Merges With Bite To Create New Agency

Another agency merger, this one was rather more dramatic than most, even if Next15's decision to merge Text100 with Bite was hardly the biggest example of this trend. Regardless, it certainly proved to be one of the most interesting, resulting as it did in the departure of CEO Aedhmar Hynes and the end of the storied Text100 brand that she led for so many years.

9. What Golin Learned From A Moment Of Cultural Insensitivity

Diversity and inclusion remains a work in progress at many PR firms, and so it proved at Golin, which found itself handling the fallout from an episode of cultural insensitivity at its Chicago office. To its credit, Golin addressed the situation swiftly,

openly and honestly, reflecting its reputation as one of the industry's more progressive PR players.

10. Edelman Revenue Up 2.1% In 2017 To \$894m

This list would surely not be complete without another Edelman story, in this case the revelation of another year of disappointing growth from the world's biggest PR firm. Those results cued much soul-searching at the firm, with Richard Edelman declaring that he could not "accept this as the new normal." Regardless, Edelman's travails underscored the malaise that has gripped large PR agency networks in recent years. All eyes, accordingly, will be on Edelman's 2018 results, to see if the firm continues to crawl towards the \$1bn mark, or resumes the canter that characterised previous years of growth.



Top 10 Longreads

The blockbuster Burson Cohn & Wolfe merger heralded a year of considerable change across the PR world, as our best longreads of the year reveal.

Our 2018 Review continues by breaking down our most-read Longreads of the year. As ever, we disqualify awards stories as they always skew the rankings. Beyond that, it is worth noting that our Longreads always get the most traction, even ahead of most of our top news articles, which we will rank later this week. And please do bear in mind that, of course, some of these articles are now gated behind our Premium Content section.

For now, enjoy our most popular analysis and features from another tumultuous year:

1. 11 Talking Points From Cohn & Wolfe's Takeover Of Burson-Marsteller (\$)

Appropriately enough, first place went to the year's biggest news story, the dramatic takeover of iconic PR firm Burson-Marsteller by smaller WPP sibling Cohn & Wolfe. This analysis, posted within a couple of weeks of

the news, broke down the various questions, lessons and predications raised by the blockbuster merger, and it makes for interesting reading to see which of these 11 talking points still resonate nine months later.

2. 5 Communications Themes From A Revived World Economic Forum

Our annual Davos round-up is always a popular affair, not least because it helps to set the agenda for the year ahead. And this year's version was probably more anticipated than most, thanks to dire prognostications on the collapse of trust. Ultimately, though, the 2018 World Economic Forum ended the week in upbeat mood, buoyed by the kind of economic optimism that helped business and political leaders banish the memories of upheaval that coloured the 2017 version. Not that those issues, nor the populism that underpin them, have disappeared. But the corporate world is nothing if not pragmatic, and the combination of tax cuts, deregulation and economic expansion means they appeared just a trifle less concerned

about the decline of trust or jarring inequality that continue to bedevil perceptions of the Davos elite.

3. Global PR Industry Growth Slows To 5% As Networks Struggle

Another annual feature that is keenly anticipated, our Global Top 250 agency ranking this year reported some worrying data about the global PR industry, with major PR networks suffering their worst ever year (in 2017) since the global financial crisis one decade ago. As ever, there were some silver linings, notably the rise of the midsize firm — which performed handsomely in picking up the slack, illustrating how this tier of agencies have come to lead the market in terms of both growth and innovation.

4. Is Public Relations A 'Bullshit Job'? (\$)

“Bullshit jobs are jobs which even the person doing the job can't really justify the existence of, but they have to pretend that there's some reason for it to exist,” said LSE professor David Graeber in promoting his new book — *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory*. And public relations consultants, added

Graeber, are a classic example of this troubling trend. Enter Paul Holmes to elegantly debunk this claim, while allowing for the possibility that, in some instances, Graeber's view is not entirely unjustified — particularly when organizations are prepared to use manipulation, obfuscation and deceit to achieve their business goals.

5. P&G's Marc Pritchard: Public Relations Can Reinvent Brand-Building

Widely considered the world's most powerful marketer, Marc Pritchard probably wields the biggest global PR budget too, as part of his overarching remit as chief brand officer of consumer goods giant Procter & Gamble. Ahead of his headline slot at PRovoke18, we conducted an extensive interview with Pritchard that explored agency challenges, the PR industry's opportunity, reputation management in the fake news era, the changing nature of creativity, employee ambassadors, the fear of failure and much more.

6. Why The PR Industry's Diversity Initiatives Fail

Another devastatingly simple headline that highlighted the latest instalment of our lengthy campaign to improve diversity and inclusion in the PR industry. In this widely-read analysis, Aarti Shah breaks down why the PR industry has grappled for more than a decade with diversity initiatives that have made, at best, modest dents on a longstanding problem.

7. Cannes: Ranking the 2018 PR Gold Lions Winners (\$)

Our annual ranking of the Cannes PR Gold Lions winners again garnered plenty of attention, not least for highlighting how Cannes disproportionately rewards advertising (and public relations) people for their work with charities and non-profits, or for work that aligns companies and brands with good causes. That kind of bias may be unsurprising, as purpose becomes more central to modern branding. But what probably raised more eyebrows is how the vast majority of the 2018 Gold Lions provided very little evidence of any benefit to the brand.

8. 'Radical Evolution': Will H+K's Latest Changes Pave The Way For US Resurgence? (\$)

One of the bigger agency stories of the year involved the latest leadership reshuffle at H+K Strategies, which saw Richard Millar and Lars Erik Grønntun taking on global oversight in a bid to revive the firm's North American fortunes. This analysis chronicled the reasoning behind the decision, including the personality clash that helped usher in the departure of H+K North America chief Alex Jutkowitz.

9. Martin Sorrell, The Accidental PR Mogul (\$)

Martin Sorrell's departure from WPP in April shocked the business world, 33 years after he acquired the company as a vehicle for his global ambitions. In this long read, Paul Holmes analyses Sorrell's impact on the public relations world, a part of his legacy that is often overlooked, and with good reason. As Holmes writes, 'there is a case to be made that WPP consistently

failed to add value to the numerous PR agencies that it bought over the years— most of which declined in stature and influence after they were acquired.' We will, of course, be watching closely to see if Sorrell's new S4 Capital acquires any PR firms as part of its expansion strategy, whether accidentally or by design.

10. Next 15 Aims To Embrace Future By Dispensing With Brands Of The Past

It is, perhaps, fitting that the first and last entries on this list concern agency mergers, because nothing typified the global agency industry in 2018 better than the accelerating drumbeat of consolidation. Next15's decision to merge Text100 with Bite was hardly the biggest example of this trend, but it was certainly one of the most interesting, resulting as it did in the departure of CEO Aedhmar Hynes and the end of the storied Text100 brand that she led for so many years.



Top 12 Thought Leadership Pieces

Thought leadership is probably the most effective form of marketing for most professional service firms, so it's no surprise that PR agencies produce a wealth of surveys and studies.

We continue our 2018 Review with a look at the best of the industry's research insights this year. Thought leadership is probably the most effective form of marketing for most professional service firms, so it's no surprise that PR agencies produce a wealth of surveys and studies, supplemented each year by external research into topics like reputation and credibility.

Excluding our own excellent research, and emphasizing new initiatives or new findings over well-established pieces of intellectual property (particularly those that have made this list in previous years), the 12 most important thought leadership studies of the past 12 months shed new light on critical issues.

1-4 – Business & politics

The Trump era in the US has created an environment in which every company has to consider its position on critical political

issues—from immigration to LGBTQ rights—and in which refusing to take a side in such debates is seen as support for the status quo, creating a situation in which silence can be as dangerous as boldness.

The downside to inactivity was captured in research early in the year from public affairs firms APCO and GSG (the latter of which was way out ahead of this issue five years ago). APCO's Corporate Advocacy in Five Acts study found 90% of respondents expect brands to be involved in taking on society's most pressing concerns, and showed how companies that remain silent risk being seen as out-of-touch and irrelevant.

GSG's 5th annual business and politics report, Call to Action in the Age of Trump, found 76% of US consumers believe companies should stand up for what they believe in regardless of how it plays— up from 70% in 2016. And it suggested that 32% of Americans (a 10-point increase), 42% of millennials (an 11-point increase) and 57% of influential Washingtonians actively seek information on corporate values and positions.

Slightly better news for corporations came from a Weber Shandwick study, which found that 83% of respondents in the US and the UK believe it is more important than ever to support companies that “do the right thing” by doing business with them—a practice known as “buycotting”— compared to 59% who believe brand boycotts are of utmost import.

And reinforcing the message that this is not just a US issue, the annual Business Reputation Tracker produced by Opinium in partnership with the Confederation of British Industry and Porter Novelli found that nine out of 10 people (92%) think businesses should take a stance on social issues—with an overall decline in business reputation suggesting that companies are falling short.

5-7 – The Values-Based Consumer

Closely related to the expectation that businesses will get increasingly involved in political issues is the rise of the values-based consumer, and so it's not surprising that an increasing volume of research this year was focused on purpose.

Edelman produced perhaps the most definitive study on this topic, with its Earned Brands Study finding that 64% of global consumers are belief-driven buyers, a significant lift from the 50% who last year reported making purchasing decisions based on brands' stands on societal issues. The global research found some differences from market to market, but in the eight markets surveyed, belief-driven buyers are the majority in every age group—(18-34 (69%), 35-54 (67%) and 55-plus (56%)—and every income level.

There was an equally important contribution from FutureBrand, which found that “purpose brands” such as Disney and Apple now dominate the list of the top 25 brands in its FutureBrand Index. The index, a global perception study of PwC's Top 100 companies, uses 18 indicators across six key perception categories and included a record number of “purpose brands” (11 versus three in 2014).

Meanwhile, research from Porter Novelli/Cone supported the idea that consumers are not the only ones interested in purpose: that taking a stand is a key factor in driving a company's reputation. The Purpose Premium Index finds that purpose drives 13% of companies' reputations, making it the third largest factor contributing to consumer perception (behind quality and vision)

8. Cleaning Up Social Media

We could probably dedicate a whole list to the key insights generated by Edelman's Trust Barometer, surely the best-established and most quoted of the PR industry's thought leadership initiatives. Its findings on declining trust in governments anticipated Brexit and Trump and other populist successes around the globe, and this year's Barometer found further erosion in trust as people around the world began to question the very nature of truth.

But rather than devoting more attention to those big picture issues, our top 12 list is going to focus on a narrower Trust Barometer study released at Cannes, which confirmed that trust in social media is way down: only 41% of respondents now trust information on social media, with particularly low trust levels recorded in the US (30%), Germany (27%), France (25%) and the UK (24%). More interestingly, 71% of consumers expect brands to pressure social platforms to effectively safeguard personal data and 70% expect brands to also curb the spread of fake news.

9. Cyber-security

As we go to press with this article, Marriott has just become the latest large company to experience a devastating data breach (expect to read more on that in our upcoming Crisis Review), so it is clear that cyber security is not going anywhere as an issue any time soon. Which means that Finn Partners' research on this topic is likely to remain relevant for some time.

It focused on employee activities, and found that nearly two in five workers have clicked on a link or opened an attachment from a sender they did not recognize and that 55% of respondents said they use their own devices for work, which makes them more vulnerable to hacks, malware and data breaches. (This was before the news broke that White House staffer Ivanka Trump has been using her personal email for work purposes, which only reinforces the point).

10. Still Not Equal

The European Corporate Affairs Remuneration Report, the first report of its kind from recruitment consultancy Ellwood Atfield, found that in the most senior roles—heads of EMEA and global heads of corporate affairs—women on average earn 7% less than men. And for heads of EU affairs, the gap is even wider: analysis of the remuneration of heads of EU affairs found that €147,800 is the average basic salary for men, while for women the average salary is €124,100 – 16% less at this level.

Anyone want to guess what the difference is in the US, or in the less developed markets of Asia and Latin America?

11. Influencer Marketing's Credibility Crisis

In April, research from the Association of National Advertisers found that 43% of the advertisers already engaging in influencer marketing plans are to put even more money into them in the next 12 months, suggesting that we have not yet reached “peak influencer.”

But that's not the study that makes our top 12 list. That distinction belongs to a piece of research later in the year, conducted by UK benchmarking and measurement firm CampaignDeus. That study of influencers and marketing spend shows 12% of UK influencers bought fake Instagram followers in the first six months of the year, and engagement rates for most influencers dropped off rapidly when they posted branded content.

In the wake of several complaints at Cannes regarding “follower farms” and other attempts to inflate influencer numbers, this survey dealt a blow to the discipline's growth prospects.

12. Trust in Technology

Finally, tied for the final spot on this year's list are two surveys that highlighted areas of concern for technology companies, and indeed all companies that are using technology in innovative ways—some of which clearly trouble consumers.

WE Communications unveiled its second Brands In Motion survey, which showed that consumers have been shaken by recent technology scandals: 84% fear their personal data is not secure, 80% think they or their family could be compromised online, and 77% fear that hackers could shut down the power grid. Almost all (97%) respondents said they now place responsibility squarely on brands to use technology ethically while continuing to drive customer-centric innovation, and 94% said that if brands can't use technology ethically, then governments should step in.

A new FleishmanHillard report, meanwhile, focused specifically on artificial intelligence, which found that more than half of global consumers (56%) already say that AI needs more regulation and restrictions, and 61% of all participants believe the responsibility for educating the public about AI should be shared, and that the knowledge gap needs to be addressed quickly if tech and other industry wants to build public trust in artificial intelligence.



Top 12 Event Sessions

From Washington Post executives to Parkland survivors to an Indian transgender rights activist, these speakers and panelists had interesting things to say last year.

Every year, The Holmes Report hosts numerous events, from our PProvoke Global Public Relations Summit in the US to regional IN2Summit events, and attends many more, including the annual business gatherings in Cannes and Davos. We report on dozens of the best sessions from these events. This roundup features 12 of the best from the past 12 months:

1. "Journalism under attack"

The timing could not have been better (or worse, perhaps): Washington Post executive editor Marty Baron and publisher Frederick Ryan appeared at our PProvoke18 conference in Washington, DC, as news of the murder of one of their contributors by Saudi Arabian agents continued to unfold, and as media outlets were among those receiving letter bombs from a deranged Trump supporter.

"What's distinct is that journalists within the United States are being threatened in a way we have never seen before," Baron told the audience. "We have had to increase security not only for our newsroom but across the organization... We have an environment of hostility in this country that has gotten worse in the current political situation, and it's motivating some people to take these actions."

2. Parkland survivors at Cannes

Amid all the celebrities (Queen Latifah, Thandie Newton) and marketing luminaries (Marc Pritchard, Keith Weed), a trio of speakers stood out: three survivors of the Parkland school shooting in America, who with their peers have turned a tragedy into a new political movement, defying cynics and rewriting the rules of activism.

The survivors told attendees how their movement drove the kind of change that has long eluded gun control activists — stricter state gun laws and major corporations cutting ties with the NRA — garnering large-scale support largely by tapping the

social media prowess that is, more or less, innate to today's teens. Within six weeks, the March for Our Lives in Washington they organized drew hundreds of thousands, and spurred student protests around the country.

3. The return of Martin Sorrell

Sir Martin Sorrell's second appearance at the PProvoke conference — and his first since departing WPP and launching his new S4 Capital business — was a feisty affair, as he made it obvious that he would have done a far better job in coming up with the right questions had he been allowed to interview himself.

Nevertheless, there were some tasty nuggets. His former company "seems to be a car crash in slow motion," rival Omnicom "has no strategy," and PR has benefited from being "faster, better, cheaper" (or at least faster and cheaper). Oh, and he is not a bully: "By that do you mean I want to win? Yes. Do I want to come second? No. Do I like losing business? No."

4. Women and diversity at Cannes

With so many discussions about the need for better representation behind and in front of the camera, it was impossible to choose one session at Cannes that captured the whole discussion — especially since our roving reporter Maja Pawinska Sims did such an amazing job of bringing various panels and various threads of discussion together in an omnibus story that captured the essence of the entire topic.

And her headline surely captured some of the scepticism that those along the Croisette and beyond must feel at this point. After years of talk, and at a time when everybody agrees the ad industry (and related businesses) should be more inclusive, why aren't they?

5&6. From advocacy to education at Davos

Edelman now unveils its Trust Barometer research at the World Economic Forum in Davos, and it always seems to trigger an interesting conversation — especially this year, with PR's role in fake news under scrutiny and CEO Richard Edelman promising: "We're going to talk about the good things and the bad things. If the goal is an educated population, PR actually has to play a fundamental role."

"As a corporate leader, you need to be very clear what you say, then you need to do what you say," added ABB CEO Ulrich Spiesshoffer, responding to a journalist's concern that too many CEOs hide behind their PR people.

That point was reinforced at another Davos discussion, cohosted by the Holmes Report and Weber

Shandwick, where United Nations Foundation CEO Kathy Calvin told the audience: "We're coming out of the CSR phase. It's now about how a company behaves in its core operations with regard to the community, the planet and other UN sustainability goals. It's a real opportunity for CEOs to step up, because we don't trust politicians, and an exciting time to rewrite some old rules."

7. Purpose, from a purpose leader

There were discussions around purpose at virtually every industry event we attended this year, but in this case it is possible to pick one to highlight on this list.

Just weeks before she stepped away from her job as communications head at Unilever, Sue Garrard was on stage at our EMEA IN2 Summit in Amsterdam, to talk about the company's leadership in purpose-driven branding. "Purpose is not lipstick, it's the DNA in your business," she reminded the audience. "The narrative out there is that there is a tension between profit and purpose. You absolutely have to start by knowing what your business case is."

8. Why Facebook should be worried

Six months before the news that Facebook had funded an anti-Semitic smear campaign that attempted to blame Jewish philanthropist George Soros for its public relations woes, a panel at our IN2Summit in New York provided plenty of warning that the company was facing a challenge—and the very real possibility of regulation.

David Kirkpatrick, former Fortune journalist and founder and CEO of Techonomy, sounded the loudest alarm: "It is amazing to

me how important the question of how Facebook evolves is to answering these questions about the future of democracy. The influence of Facebook is disproportionate, particularly since it's one person's company operating for profit and without oversight. I think government has to get involved in these platforms."

9. Had enough of Bell Pottinger yet?

Arun Sudhaman's coverage of the Bell Pottinger scandal and the firm's ultimate demise was extraordinarily comprehensive, but the topic had particular resonance in South Africa, and so inevitably was a major topic of discussion at the African IN2Summit in Johannesburg.

PRCA director-general Francis Ingham was there to discuss — as he has at a number of forums this year — his organization's brave enforcement of ethical rules, but the most pertinent point on the responsibility that agencies have in these situations came from Burson-Marsteller's African CEO Robyn de Villiers: "The answer isn't that they shouldn't have taken on the client, it's that they should have pushed back on the brief. I think it's true that every organisation deserves to have good communications representation, but you have to do proper due diligence on the client."

10. Can we make data interesting?

Our reporters have sat through a lot of sessions on the increasing importance of data and analytics in recent years and there were several more in 2018. But one that stood out came at our Asia-Pacific IN2Summit in Singapore, where Emmanuel Caisse, Weber Shandwick

senior VP of insight and analytics, made the case for combing rigorous data and strong storytelling.

Marketers need “to improve their own processes to using data, so they can communicate the information gleaned from it — as well as why it matters and how it can be leveraged — in language simple senior managers can comprehend, ultimately demonstrating its impact on business outcomes like ROI and profit margins.”

11. The industry’s credibility is still an issue

With the focus on fake news, and stories like those involving Facebook and Bell Pottinger (see above) still fresh in the public consciousness, it’s not surprising that PR has its own PR problem, and while many industry panels fall into navel-gazing on the issue, a discussion at our first Middle East IN2Summit in Dubai, where Arab News editor-in-chief Faisal Abbas wasn’t shy about criticizing many of those in the audience: “The PR industry is spin doctors — they do represent clients because these clients hire you.”

Mubadala CCO Brian Lott pushed back: “Part of what we all do is we look to have a conversation that is quite the opposite of this supposed dark arts and manipulation of the public,” he said. “Are we trying to have a point of view and accentuate the positive? Of course we are, but it doesn’t mean we are lying and manipulating.”

12. Purpose is personal at PRovoke18

By now, most public relations people understand that personal narratives are more powerful than facts and figures when it comes to making the case for societal change. If they don’t, they should check out the presentation by MSLGroup, its Vicks client, and Indian transgender rights activist Shree Gauri Sawant at PRovoke18.

Recounting her own struggles with prejudice and ignorance, the adoption of her daughter (who co-stars in a profoundly moving Vicks ad), and the formation of her foundation to help the children of India’s sex-workers, she left the audience with a simple and powerful message: “Motherhood is a behavior. To love someone, to care for someone, that is being a mother.”



The Agencies of the Year – Global

The 2018 Global PR Agencies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 450 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across North America, EMEA and Asia-Pacific.

Winners were announced at the 2018 Global SABRE Awards, which took place at the PProvoke18 Global PR Summit in Washington, DC, on the evening of 24 October.

Global PR Agencies of the Year

WINNER

Cohn & Wolfe

FINALISTS

Edelman
FleishmanHillard
H+K Strategies
Weber Shandwick

Consumer PR Agencies of the Year

WINNER

Marina Maher Communications

FINALISTS

AKA Asia
Mischief
Olson Engage
W Communications

Corporate/Financial PR Agencies of the Year

WINNER

Sard Verbinen & Co

FINALISTS

Adfactors
G&S Communications
Headland Consultancy
Newgate Communications

Creative PR Agencies of the Year

WINNER

Hope&Glory

FINALISTS

Dentsu
Ketchum
M Booth
Red Agency

Digital PR Agencies of the Year

WINNER

Edelman

FINALISTS

Clockwork Media
Huge
W2O Group
Weber Shandwick

Healthcare PR Agencies of the Year

WINNER

Narva

FINALISTS

Cohn & Wolfe
Finn Partners
FleishmanHillard
GCI Health

Public Affairs Agencies of the Year

WINNER

APCO Worldwide

FINALISTS

Ewing
Farner Consulting
GSG
SKDKnickerbocker

Technology PR Agencies of the Year

WINNER

IN.FOM

FINALISTS

Brands2Life
Chameleon
PAN Communications
Zeno

New Agencies of the Year

WINNER

CURA Strategies

FINALISTS

First Partners
Talker Tailor Trouble Maker



The Agencies of the Year – North America

2018 North America Large PR Agencies of the Year

Our 2018 North America PR Agencies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 150 submissions and 50 face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across the US and Canada.

Winners were unveiled at the 2018 North American SABRE Awards, at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York on May 1.

WINNER

Cohn & Wolfe (WPP)

While most of the top tier agencies were happy if they could brag about any kind of growth in 2017, Cohn & Wolfe was recording its fourth consecutive year of double-digit growth. The traditional caveat—that Cohn & Wolfe is half the size of most of those competitors—was looking less and less convincing by the end of 2017. And given recent events (the merger with WPP sister agency Burson-Marsteller, with Donna Imperato taking control of what is now a \$700 million-plus mega-firm) it's no longer even relevant.

The growth record is impressive, obviously, but the path Cohn & Wolfe followed to get there is the real story. A decade ago, the firm was a strong player in consumer and healthcare, offering a blend of traditional media expertise and growing digital capabilities. In recent years, it has added an array of in-depth social know-how and the ability to integrate paid, earned, shared and owned channels. Last year saw a strengthening of the influencer marketing approach (“Trufluence”) and expanded AI and VR capabilities. As a result, Cohn & Wolfe can now legitimately claim to be an integrated firm, offering its clients the ability to deliver the complete brand experience, using social and experiential and more—supported by robust data—to deliver channel-neutral ideas and immersive content.

There was a deluge of new business last year: Amazon Web Services, Campari, Electrolux, Fruit of the Loom, Huawei, IKEA, Novo Nordisk, Qualcomm, Samsung, Zoetis. And there was organic growth from the likes of Bayer, Gilead, Newell

Brands, Pfizer, and 20th Century Fox. There was new talent too, including Hill+Knowlton veteran Gary Goldhammer as executive VP in the US digital practice; Stephanie O'Donnell from Edelman to lead the corporate healthcare offer; and Kristin Hooper, formerly of KRC and Weber Shandwick, as senior VP, branding and insights.

The firm's insight-driven work really stands out: the consumer practice tapped into an understanding of how cult brands form to create “The Order of Cholula” for the hot sauce brand; it created a content-to-commerce campaign that helped Maserati sell \$100,000 cars on Facebook; it worked with celebrity Anthony Anderson on a series of films that urged Americans to “Get Real About Diabetes” for Novo Nordisk; and it helped Newell Brands turn a crisis—after a beloved This Is Us TV show character was killed in a Crock Pot fire—into a brand-building opportunity, culminating with a Super Bowl ad. And on its own behalf, Cohn & Wolfe is turning

its “Authentic Brands” research into one of the industry’s most interesting thought leadership initiatives. — PH

FINALISTS

Edelman (DJE Holdings)

For almost any other global agency, the 2.3% growth Edelman recorded in 2017 (3.3% in North America) would have been satisfactory if not cause for celebration. For Edelman—the world’s largest independent, with fee income now within a whisker of \$900 million—it was disappointing, with Richard Edelman insisting that he would not accept low single digit growth as the “new normal” and doubling down on a series of investments designed to establish the firm as not only the best big PR agency, but a serious competitor to the ad agencies and digital firms—and even content producers like CNN—competing for clients’ marketing dollars.

In recent years, that has meant expanding the firm’s digital and social capabilities and its creative department—now more than 600-strong around the world, with 350 in the US—to include growing numbers of advertising and paid media specialists. But it has also involved moving into more consultative areas, from data and analytics to change management and employee experience. New appointments in 2017 reflect both of those priorities, from Mark Renshaw (a Leo Burnett veteran) taking over as global creative chair to Ernst & Young’s Cydney Roach joining to lead the employee engagement function to Natalie Seidman, formerly of The NPD Group, as managing director of Edelman Intelligence.

Those investments are reflected in new business success. There was organic growth from clients like Adobe, Citadel, Hologic, HP, Mars, and the State of Florida’s Department of Citrus, and new business from Ajinomoto, Genentech, Puget Sound Energy, ServiceNow, and Sonos. But there were also digital assignments from the Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau and Sears Holding Company, and advisory services business from Bridgestone and Microsoft.

And Edelman’s best work continues to be among the best in the business, as evidenced by a dozen SABRE nominations for campaigns ranging from executive leadership work with PayPal CEO Dan Schulman to pro bono work for the One Orlando Alliance in the wake of the tragic shooting there; from brand marketing and content creation for Unilever brands such as Dove and Axe to a follow-up to REI’s massive award-winning Opt Outside campaign focusing on gender issues; from empowering young adults to get tested for STDs on behalf of the American Sexual Health Association to marketing regional jets for Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. — PH

FleishmanHillard (Omnicom Group)

Omnicom’s public relations agencies haven’t enjoyed the best of times recently—0.3% growth in 2017, after a 2.8% increase the year before—and FleishmanHillard, in its second year with John Saunders at the helm, was always going to have to push itself if it was going to improve on a record 2016. In the end, it fell a little short, but by the fourth quarter North America was returned to growth, and profits were strong (which may matter more to the parent company). An even better sign: a

survey of 450 clients conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers found satisfaction and loyalty scores on the rise.

The western region and the Washington, DC, operations turned in particularly impressive performances, and the technology, healthcare, and financial and professional services sectors were all helping to drive growth. Additional assignments in 2017 came from AbbVie, Baxter, Bayer, Darden, Merck, Nike, Philips, Western Union, and WWE, while 2018 is off to a roaring start with the addition of AB InBev, General Motors, Monsanto, the PGA, Philips, S&P and Seagate as the firm approaches new business with new swagger.

That’s the result of ongoing investment in those areas that Saunders and his leadership team (and his rotating 15-person “cabinet”) have identified as growth drivers: a research and analytics practice now rebranded as Global Intelligence, with its focus on predictive analytics, and an Innovation Planning unit that is looking at new tools and techniques, including an influencer prediction tool. The firm is re-emphasizing cultural initiatives too, with a commitment to improved diversity and inclusion, including unconscious bias training, and expanded community outreach to celebrate the firm’s 70th anniversary in 2016.

The work is strong, from supporting AB InBev’s SuperBowl advertising, which focused on providing water for disaster relief rather than selling more beer, to working with General Motors on the “zero” goals (zero crashes, zero emissions, zero congestion) outlined by CEO Mary Barra; from helping AT&T provide blind people with a way to “see” the eclipse using

AIRA glasses to creating a high-profile stunt for Krispy Kreme's 80th birthday; from delivering a reputation management program for Aflac to opening the Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium with a blockbuster media blitz. — PH

W2O Group (Independent)

It's been clear for awhile now that W2O Group would inevitably be competing as a large agency in a matter of time. With revenues now hitting \$144m — up nearly 18% from 2016 — the firm has undeniably earned its place as one of the industry's most formidable large players.

It's also worth reflecting on how extraordinary W2O's trajectory has been. Just five years ago, the firm was at \$62 million with 72% of revenues coming from traditional communications work. While earned is still at the firm's core, communications work is now at 47% followed by digital at 37% and analytics at 16%. Among the most significant turning points for W2O was in 2016 when it sold a stake to Mountaingate Capital, followed by a series of acquisitions to make its long-standing market differentiator — digital analytics — even sharper and more disciplined.

A few notable things haven't changed for W2O over the last 17 years. Founder/CEO Jim Weiss maintains a single P&L across its 13 offices that, together, employ more than 650 people. Management is comprised of long-standing leaders — Jenn Gottlieb, Bob Pearson, Seth Duncan — along with a growing number of business unit and regional leaders as the firm now maintains five sub-brands and a centralized analytics offering with

more than 110 analysts. And despite some investments in other areas, healthcare continues to be W2O's most robust sector with longstanding clients Merck, CVS Health, Incyte, Takeda, Genentech/Roche, KOWA, Sarepta, along with new additions Symbiomix Therapeutics LLC (now Lupin), Horizon Pharma, National Pharmaceutical Council, Athenahealth, Helix, Dermira, Alcresta, Circassia. Other notable clients include Comcast, IBM and Intel.

The caliber of work has also evolved with the firm taking home three Innovation SABRE Awards this year — including an impactful drug integration with General Hospital for pharma client Incyte. Socialgraphics — among W2O's signature analytics offering — won the marketing technology category. W2O Group is also a contender for four Gold and one Silver SABRE Awards. The firm also maintains partnerships with Syracuse University and the Newhouse School through the W2O Center for Social Commerce and the LaGrant Foundation, in addition to investing several professional development and recruiting programs. — AaS

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic Group)

Let's be clear about this: 2017 was a disappointing year for Weber Shandwick in terms of growth. Last year's Large Agency of the Year winner, which has been consistently outperforming its publicly-traded peers for most of the decade, saw revenues decline slightly. Softness in the consumer category was a factor, as was a decline in project-based business—and much of the uncertainty was a consequence of continued political chaos. But there

is no reason to believe that there's any reason for long-term concern. The IPG agency continues to focus on building an industry-leading employee experience and a stellar customer experience, and the creative work—as evidenced by 23 SABRE nominations—is even better than it was. (And if the first quarter is any indication, Weber Shandwick is going to bounce back nicely in 2018.)

A refusal to rest on the laurels of recent success is evident in several initiatives: the creation of new value-based communities (client experience, insights, integrated media, content), a formal approach to dynamic teaming across offices and practices; the creation of new multi-office “geos” to manage five regions within the US for talent development and greater collaboration. And of course the digital, content-creation and technological advances continue, with developments in AI and device interaction, and the creation of a new Tech + Innovation Center, offering everything from e-commerce solutions to advanced analytics.

The result of all that is industry-leading creative input that spans multiple categories: in consumer, campaigns like “The Color of Inclusion” for Mattel's Uno—providing accessibility for the color-blind—and the “Eclipse the Eclipse” cruise for Royal Caribbean—featuring Bonnie Tyler; in the cause-related marketing space, the firm introduced the “shero” lineup of role model dolls for Barbie; in the realm of public education, the agency handled the “Childhood Enders” campaign for Save the Children, and encouraged people to “F*ck without Fear” for the Los Angeles LGBT Center; the healthcare group helped people “Understand AD” with Sanofi Regeneron; and

there was an exemplary crisis response effort for Sutter Health in the wake of the Texas hurricane.

Among the new business highlights, Interpublic was a big winner in the Novartis consolidation and Weber

Shandwick will be among the beneficiaries. The Chevrolet business, added in 2016, has expanded to include social. Names like Ancestry.com, Sanofi Regeneron, and the Bahamas are new to the roster, and

clients like GSK (Flonase), Mondelez (Ritz), Mattel (Uno) added new brands to the agency's portfolio. Other expanded briefs came from Aldi, FMC, Honeywell, Mars and Verizon. — PH

2018 North America Midsize PR Agencies of the Year

Our 2018 North America PR Agencies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 150 submissions and 50 face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across the US and Canada.

Winners were unveiled at the 2018 North American SABRE Awards, at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York on May 1.

WINNER

Marina Maher Communications (Omnicom Group)

Celebrating its 35th anniversary in 2018, there is little to suggest that Marina Maher's firm is resting on its not inconsiderable laurels, which include serial recognition as an Agency of the Year in recent years. While the firm's growth has always struck an impressive note among its publicly-held peers, 20% topline expansion in consecutive years to around \$62m in 2018 suggests that MMC is now playing in a rarefied group of firms that do not just reflect the zeitgeist, but define it. Neither has the agency's remarkable performance been slowed by a broad reorganisation that has taken place over the past 18 months; instead, it seems safer to say that the restructuring — which includes the deployment of an integrated model that houses critical mass in creative and strategy, design and

content, digital innovation, and data/analytics — is underpinning MMC's turbo-charged progress.

That reorganisation also includes a new positioning — 'Artfully Persuasive' — which distils MMCs thinking around the power of influence, always one of its stronger suits, and now given added heft by a suite of new offerings, including the firm's proprietary RISE model for social engagement work; its 'Influencer Moneyball' initiative for influencer programs; the data-driven Moments approach to realtime marketing; and, its Hive trend capability. All of which has paid off with some eye-catching work — helping Aflac steal the conversation at CES via a giant robotic duck; assisting Tide's response to the Tide Pods Challenge safety crisis; deploying its 'moments' approach for Tide to connect with micro-influencers to drive sales; and, developing an analytics-driven content lab across J&J's 265+ business units, covering everything from CSR to crisis to employee engagement, securing an In2 SABRE Award in the process. (There was also another In2 SABRE Award for AMAG Pharmaceuticals' memorable trade show effort.)

While the evolved structure has meant plenty of change, the senior leadership team remains settled. The firm continues to be led by

founder and CEO Marina Maher; supported by chief integration officer Diana Littman, executive director Nancy Lowman LaBadie; ECD Ted Sabarese; chief strategy officer Joydeep Dey; and, David Richeson, chief of digital innovation and influence. Also of note, more than 75% of MMC's revenue now comes from a mix of disciplines and 58% of its people hail from diversified marketing backgrounds, reflected in an approach that ensures brand management only ever accounts for 50% of a specific account team, supplemented by executives from its specialist units.

From a single office in New York (albeit bolstered these days through partnerships with Omnicom global sister agencies), MMC manages efforts for global giants such as P&G, Johnson & Johnson, Celgene, Eisai, Galderma, Bayer and Merck. 2017, meanwhile, saw MMC return a remarkable new business performance, thanks to an 80% win rate that helped secure major assignments from Aflac, J&J, Glenmark, Nature's Path, Dr Scholl's, Coppertone and Novartis.

The scope of the firm's consumer work remains highly impressive, but there has also been continued expansion in healthcare under executive director Michele Schimmel and business development lead

Lisa Talbot, while MMC's corporate brand practice grew by 50% in 2017. Understandably, MMC's transformation has not been without challenges, but the evidence suggests that the firm's focus on getting people to opt in to their clients' brands is paying rich dividends. — AS

FINALISTS

Allison+Partners (MDC Partners)

The largest PR firm within MDC's network continues its impressive streak of being one of the most well-balanced agencies in North America when it comes to both capabilities and client portfolio. Last year, Allison + Partners grew 14% globally to \$63m and in North America this figure was a respectable 8% to \$51m. Much of this growth was organic, fueled by expanding work with existing clients like Seventh Generation and PepsiCo, as well as adding new clients including the coveted global remit for ARM, IKEA and high-profile tech brands.

The firm's top 20 clients (among these, Toyota, Samsung, Dignity Health) remain notably stable, although Allison did lose the consumer mobile remit for Samsung. Other clients include: Adecco, DanoneWave, Dignity Health, UL, ThoughtWorks, ADT (new), Rodan + Fields (new), among others. Allison + Partners has also cemented an informal partnership as the go-to PR firm for its fellow MDC agency — and entertainment powerhouse — 72 and Sunny, which has resulted in a steady stream of high-profile work. The agency was up for 10 Innovation SABREs and one Diamond, one Silver and seven Gold SABREs this year.

Last year's digital agency of the year also continues to grow its All Told practice (this combines research, content, creative, digital and measurement expertise into one offering) across its six practice areas and it now accounts for \$7m in revenues. The firm also launched its Storytelling for Business Workshop last year. In response to the hackneyed remit from CMOs to do "more with less," Allison has also started moving away from selling "time" into more product-based offerings and project work. The firm also launched Workplace, to help organizations get recognized as great places to work.

The firm's global headcount grew modestly to 344 with its North America workforce spread across offices in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, Portland, San Diego and San Francisco (global HQ), Seattle, Silicon Valley, Washington D.C. Leadership remains stable with co-founders Scott Allison (CEO), Andy Hardi Brown (COO), Jonathan Heit (Americas president) and Scott Pansky at the helm.

Allison's signature thought-leadership IP Influence also expanded in 2017 to highlight the impact digital influencers are having on driving engagement and donations for causes across the US. — AaS

French/West/Vaughan (Independent)

French/West/Vaughn started its 20th year in business in a big way, officially bringing Fetching Communications, the country's oldest and largest pet and veterinary-focused PR firm, into the company fold on Jan. 1, 2017. Adding the new acquisition to the existing F/W/V mix

posed its challenges; Streamlining processes and procedures and educating employees were among the tasks. So was getting to know clients, and familiarizing them with new ways of doing business.

But with a two-decade history steeped in such strategic acquisitions, and the kind of innovation that often ensues (F/W/V adopted an integrated marketing model a decade-plus before it was in vogue), navigating the new and different is, in many ways, business as usual for the Raleigh, NC-based independent firm. In 1998, the agency was the first in the country to create a licensing practice. Today it has deals that boost opportunities to embed client content in film and TV productions. As a general rule, F/W/V believes that when things start feeling comfortable, and business is good, it's time to disrupt and remake it.

So it's little wonder that 2017 was a good one for F/W/V, which grew 8% into a \$25m agency; the firm worked for more than 100 separate brands, with more than half of its clients being under contract with the agency for five years or longer. Having garnered numerous accolades for its Wrangler Network, the multimedia platform built for Wrangler jeans wearers, F/W/V in the last 12 months continued rolling out next-level campaigns. Its work for the Louisiana Film and Entertainment Association resulted in a state legislature vote for legislation that essentially stabilized Louisiana's declining film industry. The agency's efforts in support of former US ambassador Jim Cain, whose son-in-law was killed in 2016's Brussels airport bombing, played a role in the Belgian Parliament passing a measure that

allows foreign victims of the terrorist attack to receive the same financial assistance as Belgian victims. — DM

GCI Health (WPP)

Still only 10 years old, GCI Health has established itself not only as one of the best healthcare PR firms in the US — it won Healthcare Agency of the Year last year — but one of the best midsize agencies of any kind. Another year of 25% revenue growth brings the firm close to the \$50 million mark, and GCI now has a team of 160 people globally—more than 140 of those in the North American market. New business came from Abbott’s nutrition and diabetes care divisions, Bristol Myers Squibb, and a number of new Pfizer brands — GCI now works for eight of the top 10 global pharma companies — and smaller passion projects like Cohen Veterans Bioscience, which is helping veterans address PTSD.

At the heart of the agency’s success is the patient-centric approach it developed three years ago, which uses both traditional research and its own immersion in client communities to understand consumers’ whole lives, not just their conditions or treatments. That has led to some innovative work in the sector, whether it’s a corporate storytelling campaign for Pfizer humanizing its CSR work fighting neglected tropical diseases; an influencer-driven strategy for device-maker Abbott and its Freestyle Libre diabetes technology; an unusual media partnership with iHeartRadio to encourage patients to “tune into AFib” for BMS/Pfizer. The firm also has its own media partnership — with Redbook — promoting women’s health.

As should be evident from all that, GCI Health is a very “mission-driven” company — something that global CEO Wendy Lund and president of North America Kristin Cahill have continuously encouraged — resulting in one of the lowest employee turnover rates in the industry and regular appearances on our Best Agencies to Work For lists, voted on by employees. — PH

Zeno Group (DJE Holdings)

With Zeno now celebrating its 20th anniversary, and firmly established as one of the leading midsize agencies in North America (and increasingly, the world), it’s slightly surprising to remember that a decade ago this was an agency in disarray, with a succession of short-lived CEOs causing the firm to lurch from one position to another, always feeling like a second-string option for clients conflicted away from Edelman. But Barby Siegel joined in 2009, and eight consecutive years of double-digit growth followed, taking Zeno from 55 people to more than 500, from a consumer boutique to a firm with strong corporate, healthcare, and technology capabilities; a robust strategic planning process; and what may be the most advanced analytics credentials among its peers.

Innovation and disruption are at the heart of the firm’s leadership. It has brought in researchers, planners, and advanced data and analytics people to fuel The Human Project—research into how people relate to the brands in their lives—and other research, including some new insights into millennials. And breakthrough work in measurement has the potential to transform not only PR but the entire marketing mix. Fueled by this approach, the

work includes integrated marketing (including paid) “I Move Me” campaign for Asics; repositioning ABB from an engineering company to a forward-looking tech brand; issues management and sustainability positioning for Scotts Miracle-Gro; global brand-building for Turtle Wax; HPV awareness and vaccination promotion for Merck; executive communications for McAfee after its spin-out from Intel; and work for Netflix that included global campaign strategy and development for consumer brand stories.

The agency’s new business performance in 2017 was exceptional. It added work from Bayer and Novartis, and J&J’s flagship Tylenol brand in the healthcare arena; technology clients like AT&T, Lenovo, and Salesforce; consumer brands like Avon, Marriott, Motorola, Nestle and PVH; and ABB, Ace Hardware, Barnes and Noble Education and Fidelity on the corporate side. The new year is off to an equally impressive start, with work from abbvie, Baxter, Coca-Cola and more. And clients like AB InBev, intel, Johnson & Johnson, Lenovo, Merck, Microsoft, Netflix, Pizza Hut, Starbucks, and Turtle Wax—names any multinational firm would be pleased to add to their roster—are now served in multiple regions beyond North America. — PH

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WINNER

Day One Agency (Independent)

It's relatively rare for an agency to leap from \$6m to more than \$11m in a single year without an acquisition — but that's how robust Day One's growth was in 2017. Even more impressive, 75% of this came from existing clients like American Express, Bacardi and Facebook (other existing clients include Comcast, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Nike, YouTube and Victoria's Secret). The growth was also fueled by some new additions, including Chipotle and Sonos.

The firm also scaled its digital storytelling through its new influencer marketing offering NEON — which has already been used for clients Bacardi, Sonos, American Express and Nike. The offering seeks out niche artists, makers and thought leaders, who individually may have less followers, but collectively drive large scale engagement among the right people. The agency uses a cost per engagement model to determine ROI. Notable work includes a campaign for Chipotle's Queso launch that was the most engaged Instagram campaign in Chipotle's history with +400% increase in organic reach (the work won an Innovation SABRE Award).

The firm's memorable founding involved Josh Rosenberg, Brad Laney and Rob Longert going rogue from M Booth to launch Day One (and ultimately winning New Agency of the Year from us in 2016). The leadership team has, since, considerably expanded to include managing director, Jamie Falkowski and VP Laura Barganier. The firm has also added three other VPs bringing its leadership team to nine people. The agency also made a series of client-side hires from companies such as Viacom, Ford Motor Co., J. Crew, Urban Outfitters, Starwood Hotels and Coach. Day One boasts a 90% retention rate and also instituted a 'Fresh Thinking Vacation Stipend' after three years of service, an annual tech stipend, a speaker series and lots of client swag—from funding the team's personal AMEX membership fees, to giving out customized Nike kicks, to weekly Bacardi happy hours. — AaS

FINALISTS

dna Communications (Interpublic Group)

As the complexity of healthcare communications has increased, dna Communications has responded with a breadth of robust, multidimensional efforts that help clients navigate the intricacies of the system, while boosting advancements — and aiming to change lives by doing so. In the last 12 months, the healthcare agency has been steeped in some of the biggest issues facing stakeholders from pharmaceutical companies to healthcare providers and patients.

A major educational campaign surrounding the link between diabetes and heart disease, and treatment options for managing it, was just one of dna's most effective 2017 campaigns, reaching millions and changing the diabetes conversation. Other key campaigns included highlighting how today's environment requires physicians to think differently and be innovative in order to deliver the best care for HIV patients, and a multi-country generational survey among millennial and baby boomer women comparing attitudes on contraceptive choices.

With team members well-versed in science and research as well as strategic communications, dna takes a multidisciplinary approach to serving its roster of clients — companies like Boehringer Ingelheim, Lilly Novartis and Celgene among them. The firm is keenly aware that, despite being part of the same industry, the companies it works with are utterly different from one another, and therefore have specific needs in negotiating the healthcare sector's ever-changing commercial, regulatory, scientific and communications landscape.

That approach has fueled dna's growth trajectory, which continued in 2017. During the last 12 months, the agency expanded its client roster with the addition of European Society for Organ Transplantation, Indivior and Novo Nordisk. Accordingly, the agency's staff also grew in 2017, increasing 35% to 70. Indeed overall revenue growth was up 40% to \$12m, reflecting the success of the agency's thinking and capabilities. — DM

Havas Formula (Havas Group)

Since its 2014 acquisition by the Havas holding company, Havas Formula has made pitching its stature as a mid-sized, client-focused agency part of its protocol in wooing clients. In doing so, the agency reaffirms that, despite now being part of something larger, it remains very much the agency Michael Olguin created 26 years ago, dedicated to helping ‘passion brands’ grow through top-tier client service. Havas remains so committed to its roots that it makes sure emergent and provocative brands comprise 20% of its client roster. In the last 12 months, that strategy resulted in Havas Formula expanding the range of companies with which it works, adding brands like Runa, High Brew and Parm Crisps to the mix.

Which in no way suggests that Havas Formula is stuck in the past. Quite the contrary, in fact, as the firm in 2017 celebrated its 25th anniversary year by hitting a number of hallmarks. During the last 12 months, Havas Formula grew beyond expectations, topping its “aggressive” revenue goal of \$19m by \$1m — cracking the \$20m mark for the first time ever. That’s 17% topline growth, stemming in part by signing on new clients including RE/MAX, Sears Holding Group and Mike’s Hard Lemonade. The year also saw Havas Formula launch a creative service division, bolstering its presentations and storytelling capabilities, and open an in-house content studio in its L.A. office. The firm also launched a new mobile application for its brand activation division, called Havas Street. The app manages all experiential data collected at the events the agency execute across 30+ markets, reducing the overhead

labor needed to support large-scale programs and delivering best-in-class reporting to our clients.

So it’s little wonder that Havas Formula’s work in 2017 got noticed — and paid off in big ways for partner brands, which include companies like Dunkin’ Donuts, Heineken USA and Schlage. The multifaceted campaign the firm created to drive attention to Jaguar Land Rover at the L.A. Auto Show garnered 2bn earned media impressions and 1,300 media placements in auto, lifestyle and national news media. Meanwhile, the Healthy Chica campaign helped Wonderful Pistachios tap into the Hispanic market, one of the agency’s core strengths.— DM

Inkhouse (Independent)

In a year that was bookended by the Women’s March and #MeToo, InkHouse CEO Beth Monaghan had already established herself as one of the industry’s most tireless advocates for workplace equality. She has testified in front of both state and federal legislators advocating for paid leave, pay equity and other policies to foster workplace equality. This commitment to fairness is also reflected in an agency culture rooted in trust and freedom. Rather than relying on abstract concepts to encourage creativity, InkHouse builds this into its culture with perks like unlimited vacation, email banned outside of the hours of 7am and 7pm and weekly work-from-home days to focus on writing.

In 2017, revenues were up 9% to \$16.4m — and over the last five years InkHouse has seen 434% growth (2011 net fees were \$3m). The 10-year-old firm now has 100 people across offices in Boston, San Francisco, Providence (opened in 2017) and New

York (opened in 2017). EVP Nicole Bestard joined to lead New York. Clients include Raytheon, Salesforce, Toyota and Bentley University, plus new additions last year were Okta, John Hancock, Wentworth Institute of Technology, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Rockland Trust, Lyndra, Sense Labs, Mass Technology Leadership Council, CollegeVine, Freight Farms, Quell, Women’s March, Honeywell and Applause, among others.

Notable work included planning for (what turned into) an historic global event, InkHouse worked with the Sister March Network to aggregate global march attendance through media relations and a communications program around Salesforce’s sustainability programs. InkHouse launched several new offerings in 2017: a hands-on messaging workshop QuickStart and GoodInk, a CSR offering designed with the current challenges around trust in mind. — AaS

rbb Communications (Independent)

Rbb’s focus on ‘breakout brands’ has always given the Miami firm a distinctive positioning that it has leveraged to strong effect, but its efforts over the past couple of years reveal an agency that has successfully implemented an integrated model that works for a roster of national and global brands. That plan has been underpinned by a series of acquisitions — including digital firm Spiderboost and Out of the Blue Advertising — that helped the firm grow 29% in 2017 to \$12m, with its 20% margin continuing to rank among the industry’s best.

The firm’s new business performance provides ample proof of its integrated expansion, including such brands

as Anthera Pharmaceuticals, Merck Serono, Sentara Healthcare, Brown & Brown Bureau Veritas, Embassy Suites by Hilton and Virgin Voyages. There is strength across travel and leisure, consumer and healthcare — supplemented by specialist skills in digital, advertising and reputation/crisis management — with an existing client roster that includes Bank of America, Cleveland Clinic Florida, DHL Express, Florida Power & Light Company, Hampton by Hilton, Homewood Suites by

Hilton, Jackson Health System, Secrets Resorts & Spa/Dreams Resorts and VITAS Healthcare.

The firm remains led by CEO Christine Barney, supported by president Lisa Ross, EVPs Tina Elmowitz and John Quinn and a number of new senior hires, including EVPs Srikant Ramaswami and Laura Guitar. And while Rbb has grown noticeably, its focus on workplace culture and diversity remains a competitive advantage, at an agency that is not only women-

owned, but more diverse than most, and not shy about providing the statistics that underpin its case.

Rbb's thought leadership continues to impress, including its first Health Innovation Symposium and the expansion of its 'Idea Clouds' ideation methodology. All of which paid off with some standout work for Hampton by Hilton that focused on Hispanics, and for Homewood Suites that focused on men instead of women. — AS

2018 North America Boutique PR Agencies of the Year

Our 2018 North America PR Agencies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 150 submissions and 50 face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across the US and Canada.

Winners were unveiled at the 2018 North American SABRE Awards, at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York on May 1.

WINNER

C+C (Independent)

Seattle's C+C has grown impressively over the last decade focusing on campaigns that change behavior. Since its founding in 2005, C+C has built its agency around "doing good work," in particular for social issues in the private and public sectors. This expertise has proved lucrative, revenues are up 23% to \$9.9m and the team has expanded to 67 people across offices in Seattle, Boston and Portland.

Over the last year, the firm invested heavily in new services with 25% of its staff now specialists in either

creative, content or video. C+C also houses a multicultural division that is integrated from the start for all clients and has delivered 10% of the agency's revenue. Founders Julie Colehour and Bryan Cohen have strategically managed growth to ensure the firm maintains a strong, engaged culture—turnover was 8% in 2017 and of the 16 employees that joined C+C during its first five years, 80% are still with the agency. Last year, the agency also added a director of people and culture. In addition to the founders, the firm's leaders include office heads Cindy Jolicoeur and Suzette Riley.

This year C+C has earned four Gold SABRE and five Innovation SABRE nominations (and two wins in the latter category). The "Official Card of Sounders FC Fans" work for BECU resulted in 52,000+ credit card signups on the back of smart creative. Other notable work includes content creation for Alaska Airlines as it chased the eclipse with a special charter flight; and "On the Road, Off the Phone" for the Washington Traffic Safety Commission which showed a 13% reduction in distracted driving.

Other clients include Puget Sound Energy, Google, U.S. Department of Energy, Central Co-op, Columbia Gas (new), San Francisco Fire Credit Union (new), Massachusetts Community Colleges (new), Slalom Consulting (new) and Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op (new), among others. — AaS

FINALISTS

Bospar (Independent)

Tech PR veteran Chris Boehlke parted ways with Grayling in 2014 after selling her shop Phase Two Strategies to the Huntsworth-owned firm in the years prior. Since then, she's kept a relatively low-profile as she's grown and expanded her second entrepreneurial effort, Bospar with fellow principals Curtis Sparrer, Tricia Heinrich and Tom Carpenter.

In three years, the tech shop has grown to \$3.7 million with 22 people — while also making 20% or more in profit. Most notably, Bospar is disrupting the conventional industry thinking that a brick-and-mortar office becomes inevitable after a certain size. Rather, Bospar manages

to be a 100% virtual agency by implementing technology, training and processes designed specifically for a virtual workforce — including teaching senior staff how to manage remote teams and conduct virtual whiteboarding. From Bospar’s perspective, the agency “moved PR’s center of gravity to be far closer to the firm’s staff and clients than traditional models allow.”

Bospar launched in 2015 with two core clients: consumer cash-back website Ebates and big data analytics company 1010data. Both are clients still today, in addition to Cambium, Conversica, Neurala, NodeSource, Postman, PrescribeWellness —as well as new clients Alfresco, Ceres Imaging, Express VPN, Varo Money and others spanned across sectors that include AI, APIs, blockchain, cloud, data analytics, mobile banking, security, procurement, VPNs and WiFi. Bospar also prioritizes business impact metrics when launching and evaluating campaigns, these include tracking website visits, product demo requests, new membership subscriptions, software installs and other growth trajectory markers. Bospar was shortlisted for one Silver and one Gold SABRE Award this year. — AaS

INK Communications Co. (Independent)

2017 was the inaugural year in INKs’ five-year strategic growth plan, a roadmap to the agency’s future driven by the type of work the firm wants to do, the kind of brands with which it wants to work and the overarching goal of growing 30% year-over-year growth for the duration. And, by the time the year wrapped up, INK had handily achieved its goals.

The Austin-based agency signed on new clients including Whole Foods 365, Verizon, Rackspace and CoreLogic. The firm embarked on internal development, restructuring its communications staff into teams of specialists organized to work together on integrated communications programs, increasing quality and impact for clients, as well as increasing the ability to grow and train in their specializations. A research and insights team was created. INK moved into a new headquarters, debuted a new website and opened in New York. The Denver office it launched in 2016 expanded, capitalizing on being in a location that, like Austin, provided INK with direct lines to startups and large companies alike, while establishing a geographic footprint that differentiates from the large New York, Chicago and California agencies. Financially, the company topped its goal, growing 36% over the previous year into a \$4.5m operation.

All of which occurred without INK straying from its founding principle: Good work with good people makes for a good life. It’s a tenet reflected in the agency’s offerings and output, which start with an audience-fueled strategy aimed at producing results that matter. While the agency works with clients across sectors, it is committed to working with organizations it trusts and respects. The ‘good life’ results from CEO Starr Million Baker’s commitment to maintain a workplace that employees find challenging but also enjoyable. INK’s 1BHF (read: one big happy family) culture is rooted in the idea that, regardless of geographical divides, INK’s 40-plus staffers are all-in and all

together. Practically, that translates to working across offices, across accounts and across specialties.

Founded 14 years ago as a tech-based agency, INK has since gained a foothold in the clean energy space, working with clients across the sector. A leader in next-gen communications, INK also produces two podcast series, The Good Stuff & The Noise. The agency’s blog reflects its thought leadership efforts, including a recent series on the clean energy industry. — DM

Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock (Independent)

Founded in Nashville in 2006, Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock (JPCH) has grown to become one of the country’s top healthcare firms, with an additional hub in Chicago helping it deliver a sophisticated range of services that favours strategic positioning, issues/crisis navigation and change management. Led by president/CEO David Jarrard, COO Kevin Phillips, chief innovation officer Molly Cate and chief development officer Anne Hancock Toomey — the firm grew by an impressive 18.5% in 2017, thanks in part to a rich new business haul that included numerous high-profile healthcare organisations.

Specifically, JPCH has capitalised on its ability to navigate complex communications challenges as health systems have formed bigger alliances and hospitals become subject to higher transparency standards. JPCH’s own focus on predictive trends has helped it anticipate many of these issues, resulting in thought leadership and strategy efforts that result in a clear point of view and actionable recommendations to clients.

Examples of that approach come from a number of the firm's campaigns, including a major change management effort for a health system; helping a national hospital company navigate a '60 Minutes' takedown; and positioning efforts for health companies that resulted in measurable revenue growth. — AS

Kyne (Independent)

David Kyne founded his eponymously-titled communications firm in 2009 in a bid to focus on connecting public and private sector organisations to address unmet healthcare needs. Headquartered in Dublin, the firm's operations in New York and Los Angeles are led by Maureen Byrne and Wendy Woods-

Williams, respectively, supplemented by the arrival of SVP Darcy Sawatzki to lead its US public health business.

And while much of Kyne's work is global in scope, it is the firm's US clients that appear to be powering its eye-catching work. For example, Kyne has partnered with The Carter Center to help end endemic transmission of Guinea worm disease in four remaining countries, thanks to a creative behaviour change campaign that involves music, radio, video and social drama. Kyne also helped conceptualize My Life, Our Future, a US program that provides free genetic testing to people with hemophilia, a rare bleeding disorder, and has built the world's largest hemophilia genetic research repository.

Work like that helps to explain Kyne's stellar growth in 2017, up almost 63% to \$9.6m. There was new business from Relypsa and the World Federation of Hemophilia, joining a client list that also includes AstraZeneca, Boehringer Ingelheim, CDC Foundation, National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, Seqirus and the Carter Center. The firm's thought leadership approach also underpins its growth, showcased by David Kyne's work on the CDC Foundation Corporate Roundtable. To help manage the growth, the firm has upped investment in data mining and software, as part of a thorough audit of its staffing and technology capabilities. — AS

2018 North America New PR Agencies of the Year

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WINNER

CURA Strategies (Independent)

CURA Strategies cofounders Anne Woodbury and Jeff Valliere worked together at FleishmanHillard and its Washington, DC, subsidiary GMMB before going their separate ways—she to Togo Run and the offices of former Speaker Newt Gingrich, he to digital strategy firm Threespot and the Obama campaign. They reunited in January 2016 to launch a new

firm that would focus on healthcare public affairs in the healthcare sector, helping to address some of the critical issues facing the healthcare sector in America and providing a voice to advocacy groups and causes with a stake in the big health policy debates.

That objective has been realized, with CURA's 2017 projects including handling veterans' health work for The Elizabeth Dole Foundation (supporting military caregivers), PsychArmor Institute, and MDxHealth, and coalition building activity for Advocates for Opioid Recovery. Other highlights included work on behalf of The National Diabetes Prevention Program, created by Congress and managed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and winning a competitive pitch to become agency of record for the American College of Cardiology's annual scientific session.

As a result, CURA has grown over the past couple of years to become a firm of 11 people, with 19 clients and fees of close to \$2 million — all of that despite the fact that its largest client elected to take many of its communications activities in-house last year (a process CURA supported through the transition). In December, the firm expanded its offerings to include direct government relations with the addition of vice president Scott Leezer, formerly of The Federal Group. — PH

FINALISTS

Brands2Life (Independent)

When Brands2Life decided to launch a US operation 12 months ago, the firm's founders Giles Fraser and Sarah Scales knew better than most that success was hardly guaranteed. Credentials as one of the UK's finest

PR agencies counted for little in a US market that is littered with the carcasses of failed contenders from across the pond. Yet, one year in, Brands2Life may well be on the road to proving the naysayers wrong, delivering an encouraging start that has blended the best of its UK capabilities with a refreshing willingness to localise its offering in line with market expectations.

Under the oversight of US MD Rene Musech, Brands2Life's San Francisco operation is working with nine technology clients, bringing in revenue of more than \$500k from a team of seven. Assignments include Renault Silicon Valley Innovation Lab; thought leadership for Verizon Connect; executive profiling work for Tipalti; Internet of Things World media relations activity; supporting Celonis' market growth and increasing US brand awareness for Thomsons Online Benefits. — AS

Cheer Partners (Independent)

With more than 20 years experience each in HR, communications and business, Cathleen Graham and Darcie Peck's new consultancy is dedicated to helping companies work through employee and talent-related issues. In the short time since launch, Cheer Partners has made big-league gains — signing on clients including Aetna and Juniper Networks; starting a joint venture with RF|Binder focusing on areas like employee engagement and diversity; and reporting \$1.3m in revenue.

That kind of success shows that Graham, a veteran of HR and talent management, and Darcie, who has held senior finance roles, are on the right track in opening a shop that aims to help businesses succeed by having the right talent and culture,

and the programs to sustain them. Cheer Partners' timing appears ideal, as companies are increasingly requiring expertise in such areas as employee engagement and internal communications, boosting diversity & inclusion and fostering a compelling company culture.

2018 is also off to a good start, with the firm's existing clients signing on for expanded services, more new assignments coming onboard and a joint venture inked with RF|Binder, called RFB|Cheer. The five-person operation's promising start is testament to Graham and Peck's ability to position and leverage their expertise in ways that attract and serve clients. One client's diversity & inclusion program, for instance, includes training, focus groups, surveys, team building activities and holding salons featuring outside voices on the subject.

The Colony Project (Vision 7 International / BlueFocus)

At just two years old, The Colony Project aims to push the boundaries of communications, using 21st century tactics to promote the common good. Earned-first, bilingual and decidedly Canadian, the agency specializes in social media strategy, content creation and influencer relations — and harnesses its expertise in those areas to help connect brands to otherwise untapped audiences. And, as part of Vision 7, the firm counts Cossette and Citizen Relations as well-connected sister agencies.

The approach appears to be working. Since opening its doors in 2016, the Colony Project has doubled its revenue, hitting the C\$1.3m mark in 2017. With offices in Toronto and Montreal, the agency's team has

tripled to 14 people during that time. It has also garnered a roster of impressive clients, inking deals with global brands including Hyundai, La Roche-Posay, Heinz Ketchup, the Guinness Book of World Records and Nando's as well as startups such as SoCIAL LITE Vodka.

The array of companies the Colony Project represents reflects the agency's belief in not limiting its work to a specific sectoral focus. Its recent work for Hyundai, for instance, involved reaching untapped consumers through emotional storytelling, rather than automotive media relations. When the mummified human toe (yes, a real one) included in a Yukon hotel's signature drink went missing, the Colony Project, sister agency Cossette and Tourism Yukon within 48 hours hatched a plan to retrieve it, including a social media campaign #MakeAToenation, to replace it. When the original was recovered, the campaign switched gears to focus on finding a backup toe for the Sourtoe Cocktail to make sure such a tragedy would never happen again. — DM

SourceCode Communications (Independent)

There hasn't been a shortage of new tech firms hitting the market over the last few years. But it is notable when a new firm emerges and within a few months produces award-winning work combined with solid, and sustainable, business performance.

Former Hotwire execs Greg Mondschein and Becky Honeyman launched SourceCode last fall and reached \$100K in recurring revenue within six months and have grown an average of 30.5% month-over-month with 60% profitability. The agency now has six full-time employees. This

year, SourceCode was nominated for three In2 SABRE Awards and won the MicroMarketing category for its work with the dating app Hinge. The campaign was built around a pop-up store that celebrated relationship milestones for couples that have met on the app, which the

judges called “a clever, affordable campaign that led to downloads in the crowded dating app space.”

Other clients across its five key sectors — mobile & telecommunications, consumer technology, advertising & marketing technology, IT & enterprise and

financial technology — include Yotpo, Blis, Puls, Rachio, 37.5 Technology, PCI Pal, Adzuna, Zailab and Felix Gray & the LGBT Foundation. To tackle the talent issues, especially as a new firm, SourceCode offers unlimited vacation, full benefits and flexible working arrangements. — AaS

2018 Canadian PR Agencies of the Year

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WINNER

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic Group)

Amid a disappointing year for Weber Shandwick in terms of growth—revenues decline slightly—Canada was a bright spot, growing solidly once again, after five years of double-digit growth north of the border. The agency now has around 75 people across three offices (Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, operating seamlessly as a single P&L) and is now believed to be among the top five firms in Canada. The firm has a leadership position in the corporate reputation and risk management spaces, and has developed a new product called Behaviour Modes, which helps map the different ways audiences engage with media.

Weber Shandwick represents some of Canada’s most iconic brands, including the Royal Bank of Canada, Air Canada, Canadian Tire and Sport Chek. It has been agency of record in the English speaking territories for more than 30 years, and in 2017 expanded the brief to include all of Canada, including Quebec. The firm also leads consumer activations for Harley-Davidson Canada, citizenship and reputation management for RBC, digital creative for KPMG, influencer marketing for GM Canada, digital content for the Florida Department of Citrus in Canada, and serves as agency of record for Bayer CropScience. The healthcare practice supports brands such as AstraZeneca and Roche.

Highlights of the work include working with McDonald’s on the Canadian launch of its All-Day Breakfast menu and its 50th anniversary Big Mac with Bacon; supporting Roche Canada in a campaign to raise awareness of a rare and fatal lung disease in partnership with sprinter Andre De Grasse; helping Canadian Tire raise the profile of its in-house paint offering; promoting Air Canada’s loyalty program; and handling GM’s #BuickStyle campaign.—PH

FINALISTS

Argyle Public Relationships (Independent)

Argyle has something of a unique status among Canadian PR firms. It is both one of its oldest, having started life in 1979, and one of its fastest-growing, following a management buyout in 2003. In the 15 years since, the firm has grown from just \$1m in revenue to more than \$8m today, with expertise across corporate, consumer, healthcare, public affairs and digital. The firm’s Public Relationships index also showcases its thinking to good effect, helping explain the longevity of its assignments for such clients as RBC, Saputo, Facebook, Instagram, a couple of major Canadian pension plans, GSK and Kal Tire.

Growth of 8% during its last fiscal year demonstrates that Argyle has successfully rebounded from the loss of a seven-year mandate with a large government agency, one of its largest clients. Indeed, the public affairs unit replaced and soon outstripped the loss; new business in 2017 from UPS, AbbVie, Fasken Martineau, the Ontario Public Service Trust Pension Plan, Takeda, Dietitians of Canada and the City of Toronto.

Under the leadership of owner and CEO Daniel Tisch, Argyle possesses a strong senior team that includes consumer marketing SVP Alison George, healthcare SVP Rob McEwan and SVP Roanne Argyle. There is also a range of proprietary offerings that help distinguish the agency from its rivals, including an exclusive co-branded reputation management and measurement service with the Reputation Institute, and the aforementioned Public Relationship Index. And there has been a major effort to revamp the firm's workplace practices to address junior-level turnover, resulting in a dramatic drop in junior staff departures.

Argyle's work also shines. The firm's CSR efforts for Ontario Pork have resulted in a three-year strategic plan that has won numerous awards, addressing consumers, retailers, policymakers and industry — resulting in improved awareness, industry buy-in and public support from policymakers. The SixtiesScoop class action lawsuit support, meanwhile, was named Campaign of the Year by the Canadian Public Relations Society, successfully ramping up political pressure and ensuring the government responded publicly to settle the claims. — AS

Narrative (Tadiem Inc)

Narrative sees its mission in terms of creating stories that make a difference, the difference being anything from world peace to increased sneaker sales. The 10-year old agency, a division of Tadiem, does that by developing experiences across the real and digital worlds that influence consumer perceptions.

It's a core process that starts with creative problem solving, a skill that permeates the agency and is

reflected in its hires — photographers, influencers, journalists and coders as well as PR leaders. Narrative aims to take what the client wants — the story — and reimagine it in order to deliver its message in ways that make people care. The story evolves again as those people share versions of it of their own. Narrative leverages the capabilities of sister ad agency Bensimon Byrne and digital and design firm OneMethod to its advantage in achieving the common goal of delivering results.

In the last year the agency has responded to the changes and challenges facing the industry by evolving its toolkit and technologies, while optimizing its team through restructuring to be equipped to deliver results against the range of new demands. It has also reaffirmed the two components of its results-focused approach to serving clients — strategy and harnessing the collective spirit of the agency in its efforts. The former involves delving deep to find what makes clients' stories compelling. Narrative's work in support of Casey House, the Canadian hospital for people with HIV/AIDS, revealed that there is still a stigma attached to eating with people who are HIV positive or have AIDS. The latter shows in Narrative's product — stories that are relatable, interesting and often very human.

The agency's success in doing that is reflected in its remarkable growth in 2017. Without specifying earnings, Narrative reported a 92% rise in revenue in 2017, and nearly tripled its number of full-time employees. Powering that growth are significant new assignments from Nike, Salesforce and multiple new projects with Nestle Canada. — DM

Proof (Independent)

For independent Canadian firm Proof, 2017 was a year of soul-searching, as it embarked on a "brand discovery exercise" aimed at defining what the agency is at heart — and what it wants to be known for. Founded as Environics Communications by Bruce MacLellan in 1994, the firm confirmed through the process what has long been understood: that research, measurement and analytics are at the core of delivering service and results. That focus, which has been a decade in the making, is reflected in the new name the agency debuted in March: Proof. The firm's experiential marketing and conference planning arm, formerly Free for All Marketing, was unified with a new name of its own — Proof Experiences.

Building on its stature as a fully Canadian-owned and focused firm, much of Proof's efforts in 2017 aimed to bolster its position as a data-driven strategic agency, expanding and retooling its services in response to clients' needs. Among the results is a new strategies and insight team, which starts all new client relationships to discuss and assess goals — and what it would take to achieve them. Expanding its creative staff enabled Proof to offer new kinds of campaigns, like the takeover of Toronto's Castle Frank subway station to build buzz for Netflix's *The Punisher*, whose protagonist is named Frank Castle. The agency's second annual Proof CanTrust Index garnered widespread news coverage and sparked conversations. Through training, staff have improved their expertise in the sectors and clients they support; employees who work with Loblaws, a Canadian supermarket chain and

major client, for instance, delve deep into subjects like shopping basket size and product turnover.

The efforts paid off for Proof, which won roughly 70% of the business it pitched in 2017. Google Canada / YouTube, Accenture, Dell / EMC, Shopify, Health Canada and iRobot are among the new clients Proof added during the last 12 months. They join a robust roster of existing clients including Netflix, eBay/ StubHub, Allstate Insurance, Loblaw Companies and TD Bank. That translated into good dollars and cents news, too. In 2017, Proof's revenue cracked \$20m for the first time in the agency's history.

Veritas (MDC Partners)

Last year's Canadian Agency of the Year continues its impressive progress, up 22% in 2017 to around

\$11m. Originally established in 1993 as a healthcare communications specialist, Veritas has diversified over the years and today focuses on 'influencing the influencers,' drawing on a 'custom convergence' model that brings together cross-functional teams and multichannel solutions to ensure the appropriate solution for a range of complex challenges. Based in Toronto, Veritas has built its reputation by staying ahead of the increasingly complex and changing media universe, an approach that is clearly paying off if the firm's stellar growth and campaign work is any guide.

Now numbering 72 people across offices in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and New York, Veritas' growth was powered by new business from Shaw Communications, T-Fal, Heart and Stroke Canada, ESET, Waze

Canada, Moroccanoil, YMCA, Tina Brown, Sandoz and Volkswagen. They join a client roster that already includes Microsoft, Subway, Kijiji, Labatt, Church and Dwight, Tangerine Bank, Kimberly Clark, Audible, Fox Home Entertainment and Revlon.

The new business haul is impressive, but under president/CEO Krista Webster, it is Veritas' development into a credible creative contender that remains its calling card, bolstered by the hire of creative director Rob Dean. There is standout work for YMCA, Audible and Labatt — all of which showcases Veritas' flair for creative influence. The firm's workplace culture, via the ROWE (Results-Oriented Work Environment) concept, also stands out, as does its commitment to influencer research, via its proprietary Influencer Impact methodology. — AS

2018 Consumer PR Agencies of the Year

Our 2018 North America PR Agencies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 150 submissions and 50 face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across the US and Canada.

Winners were unveiled at the 2018 North American SABRE Awards, at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York on May 1.

WINNER

Olson Engage (ICF)

Olson Engage is probably the most prolific producer of breakthrough creative work in the industry. And while Olson Engage has earned its place as a formidable creative powerhouse, it's become clear that, in most cases, the creativity drives

compelling business performance for its clients. For instance, its stunning "One Chip Challenge" work for Paqui resulted in the CEO calling out the campaign on an earnings call because of remarkable sales lift. (The work also took home five Innovation SABRE trophies earlier this year, including Best in Show.)

It's work like this that's fueling its second straight year of double-digit growth — revenues are up 10% to \$26.4m — capping 13 years of revenue growth. As a testament to its success, now three years since its sale to ICF, Olson Engage president Bryan Specht has been handed leadership of Olson's advertising agency business (this also points to the significance of earned in ICF's marketing mix.)

Much of Olson Engage's most remarkable work comes from its two longest-standing and largest clients: MillerCoors and Mars Wrigley Confectionery, meanwhile it continues to expand the number of brands it represents for Kraft Heinz. Other clients include PepsiCo, Belize Tourism Board, BEHR Paint, Beam Suntory, Reynolds Consumer Products, along with new wins like Target, Papa Johns, Days Inn, Uncle Ben's and Oprah Winfrey's O. And as we're recognizing the agency as a fierce consumer PR engine, the firm is also growing into new areas with large-scale employee engagement assignments for UHG and Centene and an award-winning public affairs work for Elevate Minnesota.

Considering Olson Engage's remarkable creative track record, it's worth noting that 2017 was the firm's best-ever creative year in its 14-year history: six Gold SABRE nominations, eight Innovation SABRE wins from 23 nominations, three Cannes Lion wins, three One Show wins, two Shorty award wins, among others.

As the agency grows — and becomes the anchor for the entire Olson brand—maintaining an engaged culture has become a priority. In the last year, Olson Engage cut its voluntary turnover in half to 10.5% and increased training and development hours by 39%, to 1,102. The firm's 140 employees are located across offices in Chicago (HQ), Minneapolis and New York, and satellite presences in Los Angeles and Washington D.C. — AaS

FINALISTS

Current Marketing (Interpublic Group)

Current Marketing started 2017 with a pretty tough task. The consumer marketing firm set out for Las Vegas with the goal of launching the first wearable breast pump at the CES show — a male-dominated event where high-tech gizmos like drones, next-gen TVs and smart home systems, not contraptions to help nursing moms, tend to get the bulk of attention. Yet between leveraging the popularity of wearables, and standing out as a purpose-driven women's product, Current's launch campaign did the trick. The Willow Breast Pump earned eight CES show awards, was featured in 454 stories across media and piqued the interest of 38,290 consumers who asked about buying the product.

But that's just the way Current rolls, as a company driven by connecting brands with people in new ways — and seeing results from doing so. Founded by Virginia Devlin in 2006, Current started with a single client, the Clorox Company — with which Current still works, supporting seven of its brands. In the time since, however, the agency has grown its client list to include big-name companies like Samsung Home Appliances, Allstate, Mars and Radio Flyer. In the last 12 months, the firm added Applebee's, JOANN Fabric & Crafts and Omni Hotels & Resorts, as well as the Willow Breast Pump, to its roster.

All of which have contributed to 2017 being Current's 11th consecutive year of growth, fueled by an 8% increase in revenue. That sort of success stems from Current acting on its mantra — marketing for real lives. To deliver on that idea promise, Current has developed new tools and practices to best serve clients as the industry continues to transform. In 2017, the firm fine-tuned its research and insights process to fuse hard data with a nuanced real-life picture of how people really live and interact with a brand or category, translating those insights into creative campaigns that compel people to shop, support and share. Also in 2017, Current reorganized its talent and made strategic hires around four collaborative communities designed to marry exceptional client service with breakthrough work that is grounded in data and strategic planning, executed via compelling creative and communicated across earned, owned and paid. — DM

DeVries Global (Interpublic Group)

It's now been a little more than three years since FleishmanHillard veteran Heidi Hovland took the reins at Interpublic-owned lifestyle marketing specialist DeVries Global, and in that time she has helped the firm articulate a distinctive point of view about the relationship between popular culture and brand marketing, the proliferation of (often ineffective) brand content, and the role that public relations thinking and public relations agencies should play in taking influencer marketing to the next level. As the agency's mission statement explains: "Our mission is to decode culture to help propel brands to win."

One of Hovlund's most important moves was the appointment of another FH veteran, Colby Vogt, who joined in 2016 to lead a new business intelligence unit. Vogt has brought a data and analytics discipline to the influence marketing function, a left-brain counterpart to the right-brain creativity that the firm has always had in abundance. New additions in 2017 included Niki Chakravarthy as executive VP in the beauty practice, joining from Wunderman to lead P&G's global Olay and North American Beauty Scale business; creative director Tracy Brosnan, who brings experience from Grey, Publicis, Saatchi and The Martin Agency; and SVP strategy Tiffany Griffin, formerly with Facebook.

In addition to P&G Beauty (Aussie, Olay, Pantene and Secret), the firm's roster includes brands like Celebrity Cruises, Coty Professional Beauty, IHOP, JIBO, Staples, and Zippo, while new business in 2017 came from bottled water brand Essentia, Livionex, method, Mucinex (an integrated project with McCann

to support the Superbowl 2018 campaign), MyOne Condoms, and Sephora. Interesting work ranged from the introduction of Pantene's new Gold Series line with a campaign to empower African-American women to rock their strong, beautiful hair to the #SuperSickMonday campaign for Mucinex, built on the insight that the day after the Super Bowl is the number one "fake sick day" of the year.—PH

Exponent PR (MDC Partners)

Exponent PR is a lesson in the power of agility. The Minneapolis-based, consumer-oriented agency has learned to anticipate and adapt to the myriad challenges rocking the industry, from shifts in media consumption and the rise of inaccurate information to the dearth in diversity in communications.

And that ability made 2017

Exponent's 13th consecutive year of growth, with the firm up 6% to almost \$13m, underpinned by the addition of clients including Edwards Lifesciences, Sunflare Solar and Jackson Hole Tourism to a client roster that already featured Land O'Lakes, Florida's Natural, Cenex Convenience Stores, Farm Credit and DuPont.

Exponent has built its reputation on harnessing empathy and data intelligence to create strategies, content, service and experiences that inspire people to think, feel and take action, driven by the belief that brands that set the bar for industry, communities and culture, ultimately win. The firm transforms the reputations of brands (75% of its revenue comes from food and agricultural businesses) by navigating the contemporary landscape; Exponent also leverages

the range of 21st century channels and tactics in support of its clients' purpose initiatives. In 2017, that reaped results like Land O'Lakes Uncharted Waters, a digitally driven, visual initiative that used video, an online quiz and data visualization to drive awareness of the looming water crisis facing farmers, who will have to feed 9bn more people by 2050 with the same amount of water they have today. The agency supported 3M's efforts to make its Command brand part of its 2017 Pride efforts with its #ParentsComingOut campaign. When parents and families shared their personal stories to #ParentsComingOut, they not only showed up for their kids, but also inspired others to do the same — powerful steps in promoting empowerment and confidence building.

During the last year, Exponent also increased investment in technology to further emphasize innovative thinking and expand its toolset. It opened a new tech lab and workshop called Hatch, giving teams the opportunity to embrace new technology with even more speed, anticipating changing consumer preferences and challenging the tried and true approaches. Exponent has also unveiled a multi-pronged program to help boost diversity among its workforce. — DM

Golin (Interpublic Group)

Golin's heritage was underscored this year with the passing of both Al Golin — who made his name providing PR counsel to McDonald's and pioneering many of the techniques now commonplace in consumer PR — and his longtime partner Tom Harris, a tireless advocate of PR's role in the integrated marketing mix.

It was a reminder that despite its expansion into corporate reputation building, public affairs, technology and (particularly in recent years) healthcare, Golin remains one of the best brand-building public relations firms in the country.

While the legacy was front and center in 2017, Golin continued to look toward the future—as it has since its radical restructuring five years ago and its appointment of three joint CEOs (Gary Rudnick, Jon Hughes and Matt Neale) in July of 2016. There was an expanded focus on data and analytics with the appointment of Edelman's Jonny Bentwood as head and the unveiling of the data-driven "Relevance Fingerprint" methodology for measuring a brand's relevance relative to its competition. The emphasis on "relevance" will be a key differentiator for the firm's brand work going forward, with new research — in partnership with USC's Annenberg School — revealing what drives relevance for brands in 13 markets across the globe.

New business came from the Boy Scouts of America, Pepsico's bubly and LifeWTR bottled water brands, L'Oreal Paris, and in the healthcare realm Amgen, Novartis and Sandoz, and organic growth from clients such as Hyatt, Icelandair, JetBlue, McDonald's, Mead Johnson Nutrition, Mountain Dew, and Walmart.

Great work included the "Farewell Dandelion" campaign for Crayola's latest retired color; the introduction of the "fork" for McDonald's, as well as a playful crisis campaign to bring back the cult-favorite Szechuan sauce; and "Check In for Good" and the "No Blackout Non-Eclipse Non-Event" for JetBlue.—PH

2018 Corporate/B2B PR Agencies of the Year

Our 2018 North America PR Agencies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 150 submissions and 50 face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across the US and Canada.

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WINNER

G&S Business Communications (Independent)

A 47-year-old agency with a heritage in agribusiness and manufacturing might not suggest a penchant for innovation, but G&S has been successfully debunking perceptions — both for its clients and for itself — for several years now under the leadership of CEO Luke Lambert. Today, G&S is a highly-focused B2B agency that combines impressive thought leadership with the kind of creative flair that reflects its risk-taking, entrepreneurial culture.

Growth of 13% to \$27m in 2017 suggests that the firm is firing on all cylinders, best demonstrated by an eye-catching string of campaigns. For Syngenta, the firm devised a TV-centered campaign to celebrate women in agriculture by aligning the company with the FarmHer movement, helping to increase non-customer affinity and click-throughs. For Coronal Energy, there was a powerful effort to integrate communications strategy with the solar developer's value chain. And, for Sodexo, the firm developed an integrated effort that showcased sustainability within the company's food supply chain.

Work like that reflects an offering that involves serious creative and strategic capabilities, for a client base that includes numerous major brands in the agribusiness and technology sectors. There has been consistent investment in data and analytics along with a credible commitment to diversity and inclusiveness in the agency's culture across its New York, Chicago and Raleigh offices.

G&S' thought leadership also stands out, including its Global Street Fight conference, which gathers senior communicators to discuss the implications of a hyper-connected marketplace, and a sustainability study that polls the public on business efforts to communicate environmental, social and governance (ESG) actions. — AS

FINALISTS

Fahlgren Mortine (Eastport Holdings)

Throughout its 56-year history, Fahlgren Mortine has aimed to continually reinvent itself as a means of keeping pace with and serving clients as they undergo changes of their own. The result: Fahlgren Mortine is very much a hybrid business, rather than a firm focused on a single discipline. As such, the Columbus, Ohio-based agency believes it can offer clients the authenticity of PR coupled with the creativity of an ad agency and accountability of a digital shop.

The year was punctuated by the agency's advanced digital work, particularly from its tourism and economic development practice. The agency debuted its first virtual reality product in support of

TravelNevada and unveiled a new digital experience for the John Glenn International Airport. Also for TravelNevada, the firm created the cowboy song Don't Fence Me In, in a bid to appeal to millennials' propensity for storytelling and adventure, generating considerable gains in consumer reach, engagement and goal conversation. When the warehouse automation company Swisslog tapped Fahlgren Mortine to help drive brand awareness, the agency developed a content marketing program that educated the industry on change through blog posts, case studies, white papers, marketing automation, trade show and media relations. Results included 146 inbound leads, a 154% increase in gated content downloads and a 62% increase in site traffic from 2016.

With that, Fahlgren Mortine in 2017 grew 10% into a \$27m firm, fueled by its particular strengths serving clients in the tourism, economic development and B2B sectors (the revenue figure includes the company's wholly owned subsidiary, Turner). In February 2018, the firm was acquired by Eastport Holdings in a deal that aimed to drive the agency's further growth.

Fahlgren Mortine's upward trajectory is a credit to its elasticity, and keen ability to serve an extensive client roster that includes Emerson, Cardinal Health, Sherwin-Williams and Savannah College of Art and Design, even after being tested. In November, Fahlgren Mortine parted ways with McDonald's after 42-years when the fast food giant reduced the number of agencies it works with. The agency rebounded,

however, winning a piece of Dunkin' Donuts business in a key US region. By the end of 2017, the agency had 50 more clients on its roster than it did at the start, thanks to the addition of organizations including the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Foundation, Columbia Gas of Ohio, BrewDog USA, Palladium Hotel Group among others. The agency's new business efforts yielded a 200% increase year over year in new revenue — not including organic client growth in spending. — DM

Group Gordon (Independent)

Group Gordon has a reputation as one of the industry's good guys, both in terms of the clients it represents—a roster of philanthropies, foundations and socially responsible businesses—and in terms of its own employee culture, which has earned it a spot on our Best Boutique Agencies to Work For list in each of the past three years. As a result, it perhaps does not get enough credit for its work, which has helped it to grow by better than 40% over the past three years and build a client roster that includes a number of larger brands in traditional areas of expertise like professional services, but also in some new sectors.

So new corporate clients such as Columbia Children's Health, real estate firm Denham Wolf, fast-casual restaurant chain CAVA, and Bridges Fund, a fund manager specializing in impact investing, have joined the likes of consulting firm Willis Towers Watson, law firm Schulte Roth & Zabel, investment solutions firm AssetMark, ShakeShack, and Gust, a platform that connects entrepreneurs with VCs and angel investors. In the non-profit sector, meanwhile, Cardozo Law (the law school of Yeshiva University), the American

Heart Association, Public Health Solutions, and the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer, join Habitat for Humanity, the NoVo Foundation, and others.

GG remains focused on communications strategy and execution—media relations, thought leadership, content development, and social media—but has been adding new capabilities, from data visualization to video production handled in-house. The firm has also increased its own thought leadership activities, hosting webinars and producing white papers tackling issues such as the divisive political climate and challenges in the real estate market. — PH

Prosek Partners (Independent)

The rare national mid-size independent with global capabilities, Prosek Partners is driven by the entrepreneurial nature on which was founded. And consistent year-on-year growth reached a watershed of sorts in 2017, when Prosek expanded by an eye-catching 32% to \$42m. Offering the global reach that comes with a London office and international network, Prosek has among clients some of the financial and professional services industries' most notable names — companies like Bloomberg, Goldman Sachs Asset Management, Prudential and Bridgewater. Over the last 12 months the list grew with the addition of new clients including UBS Wealth Management, Citi Consumer Credit, Varde Investments, Capital Dynamics, Southeastern Asset Management, Aviva Investors, Personal Capital and Nuveen Investments. Prosek currently advises more than \$10 trillion in client

assets, and has grown its creative services, editorial and digital teams to meet the demands of doing so.

The company's expansion in 2017 was centered around bolstering its capabilities to better serve clients managing a range of challenges, from regulatory to reputational. Staffing grew with the addition of a digital strategy head, who helps integrate digital, social media and analytics into their overall communications plan. That resulted in the year's hallmark campaigns, including a quick turnaround effort for online banking company, Ally, promoting Online Bank Day. The initiative, which included drones flying around a mall delivering cellphone chargers, delivered news stories, earned media and 4.5k Twitter followers.

After acquiring Muirfield Partners, Prosek continues to build out its transactions communications and issues and crisis management services. The extended transaction offering includes mergers & acquisitions, proxy contests, IPOs, privatization attempts and more. — DM

Saxum (Independent)

Not only is Saxum the biggest PR firm in Oklahoma, where Renzi Stone launched it in 2003, but local media have also hailed it as the best PR firm in the state, as well one of Oklahoma's top places to work. And as one of the most diverse and versatile integrated marketing firms in the region, it's no surprise that Saxum's influence is felt well beyond its home region.

Harnessing a mix of hometown strengths, and talent from around the country, Saxum has boosted its capabilities across its creative, advertising and digital divisions. In

2017, Saxum attracting new high-profile clients including the Walton Family Foundation and Oklahoma Lottery, which now are part of a client roster that includes Anheuser-Busch, 7-Eleven and GE Oil & Gas. All of which are served by Saxum's three key practice areas — B2B and B&C, energy and goods & issues.

In wrapping up 2017, Saxum closed out its biggest year ever, during which it grew 42% to more than

\$9m in total revenue, with employee headcount up to over 50 for the first time. Company leaders, cognizant that growth can backfire by eroding culture and client service, are working to proactively combat that possibility. The agency invests heavily in professional development for its team — with individual stipends and with monthly team trainings and mentoring — and continues to recruit young talent through a graduate fellow program, then plot career

paths and promote from within. 2017 also saw the creation of new offerings surrounding stakeholder engagement (town halls, open houses, on-the-ground grassroots relationships across multiple cities, counties and states) and CRM planning and integrations (building website products with more robust customer data collection capabilities, then turning those engagements into meaningful marketing automation and conversions). — DM

2018 Creative PR Agencies of the Year

Our 2018 North America PR Agencies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 150 submissions and 50 face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across the US and Canada.

Winners were unveiled at the 2018 North American SABRE Awards, at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York on May 1.

WINNER

Ketchum (Omnicom Group)

The shortlist for Creative Agency of the Year has traditionally been dominated by independent and midsize firms, a reflection of the widespread notion that there is some sort of inverse relationship between size and creativity, that small agencies are more capable of delivering big, bold ideas while their larger competitors are more likely to offer a “safe pair of hands” and the conservative approach that implies.

Ketchum would appear to refute that hypothesis. The Omnicom-owned agency has consistently earned more SABRE nominations than any other agency, including

this year, which saw the firm and its various units (employee engagement specialist Daggerwing and integrated creative shop Interfuse) notch up 15 finalists between them, ranging from “The Spotted Cheetah,” a restaurant serving Cheetos-inspired menu items (a formidable follow up to last year's Cheetos Museum) and the introduction of Tostitos Party Safe Bags—both for Frito-Lay — to the Handle With Care campaign for Gillette to representing Wendy's during its “Twitter Beef” to heavier corporate and issues fare for GE Digital, H&R Block, IBM and The Truth Initiative.

All this creativity is not an accident. It's the result of a corporate culture that celebrates big ideas at every opportunity, and a process that now integrates earned, shared, owned and a growing amount of paid work; a bespoke approach to influencer marketing that balances reach, relevance and resonance. In this past year, Ketchum elevated its global president, Barri Rafferty to global CEO. Her vision is to transform the firm — which has faced significant challenges with

the loss of signature clients like IBM and FedEx over the last few years — into a more client-centric multi-disciplinary agency. — PH/AaS

FINALISTS

Coyne PR (Independent)

If we had a category for Comeback Agency of the Year, Coyne PR would be among the strong contenders, bouncing back after a couple of difficult years with growth (up from \$27 million to \$28 million); new business (additions like clothing retailer Catherines, Einstein Bros Bagels, Finlandia cheese, Lane Bryant, Massage Envy, the MLB Players Association, and The Container Store) and award nominations — seven SABRE finalists.

It's the latter performance that earns the New Jersey firm a place on our Creative Agency of the Year list. Highlights include “Taking Timberland Beyond the Boot” for the progressive and inventive footwear company; the launch of virtual reality “experience centers” for IMAX; and in the sport marketing category — where the firm excels —

some forward-looking work for the International Speedway Corporation. Beyond the consumer space, though, there was work for Pfizer's pediatric portfolio, honouring school nurses, and for Pacira Pharmaceuticals addressing the opioid crisis.

Since its founding in 1991, Coyne has been inspired by founder Tom Coyne's philosophy: "Our mission is not to be the best agency, but the best one to work for. If we are the best place to work, we will retain the best people," he says. "If we have the best people, we will attract the best clients. If we have the best people and clients, how can we not be the best agency?" That means a people-centric culture than foster collaboration and creativity, now supplemented by new capabilities in digital and social, and a focus on improved client service, all of which has helped it to its best year ever. — PH

LDWW (Independent)

The Holmes Report's Global Creative Index analyzes finalists and winners from more than 25 PR, digital and marketing awards programs around the world, awarding points for each win and ultimately producing a ranking of those firms that are 'pound for pound' the most creative in the world. Dallas-based LDWW, founded in 2013 by former Weber Shandwick and Hill+Knowlton exec Ken Luce, has finished in the top five for each of the past two years, and looks like it could be on track to make it three in a row this year, having earned seven SABRE nominations this year — an impressive haul for any agency, but a remarkable one for an agency with a team of just 20.

LDWW is an interesting hybrid. It's a PR firm, yes, but given that it was born only five years ago it's a very 21st century kind of PR firm, as comfortable producing paid content as it is in the earned media realm, and combining the creativity of a hot consumer shop with the strategic savvy of a corporate communications firm (crisis management is a core strength). It grew at a healthy pace in 2016, with fee income topping \$7m for the first time, and new business from Pure Company and Vivid Seat as well as a host of local clients.

The diversity of the firm's work— from crisis to corporate to content to consumer, is reflected in its awards-nominated campaigns: post-hurricane crisis communications for Omni Hotels in Houston; helping Whitefish Energy counter fake news around its facilities in Puerto Rico; helping Carnival Corporation rally the industry to show "the Caribbean is open" after the hurricane there; the content-driven "Big 12 Champions for Life" campaign for the athletics conference; innovative marketing at CES for Carnival Corporation's Ocean Medallion; and a local "Real Life Women Superheroes" campaign for Studio Movie Grill. — PH

M Booth (Next15)

Only Edelman, Ketchum and Weber Shandwick — three of the world's five largest public relations firms in 2017 — earned more SABRE awards nominations than M Booth last year, an indication of the extent to which the New York-based firm punches above its weight in terms of great creative work, although its worth pointing out that after doubling in size over the past four years under the leadership of Margi Booth and Dale Bornstein (including another

year of 20% growth in 2017) M Booth is no minnow, with fee income just a tad short of \$34 million.

What that means is that M Booth now has the critical mass to handle even the largest of clients in North America, and the resources to deliver all those capabilities expected from a 21st century PR firm, including digital and creative capabilities to match those of its largest competitors, and innovative offerings in content creation — the firm produced 150 separate pieces of content for Google each week, and delivers everything from paid campaigns to work that integrates voice-activated systems like Alexa — and data and analytics. At the same time, M Booth continues to dive deep into popular culture to make sure its creativity really connects with target consumers.

As a result, the firm's insight-driven creative work has been earning a record number of plaudits, from bringing hip hop architecture to camps nationwide on behalf of Autodesk to challenging the food industry on added sugar on behalf of Panera Bread; from a Thanksgiving campaign on behalf of Morton Salt that created brand lift for the most commodity of products to celebrating Estée Lauder's long commitment to breast cancer awareness; from the "Donate a Photo" influencer program for Johnson & Johnson to "Pay With Honesty, Get Honest Tea" for Coca-Cola's progressive tea brand. — PH

MullenLowe (Interpublic Group)

MullenLowe has earned its spot as an award show favorite, consistently showcasing inspired and innovative work for clients like American Greetings and JetBlue. This year, the integrated IPG-shop,

once again, has delivered work that's garnering accolades for its emotion-centered campaigns.

The "Encourage Everyday Connections" campaign for American Greetings used powerful stories around issues like infertility to encourage people to connect. Innovation SABRE judges, who named the work Best in Brand Film, lauded the campaign for "beautiful, moving videos that use everyday moments to provoke conversation and increase purchase consideration especially for a new generation." And its "Bites at 30,000 Feet" campaign for JetBlue demonstrated

how strategic MullenLowe's work can be by leveraging influencers with the most impact.

Last year, MullenLowe took home the Creative Agency of the Year award from the Holmes Report in North America and globally. This year, it has racked up five Gold SABRE and eight Innovation SABRE nominations, in addition to Cannes Lions, Shorty Awards, Effies and other award recognition.

MullenLowe operates 10 offices around the world, including Boston, New York, Los Angeles and North Carolina with 875 employees and more than a billion dollar in fee income across all of its advertising and communications services. In

addition to American Greetings and JetBlue, other clients include Feld Entertainment, Olympus, Pepsi North America Nutrition, Capital One, Rexona/Unilever (new), Talbot's (new) and FTD Companies (new), among others.

The firm calls its integrated offering "hyperbundled," which spans across digital, storytelling, advertising, communications and marketing. Managing partner Sheila Leyne has been at the helm of the firm's PR/social group for 25 years, SVP Kelly Burke leads the food and beverage portfolio, SVP Jaclyn Ruelle leads global PR creative; and SVP Sara Gottman joined last October leading consumer. — AaS

2018 Digital PR Agencies of the Year

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WINNER

Huge (Interpublic Group)

It was one year ago that Kwittken co-founder Jason Schlossberg joined Huge to add public relations to the IPG firm's core offering of digital design. The PR team that Schlossberg now oversees is about 30 people working on traditional PR, thought leadership, editorial, content and social strategy for its client portfolio. Already, the agency's

PR portfolio has grown in the last 12 months to include Broadridge, United Technologies Corporation, OneMarket, Zelle and Harley Davidson Canada, which joined existing clients such as Think with Google, Kohl's and Eli Lilly, among others.

What stands out at Huge is the way communications is fully integrated into its existing services — which include research, analytics, design, media, and creative technology. Over the last 12 months, a major part of integrating PR into the organization involved an internal education campaign on the ways PR could complement the firm's more developed offerings. Impressively, this led to incremental client projects — which led to success, which led to more steady work. The communications team also built a new innovation methodology/framework called Future Making

that has been adopted by clients and by Huge more broadly. Other notable work includes a campaign for United Technologies Corporation to recruit talent for its new Brooklyn-based innovation hub by developing and promoting "UTC's Principles for Designing Really Big Things."

In addition to Schlossberg, other notable talent include VPs Rebecca Moeller, Brittany Slattery, Brad Wellen and Nicole Kuang. Globally, Huge has approximately 1500 employees based out of 12 offices around the world. — AaS

FINALISTS

Carmichael Lynch Relate (Interpublic Group)

One year after being named one of our Agencies of the Year, Carmichael Lynch Relate (CLR) continues to refine an offering that now demonstrates

considerable expertise across digital and multimedia marketing, thanks to a fully integrated staff of paid, earned, creative and social experts weighing that focus in particular on influencer marketing strategies.

Best known for its brand marketing and corporate reputation capabilities, CLR's continued growth (up 19% to around \$30m) has been bolstered by the addition of proprietary digital services, including the CL Relate IQ influencer tool that ties influencer programs to sales; the CL Relate Effect analytics offering that works across media, brand health, social conversation and geographic-specific customer behaviors, to help drive message modeling data on a regular basis; and, CL Relate Pinpoint, which aims to combine the right message with the right medium, tailored for the exact point at which a brand's target consumers sit within the marketing funnel.

Those kinds of capabilities helped drive some impressive digital campaign work from CLR over the past 12 months, rooted in the firm's practice of harnessing what it calls 'Unfair Ideas' — upending the status quo to give consumers new way to understand, embrace and experience brands. Charge with raising awareness of Edwards Desserts among social media-savvy millennial moms in the aftermath of the polarising 2016 election, the agency positioned the brand as social media peacemaker, calling on people to freeze the negativity for just one day — National Pi Day.

CLR's work also appears to be drawing clients looking to break out of the traditional marketing mold. In 2017, the firm added Phillips 66, Sun Country Airlines, The Minnesota

Twins and Red Baron Pizza to a client roster already populated by brands such as Sherwin-Williams, U.S. Bank, Schwan's Company, Bath & Body Works, Marvin Windows & Doors and The Formica Corporation. — AS/DM

Edelman (DJE Holdings)

The ambition for Edelman is not only to cement its place as the world's largest PR agency, but to ensure that it can perform as a serious competitor to the ad agencies and digital firms—and even content producers like CNN—competing for clients' marketing dollars. That has meant expanding the firm's digital and social capabilities, so that its creative department—now more than 600-strong around the world, with 350 in the US—includes growing numbers of advertising and paid media specialists and formidable data and analytics team. New appointments in 2017 reflect both of those priorities, from Mark Renshaw (a Leo Burnett veteran) taking over as global creative chair to Natalie Seidman, formerly of The NPD Group, as managing director of Edelman Intelligence.

Those investments are reflected in new business success. There was organic growth from clients like Adobe, Citadel, Hologic, HP, Mars, and the State of Florida's Department of Citrus, and new business from Ajinomoto, Genentech, Puget Sound Energy, ServiceNow, and Sonos. But there were also digital assignment from the Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau and Sears Holding Company, and advisory services business from Bridgestone and Microsoft.

And Edelman's best work continues to be among the best in the business, as evidenced by a dozen SABRE nominations for campaigns

ranging from pro bono work for the One Orlando Alliance in the wake of the tragic shooting there to brand marketing and content creation for Unilever brands such as Dove and Axe; from a follow-up to REI's massive award-winning Opt Outside campaign focusing on gender issues to empowering young adults to get tested for STDs on behalf of the American Sexual Health Association. — PH

Lippe Taylor (Independent)

Two years ago, Lippe Taylor was a New York-based consumer marketing specialist—known for its expertise in 'Moving Her' — with a 20-year heritage, a reputation for delivering top-tier earned media results, and a culture that encouraged creativity and collaboration. All of which is to say that founder Maureen Lippe didn't need to change anything. But Lippe recognized the changes roiling the marketing and public relations business and saw an opportunity, and so in January 2017 she brought in Paul Dyer — a seven-year veteran of W2O — and embarked on a journey that has already had a transformative impact on the agency.

Dyer admits that the transformation is still very much a work-in-progress, but Lippe Taylor has built on existing capabilities in blogger outreach, community management, content curation and social listening — pretty much de rigueur for any lifestyle PR firm — to include social strategy, influencer marketing, paid social and native and advanced analytics. The leadership team has been expanded with newcomers like chief creative and digital officer Tina Cervera, formerly of VaynerMedia and her own consulting shop; Jennifer O'Neill, healthcare practice lead brought

in from inVentiv; Weber Shandwick veteran Tracy Naden, who leads the consumer practice; senior VP of digital and social Elisabeth Bromberg, who joined from L’Oreal; and influencer marketing expert Lauren McGrath, from Refinery29.

The firm’s new StarlingAI platform is helping to identify influencers whose endorsement can have a real impact, in real time. It has also developed new tools measuring earned media impact, and brand health, and linking PR activity to commercial success. That expertise has informed some interesting work, from newsjacking a story about Kim Kardashian and Nicole Ritchie’s childhood shoplifting on behalf of Revlon to producing emotionally powerful content for medical laser treatment MonaLisa Touch to content strategy and website redesign work for Botox to a fully integrated effort on behalf of acne treatment Differin. Growth was a healthy 10% (coming off an equally strong 2016) and new business

came from Elizabeth Arden, Lenovo, Primark and Revlon in the lifestyle space; Differin and ProActivMD in wellness; Botox and several other high-profile brands in healthcare (now close to 50% of the business). — PH

Ruder Finn (Independent)

Ruder Finn’s evident comfort with technology in general, and digital in particular, is perhaps best demonstrated by a product offering that is as powerful as any in the industry. These include proprietary analytics tool Beacon, which integrates real-time social listening with real-world data; RiskSTAT, an app-based reputation management system that identifies potential risks and assesses and predicts impact, facilitating a fast, seamless response; and, a new global internal communications practice called Internal Customer Experience, which leverages analytics to drive employee connection, experience and engagement.

Under the leadership of chief digital officer Scott Schneider, the RFI Studios team has been considerably bolstered by the acquisition of Asian unit Daylight Partnership, bringing with it SVP David Ko along with plenty of experience of cutting-edge work for such clients as HSBC, AstraZeneca and Prudential. In North America, meanwhile, there was standout work for Subway, Oath (the new company founded by the merger of AOL and Yahoo), and Cisco, the latter involving the company’s country digital acceleration program.

In a bid to anticipate market trends further, Ruder Finn also launched a healthtech practice last year to help capitalise on new technology platforms for the delivery and consumption of healthcare, and also support technology company efforts to better understand patients. All of which has translated to strong work for the likes of Shire, Novartis and J&J. — AS

2018 Financial PR Agencies of the Year

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Winners were unveiled at the 2018 North American SABRE Awards, at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York on May 1.

WINNER

Sard Verbinnen (Independent)

This time two years ago, financial communications specialist was making headlines of its own. In

the midst of talks to sell a 40% stake to private equity firm Golden Gate Capital, the firm was hit by a number of high-profile departures—former hedge fund practice leader Jonathan Gasthalar was the most high-profile—that raised questions in the mainstream media. But after 18 months of the new ownership structure, George Sard and Paul Verbinnen’s firm looks stronger than ever, with a team of 175 people across seven offices, and a leadership position on the 2017 mergermarket ranking of PR advisors to M&A (about half of the firm’s business).

Sard Verbinnen handled 248 deals globally, worth a combined \$386 billion, and was also number one in terms of both volume and value in the US. Among the highlights, the firm has been working with Bayer on its pending acquisition of Monsanto, with Qualcomm on its defense against Broadcom, with Samsung on its acquisition of Harman, with ADP in its defense against activist Pershing Square Capital, with Delphi on the spinoff of its Powertrain business, with Scottrade on its acquisition by TD Ameritrade and with Intel on its acquisition of

Mobileye. It also handled the initial offering of Best, Inc., the largest IPO by a Chinese company in 2017.

But deals are only half of the picture at SVC these days. The firm also provided crisis communications support for the board of directors at Wells Fargo; advised on the chapter 11 restructuring at Avaya; and handled CEO transition issues at Ralph Lauren. The firm also added an office in Houston, focused on the energy sector, launched a corporate governance advisory services business, Strategic Governance Advisors, led by Chris Cernich, former managing director for M&A at ISS; leveraged its 2016 acquisition ARC Research to ensure a data-driven approach; and expanded its video, digital and social media capabilities—increasingly relevant in proxy contests against activist investors. — PH

FINALISTS

Finsbury (WPP)

It has been seven years now since the former Robinson Lerer & Montgomery merged with UK financial specialist Finsbury, and more than three years since the US operation adopted the Finsbury brand, and the progress has been impressive. The former RLM had always enjoyed a formidable reputation for its corporate and crisis work, but had struggled to crack the top tier of merger and acquisition advisors. That's no longer the case: Finsbury was fifth in terms of deal volume in the US last year, handling 93 transactions, and third in terms of deal value—behind only Sard Verbinen and Joele Frank.

A major change is that Finsbury is now among the leading players in the cross-border transaction business, with Kal Goldberg in New

York working in partnership with the firm's formidable London office and German financial PR powerhouse Hering Schuppener. That has helped the firm play a lead role representing SABMiller in the \$107 billion Anheuser-Busch InBev deal; Royal Dutch Shell's \$70 billion acquisition of BG Group; and the merger of Walgreens Boots Alliance and Rite Aid. Last year, the firm worked with Praxair on its \$80 billion merger with Linde; Takeda on its \$5.2 billion acquisition of Ariad Pharmaceuticals; and Tribune in its \$3.9 billion acquisition by Sinclair.

All of that has been accomplished while strengthening the firm's performance in other areas. Its partnership with WPP sister agency Glover Park Group has added a new dimension to Finsbury's M&A work as well as expanded public affairs capabilities. The addition of former GPG exec Winnie Lerner as managing partner has strengthened the firm's capital markets credentials. And there's plenty of work in crisis and litigation communications and broader corporate reputation work, with new clients such as Dick's Sporting Goods and Marsh & McLennan joining the likes of Toyota and United Health Group. — PH

FTI Strategic Communications (FTI Consulting)

It was something of a roller-coaster year for FTI Consulting's "strategic communications segment" (the somewhat unwieldy name for the management consulting firm's corporate and financial communications unit). The second quarter, in particular, was pretty dismal, with fees down by about 7.4% from the previous year. That was followed by changes at the top of the organization, with longtime

CEO Ed Reilly focusing on client development and assisting with the leadership transition while Mark McCall — who had been CEO for the Americas — taking over the global role and energy and natural resources practice lead Brian Kennedy elevated to lead the Americas.

But by the end of the year, the metrics were looking quite a bit better. Fees were up 5% in Q3 and another in 8% in Q4, ending the year just short of \$200 million, and while much of that growth came from Europe and Asia there were signs that the US operations were turning around. The firm added new clients like LyondellBassell, Cincinnati Bell, and McCormick & Company to a roster that includes MasterCard, Delta Air Lines, Google, Amazon, Pfizer and more. The mergermarket league tables, meanwhile, showed FTI second globally in terms of deal volume, handling 207 transactions around the world in 2017, worth around \$200 billion. In the US, FTI was number six in terms of volume (91) and value of deals worked.

Those M&A rankings are an increasingly imperfect measure of overall performance, however. The past couple of years have seen the strongest growth in areas such as public affairs (the government of Mexico is a major new client, for NAFTA related issues, while M&A activity has antitrust and other regulatory implications) and change management (a recognition that the post-merger integration can be as critically important as the deal itself), and broader, retained corporate reputation assignments. Moreover, the strategic communications segment is sharing more and more business with the other parts of the

consulting operation, particularly in areas such as litigation and economic consulting. — PH

Joele Frank (Independent)

In a year marked by the communications challenges brought on by political and regulatory uncertainty, Joele Frank was involved in some of 2017's highest-stake transactions — and gravest tragedies, like the Las Vegas shooting, due to its growing crisis communications practice. In 2017, the firm provided counsel on 151 transactions globally and worked with roughly 480 clients.

A leader in M&A, the agency's work in 2017 included representing Broadcom in its ongoing bid for Qualcomm, currently valued at approximately \$117bn; Johnson & Johnson on its \$30bn acquisition of Actelion; Scripps Networks Interactive on its \$14.6bn sale to Discovery Communications; and Honeywell on its \$7.5bn spin-offs of its Homes product portfolio, ADI global distribution business and Transportation Systems business.

With a newly expanded crisis communications practice, the firm also worked with MGM Resorts following the Las Vegas shooting. Joele Frank rolled out a multi-tiered initiative aimed at providing community support, including a \$3m donation to help victims and first responders; offering support services to employees; communicating with guests about safety concerns; and working with the media.

The crisis practice also handled other major events. It worked with NextEra in its response to Hurricane Irma in Florida; PG&E in its response to wildfires in California; and Snap-on when it hosted President Trump at its headquarters. Separately, the

agency counseled companies in the limelight due to bankruptcies — Toys R Us, Cumulus Media and Bon-Ton among them.

The firm added 150 new clients to its roster of blue-chip companies in 2017, including Barrick Gold Corporation, Broadcom, Dean Foods, Georgia-Pacific, Hanesbrands, Macy's and Toys R Us, which join a client roster already that already featured the likes of American Airlines, Merck, Procter & Gamble and Johnson & Johnson. — DM

Rooney Partners (Independent)

Founded in 2003 by former Morgen-Walke Associates media relations guru Terry Rooney as Rooney & Associates, the firm now known as Rooney Partners has flown below the industry radar for a decade and a half, helping its clients “be known” (the firm's tagline) while remaining relatively unknown itself. The firm focused on providing senior-level counsel and bespoke media relations services to its clients—in financial and professional services, agribusiness and industrial, healthcare and technology—almost all of whom come to the firm via a referral network of friends in media, venture capital and professional services firms.

But over the last couple of years, since the name change, the firm has become more and more difficult to ignore. That's partly because of the increased contribution of the two new partners: Marion Janic, former assistant vice president of corporate communications and investor relations at CIFG Services, a Frenchwoman who has helped to grow the firm's international business; and Len Costa, former head of communications and

content strategy at CFA Institute, who has expanded the firm's content creation and digital and social media capabilities.

There has also been a new emphasis on a data-driven approach that incorporates audience analysis, conversation and influencer analytics, content and SEO analysis, and competitive benchmarking. That approach has helped to build a client list that now includes AACSB, Bowen Hanes & Co., CFA Institute, Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment, DHR, Gecko Biomedical, GenSight, Kroll Bond, Merrill Corp., Nucana, Oerlikon, Pharnext, Syngenta, and T Rowe Price. Delivering top-tier media, high-performance content, and strategic counsel to a client list that might be enough to make Rooney Partners the most powerful 10-person boutique public relations firm in New York. — PH

2018 Healthcare PR Agencies of the Year

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Winners were unveiled at the 2018 North American SABRE Awards, at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York on May 1.

WINNER

Finn Partners (Independent)

Finn Partners has enjoyed considerable accolades in its first six years since founder Peter Finn led the spinoff out of Ruder Finn: it has grown consistently, with fee income last year up by about 6.5% to almost \$82 million, and it has earned both Agency of the Year and Best Agencies to Work For recognition from this publication. But even amid all that broad-based success, the performance of the firm's healthcare practice stands out.

At launch, Finn had essentially one healthcare client — Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, led from the firm's Michigan office — and when healthcare public relations veteran Gil Bashe joined in May 2015, having most recently led the health practice at Makovsky, healthcare fees were less than \$1 million. Today, healthcare accounts for \$17 million in fees, with Bashe having leveraged his own industry expertise, and the collaborative nature of the Finn Partners culture (partnering with colleagues who bring tech, consumer, and social impact expertise), to establish the health practice in 12 of Finn's 16 offices around the world.

The core strength is not only pharma — the traditional big budget business in this arena — but a balanced portfolio that spans patients (advocates and caregivers); providers (physicians and hospital systems); product innovators (in biopharma and health tech); payers (procurement and PBMs); and policy makers (public health). To bring that ecosystem together, Bashe has recruited a leadership team that includes US pharma team lead Kristie Kuhl, formerly of Cohn & Wolfe and Makovsky; Michael Heinley, who leads health tech sector work; and Chris Messina-Boyer in Washington, DC. Finn works with companies such as Allergan, Bristol Myers Squibb, Ortho Clinical Diagnostics, Merck, and NextGen as well as the Galien Foundation — known as the Nobel Prize of the biopharmaceutical and medical device industries — globally, and mHealth, one of the world's largest health technology associations. — PH

FINALISTS

Biosector2 (Syneos Health Communications)

With much of the discussion around health in recent years focusing on relatively weak new drug pipelines, budget pressures, and a somewhat formulaic approach to communications, it was good to see the sector resurgent in 2017. Biosector2 not only benefited from the broader industry comeback — the firm's 15th anniversary year was its strongest in some time, with fees up 6.5% and a significant expansion of the client

base — it actually led the way, at least in terms of delivering a more creative approach to pharma PR.

Two its campaigns are among the finalists for our pharmaceutical industry SABRE Award this year: one a bold new campaign designed to cut through the sea of pink ribbons and slacktivism to amplify the voices of patients with metastatic breast cancer under the confrontational “Kiss This” banner on behalf of Novartis; the second “Be Vocal” Speak Up for Mental Health,” a campaign for Sunovion Pharmaceuticals that brought together singer Demi Levato and five leading advocacy organizations to develop a documentary film, a photographic exhibit and ultimately a social media movement to confront the continued stigma of mental health issues.

Originally founded to focus on biotech and specialty pharma, Biosector2 has become the largest and arguably to best-rounded PR operation in the inVentiv (now Syneos Health) portfolio, boasting longstanding client relationships with the likes of the American Migraine Foundation, Melinta, Merz, Novartis, Ortho Dermatologics, and Sunovion. The partnership with other Syneos companies is also beginning to pay dividends in terms of research-driven insights, and behavioral analytics. And the values-driven culture has stayed strong, with turnover in single digits percentage-wise—a stability clients appreciate. — PH

RxMosaic (MMC/Omnicom Group)

Absorbed into Omnicom's Marina Maher Communications in 2014, few expected big things from RX

Mosaic, a small healthcare firm that was struggling with senior leadership changes and considerable staff turnover. In the years since, though, the firm has emerged as a specialist healthcare player that positions itself as a lab focusing on innovative approaches to sectoral communication challenges.

Under the leadership of MDs Michele Schimmel, Jane Petrino and Lisa Talbot, revenues have doubled since 2015, with headcount up 18% in 2017 to 33 people. More importantly, perhaps, the firm is no longer reliant on a single client; a transformative 2017 means it now has an impressive stable of accounts that includes Teva, Quest Diagnostics, Roche, Pfizer and USP, along with new business from Foundation Consumer Healthcare, Braeburn, N.O.R.D., Takeda, Cooper Surgical, LEO Pharma and Novartis.

Much of that growth can be traced to an approach that aims to help healthcare companies experiment with non-traditional forms of storytelling. Accordingly, there is specialist talent in the form of digital and creative healthcare expertise, and a flair for work that encompasses patient engagement, HCP communications, disease awareness/branded communications, advocacy, corporate reputation and public health education. The offering also includes a proprietary 'advocacy in motion' engagement tool that aims to marry the needs of patients with cutting-edge communications methods.

If the firm's work is any indication, the approach is paying off, including an IN2 SABRE Award for best use of video for Teva Neuroscience. There were other standout campaigns too — a \$50k campaign that helped

drive boomer action around hepatitis C awareness; inspiring women to demand better birth control on behalf of Paragard and Teva; and, increasing sales for Pfizer's top pneumococcal pneumonia brand. — AS

Spectrum (Independent)

In keeping with its recent history of annual double-digit growth, healthcare consultancy Spectrum in 2017 reported \$24m in revenue, up 20% from the year before. Wisely, the firm has opted to use that momentum to take stock of its progress, including a particular focus on how to best manage growth in such a way that would secure Spectrum's long-range viability — while retaining its focus on telling 'science stories'.

That exercise is reflected in a range of the year's initiatives, including the launch of Spectrum's proprietary analytics dashboard, Galileo6, which provides real-time views of campaigns, conversations and channels as they evolve across paid, earned, shared & owned channels. Having brought 22 new hires onboard, increasing its headcount 28% in a single year, Spectrum also strengthened its talent management policies, giving employees considerable freedom and unlimited vacation in a bid to reaffirm the firm's emphasis on flexibility, accountability and responsibility.

In turn, Spectrum in 2017 demonstrated the power of its approach to telling science stories via highly impactful behind-the-scenes work and public campaigns, whether for new clients like Vertex and Arbor Pharmaceuticals, or existing ones such as Astellas, Medtronic and Dermira. Among Spectrum's hallmark endeavors was its own marketing campaign,

Wired by Nature, Swayed by Science, which detailed the science and emotion that go into Spectrum's shrewd ability to tell science stories in ways that increase brand loyalty. Also standing out was the agency's strategic communications program for the second year of Astellas Oncology's C3 Prize, a challenge aimed at inspiring novel, non-treatment and non-medicine based ideas to change cancer care. — DM

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic Group)

Weber Shandwick's eye-catching consumer work and its pioneering digital capabilities have received the most attention in recent years, as the Interpublic-owned agency has outperformed its peer group, but the healthcare practice has arguably been the most consistent performer in the US, recording double-digit growth in recent years (including 2017, when the rest of the business fell victim to the industry's slowdown) and reaching a point where it now accounts for about a quarter of Weber Shandwick's North American business.

The story last year was one that combined both longevity (50% of the top 20 clients have been with Weber Shandwick for more than a decade, including Roche Genentech, Gilead, Merck, and Boehringer Ingelheim); healthy organic growth (Merck, Lilly, Sunovion and Daiichi Sankyo); and impressive new business performance (Sanofi Regeneron, Illumina and — most notably, perhaps — Novartis). Beyond those leading pharmaceutical clients, the practice also works with industry trade association PhRMA, Merck for

Mothers, and The International Fund for Agricultural Development (leading its hunger and malnutrition efforts).

President of global healthcare Laura Schoen, an 18-year veteran of the firm, has built a formidable leadership team that includes New York health practice leader Jamie Dowd and

Frank Orrico (one of 16 PhDs on the full-time staff) who leads Element Scientific Communications, the specialist science team. And with 500 team members, Weber can deliver an astonishingly wide range of work in the healthcare sector, from efforts to strengthen the connection between

GSK Consumer Healthcare's Excedrin brand and headache sufferers to the bold "F*ck Without Fear" safe sex campaign for the Los Angeles LGBT Center to employee engagement advice for Boehringer-Ingelheim to crisis management and disaster relief efforts for Sutter Health. — PH

2018 Public Affairs Agencies of the Year

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WINNER

SKD Knickerbocker (Stagwell Group)

Bucking the challenges of a non-election year, SKD Knickerbocker spent much of the past 12 months making sure the year's hot-button issues — from Obamacare to sexual harassment — were top of mind among the American people. Coordinating the campaign to save the Affordable Care Act, serving as a hub of the "resistance," and helping companies navigate the new Washington ensured that the progressive public affairs firm played a pivotal role during a unique political era. SKDK was one of the lead agencies supporting the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, Hollywood's organization to help victims of sexual harassment. When a government scientist was reassigned after speaking up on climate

change, meanwhile, SKDK launched an aggressive media campaign aimed at halting other transfers.

Under the leadership of high-profile political veterans Hilary Rosen and Anita Dunn, SKDK's growth continues to impress, up almost 20% in 2017 to \$43m, thanks to the addition of new clients including Delta Airlines, Under Armour, Pepsico Foundation, Google, Center for Reproductive Rights, NAACP and Time's Up Legal Defense Fund. They join an impressive list of existing companies and organizations such as Planned Parenthood, American Airlines, Human Rights Campaign, AT&T, Open and Fair Skies, Disney and Rockefeller Foundation.

SKDK also expanded its offering in 2017, hiring Heather Wilson to lead public affairs on the West Coast and adding a new digital division to better meet clients' objectives by examining the cultural signals, human insights and industry context that affect business. The firm also stepped up its focus on litigation and regulatory support, along with cybersecurity prep and response. Most notable, perhaps, is that SKDK's efforts reaped results. Representing a coalition of Affordable Care Act advocates, the agency fought to save Obamacare by mobilizing community activists, developing

strategies to reach members of Congress and leveraging paid media, all centered around dispelling misperceptions about the program. The repeal ultimately failed. — DM

FINALISTS

APCO Worldwide (Independent)

There have been times in recent years that APCO's search for new investment seemed to consume too much of the management team's time and energy, with growth taking a back seat to securing long-term stability. But when APCO finally found a solution — minority shareholder WindRiver was bought out with support from longtime banking partner Citibank and private credit company Monroe Capital in July — the change in mood was almost palpable. APCO founder and chairman Margery Kraus and CEO Brad Staples were able to lay out a clear vision for the firm going forward, and with 70 employee-owners joining them, there was an excitement about the future that helped the firm record 5% growth, ending the year with record fee income of \$128 million — more than half of it in the US.

If the firm's growth has been hindered by its ownership struggles, its ability to innovate in the public affairs space never was. In fact,

APCO has been redefining and expanding the definition of public affairs, both in its early embrace of research and analytics, and in its investment in digital and social capabilities. Its “Telescope” model identifies emerging influencers and redefines stakeholder mapping. As the worlds of politics, business, and civil society have intersected in ever more controversial and confusing ways, APCO’s unique ability to help clients see around corners has become more valuable in the policy arena and beyond, in areas ranging from investor relations to CSR. Its new report on “Corporate Advocacy in Five Acts” helps companies understand evolving consumer and societal expectations.

This manifests itself in the agency’s work, from working with Honda around the idea that what the company stands for is now just as important as what it makes, engaging with consumers, dealers and policymakers around a wide range of issues, to helping McCormick articulate its new mission and vision, and public its first purpose report. There has been new business from IKEA, Microsoft, Cargill, the Motion Picture Association of America, and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, and from several government clients—a key strength that has been formalized through the firm’s new global solutions offering, which works with government agencies and other sovereign clients at a highly consultative level. — PH

Global Strategy Group (Independent)

There’s a pretty good case for Global Strategy Group as the most prescient public affairs firm on the planet: the firm — well known for its

work with Democratic candidates and progressive causes — might not have predicted the rise of Trump, but it was way out ahead of the politicization of business in America. Drawing on its rich heritage in polling and research, GSG produced a report three years ago suggesting that consumers and other key stakeholders were increasingly demanding that corporations take a stand on critical political and social issues — that neutrality would no longer be an option — and 2017 meant that those who listened to that advice were not blindsided by the polarization produced by Trump.

Needless to say, the trend GSG identified has been a boon to its business, since the firm operates squarely at the intersection of business and politics and the firm has once again been involved in some of the most high-profile issues in the new landscape, advising foundation and advocacy clients on issues such as criminal justice reform, gun control, immigration reform, healthcare, funding for the arts and humanities, LGBTQ rights, women in leadership, and choice. GSG worked with the Rockefeller Foundation on its widely-recognized 100x25 Campaign that aims to have 100 women in Fortune 500 leadership by 2025, and supported efforts to save arts and humanities funding from budget cuts, close Rikers Island and reform criminal justice in its home market of New York, and secure free school lunches for 1.1 million New York public school kids.

Historically, GSG has seen overall revenues decline slightly in non-election years, because of a drop off in polling, but the effect was diminished in 2017 as GSG’s public affairs and communications practices

set records. In the public affairs realm, the firm worked with General Motors to promote autonomous vehicles amid the patchwork quilt of local regulations across the US; with CVS Health to advance pharmacists as caregivers; and with America’s Health Insurance Plans to protect Medicare Advantage for seniors. And the growing corporate impact practice supported Subaru’s CSR thought its foundation, other philanthropic efforts, and volunteerism; the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, and FSG. — PH

JPA Health Communications (Independent)

In the 10 years since Carrie Jones launched JPA in her home basement, the healthcare-focused agency has grown to more than 50 employees across three offices, driven by the overarching goal of contributing to society through scientific advancement. And while that’s easily enough said, JPA has challenged staff to focus on this idea via the JPA Why Project, an internal initiative that asks each employee to understand why they are in the field, and what drives them professionally.

Bolstered by that sort of soul-searching, and the creativity it engenders, JPA’s growth trajectory has been impressive, up 19% to \$9.1m in 2017. That stemmed in part from new client wins, with JPA in the last 12 months adding Epizyme, Medicines360, Milestone Pharmaceutical and Phytects to its roster, while continuing key relationships with the American Liver Foundation, American Medical Informatics Association, College of American Pathologists, Merck and Together for Safer Roads among others. Other 2017

hallmarks included forming The Coalition to Save NIH Funding to protect biomedical research and innovation, and being recognized at AARP's 2nd Annual Supplier Diversity Awards & Recognition Program as Supplier of the Year.

Over the last 12 months, JPA has also responded to the rise in clients wanting to work with just one strategic partner, rather than an array of specialists. The agency expanded its integrated capabilities, including investment in JPA Labs, a cross-functional team comprised of specialists in analytics, visual communication, social media and web design. — DM

Kivvit (Independent)

Kivvit prides itself on working with organizations that have big ideas and robust agendas. With a broad offering across public affairs and communications, the agency in 2017 crafted initiatives that translated into action surrounding some of the year's biggest issues, such as the opioid crisis. The independent agency — staffed with 65 professionals across offices in Chicago, Miami, New Jersey, New York and Washington — was also an active player in

helping organizations delve into next-generation CSR, as companies increasingly focus on changing their own culture and business mission in ways that improve the greater good.

For example, in the spring of 2017, Kivvit launched ReachNJ, an eight-figure, state-backed multichannel campaign aimed at raising public awareness of the heroin and opioid abuse epidemic, while driving people to recovery by reducing the stigma associated with addiction. Kivvit tackled the charge by creating and managing the day-to-day operations of an effort that included strategic guidance, creative production, media buys and placement and budgeting to social content, website design and SEO, ad design and metrics reporting. Over the course of the nine-month campaign, the ReachNJ call center received 17,026 calls. The ReachNJ website logged roughly 638,000 unique site visits, with users spending an average of eight minutes on the site.

Also in 2017, Dutch life sciences multinational Royal DSM tapped Kivvit to elevate its visibility in the US by promoting its transition to a sustainable company, while

driving the idea that profitability and sustainability aren't mutually exclusive, Kivvit executed an aggressive media relations campaign highlighting DSM initiatives and innovation. When DSM launched the first 100% recyclable carpet (the second largest occupant of US landfills), Kivvit drew attention to a little-known but pressing environmental issue, moving DSM from a relative unknown in the US to a recognized leader in CSR: the company jumped 42 to spots to second place on Fortune's Change The World list.

All of which helps explain healthy growth of 12% for Kivvit in 2017 to \$22m, powered by a client roster that includes Exelon/ComEd, Anheuser-Busch, General Dynamics, Aon, Allstate, Google/YouTube, Lyft, Airbnb, BlueCross BlueShield, National Restaurant Association, the United States Olympic Committee and Cushman & Wakefield. The firm remains led by managing partners Eric Sedler and Maggie Moran, who have overseen consistent expansion over the past decade as Kivvit has grown from its Chicago base into a national public affairs powerhouse. — DM

2018 Technology Agencies of the Year

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WINNER

PAN Communications (Independent)

We said, last year, that PAN had hit an impressive stride after more than two decades in operation. This year, the agency has continued to forge ahead, reaching new heights of achievement around its business performance, caliber of work and culture.

In 2017, PAN grew 14% to \$17.7m with 78 people across offices in Boston, San Francisco, Orlando and New York (which was a new office in 2017). Twenty-eight new clients and an increase of more than 20% in new average deal size fueled the firm's growth in 2017. New clients Alegeus Health, Outsystems, Acquia, Radial, NUorder, AppDirect, Nanigans, phononics, iBoss, SuccessFactors

joined a portfolio that includes SAP, Perfecto, CloudBees, Fuze, Maestro Health, MediaMath, MobileIron and Nice. While firm's 2015 purchase of Vantage Communications didn't quite yield the Silicon Valley boost that was intended, bringing on West Coast PR veteran Phil Carpenter in early 2017 has certainly helped build PAN's presence in San Francisco. It also opened a New York office in 2017.

In the competitive B2B media category at the Innovation SABREs, PAN impressively earned two nominations. One was for a feature story for Cogito in Inc. Magazine that showcased the company's AI-driven empathy capabilities (the work has also been shortlisted for a Gold SABRE Award). And PAN took home the category trophy for "How SAP Ariba Technology is Stomping Out Modern Slavery" that was anchored in a the Fast Company that addresses how technology can help solve the modern slavery crisis. The judges called the work "brave — it shows how SAP Ariba is going beyond typical CSR and looking to combat human trafficking within supply chains."

PAN president and CEO Phil Nardone has been at the helm since its founding in 1995. Other key executives are EVP Mark Nardone, EVP/MD Phil Carpenter and SVPs Lisa Astor and Darlene Doyle. The firm recently unveiled the "The Power of Voice," a five-step guide that includes idea generation, market opportunities and engagement program building. In addition to other thought-leadership, PAN's eBooks have 20% conversion rate. — AaS

FINALISTS

The Bulleit Group (Independent)

The Bulleit Group is breaking from the tech boutique playbook that tends to rely on the insular Silicon Valley referral network. Instead, Bulleit has consistently sought corporate work from global companies beyond Northern California. Founded in 2012, the firm saw a whopping 55% growth in 2016. But after detecting some gaps in service, opted to scale growth to 9% in 2017 to \$3.4M — and cement a foundation that optimizes client and employee satisfaction. This resulted in operating profit increasing by 5% last year.

The firm's work with Google, Bloomberg and others to articulate their AI strategy, employer brand and innovation narratives has served a blueprint for developing expertise in these three areas across its clients. Its portfolio includes Google (Bulleit has grown the account since 2012 and now retains 10 divisions), LinkedIn, Bloomberg, Orbital Insight, Flexport, Halo Neuroscience — in addition to new wins Thor Trucks, Pipedrive, Hover, Lucid, Petuum, Plethora, LaunchDarkly and Andela, among others.

Bulleit earned three Innovation and one Gold SABRE nods this year. This includes its Instagram vs. Snapchat data-storytelling work for Jumpshot and its work for Orbital Insight around the Whole Foods acquisition announcement. The 15-person team is spread across offices in San Francisco, Nashville, Portland and Washington, DC with a focus on data-informed stories that move markets. New hires include the former press secretary for Speaker of the House Paul Ryan and former head of communications at Clover

Health Shelley Risk as SVP/General Manager for the San Francisco office. Co-founders Kyle Arteaga and Alex Hunter remain at the helm. — AaS

Highwire (Independent)

Highwire is on track to being a formidable mid-size tech player with offices in San Francisco, New York, Boston and Chicago. Founded a decade ago by Kathleen Gratehouse, Emily Borders and Carol Carrubba, the firm has become one of the fastest-growing tech independents, closing 2017 at \$17m (up more than 20% from 2016) with 81 employees servicing clients like IBM Cloud, Atlassian, Twilio, GE and Darktrace, among others.

Earlier this year, Highwire made its first acquisition with Inner Circle Labs, bringing its revenue total close to \$20m and growing the agency to nearly 100 people. Last year, the firm also expanded its content and social media services, which included hiring former NPR journalist and producer Tanner Latham. Other new hires include its first EVP Bob Finlayson (former Ketchum exec) and VPs Joe Ferrary, Mike Taylor, Meredith Klee, Mallory Cloutier and Melissa Roxas. Among its new clients are GE Ventures, Rubrik, Akamai, Appian and others.

Notable work includes re-launching Appian as an innovator in the low-code revolution (the work was shortlisted for an In2 SABRE Award). The campaign elevated Appian's voice in the developer community by expanding its corporate and executive visibility efforts to non-traditional channels such as social media and podcasts. As a result of the work, Appian has

been able to reach new audiences and expand awareness of the low-code revolution. — AaS

Walker Sands (Independent)

Chicago's Walker Sands continues to impress with respectable growth (about 8% in 2017) combined with award-winning work and an engaged culture. Revenues are up to \$8.6M as the midwest B2B player looks to establish itself in San Francisco and Seattle.

This year, the sophistication of the 17-year-old firm's integrated approach stood out — in particular, its work with B2B commerce platform CloudCraze. To keep CloudCraze's prospects engaged through a six-month sales cycle, Walker Sands developed a strategy that included web, SEO, content marketing and PPC to drive qualified leads. The program resulted in a 51% increase in web traffic, a 100% increase in form submissions and nearly \$3M in new business in Q2 2017. The work earned Walker Sands an Innovation SABRE trophy earlier this year.

For business insights platform Owler, Walker Sands developed the first National CEO Likability Study that resulted in a media blitz — plus companies such as Sprint, T-Mobile pledged to take action to improve their standing by introducing new company culture initiatives and becoming more active on Owler. Other clients include: CompTIA, G2 Crowd, Worldpay, Sprout Social, Grubhub, Miller Heiman (new), OpenX (new), Silicon Valley Bank (new), Showpad (new), Insureon (new) and Billtrust (new), among others.

The firm conducts its own research to impressive effect, including the State of Marketing Technology 2017

(which led to a speaking engagement with the American Marketing Association), the Future of Retail 2017 that is downloaded by most major retailers, including Amazon, Google, Walmart and Apple; and in 2017, the firm also rolled out Project X, a proprietary tool to measure team bandwidth and individual utilization.

Mike Santoro has been president since 2008 and the management team includes COO Ellen Hanson, VP of digital services John Fairley and VP of brand strategy Dave Parro. — AaS

WE Communications (Independent)

WE Communications unveiled its new "Brands in Motion" research in July of last year, arguing that in today's fast-moving world, traditional brand positioning is a thing of the past. Appropriately, WE itself appears to be on the move again, after a few years in which it appeared adrift—at least in terms of growth. Fee income was up by 8.4% globally — the best performance in the last five years, taking the firm above \$110 million — fuelled by a resurgent health practice and robust growth in tech, with the San Francisco and New York offices leading the way, and the Seattle headquarters up 6%.

The new leadership talent added in recent years — Kass Sells and Alan Vandermolen, presidents of North America and international respectively — have brought a much-needed outside perspective, complementing founder Melissa Waggener-Zorkin's vision for the agency, an unwavering commitment to collaborative culture and purpose (the latter apparent both in internal initiatives and work for clients).

There were more additions in 2017, including Scott Friedman, formerly of Text 100 and APCO, as executive

VP in the tech practice; Porter Novelli veteran Matthew Ashworth as GM in Seattle; Matt Trocchio of Shift as GM in Austin; and Kona Luseni Barrasso from Burson-Marsteller as senior VP in the New York tech practice.

In terms of new business, there were some impressive wins: McDonald's retained WE to support its "experience group" (delivery, mobile ordering, table side service, and more), which speaks to the way in which WE's longstanding consumer expertise is increasingly relevant to consumer brands. But there was also additional work from more traditional tech clients including AMD, Brother, Cisco, iRobot, Tabula Rasa and Trend Micro—all North American briefs. New global work came from FWD, Lenovo, Sennheiser and more. Strong examples of the work include supporting Honeywell's aerospace division and its wireless offering; launching Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella's new book Hit Refresh; holiday season promotional work for iRobot as it seeks to move beyond its flagship Roomba product; and corporate work for Cisco. — PH

Best Agencies To Work For - North America

Best Agency to Work For is possibly the only predictive award the Holmes Report gives out. By this, we mean there's a direct correlation between the agencies on this list and those that take home our biggest honor (often times at some point in the future) — Agency of the Year recognition. That's, in part, because firms that take culture seriously tend to attract and retain smart and creative talent who, in turn, produce stellar work. It's a simple formula but one that's easily overlooked amid the breathless pace and tremendous pressures that are a seemingly inevitable reality of agency life. But this pace is exactly why agencies shouldn't underestimate the power its culture has on the work its employees produce.

The firms recognized on the rankings include a few holding companies firms, but mostly independents. Some have generous benefits, others prioritize professional development or interesting work that keeps talent engaged. We're working on an in-depth feature that will more deeply explore the factors that drive employee engagement within our industry. All participating firms can also obtain their own results mapped against either the industry or its competitive set. Trophies for the top ranking agencies were presented at the 2018 North American SABRE Awards in New York on May 1.

BEST AGENCY TO WORK FOR, LARGE (201+ employees)

#1 W2O Group (Independent)

When a firm grows as quickly as W2O Group has (132% growth in five years to top \$140m in revenues), some turbulence around culture and engagement is expected. Yet this year, W2O Group defied odds and, amid staggering growth, managed to top our Best Agencies to Work For ranking #1 among large firms. The secret to its success is actually deceptively simple: the firms' management asked employees what they wanted and then worked to make that happen. Among these, last year the firm launched its "4th Trimester" program that expanded paid leave for new parents to nine to 12 weeks and connected new parents to a personal coach for three months to help them with the transition back. Other new policies include unlimited, flexible PTO and a continuation of its five-week sabbatical program that kicks in after five years at the company. The culture at W2O is famously competitive and entrepreneurial — but that also means new ideas and disruption are welcome from any level within the organization. This is how, what was an healthcare boutique in 2002, transformed into a large agency that's on the forefront of applying digital analytics to communications. — AaS

#2 FleishmanHillard (Omnicom)

#3 WE Communications (Independent)

#4 Weber Shandwick (IPG)

#5 APCO (Independent)

BEST AGENCY TO WORK FOR, MIDSIZE (121 - 200 employees)

#1 PAN Communications (Independent)

The long-standing Best Agency to Work For favorite takes the top spot on its fourth year on the list. The win coincides with a moment where PAN's business performance and creative caliber are also exceptionally high. (The firm grew 14% to \$17.7m last year and now has more than 140 people across offices in Boston, San Francisco, Orlando and New York.)

PAN strong performance on Best Agencies to Work For over the last four years seem to confirm that an engaged workforce yields great business performance and great work. Recognizing and promoting employees is part of PAN's workplace culture, rather than a milestone reserved for annual reviews. The fast-pace of tech PR is balanced with generous time-off initiatives including at least 15 paid days (including an agency-wide shut-down between Christmas and New Years), plus 10 paid holidays, one floating holiday, employee's birthday off, 8 hours of volunteer time, and 9 sick days per year. The firm's culture is casual — jeans, PAN-branded Patagonia sweaters, Fitbits for all and opportunities for extra cash via new business and employee referral programs. Efforts are made to clear out the office by 6pm — and 1pm on Summer Fridays and 3:30pm on other Fridays throughout the year. — AaS

#2 GCI Health (WPP)

#3 Text 100 (Next 15)

#4 M Booth (Next 15)

#5 Allison + Partners (MDC)

BEST AGENCY TO WORK FOR, SMALL (71 - 120 employees)

#1 Walker Sands (Independent)

We've taken notice to Chicago's Walker Sands for its respectable growth (about 8% in 2017) combined with award-winning work — and its engaged culture. The 17-year-old firm is particularly progressive around diversity and inclusion, which includes several initiatives, like bringing in Xavier Ramey to speak and Unconscious Bias training from Pooja Kothari. There's a fun element to this as well. This year, the firm purchased 20 tickets to Black Panther and had a lunch discussion on the film the following day. The firm takes weekly TinyPulse surveys for anonymous feedback. In addition to other standard perks, the firm pays for employees to obtain their MBA and has a points program for SAE+ that can be exchanged for more time-off, Amazon Prime memberships or personal classes (not related to work). — AaS

#2 C+C (Independent)

#3 Highwire (Independent)

#4 Gagen MacDonald (Independent)

#5 Spectrum (Independent)

BEST AGENCY TO WORK FOR, BOUTIQUE (11 - 70 employees)

#1 Davies (Independent)

For the second consecutive year, the Southern California public affairs shop Davies tops our boutique Best Agencies to Work For (the firm won in 2017 and 2015, was shortlisted in 2016). The firm's 34 employees are spread across offices Santa Barbara, Washington D.C., Los Angeles.

What has kept Davies at the top of the running year-after-year is the commitment CEO John Davies has shown to professional development. For instance, the firm's COO Caitlin Bidwell started as the agency receptionist in 2008. Six months into her tenure, Davies invited her to join a project team, which she declined "because she said she wants to run the company." He developed a multi-year training program designed around her ambition and by 2014 she achieved the COO title. There are numerous other stories like this where Davies identifies talent and builds a career trajectory around them. "If we can train someone to do a job, we don't hire for that job," Davies said. "And we don't have people doing repeatable tasks — when you have people doing entry level work, it's hard to find good people." When it comes to tangible benefits, Davies covers 100% employee premiums for medical, dental and vision insurance — and partially funds employee Health Savings Accounts. The firm also has policy of Real Profit Sharing, which means staff can earn up to a 100% performance bonus (based on profitability, client satisfaction and individual contributions), on top of an already competitive salary. Company financials are also "open book" — this means that every quarter, financials are presented to and reviewed by all

staff, including all expenses, all profits and all challenges and strengths. Autonomy is also highly-valued with employees setting their own hours — with performance being measured by results, not time in the office. The firm makes a concerted effort to recruit diverse management (women represent 50% of the agency leaders) and equal pay is a priority for women and ethnic minorities. — AaS

#2 Fish (Independent)

#3 Just Drive (Independent)

#4 Zapwater (Independent)

#5 Group Gordon (Independent)



The Agencies of the Year - EMEA

2018 Pan-EMEA Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

Hill+Knowlton Strategies (WPP)

Hill+Knowlton's high single-digit growth in the EMEA region is strong enough on its own to qualify the firm for this list, but in context it looks even better, achieved as it was at a time when the firm's European operations receive less help from their American parent company than most of their competitors. Throw in improving margins—tripled over the past three years—and an increasingly 21st century business mix (from high-end consulting work to strong digital and creative) and it's clear that H+K,

which won our EMEA Consultancy of the Year trophy two years ago, remains an impressive contender.

Under the leadership of Lars-Erik Grønntun, chairman and CEO for EMEA, and Richard Millar, who chairs the UK operation and also leads H+K's global Center of Creative Strategy, H+K has managed to blend operational discipline, a more entrepreneurial attitude, and strong creative to become a well-rounded business, equally strong in corporate reputation management and brand-building work. The past 12-months have seen the addition of several new offers, including Better Impact, which helps organizations understand where they stand on each of the UN's 17 sustainable development goals; Shanghai Addition (which has worked with Chinese companies like Huawei, Honor and Envision striving the establish themselves in Europe), and Flight School+ (an expansion of the firm's social media crisis simulation tool).

There have also been a number of professional development initiatives, including Knowledge+, a training

academy balancing hard and soft skills; Orbita, an event that helps to develop integrated thinking and partnerships with other WPP sister agencies; and Represent Her, which ensures that the firm's creative work avoids lazy gender stereotypes. There has also been an influx of talent, including new Middle East chief executive Bashar AlKadhi, who joined from Asda's Burson-Marsteller and new German CEO Ruediger Maessen from Ketchum Pleon. New business, meanwhile, came from Saudi Aramco, Hydro, EY, GSK, China's Wanda Group, Hankook, Standard Chartered, Nespresso, Colgate, Pfizer, Lockheed Martin, Johnson&Johnson, Duracell and more. Numerous existing clients, including Danone, Tata, Huawei, Shell, Lenovo, Statoil, Coca-Cola, McDonalds, and Arla, expanded their work with the agency. And that work was impressive, garnering 14 SABRE nominations—more than any other agency. Highlights ranged from working with Shell to tell the world about a coffee-powered London bus to helping manage the largest M&A transaction in the Netherlands, from promoting

cashless purchases in Russia for Visa to establishing China's Envision as a wind power pioneer, from promoting battery recycling in UK schools for Duracell to driving the Vision 2030 agenda in Saudi Arabia. — PH

FINALISTS

APCO (Independent)

There have been times in recent years that APCO's search for new investment seemed to consume too much of the management team's time and energy, with growth taking a back seat to securing long-term stability. But when APCO finally found a solution, the change in mood was almost palpable, and the return to growth almost immediate: global fee income was up 5% in 2017, and in EMEA the growth was an extremely robust 12% under the leadership of Claire Boussagol, who joined the firm in 1995 and took the helm in Europe after Brad Staples was elevated to the global CEO role at the end of 2014.

New business wins and expanded assignments came from across the region: American Express, a new global assignment; Boeing in France and Germany; Celgene in Brussels and Paris; and the Copper Alliance in the UK and the US. They also came from across a wide range of industries, from a public affairs and corporate communications assignment for Roche in the healthcare space to a Yum Brands win in the consumer arena to work for Palo Alto Networks in the growing technology practice to the Republic of Bulgaria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, indicative of the firm's strength in representing government clients. Other additions included

Arconic, Allianz, Global Citizen, Oculus, Microsoft, and the Motion Picture Association of America.

The firm has long been built around twin pillars of strength in London and Brussels—the two most significant public affairs markets in the region—but as it has expanded both geographically and in terms of the kind of work it does in the corporate reputation and crisis and issues management spaces, its operations in Germany (offices in Berlin and Frankfurt, up 31% last year), Italy (Rome and Milan, 31% growth), and France are all making a significant contribution. The Middle East operation, meanwhile, was up by 21% last year and with 170 people is the UAE and Saudi Arabia is a major player in the region and a significant contributor to APCO's EMEA region.

The work last year included public affairs and executive leadership communications for Facebook and support for organizational change at Tui in Germany; crisis management support for Whirlpool around plant closings and support for Apple during CEO Tim Cook's meeting with the Pope in Italy; corporate and CEO positioning for NetJets and issues management around sexual health for Reckitt Benckiser's Durex brand in the UK; and helping to secure EU funding for Rotary International's Global Polio Eradication Initiative in Brussels. The firm also continued to expand its APCO Insight group, led by Chris Levy, across the region, adding team members in other key markets and managing research projects for Bulgaria, Metro, Roche and more. — PH

Edelman (Independent)

In isolation, Edelman's financial performance in EMEA was disappointing last year: growth of slightly less than 1% is not what we have come to expect from the world's largest public relations firm. But context matters, and 2017 can be seen as a year of consolidation for a firm that had been regularly outperforming its peer group for a decade or so. The firm put in place a new leadership team, with ad industry veteran Carol Potter moving to London from the Middle East to take over as CEO for the region, Ed Williams promoted from his UK role to vice-chair, and finally a restructuring that brings the Middle East and Africa (recently part of an unwieldy APACMEA construct) back into the EMEA fold.

Even with all that going on, there was plenty of good news in the region, which combined currently accounts for 20% of Edelman's global revenues and clearly had plenty of growth potential left. Both Italy and Spain are performing well, despite difficult market conditions; there's a new leadership team in Brussels under general manager Gurpreet Brar, who previously headed public affairs in London; a new model in Amsterdam, where Philips veteran AJ Hesselink is implementing the firm's "communications marketing" strategy with gusto; and of course the London operation is still the UK's market leader, with 500 people and a number of key hires in 2017 including Hugh Taggart from Bell Pottinger to run corporate affairs; Justin Wescott, who is rebuilding the tech practice; Michele O'Neil, who joined from the Australian Institute of Corporate Directors as global strategy partner;

and Will Walden, managing director of public affairs, who was previously a senior advisor to Boris Johnson.

The new business picture was pretty healthy too, starting with the firm's global assignment from Nissan, one of the year's biggest pitches and led out of EMEA. In the UK, the firm added work from Coca-Cola, Formula 1, Kering, Lego, Shire, and Ujet; in Brussels there were new assignments from CHAFAEA (the Organic Food from Europe campaign) and Lloyd's; new German clients include

Astra, Merck, and MundiPharma; in France, Edelman Elan added L'Oreal and Danone business; in Italy, Samsung and Mattel were among the marquee additions. And there was an increase in cross-border work for clients such as GSK, Gilead, HP and Lloyd's, while PayPal, Johnson & Johnson, Shell, Unilever, Microsoft, Asics, Pfizer, Heineken and Mars are all working with Edelman across the region.

And of course Edelman continues to be a creative powerhouse in the region. Globally, Edelman has been investing in digital and creative talent at a pace unmatched by any of its rivals—more than 600 creatives around the world, including about 200 in Europe. And the acquisition of Swedish creative shop Deportivo in the summer of 2014 has been paying dividends in Europe, where that firm now has 30-plus people in London under the leadership of Toby Gunton, a veteran of OMD and WCRS. Great creative work includes Heineken's "Open Your World" social experiment; Knorr's "Love at First Taste" campaign; public affairs and events work for Formula One; a global search for the perfect shower for Grohe; and a search for

the "next Einstein" that brought together Unilever, IKEA and Lego to form the Real Play Coalition. — PH

FleishmanHillard (Omnicom)

One tribute to the job John Saunders did in strengthening FleishmanHillard's EMEA operations during the first half of this decade is that since he ascended to the global CEO role at the end of 2015, the leadership team he left behind has continued to build: growth in each of the past two years, including a 10% increase in fee income in 2017—despite the disappearance of the FH brand in several markets due to an Omnicom PR Group consolidation—and double-digit growth in major markets such as the UK, Germany and Brussels, as well as in the France, Italy, the Czech Republic, South Africa and the Middle East.

The firm has a balanced portfolio in the region, with growth in the technology and healthcare sectors, the corporate and consumer practices. There was growth from some of the firm's key clients—Crocs, Bayer (led out of the UK), Lidl (led out of Germany), Fitbit (for its entry into European markets), and Philips (served as part of Omnicom's OneVoice)—and from new clients that ranged from global brands like Amazon (in the Czech Republic), Google (a US client expanding to EMEA), Samsung (across 17 markets)—and newer names like GoPro (European social and media relations) and Korean razor blade company Dorco. There has been new talent too, with three key additions to the financial services team (Claudia Bate from Bell Pottinger in the UK; Mette Grolleman in Belgium, Khaya Buthelezi in South Africa); Michael Hartt from Burson-Marsteller to

strengthen the international affairs offer in the UK; Nadine Dusberger from Edelman to lead healthcare in Germany; and Tim Snowball, former head of comms for the LibDems, to lead public affairs in London. Staff development remains a priority, with internal professional development and networking initiatives and an increased diversity focus for its 500 employees in EMEA.

Highlights of the work in 2017—which garnered 10 SABRE nominations—included the UK launch of Crocs developed in collaboration with designer Christopher Kane; food and nutrition communications for the Polish Association of Juice Producers; international corporate brand-building work on the Philips Future Health Index; bold CSR work for O2 in the Czech Republic; support for the 5th Football World Cup of Children from Care Homes in Poland; and telling the story of a Syrian migrant called Nour and her 2000 mile journey through nine countries to seek asylum in Sweden, on behalf of the EU. — PH

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic)

Colin Byrne learned his lesson from Arsene Wenger: he decided to go out while his team was still on top. In Byrne's last year at the helm of Weber Shandwick's EMEA operation was every bit as impressive as the previous eight: 13% growth, all organic, at a time when the Interpublic agency's global revenues increased in the low single digits). He leaves behind a firm that has regional fee income in excess of \$125 million, having grown by 72% since 2013 to establish itself as one of the strongest networks in the region.

New business performance was impressive: significant additions included Mars Petcare, supermarket chain Iceland, Philips' TPVision, Syngenta, Bayer, Roche, Epson, luxury brand giant Richemont, Coty, Sanofi, Kellogg's and more—as well as IPG's global Novartis win, in which Wever Shandwick played a lead role. There was plenty of growth from existing clients too, with fee income from the firm's top 40 regional clients up by 24%. The agency's work continues to earn recognition: its "72-hour cabin" concept for Visit Sweden won an In2 SABRE Award, and it has seven SABRE nominations, for campaigns ranging

from the McDonald's "Serve Your Country" employer branding initiative in Sweden to the ManFran campaign connecting Manchester and San Francisco for Virgin Atlantic; from The Little Chicken Named Ping-Pong adult literacy campaign featuring Idris Elba on behalf of Pearson to the #toocoolforplastics commitment that positioning Iceland at the forefront of sustainable business practices.

And finally, the leadership team taking Weber Shandwick forward looks solid. Veteran Tim Sutton will chair EMEA and the Asia-Pacific; Rachel Friend leads the UK and

Ireland; Jonas Palmqvist—who joined via the Prime acquisition in 2014—is now chief operating officer for EMEA: another Prime addition, Charlotte Witte, is leading client experience in the region; and there is a strategic board that includes practice leaders and regional CEOs. The firm has also introduced four "value-based communities" (insights, integrated media, content, client experience) as part of a reorganization designed to prepare it for a changing competitive landscape, and to ensure that it can continue to offer an array of multi-channel services with earned at the center. — PH

2018 Africa PR Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

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WINNER

Clockwork Media (Independent)

Launched just five years ago, South Africa's Clockwork Media has already reached \$5m in fee income, making good on its vision of changing the way PR is perceived in Africa, and across the globe. The consultancy now number 100 people, focused on four key components — strategy and data, concept, production and dissemination. Led by two former tech journalists — Tom Manners and Nic Simmonds — the firm brings a refreshingly agile approach to its

business, investing in such areas as as influencer marketing, video production and data analytics, helping it to become one of the largest consultancies in the country, one capable — more importantly, perhaps, of winning global remits.

In that respect, 2017 marked something of a watershed year for Clockwork Media, with growth of 50% powered by a £1m Microsoft assignment to run Windows.com, Xbox.com and Surface.com in 46 markets – establishing the firm's 15-strong interactive team and marking it out as one of the world's agencies to watch. There was also new business from LaLiga, Lafarge and Exxaro, media relations accounts that have expanded to encompass the full spectrum of public relations across offline and online. In addition to Microsoft, Clockwork's client roster also features such names as NBCUniversal, LG, Lafarge, Exxaro, Tile Africa, Tata Motors, Mimecast and L'Oreal.

Clockwork's capabilities also expanded considerably, with the firm adding a data and insights component to its strategy division, a conceptual team featuring a creative director, copywriter and art director, an interactive team focused on producing digital work on a global scale and an activations team aimed at bringing concepts to life in the physical realm. All of that helps to explain the firm's remarkable progress in such a short space of time, further highlighted by brand repositioning for Dell Alienware, content strategy for L'Oreal, TVCs for Tile, radio ads for Lafarge and websites for Microsoft and Exxaro. And there have also been some notable hires to help manage the growth, including Monica van der Spuy to oversee the PR business unit and three former Wunderman execs — Emilia Brooks, Ciaran Burnand and Lisa Cohn — to oversee operations, interactive and strategy, respectively. — AS

FINALISTS

Burson-Marsteller (WPP)

Burson-Marsteller (which became Burson Cohn & Wolfe earlier this year) continues to operate the most comprehensive network of offices in Africa, covering 53 of 56 African nations, 36 of them under the Burson brand. But it is not merely the scope of BM's African network (500 people) that sets it apart: it's the fact that so many of its members (from hub agency Arcay Burson-Marsteller in South Africa to Engage Burson-Marsteller in Kenya to CMC Connect in Nigeria to Blast in Mauritius—are market leaders, and the fact that under the chairmanship of Robyn de Villiers the firm has made such a major contribution to the development of the PR profession across the continent.

There was an impressive 50% increase in the amount of work referred from the South African hub into the rest of the region last year as more and more clients begin to recognize the massive growth opportunities in Africa. Key clients include Net1 (for issues management and stakeholder engagement); Turner Broadcasting including CNN, Cartoon Network and Boomerang; Pernod Ricard; SES (media relations across 15 markets); Novo Nordisk; and Allen & Overy. There were new assignments in 2017 from ACE Packaging, Colgate-Palmolive, the Natural Resource Governance Institute, Thyssenkrupp, Toshiba, and Trafigura. The firm's impressive work includes leveraging strong in-country media and stakeholder relationships our affiliates in Ghana, DRC, Tanzania, Tunisia, Guinea and Nigeria to secure widespread media coverage for the Natural Resource Governance

Index; a campaign driven by Engage in Kenya to follow the coffee experience from "farm to cup" on behalf of Nestle; a "Be a Buddy and not a Bully" CSR campaign for Turner's Cartoon Network; and a free trade public affairs campaign for Nigerdock led by CNC Connect.— PH

Djembe Communications (Independent)

Djembe Communications has organically grown a local network that spans Angola, Morocco, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, the United States and the United Kingdom. These offices all operate under a single budget, which enables Djembe's Dubai office to be a gateway for clients and acts as the design and media epicenter for all clients. Beyond that, Djembe's Luanda and Maputo offices spearhead the consultancy's Lusophone client engagements; Djembe's Rabat office serves as the digital hub for the network, while Europe is overseen from its Zurich outpost.

In 2017, some long-term client shifts (notably involving Angola's sovereign wealth fund) meant that fees declined slightly to \$6m across 47 employees. There was new business from the likes of Vlisco, Philips, L'Oréal, RA International, Movenpick Ambassador Hotel Accra, Afton Chemical, Honoris United Universities and Hennessy, joining an existing client roster that includes the African Innovation Foundation, Porto de Caio FACRA, Estrela de Floresta, the African Law Library and the Innovation Prize for Africa.

It is Djembe's work, however, that provided the real highlight of the year, helping the agency net a SABRE Awards nomination for its

Innovation Prize for Africa campaign, elevating the overall impact of the event to impressive effect. The leadership team includes MD Mitchell Prather; regional director-EMEA Nicole Suter and international director Kevin Nolan.— AS

FleishmanHillard (Omnicom)

With 60 people in its Johannesburg office, FleishmanHillard is one of the market leaders in the South African market. And last year was another strong new business year, with retainer and project assignments from General Motors, Global T20 Cricket, Ascendis Health, pan-African fund manager Harith, French bakery Paul, and Danone. They join a roster that includes ABSA (the South African operation of Barclays), Akzo Nobel, Discovery Networks, MasterCard SSA, Microsoft South Africa, Nike, Omidyar Network, Pernod, and Philips Group. Sharon Piehl, who joined FleishmanHillard in 2011 to lead its brand marketing team, was promoted to general manager in April of 2016—only the third GM in the 30-year history of the firm. She is supported by four directors—Vanessa Sabbatini (client services), Penny Motsamai (reputation management), Clare O'Donovan (crisis and issues), and Joanne Theodorides (financial)—who round out one of the most experienced senior leadership teams in the region. New in 2017 were Khaya Buthelezi, who will lead the firm's financial services practice in the region, and former newspaper journalist Francois Rank as head of content.

The firm earned two SABRE Awards for its work last year: one for the opening of Paul's first French bakery in South Africa, which included an exclusive baking class with a master

baker and media interviews with the firm's chairman; another for the launch of Mastercard's Masterpass QR mobile app in Kenya, which helped the company increase share of voice in a fast-growing market. — PH

Meropa (Independent)

Founded in 1989 by Aubrey Sussens and Peter Mann, Meropa may have turned 21 in 2017, but does not appear to have missed a spring in its step if its numbers are any guide. The independent firm grew 10.5% to almost \$6m, powered as much by a vibrant staff culture as by its ability to build long-lasting, profitable client relationships. The firm employs 86

people across wholly-owned offices in Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, supported by its own pioneering AfricaOne affiliate network, which spans 18, mainly sub-Saharan, markets.

Under the leadership of Mann and CEO Patrick Gearing, Meropa has built a reputation for client quality, particularly in the automotive, aviation, healthcare and government sectors. This is illustrated by a roster that includes the South African National Roads Agency, Ford, Jaguar Land Rover, British Airways, Boeing, Black & Veatch, BP, Exerian, Mauritius Tourism and

Lancet. In 2017, there was also new business from Boehringer Ingelheim, Monsanto, Sodastream, South Africa Scenarios, ICASA, the Society for Family Health, the International Partnership for Microbicides, and the Beijing Automotive Industry Holding Company (BAIC).

Notable work includes issues management for SANRAL; supporting the HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN) study is run in collaboration with the US Institutes for Health, the Medical Research Council and 15 clinical research sites in South Africa; #MyFordStory; and an internship programme for BAIC. — AS

2018 Benelux PR Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

LVT Group (Independent)

Founded in 1994 as a technology public relations specialist, LVT has succeeded in building a well-rounded corporate and consumer public relations business. But its technology credentials—embodied in specialist subsidiary Progress Communications—continue to shine. Meanwhile, LVT continues to work across a number of business-to-business categories, with clients in the fintech, aviation, mobility,

construction and real estate, and consumer and retail sectors. Last year saw the revenue rise past the €8m, hitting €8.2million. The agency's Bunnik did particularly well, doubling its capacity to accommodate the growth across disciplines. The group moved to a new CRM, implemented marketing automation and increased its focus on digital measurement, as well as bloggers and influencers.

New business came Accenture, Experian and Datto, and the Belgian office signed Konica Minolta and Red Hat. The agency's consumer team added Turkish Airlines, Spotify and Casio G-SHOCK, while the Business-to-Business team started working for NetApp, Extreme Networks and Honeywell (B2B) – on a Benelux basis. Additionally, LVT's Belgian office signed new corporate clients, such as NGO Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen and pharma giant Takeda. Meantime, several incumbent Dutch clients including Indeed and

Fleetmatics expanded their activities to the entire Benelux region. All of the newly signed companies join a portfolio that includes clients like Air Belgium, Auping, AVM, Castrol, DOMO, Haacht Brewery, Microsoft, The North Face, Plus Supermarkets, Sonos and Veeam.

LVT has grown its team to 80, led by group CEO Charly Lammers van Toorenborg. The leadership team was boosted with the return of Richard Verbeek, a former managing director of Belgium, who has assumed a group role focused on creating strategy and innovation. — PH/DM

FINALISTS

Edelman (DJE Holdings)

Edelman has transformed its market-leading Amsterdam operation under the past couple of years, following the appointment of Arent Jan (AJ) Hesselink—formerly head of content and channels at

Philips—as general manager in the summer of 2016. Given his focus on integrated marketing, it’s no surprise that the office is participating with enthusiasm and elan in the global agency’s reinvention as a full-service “communications marketing” offer (there are in-house content, production, paid, creative services, digital marketing, strategy and data science capabilities), but it is perhaps a little more surprising that Hesselink has devoted just as much energy to moving the firm upstream to handle financial crisis and risk management work and other critical issues.

The revamped leadership team includes chief client officer and deputy GM Steven Heywood, a former head of corporate communications at eBay who brings deep crisis experience; b2b practice leader Eeva Raaijmakers who brings experience at KPMG, Ricoh Europe and Philips; and director of strategy and integration Martijn Nieuwenhuis, whose advertising background includes being the owner of a small agency and time spent at Leo Burnett. At the same time, the firm has moved to single P&L to ensure a more agile, collaborative and client-centric approach.

There was double-digit growth last year, consolidating Edelman’s position as the number one multinational in the Dutch market, with work for global clients such as HP, Shell and PayPal supplemented by local wins such as Ahold Delhaize, TE Connectivity, Samsung Air Conditioning, Takeaway.com, Wolters Kluwer, and the AIDS 2018 summit—more than two-thirds of the firm’s clients are headquartered in the Netherlands. In the marketing realm, the firm has been driving brand engagement and sales for clients

such as FrieslandCampina, Shell and a global food ingredients company (under the Zeno brand), and for Lovinklaan Foundation it created a new brand identity—and redefined mission and values—to celebrate its 35th anniversary. On the healthcare front, the firm led the “Many Faces One Voice” campaign for the first lung cancer patient advocacy group, on behalf of Lung Cancer Europe. In the financial arena, the firm is now handling a number of M&A deals (including hostile bids) and activist situations and providing counsel at the board level to several clients.—PH

H+K Strategies (WPP)

Hill+Knowlton Strategies is no longer the pure public affairs powerhouse that it once was in the Brussels market, but it remains a leader across the Benelux region due to a successful transformation effort that has seen its Dutch operation position itself as a leader in high-value, high-stakes corporate and financial situations, and the Belgian operation take public policy and issues management work and convert that into broader, integrated assignments. So H+K now has 85 people spread across three offices (Amsterdam, Antwerp and Brussels) that are among the most profitable in the region.

The Netherlands may not be a giant market for consumer work, but it does have more than its share of corporate headquarters, and under the leadership of CEO Frederique Demenint (who also leads the firm’s corporate practice) H+K has developed strong capabilities in crisis and issues management and litigation support (it worked for RecyBEM, the management company for the Dutch legislation

on waste management, to debunk rumors that recycled plastics were causing cancer) and in financial communications (it handled 28 M&A deals in 2017, including the high-profile sale of media group Telegraf Media Group). New additions to the team included Machteld Merens, who joined as director of corporate communications from Randstad.

Meanwhile, the Belgian operation, helmed by CEO Melanie Faithfull Kent, has been diversifying its own operations, developing a more integrated offer (strengthened by the addition of digital and content specialist Uzo Madu last year) and also competing for European Commission work, which now accounts for 25% of the office’s business. — PH

Ketchum (Omnicom)

While most multinationals in Brussels have focused their energies on developing EU policy capabilities, Ketchum opted instead to become a leader in the local Belgian market—leveraging an approach it characterizes as “more local than the global agencies, more global than the local firms”—an approach that has paid dividends over the past five years. Ketchum’s Belgian revenues have increased by 148% since 2012, and in 2017 were up by better than 20% for the second straight year. The firm now has local revenue in excess of €4 million and is exporting €1.5 million to other Omnicom agencies, including BBDO Belgium and Ketchum’s own Daggerwing employee and change management consultancy.

Given the relatively small size of the consumer market in Belgium, and sluggish economic growth (less than 1% last year), Ketchum has

prospered by focusing on moving upstream, solving some of its clients most complex business challenges. Building on strong brand, digital and social, and corporate reputation practices, managing director Peter Otten and client services director Hilde Ransschaert have added a change and transformation communication offering, bringing in Christel Van Litsenborgh, formerly of BBDO, to lead internal communications initiatives. There have been other non-traditional hires too: Ransschaert is another BBDO alum; Valérie Champault joined as social and digital strategist joined from VOO, the telecom provider; Tom Meyndonckx was formerly managing director of YouEngine; Nicolas Vergauwen is a trendwatcher and data miner and will spearhead research and analytics.

The firm maintains long-term relationships with clients such as Accor, Deloitte, and Novartis, and has grown its assignments with some more recent additions such as BNP Paribas Fortis, IKEA

and BMS—the firm has a habit of taking one-dimensional briefs and pushing clients to think in broader terms about their business challenges. Highlights range from educating Belgians about “The Migraine Experience” for GSK to working with Goodyear to launch its Oxygene “living tire” at the Geneva Motor Show. — PH

Whyte Corporate Affairs (Independent)

Nearly a decade after it was launched by former Interel exec Emmanuel Goedseels, Whyte Corporate Affairs has positioned itself as a leader in corporate affairs in the Belgian market, and in 2017 furthered its position with new initiatives (investments in visualisation and digitalisation and growing its internal comms practice), strategic hires (added a fifth partner and hired a crisis communications expert away from competitor Akkanto) and expanded geographic reach (the opening of a new operation in Antwerp to cover the Flanders market).

The firm continues to offer valuable insight into the Belgian media, political, corporate, social and academic landscape, an expertise that allows Whyte to define the right audiences, recommend the most appropriate channels of communication, to formulate the right messages and to anticipate actions and reactions. That expertise has been strengthened by a commitment to analytics and research and a growing emphasis on digital channels and visualisation. Now in its 10th year, Whyte is still run by founding partners Sandrine Agie, Joris Bulteel, Eveline de Ridder and Emmanuel Goedseels.

Last year saw Whyte saw record growth of around 13%, with fee income of close to €4m. New business came from Elia, Belgium’s electricity grid operator; the retail company Carrefour; the federal government’s Crisis Centre; the produce company Greenyard; and the meat company Debra. The join a roster that includes blue-chip clients such as SAAB, Uber, Burger King and Ubinet. — PH/DM

2018 DACH PR Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

Farner (Switzerland/Independent)

Farner, now 66 years old, has been the Swiss market leader in corporate and public affairs for as long as anyone can remember, with seven offices in Switzerland: Zurich, Bern, St. Gallen, Lausanne, Geneva, Basel and Lugano. Traditional expertise includes campaign management for business and politics, crisis and issues management, and financial communications, working with clients across the financial services,

pharmaceutical, energy, technology and public health sectors. But in recent years its dramatic growth has been fueled by diversification: Farner can now offer fully integrated campaigns including content creation, community management, real-time marketing and video storytelling, its integrated capabilities further strengthened in 2016 with the acquisition of brand marketing specialist YJOO, Switzerland’s third largest PR firm. With 140 employees and fee income of more than €26

million, Farner is now number one among all creative agencies—advertising and PR—in Switzerland. It represents a host of leading Swiss companies and multinationals, including PostFinance, McDonalds, Coop, Die Post, Julius Bär, TCS, Roche, Swissport and Johnson & Johnson, Nespresso, and numerous regional and governmental agencies. New business success in 2017 included PostFinance, MSD, Tezos, Comet Group and SwissMilk. A new innovation and startup practice, meanwhile, is making inroads into next generation companies.

As far as the work is concerned, highlights of the past 12 months range from traditional corporate work like internal communications for the launch of a complex new strategy for Allianz Suisse, a corporate change communications program for Johnson & Johnson, and a rebranding project for Bank Cler to more creative and consumer work like an integrated campaign for TCS, a lead generation quiz for Emmi Benecol, and an influencer marketing campaign targeting younger audiences for Fondation Beyeler. — PH

FINALISTS

Cohn & Wolfe (WPP)

Based in Hamburg, Cohn & Wolfe in Germany turns 21 this year, but to all intents and purposes it's a three-year-old start-up. The agency has been rebuilt from scratch since 2015, when it was a struggling office of just four people. A new leadership team was put in place, headed by enthusiastic managing director Wolfgang Lünenbürger-Reidenbach, a former director of digital and social at outfits including Edelman and achtung!, who put a rocket up the agency's intern.

In three years, Lünenbürger-Reidenbach claims with some confidence to have built the fastest-growing and most profitable agency in Germany. Cohn & Wolfe has grown to 40 people, and double-digit growth in 2017 means it has grown fee income by a total of 200% since the reboot. The firm positions itself in the German market as “an agency for grown-ups”, including offering fully-flexible careers for women and achieving outstanding ratings for employee engagement and satisfaction. It has high client satisfaction scores, too, for programmes ranging from acting as the lead agency for pharma clients, to integrated marketing campaigns including paid media, to winning strategy work against the likes of McKinsey.

Cohn & Wolfe has retained and seen organic growth from all its existing clients this year, as well as adding several new companies to its roster. These included ABInBev, Gilead, Pfizer, Boehringer Ingelheim, Nokia phone manufacturer HMD and Chiquita. Progressive healthcare work is clearly a particular strength for the team in Germany. Groundbreaking work over the year included #OnlyIfIWant AI for HRA Pharma, which enabled women thinking of taking the EllaOne morning after pill to talk to a “first consultation” chatbot before going to a pharmacy; it's already become Germany's most-awarded healthcare campaign ever.

Fink & Fuchs (Independent)

Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2018 but still fiercely independent, Fink & Fuchs continues to benefit from a keen focus on technology as many sectors undergo tech-fuelled disruption. The firm now has

77 staffers working across offices in Berlin, Munich and Wiesbaden, under the leadership of co-founder Stephan Fink and management board members Alexandra Groß and Michael Grupe, who oversee an offering that has broadened considerably to include content, design, digital services and video.

Fee income remains at around €6.4m, powered by new business from Exact Software, Terzo, nano flowcell, Innovation Alliance, ESET, and Sonicwall, who join a client roster that already features the German federal authorities and ministries (35+ different entities), Salesforce, Cisco, Computacenter, Hasbro, Messe Frankfurt, SCHOTT, Pro Alpha, Fraunhofer Academy, F5 and Rackspace. There is also ongoing engagement within leading industry and government initiatives like D21, Future Convention, Future Network Academy and re:publica, along with a impressive ability to generate research in conjunction with universities and research institutions.

For clients, meanwhile, campaign highlights included Cisco's 'Digital Germany' thought leadership effort and a successful recruitment campaign for the German Office for IT Security. — AS

FischerAppelt (Germany/Independent)

fischerAppelt ended 2017 with growth of 10%, bringing the with 448-person operation's fee income just shy of €55m. The lift was driven by closer integration of content, creative and media services as well as the successful growth of the agency's software technology and digital service portfolio. It also comes after several years of remarkable expansion: Not only did

fischerAppelt grow beyond its six offices in Germany (Hamburg, Berlin, Munich, Cologne, Frankfurt, Stuttgart) to establish operations first in Doha and in 2016 in New York, it also now offers added creative capabilities in content marketing, digital marketing, and film production—often making acquisitions that were years ahead of their time, and expanding the definition of PR in the process.

Andreas and Bernhard Fischer-Appelt, who were in their early 20s when they started the firm in the living room of their flat, continue to lead the agency today as a “federation of ideas” that works across paid, earned, shared and owned media on behalf of a host of market leaders, including both German companies and multinational brands: Coca-Cola, Cosmos-Direkt, Daimler, Deutsche Bahn, Deutsche Post, easy jet, Hilti, Merck, Mondelez, Pfizer, T-Systems and Mondelez.

Highlights of the last year include fischerAppelt hiring Air Berlin’s entire e-commerce team (they team made a public pitch for a group hire after the airline went bankrupt), creating a new performance marketing agency focused on digital solutions. The airline’s former VP of e-commerce & online sales Pascal Volz and fischerAppelt’s chief digital officer Franziska von Lewinski lead the new unit as managing directors. A new digital performance unit has added offerings including SEO, SEA, social advertising, performance marketing, email marketing, Data intelligence and media distribution to the integrated digital offering. The year’s top initiatives include the ‘Strong for you. Strong for Germany’ campaign the agency created on behalf of federal government to make sure police and emergency workers are treated with more

respect, reducing attacks on them in turn. The firm rolled out TV spots and online initiatives and put up posters in various cities, all of which feature real-life police and first responders showing what it takes to do their jobs. — DM

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic Group)

Weber Shandwick’s growth in Germany over the past five years has been by some margin the best among multinational agencies doing business there: up 40% since 2013, catapulting the Interpublic-owned agency into the top 10. Last year was another strong one, with fee income up by just under 7% to around €18 million. The firm’s success in the market is built on a strong local base: 19 of Weber Shandwick’s top 20 client relationships in Germany were won locally. And the growth last year was a mix of new business success (assignments from Mars and Boehringer Animal Health, both for employee engagement and change management) and expanded assignments from longtime clients like Lilly, DTAG and Beiersdorf.

But the most interesting part of the story is the way Weber Shandwick has diversified its offer in Germany to take advantage of emerging trends. For example, it recognized two or three years ago that management consultancies were taking an interest in the higher end of the communications business, and developed its own change management capabilities accordingly. It has also been developing its own data and analytics capabilities, creating a new influencer marketing product that is based on in-depth research. There’s a new crisis prevention offering too. Highlights

of the firm’s work in 2017 include handling corporate communications for Nespresso; digital content and physician communications for Boehringer Ingelheim; and (under the Creation brand) the “Girls in STEM” campaign for Microsoft, based on research from Weber’s KRC subsidiary and positioning the company as a leader in gender equity in science-related education. Nor has Weber been neglecting its own brand: it is increasingly positioned as an employer of choice in Germany and is the only firm in the market to produce its own corporate social responsibility report. — PH

2018 Eastern Europe PR Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

Ewing Public Relations (Czech Republic/Independent)

Founded 25 years ago, Ewing's current owners took over in 1999 when the firm had just employees. Today, there are 55, generating around €3m in fee income, an impressive 33% jump from the year before. Underpinning that growth is Ewing's superior corporate and public affairs capabilities. And with 2017, being the first of six straight election years in the Czech Republic, Ewing reaped substantial rewards from its decision to up investment — creating an in-house video production studio; inking a joint venture with a polling firm; and, perhaps most notably, buying and merging with sister digital agency Manage Social. Ewing followed that up with an internal restructuring that focused on its specific industry expertise in financial real estate, energy, environment and healthcare.

All of that paid off for a client roster that now includes synlab, Arriva, AVE, Metrostav, Home Credit International, Gordic, Veolia Water, the City of Prague, Passer Invest and presidential candidate Michal Horacek. There was also eye-catching work — helping to clear the name of Southern Bohemia governor Jiri Zimola;

SABRE-nominated work on Horacek's presidential campaign; and, another SABRE-nominated effort for Arriva.

Ewing's leadership team includes a number of partners who have helped drive the agency's transformation. Ondrej Kubala has played a critical role in driving non-PA growth; Jakub Hrabovsky came onboard from Manage Social; Martin Jaros leads all energy and environment clients; Radka Hrstkova led the Zimola effort; and Jan Sedlacek leads financial and real estate. — AS

FINALISTS

Grayling (Huntsworth)

Grayling's network of 10 offices and 145 consultants across the Eastern European region is the strongest of any of the western-based multinationals, and while much of it was inherited from Mmd—the pioneering Eastern European firm founded by Alistair McLeish, it has been modernized and expanded in recent years under the leadership of Jan Simunek, who has risen from running Mmd's Romanian and Bulgarian offices to lead all of Grayling's Central and Eastern European operations and—since 2015—serving as CEO of continental Europe for the Huntsworth-owned agency.

So while Grayling in Eastern Europe continues to be best known for its work in public affairs and crisis communications it has expanded into new areas, from employer branding all the way to consumer marketing—with expanding digital and social capabilities. New business successes in 2017 added clients like Ahold, Dacia, IKEA,

McDonalds, Nokia, Skanska, and Tetra Pak to a formidable existing client list that includes multimarket assignments for Diageo, eBay, Google, Hewlett-Packard, Hilton, IBM, PokerStars and Visa.

Highlights of the firm's work in 2017 included the “Bring Your Parents to Work” campaign for GE Digital in Hungary and an April Fools' Day campaign for Airbnb in Russia, while the firm's work for the Croatian National Tourist Board and Paypal have picked up local awards in the region. There has been plenty of thought leadership activity too, including a presentation on brands and the arts, and another looking at legislative trends across the region.—PH

Seesame (Slovakia/Independent)

Last year's Eastern European Consultancy of the Year, Seesame Communication Experts celebrated its 21st anniversary in 2017 by maintaining its market leadership in the Slovakian PR market—both in terms of size (with a team of 45 and fee income in excess of \$2.5 million) and in terms of its offer, which has expanded from the public affairs and issues management work with which it first made its name (when it was affiliated and shared its name with Interel) to include a full service offering of marketing communications, digital and social, and creative work.

The latter has been a hallmark of the agency in recent years: it earned itself a place in the top 10 of our Global Creative Index last year, thanks to its Global SABRE Award winning “Autism Simulator” and its grassroots public affairs campaign

for the Slovak Insurance Association. This year, it is a SABRE finalist for three campaigns, ranging from an employer branding initiative for Henkel to a bold CSR initiative on behalf of O2 in Slovakia. But it's not just the creativity that stands out: Seesame is one of those Eastern European firms that are equally well known for their integrity and refusal to engage in the darker side of the business (the firm offers PR training to NGOs and has fought against political and media corruption).

There was new business last year from AT&T, Biogen, and fashion retailer F&F, which join a client list that includes adidas, Dell, Dr Oetker, Electrolux, European Commission, Henkel, IKEA, Pfizer, Shell, and construction company YIT. The senior leadership team remains intact and unparalleled in the market: founder and managing director Michaela Benedigova is joined by real estate practice leader Adriana Catlosova, public affairs chief Anna Michalkova, FMCG leader Juraj Caranek, and head

of digital and creative Peter Jancarik—all with at least 10 years experience in their respective fields. — PH

United Partners (Bulgaria/Independent)

Now in its 21st year — making it one of the pioneers of PR in the Bulgarian market — United Partners has worked with more than 150 clients on almost 1,400 projects—more than half of them international in scope. More recently, it has set itself a “big hairy audacious goal”—to be the “Tesla of the communications industry.” It has also put a lot of thought into the kind of values that will get it there: reliability, innovation, learning, positivity and passion.

So while the firm continues to work with some long term clients — P&G (20 years), IBM (12 years), Johnson Wax (20 years), VMware, Viber Abbvie, Bayer and H&M — it has been aggressive on the new business front, picking up assignments from major telco MTEL; Hyper Science, Fadata, Indonesian Embassy; MyLan; Alvogen; Sofia Municipality; Tesy; Monsanto; and the Data Science Society in the

past 12 months as it grew by about 10% to end the year with a team of 30 and fees of around \$1.67 million.

A full-service firm, United has also reinvented its teams to better fit client needs — structuring talent around Inspiring Innovators (Developing strategies and services), Ingenuous Insighters (research and analysis), Creative Cooks (concepts, video, text, visuals), Wonder-making Wizards (Client relations) and Lasting Linkers (external relations). The agency has also stepped up its workplace culture initiatives and is a regular presence at major PR and marketing events in the CEE region — working with data scientists and machine learning engineers to try and solve fake news, for example.

For its 20th anniversary, United Partners created a yearlong effort to boost its own reputation, including a rebranding and 20 experiments two areas — innovation and people. For external clients, highlights included the Mtel Media Masters; the Baylab initiative for children; and the communications strategy for Sofia's presidency of the EU. — AS

2018 French PR Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

Jin (Independent)

Founded just five and a half years ago by Edouard Fillias, who previously held digital roles in French organizations, including a stint with Publicis, Jin is a fast-growing, digital-first agency with its headquarters in Paris, where a team of 36 works under the leadership of GM Patrick Bonin (a veteran of Kingcom and Le Public Systeme) across the

consumer, healthcare and technology sectors with clients including Chipotle, Europcar, and Ricoh.

Jin boasts exceptional digital capabilities (especially in the context of continental Europe). Its team includes several specialists in SEO (including COO Alexandre Villeneuve); a team of six designers, developing website and social media content; an insights team of three; and a group it calls the Lab, which has developed proprietary tools including

a monitoring solution, Plugr, and a VR training tool, Pitchboy. Its influencer marketing capabilities, meanwhile, depend on networks of influencers in major European markets).

Another thing that sets Jin apart is its focus on delivering pan-European solutions. It has opened smaller offices in London (six people) and Hamburg (four people) and actually has two people on the ground in New York. It works for Chipotle and Ricoh in France, Germany and the UK, and for Europcar in 15 countries. Other clients include GE, for women's healthcare issues, Astellas (disease awareness and influencer outreach), and Medtronic. — PH

FINALISTS

Edelman-Elan (DJE Holdings)

It has been three years now since Edelman acquired the leading French independent, Agence Elan, and installed its founder (and Edelman veteran) Marion Darrieutort as CEO of the merged operations. Darrieutort had built a €15 million agency in a difficult market by challenging the conservative conventions of the conservative French PR establishment, blending expertise in corporate and marketing communications, supplemented by research and planning and expertise in influencer outreach and social media. Joining forces with Edelman—and its pioneering digital, social, creative, integrated resources—has only strengthened the offer.

With close to 100 people in Paris, Edelman now ranks in the top three in the French PR market, and in the top 10 among all creative services. The firm picked up new business from French blue-chip brands Danone and L'Oreal last year, adding them to

a roster that includes Gilead, BMS, HP, Microsoft, Econocom, Club Med, and more. The firm also added new talent, hiring Benoit Viala, former managing director of Havas PR in Paris and most recently with a leading French change management specialist, as deputy CEO to strengthen the firm's consulting credentials, and bringing in Robert Fridovich, a veteran of Havas Media Group, as global director, creative marketing.

That last move will only bolster a creative capability that is already impressive. The agency took a look at strategies to get pregnant for Le Grand Forum Des Touts Petits last year, producing a frank and funny video that drove a social media conversation, and has taken the lead on Club Med work that used virtual reality to take people on amazing journeys. For Airbnb, the firm organized and publicized a contest to allow people to spend the night at the Galeries Lafayette department store on the eve of the winter sales or in the Catacombs of Paris, and for Klorane Botanical Foundation it launched the "Botany for Change" initiative.—PH

Hopscotch Groupe (Independent)

Launched in 2000, Hopscotch has expanded to become France's largest communications group, with the 2010 merger with Le Public Système helping to create a leader in the industry, now worth €54m with operations across EMEA. The group has further expanded its offering by acquiring 33% of food and beverage specialist Sopexa, part of a plan to create a viable French alternative to the Anglo-Saxon independent PR networks. In 2017, Hopscotch started operating under a new tagline, Relationships Built By Design. The phrase is meant

to capture the agency's approach to communications — designing relationships for clients and their audiences. For Hopscotch, that involves inciting high-impact conversations, creating experiences, collaborating and aligning with business sectors and eradicating preconceived notions. The firm showcases a fully rounded offering across multiple sectors and practice areas, with particular strength in digital, events, technology and content production. The client roster is a blue-chip affair that in 2017 added Alibaba, PWC, Huawei, Puig and Lacoste on top of existing clients such as Renault-Nissan, Skoda, Microsoft, Sony, Samsung and Peugeot. — AS/DM

Monet + Associés (Independent)

Monet's positioning reflects its focus on creating engagement, which has helped it develop into one of France's leading PR firms, with 37 staffers led by MD Amaury Bataille. The consumer PR firm demonstrated remarkable growth in 2017 of 42%, powered by a client roster that includes Bosch, Siemens, Bayer, Bouygues, Nokia, Roche, Intermarché and Nikon. Much of that growth was helped by the agency's ability to handle social media campaigns for its clients, thanks to specific expertise in branded content and influencer marketing. That was further illustrated by a range of eye-catching campaigns, including considerable digital and video activity, for the likes of Algoritherm, Bosch, Laino, Silverlit and Brossard. After being elected PR Agency of the Year in 2016, it is little surprise that Monet continues to impress. — AS

Wellcom (Independent)

Wellcom's consistent presence as one of France's top 3 PR firms owes much to founder Thierry Wellhoff's restless penchant for innovation. In 2015, for example, the firm joined forces with La Maison Link, expanding its expertise into the lifestyle and consumer arena. A couple of years ago, meanwhile, it upped investment in measurement and analytics, via the creation of a new KPI tool. And at the end of 2017, Wellcom acquired multimedia content firm Analogue to

bolster its branding unit, following an internal reorganisation that divided the firm into five areas of expertise. That approach extended to a new methodology called 'senslation' which aims to guide brand building with the help of AI tools.

Fee income continued to demonstrate healthy growth, up 5% to €10.5m, driven by continuing strength across consumer, corporate, creative, digital, healthcare and technology. That approach helps to sustain a client portfolio that is

stronger than most featuring new clients like Nivea, Thales, Trandev, Motorola, Talentia Software, Placo Saint-Gobain, Carglass, UPPAbaby, Verisure, and Transferwise, who join a client roster that includes Adidas, Logitech, Total, Sodebo, B&B Hotels, Easy Voyage, Engie, Biocodex, Essilor, Pfizer. There was also notable SABRE-nominated work for Nivea — 'Pure Skin' and Careless, underpinning Wellcom's reputation as a progressive force in the modernisation of French PR. — AS

2018 Iberian PR Consultancies of the Year

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Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

Atrevia (Independent)

While Atrevia, which has a 30-year history in Iberia, has expanded its operations into 16 countries over the past few years, the former Inforpress continues to derive the majority of its revenues from the Iberian markets: close to €17.5m of its €19.5m in fee income last year was derived from its extensive Spanish network (offices Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Bilbao, Santiago de Compostela, Málaga, Sevilla, Valladolid) and its Portuguese operations (Lisbon, Porto). That's enough to make it a market leader on the peninsula, as well as one of the leading independent firms in Europe.

The other thing that continues to set Atrevia apart from its competitors in Spain is the diversity of its operations. While others have carved out niches in corporate and financial communications or consumer PR, Atrevia is genuinely full-service, with genuine strength in consumer, corporate, financial, healthcare, technology, and digital, and with market leading expertise in areas such as employee communications. The firm has a newer public affairs capability that has been expanding internationally (including a small Brussels office) and expanding advertising capabilities. New clients such as Miele, FNAC, Roche, Turkish Airlines and Burger King helped to drive growth of close to 10% in 2017, joining a roster that includes C&A, Twitter, LIDL, Pfizer and California Walnuts.

Under the leadership of founder and president Núria Vilanova, the firm continued to innovate in 2017. Atrevia launched a new global business model creating new departments including market research, advertising and digital innovation.

With new Latin American offices, and the growth of existing ones, Atrevia expanded its recruitment efforts to increase its expertise and promote the company's digitalization. The agency expanded into advertising and creative. It also became the first Spanish communications consultancy to receive the EFR certificate for being a family-focused company. — PH/DM Finalists

Edelman (DJE Holdings)

While Edelman's EMEA region numbers were relatively flat, there were one or two markets that outperformed both Edelman as a whole and their local market too. Edelman's Spanish operation, which includes offices in both Madrid and Barcelona, was among the agency's top performers despite difficult market conditions, recording growth of 8% and ending the year with a headcount of 60—likely good enough to place Edelman firmly in a market top 10 that continues to be dominated by local Spanish firms.

Edelman's clients in Spain include Iberostar and AstraZeneca (both of which have been with the firm for close to a decade); Abbvie (nine years); and Repsol, for which Edelman provides global crisis training, (five years). Other notable clients include HP, eBay, AstraZeneca, Shire, GSK, PayPal, Align Technology, and LinkedIn, while new additions in 2017 included Nissan (Edelman won the global remit in April), Euronext, Kirkland & Ellis, and Fox Network Group.

The agency's strengths include a senior management team, led by general manager Miguel Ángel Aguirre and deputies Jordi Ballera (Madrid) and Brad Pick (Barcelona), and growing expertise in corporate, crisis, and public affairs, providing corporate reputation support for AstraZeneca; financial communications work for Euronext, Fisher Investments, Santalucia (Aviva), Rastreator (Admiral), as well as the crisis work for Repsol and development of a new "crisis command center" product. The firm has also worked extensively in the tourism sector for clients including Iberostar (a highly integrated assignment), Ryanair, Costa Cruceros and Tourism of Andorra. Other notable work this year includes a SABRE nominated campaign, "5000 Gestures Without Pain" for GSK. — PH

Evercom (Independent)

Evercom numbers 70 people across Iberia, growing more than 15% last year and by more than 50% over the last three years. The firm's Spanish operation has long possessed strength across corporate, public affairs and brand marketing, and this has been

complemented in recent years by growing capabilities in healthcare, technology and food and beverage.

New clients include Level, Rowenta, Moulinex and Oticoni, adding to a client roster that already features Burger King, Deutsche bank, Infojobs, Liberty Seguros, Midas, Mondelez, AECOC, BP, AEGON and Alvalle. Evercom's work remains more creative than most and the firm is also distinguished by a keen thought leadership edge that has seen it develop an annual trends report. — AS

Lift World (Independent)

Portugal's Lift World is the umbrella group for eight integrated agencies that focus on a wide array of marketing and communications services, from the established to the emerging. It seems fitting that its tagline is "Great Together" — 85 employees work for a holding company that is inching towards €10m (although revenues were flat in 2017 at €9.8m).

Under the leadership of Salvador da Cunha, Lift has always benefited from a diversified approach, bolstered by the 2016 launch of brand activation specialist Big Fish. Key clients include Microsoft, Oréal, Nestlé, Rock In Rio, SLBenfica, The Navigator Company, Vodafone, Intermarche, Sonae Sierra and EDP while there was notable new business from Samsung, WEDO, Worten, Credit Suisse and Deloitte. Campaign highlights, meanwhile, included positioning Abbott as a market leader in the diabetes industry via the FreeStyle Libre meter. — AS

Llorente & Cuenca (Independent)

While Llorente & Cuenca's Latin American operations—which now account for more than 60% of the firm's global revenues—have understandably garnered a lot of attention in recent years, the firm's Spanish and Portuguese business (spanning offices in Barcelona, Lisbon and Madrid) continue to account for a little more than €14 million—enough to rank the firm among the market leaders on the Iberian peninsula. And the firm's 8% fee increase in Europe last year actually outperformed the growth of the Latin American business.

Still best known for its work in the corporate and financial space—it is the Latin world's leading advisor on financial transactions—L&C has invested heavily in digital and creative capabilities in the past few years, and continued to add innovative new services in 2017: People by Llorente & Cuenca, which helps organizations mobilize employees as social media advocates; SOS Works by Llorente & Cuenca, which aims to minimize reputation damage in the event of crisis; and Analys-In, a mobile channel that provides clients with political and economic analysis.

Clients include Coca-Cola, Bayer-Monsanto, Campofrío, Aliseda, Repsol, Gas Natural Fenosa, BBVA and CaixaBank, with new business in 2017 coming from Bodegas Emilio Moro, GSK, Uniqlo, Xiaomi, Queiroz Galvão, Kronos Homes, Lidl and more. The firm's creative work, meanwhile, resulted in five EMEA SABRE nominations—considerably more than any other agency in the Spanish market—with highlights including community outreach for Aquarius (a sports drink from Coca-Cola) focused on older entrepreneurs and age

discrimination in Spain; an integrated marketing campaign for Campofrío; and capital markets communications for Unicaja, a medium-sized

domestic bank going through a major transformation at a difficult time for the Spanish economy. — PH

2018 Mediterranean PR Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

INC (Independent)

It's rare to find a firm that's lasted 40 years while maintaining its independence, but INC has defied odds to do just this. This milestone comes after a long track record of "firsts" — the agency was an early Italian firm to have dedicated digital and content practices; among the first to have a management board that includes not only former journalists but also designers, publishers and other creators; and it was an early adopter of a cross-functional communications approach.

That kind of mindset helps explain INC's growth in a sluggish market, up 20% last year to €2.5m. Key clients include Barilla, BAT, Emirates, UNHCR, WHO, AIDEPI, UNAITALIA, Terre Des Hommes and Lega Del Filo D'Oro. There was also an impressive haul of new business over the past year from Airbnb, Heineken, FINDUS/ Nomad Foods Europe, Amnesty International, IIAS and Union Food.

Meanwhile, INC's work retains an uncommon flair. In 2017, the agency found itself working for two clients on the same crisis — a top food brand and related industry association caught in the crosshairs of a major Italian investigative TV show. The firm's live war room helped manage the crisis for both, after it reinforced its corporate and crisis practice by hiring Francesca De Feo as practice leader. The firm also helped develop the successful #carbonaraday for the Italian pasta industry association, pulling off the always tricky effort to sell more pasta to Italians, and launched the Ichnusa brand for Heineken in Italy. — AS Finalists

Barabino & Partners (Independent)

Barabino & Partners is not only the dominant force in Italy, but it is becoming an increasingly credible player beyond the country's borders, a difficult feat that has enabled it to distinguish itself from its homegrown rivals. The agency now has offices in London, New York, Berlin, Brussels and Sao Paulo

and continues to serve a range of leading 'brand Italia' companies overseas. And its core financial practice remains in fine fettle, with Barabino ranking first in Italy for deal count, making it the only Italian PR firm among the world's top 20 for volume of transactions handled.

Now worth around €17.2m after growing 8% in 2017 despite tough economic conditions, the firm employs more than 100 consultants, serving such clients as Intel, Blackrock, Allianz Global Investors, ADell EMC, Fineco, Unipol, Suning Commerce Group, Brunello Cucinelli, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton. Last year, furthermore, there was new business from Honeywell, Gilead Sciences, Associated British Foods, OpCapita, Yacht Club Costa Smeralda and Green Network Energy.

Consistent growth over the past two years has come after founder and CEO Luca Barabino oversaw the development of a range of new services to complement its corporate and financial strength. And that mindset is evident in the best of its work, including global PR coordination of Italian law firm BonelliErede; supporting London's Foreign Press Association; helping reposition the Italian Banking Association at a critical moment for the industry; assisting the first One Ocean Forum; and, handling reputation management for Babcock in Italy. — AS

Cohn & Wolfe (WPP)

Cohn & Wolfe in Italy has evolved dramatically from a traditional PR and reputation management agency into a true integrated digital comms consultancy since Franco Guzzi set up the award-winning Milan office in 1996.

The 35-strong team, led by managing director Elena Silva, supports clients including Coca-Cola, Heineken, Kia, Aviva and Pfizer with everything from social strategy, influencer engagement and digital content production to media relations and events. Account wins over the year included Asko appliances, supermarket Leader Price, Hotels.com and banana giant Chiquita, leading to growth of both revenue and operating profit.

Around 40% of revenue is now from digital work, including strong organic growth over the year from Maserati: the Milan office is the global hub for the luxury car manufacturer's digital strategy, coordinating social media, producing content, handling social and influencer management across markets, liaising with Maserati's global digital marketing team in Modena and Cohn & Wolfe's teams and global digital leaders across EMEA and the US.

And its clients and team members tend to be in it for the long haul: Cohn & Wolfe Italy has worked with Italian company Indena since 1999, Twinings since 2005 and premium pet food supplier Royal Canin since 2009, while 25% of employees have been with the agency for more than 10 years. — MPS

Edelman (DJE Holdings)

The Italian market continues to present some unique challenges for multinational agencies. While many US-based agencies serve their global clients in Italy, indigenous Italian companies in general continue to prefer local firms. Edelman has addressed this by crafting an offer designed to appeal to the family-owned businesses that dominate the Italian corporate landscape, leveraging its long-

time relationships with the likes of Lavazza and Imac/Primigi—it leads PR and content production for both—and now derives 25% of its income from family-owned Italian businesses, many of which find the firm's international expertise useful when it comes to exports.

Meanwhile, Edelman's Italian operations were a bright spot—despite challenging local market conditions— even as overall European operations were slightly flat in 2017. There was new business from Grom, the family ice-cream business bought by Unilever; Velier, distributor of the cool Fever Tree brand; insurance giant Aviva; Sobi, a Swedish company focused on rare diseases; Unifarco, a cosmetics and neutraceutical manufacturer; and toymaker Mattel. The firm also saw several of its existing clients—Nestlé, luxury retail experience company Value Retail/ The Bicester Village, Samsung and Unilever expand their assignments.

Like many Edelman offices around the world, the Milan office has been investing heavily in digital and social capabilities, an investment that paid off when Virgin Active turned to Edelman to launch a new creative campaign. The firm also led new campaigns for Euronext, the largest European stock exchange; N26, the German bank; and Samsung, for the launch of the S9. — PH

Omnicom PR Group (Omnicom)

Italy is one of four markets where Omnicom elected to bring together the PR operations of FleishmanHillard, Ketchum and Porter Novelli into a single operation under the Omnicom PR Group banner—and the one where the combined entity is perhaps immediately the strongest, with a team of more than 100 under

the leadership of general manager and managing director Massimo Moriconi (head of Fleishman's Italian operations) and executive president Andrea Cornelli (CEO of Ketchum).

A strong senior leadership brings together the talents of Laura Meroni, senior vice president; head of healthcare Elisabetta Marano; strategy lead Luca De Pietro; head of food and beverage Paola Chiasserini; head of crisis management Edoardo Grandi; digital transformation lead Lucia Ricchetti; and innovation chief Fabio Croci.

There was double-digit growth last year, with work spanning several major sectors and practices. In the pharma realm, the combined agency represents GSK Vaccines, MSD Animal Health, and Gilead; in food and beverage, clients include the Norwegian Sea Food Council, AbInbev, and Monsanto. There's also digital work for Prada, KitchenAid, Estra Energie, and sports marketing support for the European Professional Football Leagues now the European League. Cool creative work included multichannel storytelling for Estra Energie; digital identity work for Prada; and the SABRE-nominated "Serious Play" initiative for educational toy company Clementoni. —PH

2018 Middle East PR Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

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WINNER

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic)

Responding to an uncertain economic climate across the Middle East over the past couple of years, Weber Shandwick launched what it called its “client unity programme,” an initiative that involved agency executives taking up residence with their clients, living the issues and challenges that those clients were facing, developing a deeper, more personal understanding of the businesses they served. It was an approach that paid off, with tangible benefits in terms of revenue growth (up 15% in 2017) and staff retention (a 10% improvement in a region where turnover can be a significant problem for agencies).

Weber Shandwick has five branded (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Cairo, Kuwait City and Doha) and seven affiliate offices in the Middle East and North Africa, home to a diverse team (23 nationalities) of more than 160. The past year saw the continued evolution of both the specialist design and creative team and the dedicated strategic planning function, both of which set Weber Shandwick apart from many of its peers. The firm does a great job of nurturing and building its existing client relationships—

average client tenure is five years—but 2017 was also a great new business year, with new assignments from First Abu Dhabi Bank, Netflix, Chevrolet, Microsoft, Dyson, Coty, Nespresso, Conoco Philips, Kuwait-based Touristic Enterprises Company, and Saudi Arabia’s General Authority of Zakat & Tax.

Weber Shandwick has been Agency of the Year in the Middle East Public Relations Awards three out of the past four years, and has also gained recognition for its creative work: the “Day One Launch and Brand Unveil” for First Abu Dhabi Bank; the “Very Special Place” CSR campaign for Children’s National; the “Beef Nation” campaign for McDonald’s Kuwait; promoting the “Exchange with the Midas Touch” for DGCX in Dubai; and “Our Hands Tell a Story” digital outreach initiative for US Aid in the Middle East. — PH

FINALISTS

APCO (Independent)

APCO’s EMEA operation grew by a very healthy 12% last year, but even that strong performance was eclipsed by the firm’s Middle Eastern operation, which was up by 21% in 2017. The former JiWin had a total of 35 people when it was acquired by APCO in 2010; now with 170 people in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, the Middle Eastern business is a major player in the region and a significant contributor to the public affairs firm’s global revenues.

A strong leadership team—helmed by regional president Mamoon Sbeih, managing director of Abu Dhabi Muhannad Al Badri, and deputy managing director Elizabeth

Sen—was supplemented in 2017 with the addition of head of media relations Haitham Haddadin; political analyst Maher Abu Thair; senior directors Priya Munro and Kelly Kolker; and director Samer Al Hachem, who joined from management consultancy Booz Allen—a reflection of the changing competitive landscape for high-end public relations in the region, and the need to strengthen the firm’s consulting capabilities. There was plenty of new business too, with new or supplemental assignments coming from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s National Center for Performance Measurement, Adaa (one of several assignments expanding APCO’s presence in Saudi Arabia); the World Government Summit (one of the most important events in the UAE last year); the Emirates Diplomatic Academy; the Qudwa global teachers’ forum; and corporate clients such as Dubai Holdings, Lockheed Martin, Cigna, and Tecom Group. — PH

ASDA’A Burson-Marsteller (WPP)

It has been a decade since Sunil John sold the firm he launched in 2000 to Burson-Marsteller, and the merger has provided benefits to both sides. In Asda’a, Burson acquired a market leader in the Middle East, a firm with unparalleled local expertise thanks to its 10 offices (spanning the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt) and its annual Arab Youth Survey, one of the most valuable pieces of thought leadership in the industry. Asda’a, meanwhile, gained access to some of BM’s most valuable strategic resources, with the parent company’s Penn Schoen Berland (research) and

Proof (digital, social and creative) units both operating now under the Asda's Burson-Marsteller brand.

That integrated offer has helped Asda's build a business that is perhaps best known for its ability to handle regional projects for government agencies, NGOs and corporations, and for its high-end corporate capabilities. But the firm also has strength in brand marketing, public affairs and tech. Clients include Emaar, the largest developer in the region, and GE—both of which have been with Asda's for 17 years, Ford (15 years), and GEMS Education, the largest private education provider in the world (13).

Major wins in 2017 included the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, one of the world's largest oil companies; the Saudi-based Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition, uniting the anti-terror strategies of 41 Muslim and ally countries; Dussur (formerly Saudi Arabian Industrial Investments Company); Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, the sovereign wealth fund funding megaprojects across the region; the UAE National Media Council; regional low cost airline Air Arabia; retail and hospitality giant Landmark Group; Thyssenkrupp; and the UAE Federal Tax Authority. Highlights of the work include the launch of a new brand manifesto—"We see the genius in every child"—for GEMS, the "Women in the Driver's Seat" campaign for Ford Saudi Arabia; and social media projects for Noor Bank's 10th anniversary. — PH

Hill+Knowlton Strategies (WPP)

With more than 30 years of heritage in the Middle East, Hill+Knowlton Strategies is the longest established of all the global firms with a presence

in the region, and while the untimely death in 2012 of its longtime regional president Dave Robinson dealt an undoubted blow, the last couple of years have seen an impressive recovery and a return to both prominence and profitability under the leadership of Bashar Al Kadhi, who joined from WPP sibling Asda's Burson-Marsteller in August of 2016.

Following very healthy 15% growth in 2017, Al Kadhi now supervises a team of close to 140 consultants across Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Indeed, the Middle East provided some of the EMEA region's most significant new business in 2017, including Saudi Aramco, the Royal Court of Saudi Arabia, Saudi industrial investment company Dussur, the Saudi Public Investment Fund, and the Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Foundation, while H+K also grew its business with Emirates Global Aluminum significantly. The firm's work, meanwhile, included award-winning campaigns such as Arla's UAE brand launch; the #MyPorscheDXB influencer campaign; an event that brought DJs to the fairways at the HSBC Abu Dhabi Golf Championships; as well as efforts to drive the Vision 2030 and NTP 2020 (National Transformation Programme) agendas in Saudi Arabia, and taking the FIFA World Cup on a tour that included Jordan and Dubai for Coca-Cola.

The real story of 2017, however, was transformation, as H+K added a new public affairs practice and dramatically expanded its digital capabilities—a team of 12 in the firm's creative studio. An impressive regional team includes Lisa Welsh, returning to the firm as regional managing director; Christopher

Sorek and Abdulaziz Albaqous as senior consultants in the fast-growing Saudi business; Felita Figuerado as digital strategist in Dubai; Stephen Reid as director of sports marketing; and Andrew Bone, senior VP in Riyadh.—PH

Memac Ogilvy (WPP)

Memac Ogilvy has been a fixture on this list largely as a reflection of its flair for creativity, demonstrated by a string of SABRE Award winning campaigns—for the likes of Grohe, the King Khalid Foundation, Coca-Cola, and most recently Huawei, which picked up one of last year's coveted Global SABREs for its "One Ramadan" initiative. At the same time, the firm's regional footprint and overall business growth probably deserves just as much recognition: it has more than 130 people across 14 offices across MENA, generating an estimated \$10m in revenue after another year of solid growth. Indeed growth over the past five years as seen the firm more than double in size. Memac's PR head Saada Hammad now oversees leadership team that also includes genuine strength in public affairs and technology as well as consumer and corporate, with a client list that strikes a good balance between global and local, corporate and government work (the latter area strengthened this year with the appointment of Instinctif Partners and DAMAC veteran Tim Fallon as head of government and international affairs).

As ever, Memac Ogilvy's work was creative and difference-making: it worked with the Queen Rania Foundation wanted to help children in Jordan become school-ready, with a fun, character-based mobile application, generating 50,000

downloads via an integrated PR and influencer marketing campaign; and it helped UNICEF launch a campaign to ensure that the children of roughly 1.75 million Syrians who

had fled to Lebanon since the civil war in March 2011 could receive a proper education through the body's "School Heroes" campaign.—PH

2018 Nordic PR Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

Narva (Sweden/Independent)

Narva — named after the Swedish army victory over a Russian force three times its size — has always embraced its positioning as a challenger brand initially within the financial communications space (from investor relations to IPOs and other transactions to annual and sustainability reporting) and more recently in the broader media relations, public affairs and CSR space (via the 2015 acquisition of consultancy Rewise) — and in the healthcare arena, where the firm bought Mix PR in 2012 and Heart three years later, and in early 2016 hired former social affairs minister Göran Hägglund as a senior advisor. In 2017, meanwhile, the firm expanded to Gothenburg, under the oversight of life sciences head Therese Lange.

Under the leadership of managing partners Daniel Bergsten and Johan Molander, Narva's performance reflects that its positioning is paying

off, with constant currency growth of 29% taking it to around \$9m in fee income, making it the market's fifth-biggest player, and one of its fastest-growing. There were significant new assignments from industrial player Sandvik, IBM and asset manager Amundi, along with growth from such clients as Bausch+Lomb, SAS, Systembolaget, Coop, Allianz and Telia Company.

Maintaining its tradition of innovation, the firm continues to lead when it comes to social media in the highly-regulated healthcare industry, and in terms of a superior insight-based planning capability. Its senior ranks were bolstered by the arrival of corporate head Christian Lundgren, while there was standout work for the Swedish Childhood Cancer Foundation and Roche. — AS

FINALISTS

Diplomat Group (Sweden/Independent)

Diplomat Group has a strong heritage in public affairs—a critical part of the Swedish PR business, due to a highly-engaged citizenry—helping clients understand the values, attitudes and politics of Sweden's opinion leaders. But the group has expanded in new directions recently. The core Diplomat Communications maintains its public affairs focus, with offices in the other Nordic capitals and in Brussels, and has expanded into

broader corporate communications, and some financial work. The group experienced a roughly 9% lift in 2017, and grew internally to meet the expanded workload. Diplomat Group launch of a new agency under its umbrella, called Tale, offering content marketing and content management solutions, bringing to four the number of company units. While Diplomat Communications AB maintains its focus on public affairs, that core has been supplemented in recent years with YouMe Agency, which focuses on brand-building with strong visual capabilities; and Repeat Studios, launched in 2016, a digital and social media specialist. Within a year, Repeat doubled nearly doubled its staff. The four brands often work in concert to deliver comprehensive communications solutions to clients—although the firm does not disclose client names as a matter of policy. The firm is distinguished by its strong senior leadership team, including founding partners Gunnar Rune Sonesson, Björn Nyblom, and Anders Oremark; and group CEO Oscar Hyléen, former head of IR at PostNord. Johan Bratt jointed from Spoon to launch the new Tale unit; Kristian Stålborg and Christina Rinman joined Diplomat from Halvarsson, both of them have long careers in corporate and financial coms. The PR offering was strengthened by the addition of journalist Anja Sundberg. — PH/DM

H&H Group (Independent)

The firm formerly known as Hallvarsson & Halvarsson had established itself as the Nordic region's most formidable financial communications specialist before it was sold to Sage Holdings in 2009. It spent the next five years in a kind of purgatory before senior executives Martin Petersson, Anders Halvarsson, Johan Ramsten and Staffan Lindgren bought the business back in 2014 — but in the three years since then the businesses now known as H&H Group have expanded at a very healthy pace, reclaiming their place of prominence in the financial space while diversifying their portfolio — most notably with the February 2016 acquisition of Swedish creative powerhouse Jung Relations.

That deal was followed up in 2017 by the acquisition of five more agencies (from the publicly-listed ICTA group), as H&H solidified its aim to become a home for entrepreneurs, who will be allowed to maintain the spirit that built their firms while benefiting from the support of a larger holding company. There are now 12 firms in the family — including Springtime, digital specialists Creo, risk advisory firm Consilio, Shanghai creative shop Tomorrow China and brand agency Identz — and H&H leadership believes it can add two or three new firms each year, and expand beyond the Nordic region. Group fees grew by a very impressive 25% in constant currency terms last year, ending up at around \$46 million, enough to rank among the top 50 PR firms in the world.

The firm works for a number of Sweden's largest companies, including Volvo Cars, Svenska Spel and Scania, along with international names like Pernod Ricard. While

H&H tends to keep its client work confidential, Jung scored three SABRE nominations this year — for Oddset in on conjunction with DDB; a 'hair-raising competition' for P&G; and, a 'scavenger hunt hack' for Sony Music. — AS

Prime Weber Shandwick (Interpublic Group)

Four years in, it looks like Weber Shandwick's 2014 acquisition of Swedish powerhouse Prime is going to go down as one of the most successful mergers in an industry where the success rate is well below 50-50. Both parties appear to be stronger today when the deal went through, with senior Prime people occupying important positions throughout the parent company: Jonas Bodin as vice president of creative strategy in Weber's US operations; Jonas Palmqvist recently named chief operating officer for EMEA; and Charlotte Witte now leading client experience in the region.

As for Prime, it enjoyed its second consecutive year of 10%-plus growth in 2017, winning a seven-figure assignment from KTH Royal Institute of Technology and a re-pitch for the City of Stockholm, spearheading global work for Ericsson, and expanding its partnerships with clients such as IKEA and Volvo. In more and more cases— Tena, Essity, Cervera, Tele2 and Node Pole— Prime now serves in a lead agency role. And of course it continues to produce first-rate creative work: the McDonald's "Serve Your County" campaign tapped into a national conversation about military service to turn the spotlight on the restaurant chain's employer brand; the The Global Village, Järvaveckan, is a

new political platform designed to reduce the distance between politicians and ordinary citizens and create better outcomes.

Finally, Prime's unique United Minds offering is helping the business—founded presciently in 1999—is now helping the agency prepare for increased competition from the management consulting business, combining the kind of business intelligence that doesn't often come from PR agencies with the creativity that has long been Prime's trademark, and thus delivering the kind of strategic thinking that will give Weber Shandwick access to the C-suite. Examples over the past 12 months include the "72 Hour Cabin" campaign for Visit Sweden, bringing visitors closer to nature; sustainability work that has been driving sales at Tetra Pak; and brand transformation for autoparts company Mekonomen. — PH

Rud Pedersen Public Affairs (Independent)

In 2017, Rud Pedersen saw its fee income rise by 69% to \$23.5m, resulting from the public affairs firm's rapid expansion since 2014. On top of the organic growth that has benefited the agency since its inception, Rud Pedersen in those few years consolidated operations in Finland and Norway, created a Brussels office, launched the agency King Street PR and acquired Welcom, a multidisciplinary, hybrid agency. With offices in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Belgium, Rud Pedersen caters to the breadth of sectors — infrastructure and transportation, defense, healthcare, consumer goods, energy, real estate and financial among them. The firm, as a practice, doesn't disclose clients.

At its core, though, Rud Pedersen remains very much the public affairs-focused firm Morten Rud Pedersen launched as a one-man operation in 2003, which is reflected in its expansion and attention to the arena. With rising interest in public affairs across the Nordic region, Rud Pedersen has kept ahead of the market by anticipating where

it's going — and making strategic decisions and hires accordingly. The firm added 46 individuals to its staff in 2017, creating a workforce 113-strong. Among those joining the organization were Jonas Wulff Juul Jørgensen as managing partner, Denmark, a former regulatory engagement manager for British American Tobacco; Andreas Krohn,

managing partner of Sweden, the former VP of PR and communications at the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce; and Torsten Lindström, a former member of the Swedish parliament and policy advisor who now serves as a partner, senior VP European healthcare director. — DM

2018 Russia/CIS PR Consultancies of the Year

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Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

OnePhilosophy (Ukraine/ Independent)

Ukraine's One Philosophy is a multidisciplinary group of communications-based companies bound by the idea that fostering, and rallying stakeholders around, a shared purpose is key to driving change. That tenet is reflected in the company's own history, as well as the campaigns it rolls out for companies across its practices — corporate communications, healthcare, government relations, CSR and crisis management among them. The Be-it Agency, One Philosophy's legacy company, broke ties with Russia's PRP Group in 2015, after the start of the Ukrainian revolution, and retained its foothold in the CIS market. The company has since expanded, in 2016

launching Republic (which specializes in governmental relations) and Be-It Health and Social Impact; Last year, the group added Zeitgeist Design and Changers, which added branding and leadership development capabilities, which yielded the formal creation of One Philosophy.

In 2017, One Philosophy registered a 29% growth in billing over the previous year, and staffed up to 96 people. The rise in revenue was fueled by new client wins — P&G, Pandora, GlobalLogic, AXA, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), ING Bank, OLX, Hasbro, Aval Bank and CFC Eurovision among them. Those companies join a roster of existing blue-chip clients such as McDonald's, MasterCard, Coca-Cola, Danone, HMD (Nokia), Sony, Microsoft, Avon, Philips and Mondelez. The agency's strong leadership team includes president Nataliya Popovych; Kristina Nikolayeva, managing director of Be-it Agency; Natalya Olbert-Sinko, managing director of Be-it Health & Social Impact; and Republic managing director Aryna Satovska. — DM

FINALISTS

FleishmanHillard Vanguard (Omnicom Group)

Launched as a joint venture between FleishmanHillard and leading local PR firm Vanguard in 2007, FleishmanHillard Vanguard (in which the Omnicom firm now owns a majority) has always been one of the best PR firms in Russia, bolstering that reputation in 2017 with a transformative year that saw it grow from 5th spot to 4th on the national PR agency ranking — consolidating its presence as the only international firm on the top 10, despite difficult market conditions.

With 135 people now working across Moscow and Kiev under the leadership of general director Elena Fadeeva, FH Vanguard saw significant increases from its key existing clients, including P&G, Samsung and Megafon, while also retaining Avon, KFC Battle and Kellogg's. There was new business from Nestle, Tabasco, Aeroflot Russian Airlines, Sberbank, X-Fit and Legrand — while the firm's sports practice continued to contribute to growth as FH Vanguard took on lead PR duties for the 2018 Fifa World

Cup local organising committee, along with several sponsorship remits across the country.

Following a strategic review in 2016, FH Vanguard continues to demonstrate its ability as one of the few firms that can successfully handle MNC and domestic clients, thanks in part to Fadeeva's own focus on ethics, at both an agency and industry level. The firm does not participate in election or political campaigns (a key source of growth for many others in 2017) and has instead developed market leading positions in consumer, technology, crisis comms, digital/social media and global campaigns for Russian clients.

All of that added up to strong double-digit revenue growth, and FH Vanguard now operates as the largest international agency in Russia, developing a range of eye-catching campaigns that include two SABRE-nominated efforts this year, along with two SABRE winners in 2017. Fadeeva's own industry leadership, as head of AKOS (The Russian Communications Consultancies Association) has also helped position FH Vanguard as visible, progressive presence in the market, particularly through the firm's Leadership Dialog Forum and Eventiada Awards. — AS

Mikhailov & Partners (Independent)

Founded in 1993, Mikhailov & Partners was one of the first public relations agencies in Russia and has been a pioneer for more than two decades, initially in corporate communications and reputation management, later in international communications (working as an affiliate of Burson-Marsteller), and more recently in developing a more integrated approach, blending offline and online strategies. The firm is

headquartered in Moscow, has an office in St Petersburg, and a Kiev operation working with Ukrainian, Russian and global companies in Ukraine and other key CIS markets.

After a flat 2016, fee income was up roughly 15% last year, pushing it close to \$20m. New business includes Rostech, MosMetro and the Central Election Commission (which is conducting the 2018 presidential election), adding to a portfolio that includes Inter RAO, Astana EXPO-2017, Aeroflot, Rosatom, Kaspresky Lab, Huawei and RVC. The firm's leadership team underwent a significant change, with Aleksey Ryabinkin, a veteran of the agency, stepping into the CEO role previously held by Svetlana Gorevaya. Alexey Yudin continues to lead as president. — PH/DM

PBN H+K Strategies (WPP)

Founders Peter Necarsulmer and Susan Thurman opened The PBN Company Moscow in 1991, during the early days of glasnost, and quickly established it as the market leader in helping western companies deal with access and policy issues in the emerging Russian market. WPP took a stake in 2007, bought a majority position and rebranded in 2012, and a year later handed the reins to new CEO Myron Wasyluk, who started the firm's Ukrainian business in 1997 and now leads a team of more than 65 working for 85 clients across offices in Moscow, Kyiv and Almaty, Kazakhstan.

While the firm continues to lead in the corporate and public affairs sphere (particularly in mining, energy, manufacturing and healthcare), it has expanded its focus in recent years. About 20% of its revenues are now in the consumer marketing and creative

space, and much of the growth in 2017 came from the pharmaceutical and information technology sectors, enabling PBN to achieve 12% growth despite a Russian economy that is still bouncing back from the 2015 currency collapse.

New business in 2017 came from the likes of HSBC, Intel, Tinder, Mail.ru (Beep Car), and PharmIMEX, as well as new public affairs mandates from Facebook, AirBnb, Duracell, Opera, PwC, and IKEA. The consumer marketing practice saw growth from new clients such as Huawei, Colgate, Duracell, Bacardi-Martini, as expanded work from P&G's Braun, Gillette and Venus. Creative highlights included a rap battle between the generations to drive home Visa's "Cash vs Cashless" messaging; a media trip to the cognac region of France to reinforce Grey Goose's positioning as a luxury brand in Ukraine; and employee engagement work for steelmaker EVRAZ. There was also some strong thought leadership: an in-depth study of the buying habits and brand loyalty of young Russians, and a survey of the regulatory hurdles faced by nascent economic sharing economy disrupters in partnership with the Russian Association of Electronic Communications.—PH

Pro-Vision Communications (Independent)

Pro-Vision experienced tremendous growth in 2017, with fee income rising 35% to US\$5.4m despite the Russian economic recession, which took a significant toll on the market's larger industry. The firm's portfolio of international brands grew nearly as much, at 30%, with an impressive list of new blue-chip clients — Adidas, Coca-Cola, Sony Playstation, Nikon,

Nespresso, Nestle, the mobile provider MegaFon (one of the country's largest mobile providers) and the Moscow City Committee for Public Services among them. They join existing clients including Lego, Henkel, A&E networks, AMC networks, Scripps networks interactive (Fine Living, Travel Channel, Food Network), Viacom International Media Networks and Beiersdorf.

All of which is a testament to the enduring strength of Pro-Vision, which, having been founded in 1998 is one of Russia's oldest communications firm, as well it keeping ahead of the market and

where it's going. Last year, the 67-person firm moved into new areas of business, most notably public procurement. It also expanded its corporate communications and consumer electronics practices. Pro-Vision, under the watch of founder and CEO Vladimir Vinogradov, responded to quickly to pressures, such as a reduction in communications channels due to regulations, by finding new solutions. Strengthening blogger relations, creating the agency's own bot to distribute press-releases and the introduction of SMS releases are among the steps it took.

Pro-Vision continues to leverage its strength as one of the oldest communications agencies in the Russian market — and has made a priority of operating in accordance with international industry standards. Vinogradov is an advocate for the industry as a whole. He currently is leading an International Communications Consultancy Organisation effort to create a unified pricing structure for PR services, a step in promoting the transparency of the industry. Pro-Vision also works with eight Russian Universities to help develop the industry's next generation. — DM

2018 UK PR Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

Cohn & Wolfe (WPP)

In what turned out to be the brand's final year before becoming Burson Cohn & Wolfe, the agency had a triumphant 2017 in the UK. Under the leadership of EMEA managing director and London CEO Scott Wilson and UK managing director Rebecca Grant, Cohn & Wolfe has been transformed from a 45-year-old traditional PR shop into an integrated marketing and brand experience agency.

It was worth the ride: fee income at the London outpost of the best-performing PR pony in WPP's stable grew by 17%, its seventh consecutive year of double-digit growth (and it's no coincidence that Wilson joined eight years ago).

The multi-award-winning agency – including an astonishing 21 Cannes Lions in the past two years – puts its continued success in a challenging market for big networked agencies down to “unrelenting curiosity” and redefining the integrated model: blending creativity with technology to achieve real business results for clients. And while achieving these sorts of numbers year after year can mean sweating the team, Cohn & Wolfe held fast to its values: “open, brave, united and true”.

The 17-strong consumer division – which recently gained Cirkle's Ruth Allchurch as its new MD – increased fee income by 22% through strong organic growth for clients such as

Barclaycard, Warburton's, Ferrero and Campari and wins for Hotels. Com, Air New Zealand, Qatar Airways, Aperol spritz and Sky. Healthcare, under the leadership of MD Catherine Keddie, also grew by 18% and produced some stand-out, innovative campaigns, including Are You Chris? for Gilead Science's hepatitis C portfolio, and used AI effectively in an asthma campaign for Boehringer Ingelheim. — MPS

FINALISTS

Brands2Life (Independent)

Few firms take the business of PR quite as seriously as Brands2Life. Founders Giles Fraser and Sarah Scales' intelligent and conscientious approach to achieving business results for clients has made Brands2Life one of the defining agencies of the UK PR industry.

The 18-year-old agency, which now has 134 people, had yet another year of record growth, with fee income

up 18% to £13.8m. This included a contribution of more than £400,000 from the first year of its new San Francisco office, shortlisted for our new US agency of the year award. In 2017, Brands2Life achieved its highest-ever levels of client retention and satisfaction and won more than 30 new clients, including Barclays, Nokia Digital health, Fanta, Premier Inn and Puma Energy.

From its tech roots, Brands2Life has become a true integrated agency, carrying out more multi-country, multi-platform programmes than ever before for digital-first brands from high-growth disrupters to tech giants. It now encompasses consumer, corporate, finance, crisis, B2B, social, healthcare and public affairs expertise, and has diversified into health, energy, financial and professional services, retail and property and construction.

Organic growth is impressive, as the agency is often brought in to handle one assignments for clients, who then realise that it works across disciplines and borders and can support all aspects of creative and paid work as well as traditional PR via earned and owned channels.

During 2017, the agency refreshed its employee offer, and invested in its digital, corporate and consumer teams, including hiring Unity director Katy Stolliday as deputy MD to drive creative consumer campaigns and Matthew Peltier from Global Radio as head of film. — MPS

FleishmanHillard Fishburn (Omnicom)

The merger of Omnicom agencies FleishmanHillard and Fishburn Hedges three years ago instantly catapulted the new firm into the

top 10 in the UK—an elusive goal for Fleishman for many years. It also seemed like a natural fit, with Fleishman’s healthcare, technology, creative and content capabilities supplemented by Fishburn’s corporate affairs expertise. And after two consecutive years of double-digit growth, it’s clear that CEO Jim Donaldson (who had joined Fleishman in 2015 from Weber Shandwick) and deputy Ali Gee (who had ascended to the top spot at Fishburn just before the merger) have made the deal work.

The combined FleishmanHillard Fishburn now has more than 200 people in its consolidated London headquarters, as well as a team of content marketing specialists in Bristol. (And while it is a standalone operation, under the leadership of Rhona Blake, it’s worth remembering that FleishmanHillard’s Dublin office is a market leader in terms of size and quality.) Donaldson and Gee have invested heavily in building a collaborative, supportive culture, reflected in last year’s #ListeningFace employer brand campaign, and a series of professional development and diversity initiatives.

New business since the merger has come from Bose, Crocs, Korea’s Dorco shaving brand, Fitbit, GoPro, and more, and there’s new talent too in the shape of Claudia Bate from Bell Pottinger as head of financial services; Michael Hartt from Burson-Marsteller as head of international affairs; and Tim Snowball from his role as director of communications for the Liberal-Democrats as head of public affairs. The great work includes helping Philips—the largest client in the London office—launch its Future Health Index; working to

make Crocs cool via a collaboration with designed Chrstopher Kane; supporting Fitbit’s “Steps For Good” fundraising challenge for Sport Relief; and a budget-focused public affairs campaign for the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers, which represents pub and bar owners. — PH

M&C Saatchi PR (M&C Saatchi)

Building a £10m global business in eight years while maintaining the passion and energy of a boutique PR shop takes some doing, but that’s exactly what Molly Aldridge and Chris Hides have achieved at M&C Saatchi PR. Launched in 2010 within the M&C Saatchi Group, the founders have grown the London agency from four people to a 118-strong global communications team, active in 10 markets.

The agency, which had growth of more than 11% to £10.3m in 2017, articulates the three things that make it special as: “Brutal simplicity of thought”: ideas that distil business and communications challenges into simple strategic solutions; “Driven by passion”: leaders in all markets are empowered to pitch, recruit and assign accounts based on the passion points of their people; and “Blended teams”: every account team is built specifically to meet the needs of the client, from digital and experiential to content.

At the heart of the agency is CREATE, its team of planners, creatives, content producers and designers who, led by Nathan Kemp, develop bold ideas for more than 50 tech, travel, fashion and beauty, retail and finance clients across Europe, Asia and the US, 90% of which were retained in 2017. Dixons Carphone, EE, Foot Locker and Red Bull were joined on M&C Saatchi PR’s roster

last year by 17 new clients including BT, Google, Sonos (UK and Italy), Virgin Active and Lipton (EMEA).

To maintain quality and consistency through a period of rapid growth and better support global CEO Aldridge, the leadership team was strengthened last year, with Chris Hides becoming global MD, Unity's MD Davnet Doran joining as UK managing director, and global business director Lottie Whyte from Instinctif. Other hires included Chris Brown as head of digital, and Julian Cirrone from Lexis as creative director. — MPS

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic Group)

With a team of more than 300 in the UK, now under the leadership of chief executive Rachel Friend, Weber Shandwick is one of the top two PR firms in the market—second only to Edelman. The firm has enjoyed

four consecutive years of growth, and fees last year were up by close to 20%, with the top 40 clients up by better than 40%. Organic growth came from clients including Amazon, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Cityfibre, ExxonMobil, HSBC, Honeywell, Pearson, Roche, Vauxhall, Virgin Atlantic, Visit Wales and Whyte & Mackay, while there was new business from AHDB, Boehringer Ingleheim, Coty, Espon, Hitachi Capital, Iceland Foods, Kellogg's, Mars Petcare, Novartis, Our Power Richemont, Rockwool, Sanofi, Syngenta, Velux and Virgin Holidays.

Driving that growth is a radical transformation of the offering, with major investments in insights (data, analytics and strategic planning), content (creative, video, production and design) and integrated media (digital and social). The London office, which Friend headed before her recent promotion, has been particularly active, developing

the agency's new MINDS (Media Intelligence & Data Science) offer, influencer identification and tracking tool FLUENT, and community management AI tool PRODUCT Q. The acquisition in 2016 of mobile marketing specialist Flipside added yet another future-focused capability.

And the work measures up the best in the (highly creative) market. The UK team developed "The Little Chicken Named Pong Pong" campaign for Pearson's Project Literacy, turning a story told to her children by a mum who could not read into an actual book; it launched the "ManFran" service for Virgin Atlantic, linking Manchester and San Francisco; it helped HSBC introduce "Gender Neutral Titles" for its trans customers; the Iceland supermarket chain take a leadership role in sustainability with its #toocoolforplastics announcement; and it helped drive sales for the Caledonian Sleeper. — PH

2018 Consumer PR Consultancies of the Year

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Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

Mischief (UK/Engine Group)

Culture is everything at Mischief, which was set up in 2006 to "play with the norm". The 70-strong consumer agency has maintained its

entrepreneurial and, yes, mischievous spirit over the past decade and is now deservedly known not only for its creative work, but its focus on "work-life blend". This ranges from sabbaticals, experience days and training everyone in coaching, to encouraging "side hustles" and supporting everyone's interests and responsibilities out of work, whether they are parents or training for a marathon.

CEO Frankie Cory took over seamlessly from founder Mitch Kaye in 2013, and the strong culture she has nurtured (with a measure of justified pride) has been a crucial factor in the agency's development

and retention of talent: 90% of Mischief's account directors joined on its graduate scheme or as assistant account executives, and account director and creative Andy Garner and strategist Daniella Graham will be representing the UK in Cannes this summer as winners of the national Young Lions competition.

It's also all about the clients, of course, and Mischief developed some impressively effective campaigns over the past 12 months, including revitalising social media engagement for the Football Association, increasing consumer affinity with the National Trust, and getting the UK talking about mental health

for the Government's Time To Talk Day. In fact, 2017 was the agency's most award-winning year yet, including two gold AMEC awards for measurement, a deeper emphasis on which has been driven by planning director Gemma Moroney.

Existing clients including Asda, Unilever, AkzoNobel, BAE Systems, Vodafone and Sport England were joined by a raft of other big brands over the year, and the agency maintained fee income of £5.2m.

During the year, Mischief added more strategists and creatives to the planning and creative department it set up in 2015, and embedded creatives in its client teams, led by creative directors Damon Statt and Greg Jones. Cory has put her plan for the next three years into place, and says the focus for 2018 will be on growth of Mischief's core creative consumer accounts, while also looking at areas such as voice-activated search and dark social. — MPS

FINALISTS

The Academy (UK/Independent)

It's been out with the old, and in with the new at The Academy this year. After taking over Shine in January 2016 and tripling in size and headcount, followed by two years of sometimes challenging integration, the 42-strong agency has now retired the Shine brand for good (although founder Rachel Bell remains as chair) and built a new leadership team, including hiring Rachel Byrne as director from Ogilvy Australia to lead its Amazon business.

What hasn't changed is CEO Mitchell Kaye and creative director Dan Glover's ambition to be the most

famous creative consumer shop in town: they describe themselves as "paranoid and obsessed" about the agency's prolific creative (and impactful) output for some of the world's leading brands. Over the past 12 months the agency has retained all its existing clients, including Amazon, AB InBev, Domino's and Zizzi, and as well as strong organic growth it added big names such as Disney, Britvic and Alton Towers to its roster, converting 80% of pitches.

It was a year of investment in new services to boost creative capability still further. Live experience offer, Jubba (headed by Andy Ashton, who joined from Kaye's old stomping ground, Mischief) has delivered large-scale events including European film premières for Amazon Prime Video. The Academy also launched an arts PR agency, All Things Considered, set-up by former Cow PR managing director Clare Myddleton. And award-winning filmmaker Gary Tarn came on board to head up The Academy Productions, now the fastest-growing area of the business, which has made more than 300 films from cinema documentary for Leffe to a TV ad for Phramcy4U and social films for Amazon, Disney and Domino's.

Fee income growth over a year of quite profound change and investment was around 7%, to just over £3.8m. And on the other side of the Shine merger, Kaye is more thoughtful about the agency's plans for the year ahead than his confidence and ambition might suggest. He and Glover are committed to The Academy fulfilling the promise of its name, as a place that insists on the highest industry standards as well as the continuous development of its people, not only in its pillars of "Intelligent

Thinking, Applied Creativity, Quality Production and Connected to the Right People", but also training future leaders how to run a business and think like an entrepreneur. — MPS

Marco de Comunicacion (Independent)

With offices in Madrid, Barcelona, Lisbon, Paris, Casablanca and Miami and a team of close to 100 professionals, Marco de Comunicacion offers a full range of services including publicity, events, audiovisual and design, as well as online communications, public affairs (including an EU affairs offer), social media, and influencer campaigns. In 2017, the firm expanded further, moving beyond PR with the launch of MARCO! Lifestyle, a 360-degree advertising agency. MdC brought on Manex Rekarte as creative director to oversee the operation, while adding to group oversight.

The fast-growing agency ((MdC grew by about 25% or more for four consecutive years) had an 11% lift in 2017 thanks to new assignments from Danone, EUIPO (European Union Intellectual Property Office), Mattel, LidL, LaLiga, D.O. Ribera del Duero, Udemy, Kiwi, Car2Go and Spaces, and continuing assignments for Netflix (which helped drive the firm's expansion into the Portuguese market), EUIPO (EU), Netflix, World Water Council, Unilever, Conforama, ANFEVI / Friends of Glass, Kaiserwetter and Etihad Airways. Among hallmarks of the year: McD used World Water Day to position its client World Water Council as the leading authority on water-related issues. Its efforts reaped results, generating 1,500 news pieces and more than 500,000 video views in just 10 days of more than 1b

people. MdC last year also solidified its stature as a truly international operation, with just 50% of its income fees coming from within Iberia.

MdC was a pioneer in digital and social in the Iberian region, and quickly realized that new media knew no geographic boundaries. As a result, the firm has built a team multilingual consultants from 17 different nationalities. It also has a dedicated digital marketing agency, Influencia. — PH / DM

Tin Man (UK/Independent)

Tin Man is a small but gutsy creative powerhouse. At only four years old and 16 people strong, it just keeps coming up with emotionally-resonant “campaigns with heart” that other agencies wish they’d thought of, resulting in multiple awards (including being named “pound for pound” the most creative agency worldwide in our Global Creative Index last year) as well as soaring revenues and profits since CEO Mandy Sharp set up Tin Man in 2013.

Average margins over the past three years have stood at 25%, and for 2017, fee income stood at £728,000 with 21% margins. Two specialisms emerged during the year: entertainment (ITV, Cartoon Network and numerous book launches for Little, Brown) and spirits, with the team now looking after a number of distilleries and whisky and gin brands. Other wins included WaterAid and dating site Plenty of Fish.

In October the agency was dealt a huge blow when its biggest client, airline Monarch, very publicly went into administration. Sharp and her team (including strategic planning director Elly Kestenbaum and head of client services Natalie Stewart)

pulled out all the stops, talking to new prospects, growing existing client work, and winning every pitch that was already lined up. Within 60 days they had secured an extra £77,000 of income, not only plugging the gap but smashing financial targets for the year.

Tin Man also found time to develop a new evaluation tool, Heart Monitor – which gauges the power of its ideas against client’s communications and commercial objectives such as perception change, sales, intention to buy and share of voice – and to carry out its annual Brand Heart Monitor research into how consumers interact with “brands with heart”. — MPS

W (UK/Independent)

In just eight years, W has established itself as one of the fastest-growing, most agile and most creative agencies in the business. Under the leadership of founder and global CEO Warren Johnson, the 101-strong agency has gained a reputation for award-winning work and a truly entrepreneurial spirit: W’s commercial shrewdness is arguably streets ahead of many of its rivals.

Fee income across the company was up 23% from £5.83m to £7.19m. In March 2017 W acquired Glue in Newcastle, creating W North to join its offices in London, Amsterdam and Singapore. Johnson also significantly boosted his management team with strategy and creative smarts, hiring Adam Mack as CEO from Weber Shandwick, and Mark Perkins from MHP as creative director.

The agency’s work ranges from serious social impact campaigns (dominating the news on World Mental Health Day for the charity CALM) to talent management

(creating its first cinema ad for Lynx with Anthony Joshua). Over the year, new accounts for Spotify, Yo!, Hard Rock Hotel, Major League Baseball, Cancer Research UK and Money Supermarket joined other iconic brands on W’s client roster, including Levi’s (for whom it created the House of Levi’s in Soho, successfully reconnecting the heritage brand with hot music stars, actors and other influencers). The agency also built on its work for Lynx, Marmite and Ben & Jerry’s to grow its work for Unilever, scooping its entire food portfolio, and launched a festival division to run all comms for events including V and Wireless.

And, as much investor and innovator as comms leader, W initiated a couple of further side ventures of its own in 2017, including working with the Chase vodka distillery to develop the UK’s first limoncello, Pococello (further underlining its drinks expertise, with a portfolio including Freixenet and Aperol), to taking a stake in jewellery specialist Facets and investing in the Allbright support network for female leaders. The company also has a Personal Development Fund to help its people gain sector expertise, and an Enterprise Seed Fund, allowing the team to invest in new businesses they are excited about. — MPS

2018 EMEA Corporate PR Consultancies of the Year

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WINNER

Headland Consultancy (UK/Independent)

Headland was founded on the belief that, too often, clients are offered a false choice between strategy and delivery. Launched in 2005 by Gavin Anderson veterans Chris Salt and Howard Lee, the firm brought on board former Fishburn Hedges CEO Neil Hedges and COO Dan Mines in 2012 to expand its corporate capabilities, and has rarely looked back since — developing its offering into one that combines commercial acumen and creative talent across financial, corporate and public affairs to impressive effect.

Indeed, 2017 represented something of a watershed for Headland, with the firm surging by 51% to £7m in fee income, and headcount up from 40 to 55. There was significant new business from Lidl, Three Mobile, TSB, Mulberry, Aggreko, Aegon, eToro, Toys 'R' Us, Iberdrola and Arthritis Research UK, joining an existing client roster that features PepsiCo, UBS, Deloitte, New Look, Danone, Grosvenor, McColl's, London Luton Airport, Ardian and MUFG.

Managing all of that growth can be a tricky proposition, but Headland has aimed to strike a balance between client service and topline expansion, recruiting selectively and opting to turn down some briefs. A specialist-heavy leadership team helps; in addition to Salt and Hedges, there is former Tesco government affairs head Simon Burton, financial specialist Lucy Leah and campaigning expert Dan Smith. In 2017, key hires included Stephen Malthouse (from Tulchan); Andy Rivett-Carnac (from Brunswick); former sell-side analyst Ian Shackleton; and Carley Sparrow from Teneo Blue Rubicon.

Headland's work reflects the focus on integrating strategy and delivery. The firm position McColl's leadership team as experts on the convenience market, helping garner unanimous 'buy' recommendations, an enlarged sell-side following, and a share price that doubled. For UBS, Headland has developed an award-winning global campaign that positions the bank as experts on billionaires. And for PepsiCo, the firm has supported its transformation towards sustainability and healthier products amid considerable political scepticism, spanning sensitive announcements and relationship building that ultimately secured public endorsements from the DEFRA Secretary of State and the Food and Farming Minister. — AS

FINALISTS

Hanover (UK/Independent)

Hanover is serious about its strategic growth. Founded by Charles Lewington in 1998, the dynamic consultancy celebrates its 20th year

in business as a 150-strong firm with a formidable reputation, true trusted advisor status (helped by the 2016 appointment of group MD Michael Prescott) and year-on-year fee income growth of 32% to £14.4m. That's four years in a row that Hanover has posted growth of more than 25%, with revenue projected to hit £20m this year, helping explain its perennial status as an Agency of the Year.

And that was in a year when Hanover acquired Bell Pottinger's Middle East business, opened a Dublin office under the leadership of MD Lorna Jennings that posted income of €750,000 in its first year, hired 40 new people, invested heavily in technology infrastructure to support more flexible working and introduced its LiveSmart programme to promote employees' health and wellbeing.

As well as its corporate heartland, led by MD Gavin Megaw, where wins included the global crisis brief for Carnival's P&O and Cunard cruise brands and strategic comms for Virgin Atlantic, the consultancy saw a strong performance from the advocacy team, led by MD Katie Blower, where wins included Tesco and the Premier League. There was double-digit healthcare growth under MD Andrew Harrison (including new client Roche); and 30% of growth across the whole business from technology clients, including from digital policy clients such as Apple and Time Warner in Brussels, where overall growth was close to 50%.

Sister agency Multiple, specialists in the UK fast-growth start-up sector, achieved 50% revenue growth on the back of high-profile client wins such as Which? And WeTransfer, and

Hanover's creative, sports, events and consumer agency Playbook brought former Red MD Andrew Baiden on board to take it to the next stage of growth. — MPS

Hering Schuppener (Germany/WPP)

The death of Hering Schuppener founder Ralf Hering in February this year, at the age of just 61, sent shockwaves through the German public relations business and the global corporate and financial communications world, where Hering Schuppener has long been a partner of choice for mergers and acquisitions involving the German market.

Hering Schuppener was the German number one again in the mergermarket M&A rankings last year, handling 37 deals worth in excess of \$100 billion. Highlights included Bayer's takeover of Monsanto, Praxair's merger with Linde, the defense of Innogy following a bid by E.on; and the defense of Uniper following a bid by Fortum. And through its increasingly seamless partnership with Finsbury (and more recently, public affairs powerhouse Glover Park), Hering Schuppener was also a significant player on the global M&A front.

Its capabilities don't end there of course. The firm also handled global positioning, issues management and capital markets communications for ABB; capital markets and crisis work for adidas and Airbus; strategic communications for Audi, Deutsche Bank, LafargeHolcim and others; public affairs and issues work for Booking.com and Uber; ongoing crisis, litigation and leadership communications for Volkswagen; and two of the largest German IPOs of 2017, DWS and Springer Nature.

While Hering's passing was a blow, he had spent 24 years building a strong leadership team, and managing partners Alex Geiser, Folker Dries, Brigitte von Haacke, Phoebe Kebbel, and Tina Mentner have the experience and expertise to maintain the firm's pre-eminent position in financial, corporate, crisis communications, and public affairs. — PH

Instinctif Partners (Independent)

Four years after rebranding and repositioning as a international business communications consultancy, Instinctif Partners is effectively unrecognisable from the firm once known as College Hill. That is probably for the best, because Instinctif today is a multi-specialist consultancy with significant depth in capital markets, corporate and public policy, bolstered by considerable breadth across content, creative, research and insights. And much of the firm's work involves multiple practice areas, reflecting an interconnected approach that has grown 85% in three years.

Aiding that approach are internal initiatives which celebrate collaboration, part of a substantial cultural effort which saw the firm's 386 employees co-create a new set of values. Staff retention and client retention have both improved considerably, and these days Instinctif looks like an agency that takes its internal outcomes as seriously as its external results.

Those results remain in very good shape, with revenues up more than 10% to £39m. Unsurprisingly, given its own positioning, Instinctif has carved out a credible niche working for challenger brands, including Purple Bricks, Asos, Graze, Made and Eve Sleep, along with new assignments

from Hype, Push Doctor, Airbnb, Oath and Ofo. A number of iconic brands were also added to the portfolio, including Bacardi, Tapestry, Google, CME Group and Burger King, while Instinctif's blue-chip and mid-market client base expanded with Inchcape, Redrow and Razer's IPO. These assignments join an existing roster that already features eBay, Aviva, Biffa, Barclays and Inmarsat.

Meanwhile, the best of the firm's work demonstrates its approach to disrupting the traditional corporate PR template. Instinctif's first group wide thought leadership effort, analysing the impact of fake news on more traditional media outlets, was ranked by the Holmes Report as one of its top 10 research efforts of 2017. For Westminster Abbey, Instinctif created the multichannel #makehistory campaign, helping it exceed its fundraising target. For Ofo, the firm provided government relations at a national and local level, helping the bike-sharing company expand from two sites to more than 50 across the UK. And for Eve, Instinctif led an accelerated IPO process that took just four months, eventually valuing the company at £140m. — AS

Seven Hills (UK/Independent)

Michael Hayman and Nick Giles have always cut a slightly different figure to their market peers since they launched Seven Hills in 2009, along the way becoming a perennial presence on this list and winning Global Agency of the Year honours in 2014. The duo have been avid creators of content, developing an events and campaign mentality that has seen them develop their intellectual property in a bid to showcase their thought leadership

and connectivity credentials to clients. It is an approach that has paid off handsomely, with Seven Hills reporting fee income of £4.3m in 2017. While that was effectively flat growth, Seven Hills' work continues to impress, not least after it literally wrote the book ('Mission') on how businesses tap into their core purpose to break through, and starting two TV shows — Change Makers and the Capital Conversation.

Best known for its focus on the entrepreneurial economy, Seven Hills has honed its positioning to focus on 'change makers and future industries', effectively representing a bet on whether traditional business will be disrupted by companies that are on a mission. Clearly,

Hayman and Giles believe it will be, hence the duo's focus on founding organisations such as StartUp Britain, the MADE Festival and Pitch at the Palace. That approach helps to underpin client work for a slew of emerging tech brands, including new business in 2017 from Canary Wharf Group, Blippar, Octopus Ventures, Rocketspace, BIMA, Bromption, Here East and Small Business Saturday. They join an existing roster that features One Young World, Grant Thornton, Adweek Europe, Ella's Kitchen, Clearly, Cobra, Innovate Finance, GP Bullhound, Tech London Advocates and M Squared.

And Seven Hills brings a similarly disruptive mindset to its own service model, often focusing on sprint goals

over 30, 60 and 90 days, and projects rather than retainers, and developing the 'MissionLab' to describe its unique campaigning approach to public relations. The firm has also stepped up its focus on internal progression as the business grows, introducing a personal development allowance and running bootcamps to expose young talent to the campaigning mindset. Unsurprisingly, the best of Seven Hills' work reflects its campaigning mojo — for One Young World's Bogota Summit; for Tech London Advocates, and for Level 39 Canary Wharf — all of which brings together thought leadership and business opportunities to strong effect. — AS

2018 EMEA Creative PR Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

Hope&Glory (UK/Independent)

Certain quarters of the PR industry may be waiting impatiently for this box of creative fireworks to fizzle out into all hope and no glory, but Hope & Glory shows no sign of slowing down on its habit of coming up with completely original ideas that earn attention, sell clients' stuff,

and sweep the board at awards ceremonies (it's shortlisted for 12 gongs at this year's SABREs alone).

The numbers are looking healthy, too: fee income grew by more than 19% to £5.69m over the year (and is aiming for £6.4m in 2018) and monthly fee income grew by 25% to £490,000. There is an even male/female split on the board, no gender pay gap across the business, and a third of the team of 64 started as interns.

Founders James Gordon-Macintosh and Jo Carr, perfectly aware that Hope & Glory is now a six-year-old mid-size agency people rather than a hot start-up, and that it is only as good as its last brilliant campaign, have identified the greatest risk to the firm is sliding into mediocrity. To ensure there is no laurel-resting going on, they've invested in more training across

the agency and have been working with an innovation consultant on creative idea generation. Hope & Glory also invested in sister digital agency OneFifty, and the two teams work together on clients including O2 and Sony.

Hope & Glory has lost just three clients since it was set up. Its biggest clients are among its most long-standing – including O2, IKEA, Airbnb, Barclays, American Express, Sony, Adidas, The Royal Mint and HTC – and 2017 saw strong organic growth from these and other existing clients such as Sainsbury's and Argos. Wins during the year included Facebook, LinkedIn, Pokemon (for which it created its first ever TV ad last year) and charities Marie Curie and Anthony Nolan. The agency also won an impressive number of food and drink

retainers, including Deliveroo, and UK PR for the entire Edrington-Beam Suntory spirits portfolio. — MPS

FINALISTS

Edelman Deportivo (DJE Holdings)

Edelman acquired Swedish creative shop Deportivo (which describes itself as an “earned advertising agency” that helps brands shape culture) in the summer of 2014, at which time the firm has already built a global profile for itself despite the fact that it had fewer than 20 employees. Today, Edelman Deportivo is well on its way to becoming a global creative hub for the world’s largest PR agency, with 25 people in Sweden and another 30 in the UK, where Toby Gunton, a veteran of OMD and WCRS, was hired to embed some of Deportivo’s creative DNA in the region’s largest office.

A great example of Deportivo’s influence came when Edelman was looking for ways to build on Unilever’s “Dirt is Good” positioning for the Omo brand (Persil or Surf in other markets) and came up with the idea of real play. The business then reached out to other brands with an interest in the idea of play—including IKEA and Lego—and launched the Real Play Coalition, which then embarked on a search for the “next Einstein” based on the idea that his youthful obsession with toy bricks helped to make him the genius he was. Some of Deportivo’s other big ideas over the past year included creating the world’s largest football team—inviting all Swedes to become members of the national team—for adidas; challenging athletes to steer a Renault Kadjar using only their brain power; and worked with designers to create a chair that can help girls with ADHD to get the crucial attention in the

classroom that they need. Elsewhere in the Edelman network, great creative work includes Heineken’s “Open Your World” social experiment; Knorr’s “Love at First Taste” campaign; public affairs and events work for Formula One; a global search for the perfect shower for Grohe; and a humorous look at strategies to get pregnancy for Le Grand Forum Des Touts Petits in France. — PH

Golin (Interpublic Group)

Golin continues to be one of the defining PR agencies of the decade, leading the way in changing the industry for the better. As well as being one of the most consistently creative agencies in the UK, it has arguably one of the strongest employer brands in the industry, and was well ahead of its time in terms of a focus on diversity and equality.

The firm also emerged as one of our most-shortlisted agencies this year for its creative work, with eight SABRE nominations including the Sweet Art Gallery pop-up brand experience for Maynard Bassetts and recreating Edvard Munch’s brushstrokes for Adobe’s Photoshop in its Hidden Treasures campaign.

The agency’s motto is “courageously happy”, underlining its people-first culture, from training up mental health first aiders to mentoring and unconscious bias training with Taylor Bennett Foundation, to reporting on Golin’s positive gender pay gap even though it doesn’t have to as it has under 250 employees. Other initiatives include Golin B&B: an innovative programme to attract talent from outside London, covering accommodation for around 12 interns a year so they can afford to work in the capital.

MD Bibi Hilton, who is this year’s president of Women in PR, has been on quite a journey since she joined the firm 12 years ago, when it had 20 employees. Golin has grown to a 150-person agency, and since Hilton took over from Matt Neale in 2015, she has continued to grow the business exponentially, with double digit growth every year. Like many larger agencies, 2017 was something of a blip on the growth chart, however, dropping back to single digits, despite big brand wins in Golin’s FMCG heartland including Merck, Green & Blacks, Maynards Bassetts and Capri-Sun.

Golin retained Npower in a competitive pitch and produced what Hilton describes as her team’s “bravest and boldest” campaign of 2017: the emotional “Heat or Eat” campaign to highlight that heating the home or buying food is a very real choice for many families in the UK. And the agency has had an unprecedented start to 2018, winning seven competitive pitches so far, including Water Wipes (integrated work with sister agency Brooklyn Bros) and a social and digital brief for Danone’s Volvic and Evian brands.

Hilton has also been busy hiring, creating a deputy MD role for former Bell Pottinger director Emily Luscombe and bringing on board Guardian head of content Alex Purcell (“He thinks in video,” she says) as creative director. — MPS

Ketchum (Omnicom)

The continuing struggles of a consolidated German operation, the loss of a significant chunk of Procter & Gamble business, and the elimination of several branded offices (to be replaced by the generic Omnicom PR Group non-brand) meant that

Ketchum's financial performance in EMEA last year trailed many of its competitors—down about 2%. But it's noteworthy that the firm's financial struggles have not adversely affected its creative output. At both the global and the EMEA level, Ketchum continues to turn out award-winning creative work to rival not only its multinational peers but also many of the local boutiques.

That's no accident: it's the result of a corporate culture that celebrates big ideas at every opportunity, and a process that now integrates earned, shared, owned and a growing amount of paid work; a bespoke approach to influencer marketing that balances reach, relevance and resonance. In Europe, there's a "creative community" of talents that spans offices and disciplines, including Hans Tranberg, a creative associate in the UK who personifies the firm's exultation in big creative ideas; Francesco Pesaresi and Giovanni Rotino, creative directors in Milan; Michael Doerwald, creative director in Dresden; David Nelles, head of creative planning in Stuttgart; Amandine Servotte, a strategic planner in Brussels; and Pepita Adelman, head of business development for EMEA.

But the proof is, as ever, in the work, like the bold "Blood Normal" campaign for feminine hygiene brand Libresse, which included an ad that featured period blood for the first time—and a PR campaign to capitalize when the ad was inevitably rejected by nervous broadcasters. Other creative highlights included the Olympics debut of Discovery Eurosport, initially met with skepticism but ultimately acknowledged as a triumph; the launch of recyclable plastic bottles

for Head & Shoulders (awarded by the UN); Samsung's "Go Beyond Fitness" influencer marketing campaign; and some wonderful guerilla marketing by the firm's Emanate subsidiary in Europe, hijacking the launch of the movie "It" on behalf of Burger King, and drawing attention to the scariness of clowns in a dig at one of BK's competitors. — PH

Unity (UK/Independent)

In 2013, our Global Creative Index—which analyzes the results from dozens of creative awards around the world—ranked Unity as pound-for-pound the most creative PR firm in the world. It retained the top spot in 2014, came in second in 2015, returned to number one in 2016, and was third in 2017. In other words, the London-based boutique firm has consistently ranked among the most creative agencies in the world. And it looks set to continue that run of success in 2018, if its seven EMEA region SABRE nominations—more than some of the global networks—are any indication.

As ever, the firm has done some sterling work in the non-profit sector, launching a holiday campaign for Action Aid, "Yours Mrs Claus" that cut through the Christmas clutter, and supporting Get Safe Online by unleashing "Scammer Nanas" upon the UK's unsuspecting youth. But the firm has also been demonstrating its ability to turn creativity in business results for corporate clients, finding a creative hook to get both corporate customers interested in ADT home security systems and promoting a menu of mouthwatering television for Sky Atlantic via "The Drama Kitchen" partnership with Dan Doherty, executive chef of Duck and Waffle.

With the departure in January of Nik Done, Unity is now led by co-founder Gerry Hopkinson and managing director Kathryn Pringle, a former head of consumer lifestyle PR at Sainsbury's who also has agency experience with Splendid. The firm has long prided itself on the ability to blend left and right brain thinking, analytics and big ideas, and alongside its expertise in influencer marketing, real-time marketing, experiential and events, content creation, and brand activation, offers two bespoke products: Brandcestry, a brand planning tool that uses the best of a brand's past to inform future strategy, and CommUnity, a CSR planning and launch product. — PH

2018 EMEA Digital PR Consultancies of the Year

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Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

Edelman Deportivo (DJE Holdings)

Globally, Edelman has been investing in digital and creative talent at a pace unmatched by any of its rivals—more than 600 creatives around the world, including about 200 in Europe, many of them focused on digital and social media, using paid, earned, shared and owned channels in an integrated way to connect clients with consumers. In Europe, Edelman acquired Swedish creative shop Deportivo (which describes itself as an “earned advertising agency” that helps brands shape culture) in the summer of 2014, and is turning it into a global creative hub, with 30 people now in the UK, where Toby Gunton, a veteran of OMD and WCRS, was hired to embed some of Deportivo’s creative DNA in the region’s largest office.

A great example of Deportivo’s influence came when Edelman was looking for ways to build on Unilever’s “Dirt is Good” positioning for the Omo brand (Persil or Surf in other markets) and came up with the idea of real play. The business then reached out to other brands with an interest in the idea of play—including IKEA and Lego—and launched the Real Play Coalition, which then embarked on a search for the “next Einstein”

based on the idea that his youthful obsession with toy bricks helped to make him the genius he was. Some of Deportivo’s other big ideas over the past year included creating the world’s largest football team—inviting all Swedes to become members of the national team—for adidas; challenging athletes to steer a Renault Kadjar using only their brain power; and worked with designers to create a chair that can help girls with ADHD to get the crucial attention in the classroom that they need. Elsewhere in the Edelman network, great creative work includes Heineken’s “Open Your World” social experiment; Knorr’s “Love at First Taste” campaign; public affairs and events work for Formula One; a global search for the perfect shower for Grohe; and a humorous look at strategies to get pregnancy for Le Grand Forum Des Touts Petits in France.—PH

FINALISTS

Clockwork Media (South Africa/Independent)

Launched just five years ago, South Africa’s Clockwork Media has already reached \$5m in fee income, making good on its vision of changing the way PR is perceived in Africa, and across the globe. The consultancy now number 100 people, focused on four key components — strategy and data, concept, production and dissemination. Led by two former tech journalists — Tom Manners and Nic Simmonds — the firm brings a refreshingly agile approach to its business, investing in such areas as as influencer marketing, video production and data analytics, helping it to become one of the

largest consultancies in the country, one capable — more importantly, perhaps, of winning global remits.

In that respect, 2017 marked something of a watershed year for Clockwork Media, with growth of 50% powered by a £1m Microsoft assignment to run Windows.com, Xbox.com and Surface.com in 46 markets – establishing the firm’s 15-strong interactive team and marking it out as one of the world’s agencies to watch. There was also new business from LaLiga, Lafarge and Exxaro, media relations accounts that have expanded to encompass the full spectrum of public relations across offline and online. In addition to Microsoft, Clockwork’s client roster also features such names as NBCUniversal, LG, Lafarge, Exxaro, Tile Africa, Tata Motors, Mimecast and L’Oreal.

Clockwork’s capabilities also expanded considerably, with the firm adding a data and insights component to its strategy division, a conceptual team featuring a creative director, copywriter and art director, an interactive team focused on producing digital work on a global scale and an activations team aimed at bringing concepts to life in the physical realm. All of that helps to explain the firm’s remarkable progress in such a short space of time, further highlighted by brand repositioning for Dell Alienware, content strategy for L’Oreal, TVCs for Tile, radio ads for Lafarge and websites for Microsoft and Exxaro. And there have also been some notable hires to help manage the growth, including Monica van der Spuy to oversee the PR business unit and three former

Wunderman execs — Emilia Brooks, Ciaran Burnand and Lisa Cohn — to oversee operations, interactive and strategy, respectively. — AS

Text100 (Next15)

Text 100 makes an appearance in our Digital rather than Technology agency of the year shortlist for the first time this year, for the compelling reason that this was the year that the 36-year-old agency evolved well beyond the B2B tech roots it's hitherto been famous for. In fact, the EMEA leadership – regional lead Rod Cartwright, who joined from Ketchum in September last year, supported by UK MD Tara O'Donnell and her team – describes Text100 as “almost like a new agency overnight” since it merged sister Next Fifteen consumer agency Lexis into the business in June 2017.

The Lexis merger followed hard on the heels of the 2016 merger of two other sibling firms in the UK — Republic Publishing and IncrediBull, adding content and brand marketing expertise – into the Text100 business. Three mergers in two years would have been a challenge for any agency, but a calm and steady hand on the global, regional and UK leadership tiller throughout the process has resulted in an impressively smooth transition to a bigger agency that is much more than the sum of its parts.

The firm is now adopting a “show don't tell” approach to positioning itself as a marketing communications agency working across PR, content, strategy, social and creative, rather than a B2B tech specialist.

Fee income at Text 100 was up around 3.5% globally, settling at £11.8m in the UK and Ireland, and just over £10m across continental Europe

for the year, but the new tone in the UK and EMEA is most evident thus far in the work. As well as investment in data and analytics, the agency formed a new Creative Hub in London in 2016, led by creative director Tom Edwards, bringing together 20 film producers, art directors and web developers to support every piece of work for every client, whether digital, social, PR or content-based.

This has led to some strong integrated brand work over the year, for brands from Coca Cola and Diet Coke (UK consumer PR), Chivas Brothers (consumer and corporate) and Pizza Hut (consumer, corporate, social and crisis) to Tata Communications (content, digital and social), Nokia (digital design and development for mobile) and SunTrust (brand strategy, including purpose-driven work around financial wellbeing). Text100 also picked up new clients including TomTom's EMEA PR hub for London and Amsterdam, with local execution in the UK, Germany, Sweden and Italy; consumer and B2B work for Grundig; integrated consumer PR for The Open University and Bridgestone's EMEA corporate hub. The agency also took the decision to withdraw from pitches for long-standing tech clients Lenovo and IBM. — MPS

TVC Group (UK/Economist Group)

TVC has never lost sight of its content roots – it's been using words, images and video to tell clients' stories for 20 years this June – but 2017 was a transitional year as The Economist Group-owned agency managed a dramatic rebalancing of its skills and client base towards digital.

Group managing director James Myers, who joined in 2004, is still the hands-on cornerstone of TVC,

overseeing client experience, sales and marketing across the UK and the US and driving the digital reshaping of the business, supported by group commercial and operations director Sarah Harris.

Myers boosted the agency's content marketing, digital and social capabilities through new hires including digital producers, content strategists, paid media experts and community managers, who work alongside TVC's media relations, broadcast, production and creative specialists.

The company put all 51 employees through its bespoke 300-module Digital Academy training programme and, to embed a collaborative digital culture, TVC rolled out Facebook's Workplace internal comms platform. It also invested in an updated version of DNA, its content hosting and distribution tool. This transformation and investment was not without cost, as fee income dipped slightly to £7.7m over the year.

Client briefs evolved beyond traditional PR, too: nearly every campaign created during 2017 had a digital element, from developing apps and content hubs to integrated digital-led campaigns. Existing clients including Bacardi Group, Otis, Ralph Lauren, Costa Coffee and Vision Express were joined on TVC's roster by new accounts including challenger bank Aldermore, Bentley, Virgin Sport, Greene King and insurer LV=. — MPS

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic)

Across Europe, Weber Shandwick has seen a radical transformation of its offering in recent years, with major investments in insights (data, analytics and strategic planning), content (creative, video, production

and design) and integrated media (digital and social). The London office has been one center of digital excellence, developing the agency's new MINDS (Media Intelligence & Data Science) offer, influencer identification and tracking tool FLUENT, and community management AI tool PRODUCT Q. The acquisition in 2016 of mobile marketing specialist Flipside added yet another future-focused capability, offering the kind of content-to-commerce capability sales and marketing clients are now demanding.

Meanwhile, in Sweden, Prime's unique United Minds offering—founded presciently in 1999—is now helping

the agency prepare for increased competition from the management consulting business, combining the kind of business intelligence that doesn't often come from PR agencies with the creativity that has long been Prime's trademark, and thus delivering the kind of strategic thinking that will give Weber Shandwick access to the C-suite. And while the London and Stockholm operations stand out, there is new digital and social thinking everywhere, like a new influencer identification and measurement tool in Germany, for example.

Examples of the work over the past 12 months include the "72 Hour Cabin" campaign for Visit Sweden,

promoting sustainable tourism by taking five people with stressful jobs and relocating them to cabins in the Swedish countryside; the UK team developed "The Little Chicken Named Pong Pong" campaign for Pearson's Project Literacy, turning a story told to her children by a mum who could not read into an actual book; in the Netherlands, the firm is creating online wish maps for the Make-a-Wish Foundation so that donors can select and follow deserving recipients close to home; and for GSK's Fentisil brand, the agency is using mobile mosquito forecasts, in partnership with The Weather Channel, to directly impact sales. — PH

2018 EMEA Healthcare PR Consultancies of the Year

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WINNER

Cohn & Wolfe (WPP)

Cohn & Wolfe's healthcare team has fully embraced the wider company's transformation from an agency with an earned heritage to an integrated marketing agency. Since 2015 the division has doubled the size of its business and team (revenue has increased by 18% in the past year alone), diversified its client base to include Gilead, Pfizer,

Sanofi Consumer Health and Novo Nordisk (the latter two during 2017), and broadened its talent pool.

A team of more than 60 people in Cohn & Wolfe's London office now work on healthcare in one form or another, including from the central digital team and the consumer and corporate practices. In a globally-acknowledged healthcare comms talent drought, the agency strengthened its senior bench with the hire of Tamsin Tierney (former MD at Tonic Life Communications) as deputy MD of health. It also added new specialists including Ben Hickey (advocacy) and Maria Simson (digital transformation).

The company wins and works across the marketing mix; its work for Boehringer Ingelheim, for instance, covers brand comms, advocacy and corporate reputation, and the team supports Pfizer on areas including

consumer marketing, market access and digital transformation. The agency also has a strong record of organic growth, adding new therapeutic areas for clients including Gilead, where it began with HIV and added Hepatitis C, launching seven products in two years, and growing its Pfizer vaccines work from one product to the entire vaccines portfolio. It also doesn't shy away from tackling some of the most difficult healthcare challenges of our age, from obesity to liver disease. — MPS

FINALISTS

dna Communications (Interpublic Group)

As the complexity of healthcare communications has increased, dna Communications has responded with a breadth of robust, multidimensional efforts that help clients navigate

the intricacies of the system, while boosting advancements — and aiming to change lives by doing so. In the last 12 months, the healthcare agency has been steeped in some of the biggest issues facing stakeholders from pharmaceutical companies to healthcare providers and patients.

A major educational campaign surrounding the link between diabetes and heart disease, and treatment options for managing it, was just one of dna's most effective 2017 campaigns, reaching millions and changing the diabetes conversation. Other key campaigns included highlighting how today's environment requires physicians to think differently and be innovative in order to deliver the best care for HIV patients, and a multi-country generational survey among millennial and baby boomer women comparing attitudes on contraceptive choices.

With team members well-versed in science and research as well as strategic communications, dna takes a multidisciplinary approach to serving its roster of clients — companies like Boehringer Ingelheim, Lilly Novartis and Celgene among them. The firm is keenly aware that, despite being part of the same industry, the companies it works with are utterly different from one another, and therefore have specific needs in negotiating the healthcare sector's ever-changing commercial, regulatory, scientific and communications landscape.

That approach has fueled dna's growth trajectory, which continued in 2017, when it added more than a dozen people in London, to go with other EMEA outposts in Berlin, Cologne, Paris, Geneva and Milan. During the last 12 months, the agency

expanded its client roster with the addition of European Society for Organ Transplantation, Indivior and Novo Nordisk. Accordingly, the agency's staff also grew in 2017, increasing 35% to 70. Indeed overall revenue growth was up 40% to \$12m, reflecting the success of the agency's thinking and capabilities. — DM

Four Health (UK/Independent)

Four Communications, founded in 2001, quickly established itself as a leader in the UK market, a full-service independent capable of competing with larger firms for consumer and corporate assignments, and more recently for a broad range of sponsorship, content creation, digital and social media work. It ranks among the top 12 UK PR firms overall, with fee income last year of around £30 million and a headcount of close to 250. Its specialist healthcare operations, meanwhile, make it a top six player in the sector.

Four Health divides itself into four groups: Four Engage (led by Rachel O'Sullivan) delivers insights and analysis and content and campaigns; Four Health Communications (led by Packer Forbes founder Alexa Forbes) focuses on medical communications and patient advocacy; Four Public Affairs (under John Lehal, former CEO of Insight Consulting) handles policy and market access; Four Health Media (led by Ben Mansfield) adds media buying and media strategy. The firm also has a specialized process designed to take products from late stage clinical trials to launch and then to uptake. Clients include some of the biggest names in the pharmaceutical sector: Alcon, BD, Boston Scientific, BMS, Fractyl, Gilead, GSK, Novartis, Novo Nordisk, Roche Diagnostics, Sanofi, Takeda and Teva, as well as

device and diagnostic companies, patient organizations and NGOs. It has handled market access issues for Actonel, Acomplia, Ventavis, Epogen, Eliquis, Xeljanz, Champix, Enbrel and more. — PH

GCI Health (UK/WPP)

At only four years old, the London business of GCI Health, WPP's only specialist healthcare agency, is in fine fettle. It grew to 19 employees in 2017, and revenue rose 60% to £2.5m, smashing targets and successfully competing for work with much bigger agencies in a year where a huge global talent shortage for healthcare comms professionals became evident.

The currently all-female agency has a formidable leadership team — joint MDs Kath Kerry and Rikki Jones, client services director Hannah Morris, director Claire Martin and associate director Caroline Burt — who are rightly proud of the progress they've made this year in navigating the business out of boutique territory and firmly on course to be a mid-size European healthcare agency. They've done this while maintaining a caring environment that encourages flexible working and treats everyone like a grown-up, leading to 96% staff retention.

The agency is always seeking inspiration from beyond the healthcare universe, and seems to have the balance right between not taking itself too seriously, and doing innovative work on products that have the potential to change lives. The team has spent time this year building relationships with other healthcare teams within the WPP network, which has led to

three times more partnership work and more opportunities for being included in big integrated pitches.

The agency works across life sciences, market access communications, consumer health and strategic consulting. Client retention for the year stood at 89%, with stand-out work such as building Merck KGaA's name in oncology R&D, breaking new ground for the pharma company's social engagement, and making a significant media impact for Pfizer's autoimmune disease biosimilar drug Inflectra. — MPS

Pegasus (UK/Ashfield Healthcare Group)

After 20 years as an independent agency, Pegasus during grew both its business and footprint during its first full year as part of Ashfield Healthcare Communications. The agency's 2017 fee income rose 13% from the year before, surpassing £10m for the first time. The Brighton-based firm opened satellite offices in Macclesfield and Glasgow (followed

by one in London in 2018) as a means of attracting talent to handle the increased workload, while also offering clients in those areas local partners. The staff, primarily in the UK, ended 2017 116 strong.

Key clients include Bayer, Novo Nordisk, GSK, CSL Behring, Holland & Barrett, Boehringer Ingelheim, Thornton & Ross and Bio-Oil. Notable wins last year included Network Rail/Samaritans, Astellas, NHS Queen Victoria Hospital, Trouw Nutrition, Merz Aesthetics, skincare brand Sebamed, private health service provider 18 Week Support and Bayer Oncology. Pegasus boosted its ability to serve such clients through its new partnership with University College of London's Centre for Behaviour. The partnership allows Pegasus staffers to learn the science surrounding behavioural change and apply it in their campaigns — of particular value when changing behaviour, particularly around healthcare, is tantamount to changing life for the better. During the last year, Pegasus also expanded

its research & planning capability; invested in new service areas, such as VR & AR; expanded its digital marketing team and added talent to its studio, including a dedicated copy team. The firm also launched a patient support programme offer, rooted in health psychology, that's secured £500,000 in 12 months.

Hallmark initiatives include the Small Talk Saves Lives, Samaritans campaign, a suicide prevention effort Pegasus rolled out for the emotional support group Samaritans, Network Rail and British Transport Police. A social film sharing the real-life story of a woman who had planned to take her own life, Sarah's Story, was viewed 5 million times in two months, reaching 6.2 million via social media alone. The film was shared 65,000 times across Facebook and Twitter sparking 300,000 comments and reactions, increasing social traffic to Samaritans website by 406%. Research shows 49% of viewers would now act if ever in a situation where they can help.— AaS/DM

2018 EMEA Public Affairs Consultancies of the Year

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WINNER

APCO (Independent)

APCO's EMEA operation has long been built around twin pillars—the strength in London and Brussels—the two most significant public affairs markets in the region—but under the leadership of Claire Boussagol, who joined the firm in 1995 and took the helm in Europe after Brad Staples was elevated to the global CEO role at the end of 2014, it has expanded both geographically and in terms of the kind of work it does in

the corporate reputation and crisis and issues management spaces, its operations in Germany (offices in Berlin and Frankfurt, up 31% last year), Italy (Rome and Milan, 31% growth), and France are all making a significant contribution. The Middle East operation, meanwhile, was up by 21% last year and with 170 people is the UAE and Saudi Arabia is a major player in the region and a significant contributor to APCO's EMEA region.

New business wins and expanded assignments came from across the region: American Express, a

new global assignment; Boeing in France and Germany; Celgene in Brussels and Paris; and the Copper Alliance in the UK and the US. They also came from across a wide range of industries, from a public affairs and corporate communications assignment for Roche in the healthcare space to a Yum Brands win in the consumer arena to work for Palo Alto Networks in the growing technology practice to the Republic of Bulgaria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, indicative of the firm's strength in representing government clients. Other additions included Arconic, Allianz, Global Citizen, Oculus, Microsoft, and the Motion Picture Association of America. As a result, EMEA the growth was an extremely robust 12%.

The work last year included public affairs and executive leadership communications for Facebook and support for organizational change at Tui in Germany; crisis management support for Whirlpool around plant closings and support for Apple during CEO Tim Cook's meeting with the Pope in Italy; corporate and CEO positioning for NetJets and issues management around sexual health for Reckitt Benckiser's Durex brand in the UK; and helping to secure EU funding for Rotary International's Global Polio Eradication Initiative in Brussels. The firm also continued to expand its APCO Insight group, led by Chris Levy, across the region, adding team members in other key markets and managing research projects for Bulgaria, Metro, Roche and more. — PH

FINALISTS

Interrel (Independent)

It's been a big year for Brussels-based Interrel, in which it practically doubled in size overnight through the acquisition of leading Washington advocacy firm Association Management Group. This brought \$10m of business into the combined firm, now thought to be the world's largest independent public affairs consultancy, resulting in fee income for the year up 74% to \$24m and headcount up 68% to 197 staff worldwide.

It looks to be a good fit for Interrel, which celebrates its 35th birthday this year: a European-based global public affairs firm with a growing association practice but limited US presence, and a US-based association management and advocacy firm with no international reach. To ensure a successful merger, the team – led by Interrel CEO Fredrik Lofthagen, Association Management managing partner Bob Lewis and Jason C Jarrell, managing partner of the global practice – invested in an internal and external stakeholder exercise called “What's the sum of your organisation?”

In a year of tragedy as well as success, as Interrel's chair in Germany, Claudia Conrad-Kreml, and CFO Christine Burgaud, a key driver of the firm's global expansion, both died after illness, the firm carried out much impactful client work. Notably, it retained Alibaba Group to build its public affairs function across eight markets, kept Coca-Cola on top of EU policy developments, increased Medicare reimbursement for the American Ambulance Association, modelled European energy trends for Eaton in a groundbreaking

study on economic tipping points, and secured the UK government's commitment to stopping puppy smuggling for the Dog's Trust.

Pagefield (UK/Independent)

Still only seven years old, Pagefield's progression into one of the UK's top public affairs firms has rarely seemed in doubt, thanks to an ability to deliver topnotch senior counsel in a market that rewards such expertise. In 2017, the firm grew by an impressive 32% to an estimated £6m in fee income, strengthening its offer by snapping up a number of ex-Bell Pottinger executives to launch sister firm Pagefield Global Counsel, which focuses on litigation, crisis comms and international affairs. There was further change earlier in the year when Oliver Foster, part of the firm's founding team under Mark Gallagher, became Pagefield's first chief executive. Significant new recruits also included Times journalist Philip Bank and the FCO's Liam Parker. And Pagefield's unique culture retains a distinguishing edge, with no silos and a focus on the team rather than financial growth.

In 2017, for example, the firm won impressive new business from Avon, CitySprint, EEF, eHarmony, Hunter Boots, the University of Cambridge and Santander, joining an existing client roster that features AB InBev, Camelot, Discovery, Experian, the Fundraising Regulator, HS1, Kellogg's and Leidos.

Much of the work reflects Pagefield's ability to handle complex issues management work. This is best illustrated, perhaps, by Pagefield's Museum of London campaign, which won the SABRE Award of Consumer Marketing in 2017. Other campaign highlights included supporting the

Fundraising Regulator's launch of the Fundraising Preference Service; helping AB InBev showcase its commitment to UK agriculture; marking the 10th anniversary of HS1; and executing Kellogg's annual Breakfast Club Awards. — AS

PLMR (UK/Independent)

A year ago, PLMR was a ten-year-old, medium-sized public affairs agency that wasn't quite able to break into work for blue-chip clients. Rather than plateauing, founder and CEO Kevin Craig and his team, including MD Elin de Zoete, launched a strategy of acquisition to take the business forward. They quickly found and bought two specialist agencies to bolster its capabilities

in the key sectors of town planning (Snapdragon Consulting) and education (Mango Marketing).

A year later, the three firms form an integrated agency of 55 people, with fee income boosted 36% to £4.3m. PLMR is on track to be a £5m business this year and is now winning competitive pitches for the likes of utility giant Centrica, flagship London development Battersea Power Station, the world's biggest recruitment firm Adecco, eBay's Gumtree online marketplace.

Snapdragon founder Rebekah Paczek came on board as MD of the new planning public affairs practice, and the firm also hired two senior advisers: Neil Carmichael,

former chair of the Education Select Committee, and Joe Mitton, a former special advisor on business to Boris Johnson, who now heads up the agency's Brexit Unit.

PLMR has a reputation for being a hard agency for recruiters to tempt staff away from, and has always had a philanthropic streak, donating 5% of profits to charity from day one. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given Craig's background as a Labour councillor and parliamentary candidate, the agency also has a natural bent towards health and social care work, with clients including health, hygiene and household multinational Reckitt Benckiser (another 2017 win) and online GP service PushDoctor. — MPS

2018 EMEA Technology PR Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Winners were unveiled at the EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on 23 May.

WINNER

Chameleon (UK/Independent)

The reputation of Chameleon has reached the stage where larger global rivals on both sides of the Atlantic may well groan when they know they're on a pitch list against them. The agency punches well above its weight for a team of only 16, with fee income up 14% to £1.97m in 2017.

This was the culmination of CEO Tom Berry and MD Tom Buttle's three year post-MBO strategic plan to transform a stagnant tech outfit and turn it into one of the world's most creative, results focused B2B technology agencies. The two Toms' ambitious plan, underpinned by their "be less beige" mantra, worked: under their leadership the agency has seen 40% top line growth and a 331% increase in profits over the past three years, and a client net promoter score of +90.

They say they only work for two types of clients: those who want to change the world through technology and those that want to change themselves. Over the past year, Chameleon has added companies like Gartner, Belkin and Hootsuite to its portfolio and is already tracking at double-digit top line growth and 20% profitability for 2018.

There's a real focus on delivering solid business results for clients, too, from generating £1m worth of enterprise leads on a £4k budget for UK fintech Cashfac, to building Google Cloud's analyst relations programme from the ground up, delivering 80% positive sentiment from the analyst community.

And while Chameleon is winning Silicon Valley work on a regular basis, Berry and Buttle have no intention of opening a San Francisco office. Instead, they have focused on building strong relationships with other independent agencies in the area and proactively visiting hot tech companies on the West Coast. The agency is also properly embedded in the technology industry: it is involved in the board of the Institute of Industry Analyst Relations, is regularly asked by private equity firms and VCs to coach their investments on

PR and marketing, and is a strategic advisor to the association for Chief Information Security officers. — MPS

FINALISTS

AxiCom (WPP)

If AxiCom has hitherto billed itself as the best kept secret within WPP, this looks set to be the year that the secret is out. The tech firm has been designing and building campaigns for big tech brands, industry pioneers and disruptive start-ups across Europe since 1994, and has grown to 91 people in seven wholly-owned offices in London, Munich, Paris, Milan, Madrid, Amsterdam and Stockholm.

The year started with a challenge: the decision by Dell EMC to consolidate agencies following the IT industry's biggest-ever merger. AxiCom, Dell's European agency of record since 2006, continues to be the strategic lead for the new combined entity, but lost local implementation budgets. However, the team rose to the occasion and redundancies were avoided by every office across the group working together to plug gaps in fees. By the end of the year, AxiCom had won more than 50 new clients across the network, 15 in the UK office alone. Its client portfolio, ranging from enterprise computing to business apps, telco and mobile to fintech, now includes Orange, Nokia and LG.

Acquired by WPP as part of the Cohn & Wolfe Group in 2008, last year was also the first full year since the post-earn out departure of AxiCom's founders Helen Ridgway and Julian Tanner, leading to a brand "reboot" and the appointment of a new senior leadership team, now led by CEO Henry Brake, who has been with

the firm for 19 years (Cathy Pittham joined as global CEO from Racepoint in July 2016 but left at the start of 2018). Brake is supported by strong country managers, including Martina Brembeck in Germany, Monica Gonzalez in Spain and Kate Stevens in the UK, plus director Stephen Orr, who is the driving force behind a new content studio. — MPS

Harvard (Chime)

After two consecutive years as our Technology Consultancy of the Year (including Global recognition in 2017), you could forgive Harvard for having a quiet 12 months. You would be wrong though — on the numbers alone, Harvard had a storming year, with revenues up (for the seventh consecutive year since Louie St Claire too charge) from 32% to £5.4m, 19% margins and profits up 28%, hitting £1m for the first time. But of course, impressive financials aren't the only measure of an agency's success.

What also marks the UK's oldest technology specialist agency out this year is clever, innovative work that has had commercial impact for clients (see the 2.7x customer conversion uplift for payments company Square) and social impact (UNICEF's digital skills programme for Syrian refugees, for example). Plus, deeply conscious of staying on the right track through this extended period of growth, Harvard has put new programmes in place to support staff and better service clients.

After winning 17 clients in 2016, Harvard added a further 25 new clients in 2017, including SAP, Sky, OnePlus and Vodafone. Non-traditional PR work has grown 74% year-on-year, and 26% of Harvard's work now sits in its creative and digital engagement

team. Ellie Thompson was named PR & AR managing director last year, while Pete Marcus became group planning director and Marc Allenby joined as creative director.

The agency carried out its first client survey, with directors spending an hour with every client and subsequently putting in place a programme to give clients more regular creative counsel and scheduled time with board members. The agency has a net promoter score of 9.1/10 and clients, who include Cisco, clearly love them.

Harvard's "kick-ass, people-first" culture is also noteworthy. The leadership team (with a 50/50 gender split) takes care of the wellbeing and development of its 55 people at all levels of the business, nurturing and stretching everyone from the newest to the most experienced, and has a staff retention rate of 90%. — MPS

Hotwire (Enero Group)

Hotwire PR rebranded as Hotwire, the global communications agency last year, and its hot pink logo wasn't the only vibrant thing about the new-look agency. A year on from buying Silicon Valley firm Eastwick Communications, the successfully-integrated business is now worth \$33.3m globally, including fee income in the UK of just over \$10m, and an \$8.2 million contribution from continental Europe. The group now has European offices in London, Paris, Frankfurt, Munich, Madrid and Milan, together with co-branded partners in the Netherlands, Belgium and the Middle East.

Eastwick founder Barbara Bates became Hotwire's global CEO last May, after Brendon Craigie, who had been with the tech firm for 16 years, left to set up a new agency,

Tyto. Her go-getting spirit and 25 years' experience of working with technology companies have pervaded the entire agency, and Bates and her leadership team (including Alex MacLavery, COO and president of EMEA and ANZ, and Andy West, group chief development officer) have worked hard to ensure a strong culture at the merged agency.

In 2017, as part of the brand overhaul, the agency launched Hotwire 2020: its mission to be “the best agency you’ve ever worked with or worked for”. It’s still a work in progress but there’s no doubt the team are doing cracking work for clients, and picking up some serious wins across the region, including Eaton (UK), Facebook (UK), Dell EMC (France), Citrix (Germany), eBay (France), Seagate (Spain), and MioDittore (Italy). The agency also introduced two solid pieces of thought leadership during the year: “The Changing Face of Influence”, looking

at what influences the purchasing decisions of 1,2000 senior IT and marketing execs, and “Understanding Generation Alpha”, on what makes children born after 2010 tick.

Schwartz Public Relations (Germany/Independent)

What started as a one-man-show founded by Christoph Schwartz in his home office in 1994 has become a mainstay on our Agencies of the Year - Dach list. It’s safe to say that Schwartz has come a long way since then. 2017 was a banner year in the agency’s 23-year history, hitting a new revenue high, nearly no staff turnover and winning big clients, like Here Technology. The agency ended the year with 22 employees, 50 clients and €3.5m in fees — up 6% from the previous year. Additionally, Schwartz finalized its transition from an agency with a focus on earned activities to a broader content management oriented agency working across

earned, paid, owned and shared media. Schwartz’s familial culture has been the foundation of the agency since its inception and continues to be at the core even as the firm grows.

Schwartz added 20 new including Here Technology, Linkando, Polk Audio, Definitive Technology and BlueYonder. They join a roster including other top-tier companies such as Alibaba, Zumtobel Lighting, Sharp, Fujitsu, Malwarebytes, 1&1 Versatel, ABB, Wonder, Exaring, Forcepoint, Questback, Steelcase and Messe Frankfurt. The firm has also continued its a CSR project that includes PR responsibility of “little Art” — a Munich-based non-profit organization that promotes the intellectual, emotional and artistic development of children and teenagers.

In addition to Schwartz, the agency’s board includes Jörg Stelzer, Julia Kaiser and Sven Kersten-Reichherzer. — AaS / DM

2018 EMEA New PR Consultancies of the Year

Our 2018 EMEA PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 200 submissions and face-to-face meetings with the best PR firms across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

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WINNER

Talker Tailor Trouble Maker (UK)

When M&C Saatchi PR’s former global MD Gary Wheeldon and global executive creative director

Steve Strickland launched their own creative comms agency in 2016 for “brands looking to upstage the status quo”, it was always going to shake up the PR business.

Talker Tailor Trouble Maker bills itself as straight talking, hungry, risk-taking, fun-loving, controversy-courting and smart thinking. With big name clients like Wagamama, Mastercard, Deliveroo and Direct Line already along for the ride, the duo have exploded any notion that start-ups have to start small: fee income for 2017 was achingly close to £1m, and the agency already has 16 staff.

Significant hires over the year included former Freud’s director Alex Pearse, who is helping to drive growth among the agency’s retained clients, former News of the World and Loaded editor Ian Edmondson as head of media and Instagram queen Jolene Lukeba, who is developing high-reach influencer programmes.

Talker Tailor Trouble Maker does almost everything differently to the rest of the industry, from closing the office every Wednesday to make the space available “for the greater good”, to unlimited holiday and providing breakfast, lunch, a free bar and awards outfits to its team.

Strickland and Weeldon set out to create a diverse agency from the off, and thought leadership last year from the opinionated agency included PR WOKE, voicing the views of BAME people in the industry. — MPS

FINALISTS

BoldT (Europe)

With a leadership team that features Jeremy Galbraith and Katarina Wallin Bureau — the architects of Burson-Marsteller’s impressive EMEA presence in recent years — BoldT was always likely to make a bang when it started life at the end of 2017. And in just six months the firm is already forecasting revenue of €2m, underpinned by such clients as PepsiCo, European consumer organisation BEUC, Norwegian publishing house Aschehoug, Area and Norwegian patient organisation LHL.

That haul reflects BoldT’s regional capabilities, which Galbraith has built by focusing on senior talent from his old Burson-Marsteller stomping grounds. In addition to Wallin Bureau, who is based in Brussels, the firm’s senior team also includes former MEP and Dutch Labour Party chairman Michiel van Hulst and the former CEOs of Burson-Marsteller Nordics and Switzerland — Morten Pettersen and Matthias Graf, respectively. Similar level leaders are expected soon in Oslo and Zurich, with BoldT’s multi-market offering gives it a distinctive edge versus other independent consultancies.

Of course, that is not the only thing BoldT has going for it. There are four external investors to support growth, and a focus on people that marks it out as a refuge for senior holding group talent. Unsurprisingly,

furthermore, the leaders have developed a business strategy and communications methodology that aims to help clients understand the delicate balance between doing and talking. That was reflected by BoldT’s strategic counsel to PepsiCo’s government affairs unit. — AS

Milk & Honey PR (UK)

Milk & Honey was set up at the start of 2017 by Kirsty Leighton, the former MD of Hudson Sandler, who brought more than 20 years of experience from the likes of Edelman, Text100, Orange and Waggener Edstrom to the creation of her own business.

It was a brave move, but in 12 months, Leighton built a hive of six “strategists and storytellers”, gained a new retained client every six weeks, creating buzz for companies from ambitious start-ups telecoms firms, and posted fee income of £247,000. Clients include compliance software firm Corlytics, for which Milk & Honey went beyond coverage in the FT, Reuters, Dow Jones and the Sunday Times to generate so many sales enquiries that its marketing budget increased by 400%.

Leighton is ambitious: she’s putting the foundations in place to grow quickly into a mid-size agency. She has already secured PRCA management accreditation, has developed a rigorous creative corporate storytelling process, Creative CREAM, and recently brought Comic Relief’s former national media manager Kirsty Reid on board as client director to lead Milk & Honey’s consumer offering. But Leighton is determined to also build an agency that puts people first and has a happy and healthy culture, such as being “fully mobile” so team

members can work anywhere, and quarterly “Bee kind to yourself” wellness or spa treats. — MPS

Munch (UK)

Founder Lizzie Earl’s back story alone means Munch is one to watch in the PR industry, and that’s before you take into account the 18-month-old agency’s growing entertainment client roster and the effectiveness of its campaigns. Earl was just 29 when she started Munch, and she’d already had a decade of adventures in consumer, B2B and tech PR and talent publicity. Hooked on PR from her first week of work experience aged 19, Earl has worked at Frank and Freud’s and in-house at Disney, and was headhunted by Golin to manage big-brand accounts in London and Hong Kong before realising her ambition of starting her own agency.

Earl’s vision was to offer the strategic thinking and efficient process of a large consultancy, blended with the creativity, tenacity, energy and cost-effectiveness of a boutique. Earl and her team focus on targeted media relations that gives clients a real-life return on their marketing spend via hard business results. Everything Munch does is a case study on the power of good PR, and it’s one of the reasons the agency was selected by crowdfunding platform Seedrs as its recommended consumer agency.

Munch, which had first year fee income of close to £121,000 and currently has three staff, is fast becoming a go-to agency for digital platforms, apps, TV channels and music clients because of its track record of smart, creative ideas that get consumers to watch, download, stream, listen, click or fund. For Music Crowns, a global promotion platform for unsigned, newly-signed

and independent music artists, Munch drove streams of its first artist release, generating coverage in 12 countries, doubling traffic to the

platform, gaining 44,000 listeners on Spotify in one week and knocking Ed Sheeran off the #1 spot in the iTunes singer-songwriter charts. — MPS

Best Agencies To Work For - EMEA

Best Agency to Work For is possibly the only predictive award the Holmes Report gives out. By this, we mean there's a direct correlation between the agencies on this list and those that take home our biggest honor (often times at some point in the future) — Agency of the Year recognition. That's, in part, because firms that take culture seriously tend to attract and retain smart and creative talent who, in turn, produce stellar work. It's a simple formula but one that's easily overlooked amid the breathless pace and tremendous pressures that are a seemingly inevitable reality of agency life. But this pace is exactly why agencies shouldn't underestimate the power its culture has on the work its employees produce.

The firms recognized on the rankings include a few holding companies firms, but mostly independents. Some have generous benefits, others prioritize professional development or interesting work that keeps talent engaged. We're working on an in-depth feature that will more deeply explore the factors that drive employee engagement within our industry. All participating firms can also obtain their own results mapped against either the industry or its competitive set. Trophies for the top ranking agencies were presented at the 2018 EMEA SABRE Awards in Amsterdam on May 23.

BEST AGENCY TO WORK FOR, EMEA NETWORK

#1 Text 100 (Next 15)

Last year's #2 climbs to the first-spot this year with a well-rounded package of benefits with the underlying philosophy of treating employees like adults. Among these, Text 100's flexible working is intended to make work fit around people instead of the other way around — so the firm eschews the rigid 9am to 5pm work structure for more fluid working options. Text 100 recently launched an unlimited holiday policy, guiding employees to take time-off when they need it. Other workplace perks include regular social activities, flexible benefits allowance, and hot-desking in which employees choose where they sit based on what they have going on that day.

From a professional development standpoint, Text 100 offers city swaps and a secondment programme as an opportunity for its employees to experience different cultures and environments and collaborate with others. Employees also develop a career-path planning document that's a framework that allows individuals to customize their careers at Text 100. After six years of service, employees are granted two months of paid sabbatical.

Notably, Text 100 has rolled out mental health initiatives with dedicated mental health first aid ambassadors to spot

the signs of people struggling, in addition to mental health campaign on the company blog.

#2 APCO (Independent)

#3 Cohn & Wolfe (WPP)

BEST AGENCY TO WORK FOR, UK

#1 Chameleon (Independent)

Chameleon makes it onto the list for the first time in the top spot with its combined benefit package that includes career development, interesting client work and an engaged culture. The firm tailors its training and development program to meet the individual goals of each employee — in addition to inspirational events and overseas trips. Strategy sessions have taken place in Athens, Bucharest and Budapest. For 'Training Tuesday' series, the team have watched the London Philharmonic Orchestra rehearse. The firm relies on a net promoter score which is currently +78 (anything about +50 is considered excellent.) When it comes to diversity, the management team consists of 2/3 women and 20% of employees are from ethnic minority groups. Meanwhile, 25% of the staff work part-time or flexible hours (an option that open to all) and 15% of profits are allocated for employee bonuses. Employees are given £100 per year to explore new areas of creativity and developmental interests.

#2 Harvard (Independent)

#3 Jargon (Independent)

#4 CC Group (Independent)

#5 Pagefield (Independent)

BEST AGENCY TO WORK FOR, EMEA

#1 One Philosophy (Independent)

The Ukraine-based One Philosophy is a multidisciplinary group of communications companies. Founder Nataliya Popovych has made it a priority to grow leaders and talent through investments in employee education and development. The management ask employees about their professional priorities and then tailors its training programs for employees. In response to this, the firm developed “Wednesday Learning Sessions” to be centered on topics beyond communications. Because feedback is also crucial to the firm’s culture, the annual evaluations are designed to be honest dialogues rather than a formal management-led activity.

As part of its CSR commitment, firm started the “Has To Be So” movement for people with disabilities to integrate more fully into life in Ukraine both professionally and socially. One Philosophy also provides employees access to a free library, composed of newest and impactful books and magazines on business, culture, artwork and design, located in the new One Philosophy Space, designed for daily inspiration and collaboration. More casual benefits include additional days-off for birthdays or child’s birthday, work-from-home one day per week and office yoga on Tuesday and Thursday

mornings. The firm conducts monthly town halls to celebrate achievements, birthdays and other milestones.

#2 Schwartz (Independent)

#3 Allison + Partners (MDC)

#4 Fischer Appelt (Independent)

#5 Canela (Independent)



The Agencies of the Year - Asia-Pacific

2018 Regional PR Consultancies of the Year (Large)

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore.

WINNER

Ogilvy (WPP)

The PR suffix might be gone, but Ogilvy continues to serve as the benchmark by which other regional public relations networks are measured in Asia-Pacific, with estimated fee income at around \$170m following another year's upper single-digit growth last year. Those numbers would be healthy enough during a year when many of its rivals failed to record significant growth, but coming from Ogilvy's base they deserve even greater respect — the WPP agency's Asia-Pacific revenue overtook its US earnings some years ago and its 'PR & influence' domain, as we must now call it, functions

as the largest profit contributor to Ogilvy group in many markets. Indeed, while Ogilvy's 'refounding' makes much of breaking down barriers between silos, it is easy to view Asia-Pacific as the template for this thinking, given the number of Ogilvy PR executives that now lead the broader group in such key markets as Shanghai (Debby Cheung), Beijing (Selina Teng), Guangzhou (Frangelica Liang), Singapore (EeRong Cheng), Vietnam (Dieucam Nguyen) and Australia (Kieran Moore).

Under the leadership of agency veteran Scott Kronick, Ogilvy PR now has more than 1,000 staff working across 26 offices in 15 countries, giving it the largest regional footprint of the MNC firms, led by particular strength in Greater China, Australia, Japan, the Philippines and Southeast Asia. There has been particular attention paid to Ogilvy PR's integrated offering, which includes a formidable digital and social media practice, along with strategic depth in such areas as public sector and public affairs, technology, consumer marketing and financial

communications. It is worth noting that, after 35 years in the region, Ogilvy's PR operation continues to either be the largest, or within the top three, in a slew of markets, including China, Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Growth was fuelled by a strong new business haul, including Vivo, the Xi'an City government, Hennessy, Tencent, Off and Cigna in China; Amazon at a regional level; and the National Arts Council and Changi Airport in Singapore. Half of those engagements were worth more than US\$1m, joining a client roster that already features Intel, Huawei, Mercedes-Benz, Dell, Nestle, Sharp, Shiseido and Ford. And notable assignments include winning the Beijing Olympic Committee's Winter Olympics assignment; helping to sell Xi'an as an investment destination; positioning Singapore as an arts and culture hub in ASEAN; developing Huawei's market-leading KOL program; and helping build Coca-Cola's social intelligence centre.

The high-profile ‘refounding’ effort, meanwhile, only underlines the strength of Ogilvy’s integrated offer, bolstered by a strong commitment to training and development, and a commitment to thought leadership that reflects the firm’s view that PR remains central, rather than peripheral to Ogilvy Asia-Pacific. And, as usual, the work remains impressive, with Ogilvy scoring no fewer than 22 SABRE nominations, including cutting-edge campaigns for Huawei with Rex Tso, Tiger Global, Intel, Ofo, Coca-Cola Foundation, Heineken, CIF, Shell and Rakuten Kobo — from a much broader range of markets than its rivals, including Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Myanmar, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia. — AS

FINALISTS

Edelman (DJE Holdings)

While Edelman’s Asia-Pacific revenues declined 1.6% for their 2018 fiscal year to \$103m (thanks in large part to the loss of its \$5m Tata mandate), there is no mistaking the ambition that underpins the firm’s regional offering, which continues to encompass considerable geographic breadth (1,400 employees across 11 markets) along with service depth in such areas as digital, research, corporate and creative. Indeed, the agency has restructured its operations to noticeable effect in the region, a process that continues under the leadership of new Asia-Pacific CEO Jesse Lin, who oversees a regional structure that is built around two key practice areas, brand and reputation.

Lin is supported by chief operating officer Bob Grove, who has spent more than a decade with the agency, and a leadership team that includes

vice-chairman (reputation) Iain Twine; and, vice-chairman (brand) Rupen Desai, one of a number of imports from the advertising industry, as Edelman attempts to elevate its creative capabilities to better compete with advertising and digital agencies for integrated briefs. While there were some notable digital departures, Edelman replaced their ranks with several senior hires, including Ranjit Jathanna as chief regional strategy officer and several creative/strategy appointments in Tokyo, Southeast Asia, Beijing, Australia, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

As such, Edelman’s growth in the region (where it is forecasting 7% expansion for the current fiscal year) represents a bet on what it calls ‘communications marketing’, where earned media ideas are brought to life across the full spectrum of marketing communications. It is not a particularly controversial idea, but it relies in particular on a superior digital capability, something that Edelman has invested in to impressive effect. Indeed, the best of Edelman’s work indicates that it has been able to bring this concept to fruition, via campaigns for HP (making the brand cool in Australia); Extra (an interactive lunchbox); Surf Excel (helping kids cope with failure); Shell (the impressive ‘emotion tracking’ effort in Malaysia); and AIAC (lead creative for a wide-ranging rebrand). And while the firm’s digital and data capabilities continue to stand out, Edelman’s rise into one of the region’s top financial communications players should not be underestimated, either.

Accordingly, the network’s portfolio across practices is well balanced across corporate and consumer, alongside a strong commitment to both professional development

(22,000 training hours across the region) and thought leadership (from the Trust Barometer to the Cultural Connections initiative). The firm’s client roster remains stronger than most, including multi-market accounts such as Adobe, AstraZeneca, California Almonds, HP, Mars, Nissan, PayPal, Samsung, Shell and Unilever while there was significant new business from Adidas, Ajinomoto, Arla, Arvind, Infosys, Mitsubishi, Principal, Eight and Vivo. — AS

FleishmanHillard (Omnicom)

FleishmanHillard’s 23-year history in the Asia-Pacific region can be divided into two halves. During the first decade or so, it would be generous to describe the firm’s market position as a challenger brand to its fellow multinationals. It’s only over the past 15 years, under the leadership of Lynne-Anne Davis, that FH has established itself as a powerhouse in the region, more than capable of competing with larger, longer-established competitors in the region.

There are plenty of metrics that demonstrate the firm’s strength in the region. Last year, 17 of its top 20 clients were served by more than one owned office, with a couple of them drawing on the resources of 10 offices. More than 50 clients expanded to additional offices in the region. That has been driving growth in some significant markets, with Thailand up 30%, India and the Vox Japan operation up by better than 20%, and the Philippines, Singapore and Korea all recording double-digit growth. Greater China, united two years ago under the leadership of Rachel Catanach, continues to be the largest market.

Major clients include both Asia-based and western multinationals, such as Alibaba Group, General Motors, HongKong Land, J&J, Bose, Corning, Reckitt Benckiser, SAP, P&G, Huawei, Philips—the average tenure of those clients is more than eight years. New clients added in 2017 include McDonalds, Hyundai, ICBC International, Nike, BNY Mellon, Liverpool Football Club, Mondelez, Amgen, Seagate, Wynn Resorts, Amadeus, Beiersdorf, Norwegian Seafood Council, BASF, JoongAng Ilbo, HiteJinro, Money 20/20 Asia, Medidata Solutions, Herbalife, JP Holdings, Nipsea, and Mixi. Healthcare, financial services, and public affairs have seen particularly strong growth.

High-profile work includes the “School for Justice” campaign, an education program in India that helps take survivors of sex trafficking out of prostitution and to prosecute the perpetrators. It is aimed at getting taboo topics around child prostitution discussed openly in Indian society and by the media. On the corporate front, the firm has been working with Harley-Davidson in China, drawing on the new generation’s love of hip-hop. And in Singapore, the firm created “They Built This City: Revealing the Sacrifices by Migrant Workers” campaign, telling the stories of migrant workers in the country, for Paya Lebar Quarter development by Lendlease. — PH

H+K Strategies (WPP)

Following a relatively quiet period in the region, H+K Strategies marked its 60th anniversary in Asia-Pacific by underlining its return to growth mode, with overall revenue expansion (up around 3% to \$50m) led by particularly strong performances

from its operations in Southeast Asia and Korea. Greater China accounts for around half of the firm’s regional headcount, and grew around 5% last year, thanks to a renewed focus on creativity that has brought new business from Alibaba, Avon, China Fortune Land Development, Crocs, MSC Cruises, Prevail, Rio Tinto, Red Bull and Zespri, along with the global AOR remit for Dalian Wanda.

In Korea, Synergy H+K Korea’s 60-plus team continues to outperform despite a difficult political and economic environment, with revenues up 14%, profits increasing 67% and headcount growing by a healthy 10% — driven in part by the firm’s impressive work for the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, for which it served as global AOR. And, in Southeast Asia, 100 staffers work across offices in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, accounting for 15% of the WPP network’s Asia-Pacific revenue. The 46-person Bangkok office must rank as the country’s largest international PR firm, and has grown at a double-digit rate for each of the past 15 years. In Singapore, meanwhile, a resurgent 28-person office grew topline (+12%) and bottomline (+18%) in some style.

Those performances helped to outweigh less stellar returns from other markets, notably Japan, India (now under new leadership) and Australia. The regional leadership team under long-term CEO Viv Lines has a more settled look about it, working for a client roster that features such names as Canon, Coca-Cola, Ford, HSBC, Huawei, LG, Microsoft, Schneider Electric and Singapore Tourism Board. Technology remains H+K’s biggest sector (around 30% of regional revenue), showcasing new business from Spotify, Huawei,

Unisys and Nvidia, but there is also strategic depth in most areas, notably its Shanghai Creative hub and a strong offering around purpose consultancy, particularly for Chinese clients going global, including Dalian Wanda, Suning and Ofo.

A transformed content, digital strategy and production capability, furthermore, is resulting in some impressive work, including the Dreamlab campaign for Vodafone Foundation and Granny’s Secret for Prevail. — AS

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic Group)

Last year’s winners continued their impressive progress in Asia-Pacific, even if growth was only 2% in 2017 after several years of turbo-charged expansion. A cohesive regional strategy means that Weber Shandwick has added considerable geographic breadth and specialist depth across the region, with the agency tripling in size over the past eight years, to around \$110m in fee income. Much of that is the by-product of a stable leadership team that is overseen by chairman Tim Sutton and CEO Baxter Jolly, supported by operations chair Tyler Kim in Korea; creativity and innovation chair Darren Burns in China; client experience chair Vanessa Ho in Singapore; global technology co-head Lydia Lee; and strategy/marketing chair Ian Rumsby in Australia.

The firm’s local market leadership, overseeing some 900 people across 10 markets, is similarly stable and also reflects Weber’s preference for homegrown leaders, including David Liu in China, Albert Shu in Hong Kong and Valerie Pinto in India. Growth was led by India (+18%),

Indonesia (+17%), Hong Kong (+7.5% to more than \$15m), Korea (+5.5% including a merger with McCann Healthcare) and Japan (+5%).

Much of that is driven by a top 20 client base that accounts for 40% of revenue, with 21 Weber Shandwick clients now bringing in revenue of more than \$1m, a considerable uptick on previous years. There was significant new business from Turkish Airlines, Tencent, LG Home Appliances, Jfoodo, Ardent, Gardasil, LG Mobile, Fidelity, Hyatt, AusGold, and Gionee. They join an existing client roster that features Mercedes-Benz, Nike, Mattel, MasterCard, GM, Axa, Vanguard, Pfizer, Abbott, J&J, ExxonMobil, NetApp and Philips — reflecting Weber Shandwick's strength across corporate/PA (which

accounts for 33% of regional revenue), consumer (28%), technology (18%), digital (12%) and healthcare (9%).

But the numbers don't tell the full story of Weber Shandwick's impressive performance in Asia-Pacific. Jolly has overseen a fundamental expansion of the firm's integrated capabilities across all of its markets and practices, with a specific focus on establishing a more credible creative offering. Weber Shandwick's digital operation now stands as one of the region's strongest. Indeed, the firm has seen a major uptick in integrated and digital briefs, accounting for particular growth in Hong Kong (+173%), Korea (+48%) and Singapore (+14%). In China, meanwhile, the acquisition of data and insights consultancy Bomoda

brings specific expertise into Chinese social media platforms, helping to drive some inspiring work, including a confidential data-driven initiative on behalf of a major beauty player, which helped to reshape its entire social media and CRM story. All told, the agency now employs more than 40+ content specialists in China alone, along with 25 analytics specialists across the region, part of the firm's 220-strong digital/studio headcount.

The work, unsurprisingly, reflects this level of innovation, with Weber Shandwick scoring 11 SABRE nominations — including impressive campaigns for the Hong Kong Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, Philips, Hotels.com and GSK. — AS

2018 Regional PR Consultancies of the Year (Midsized)

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore.

WINNER

Cohn & Wolfe (WPP)

The headline remains the dramatic takeover of Burson-Marsteller, but any analysis of Cohn & Wolfe in Asia-Pacific should judge the agency on its merits alone, ahead of the formal integration that will only complete at the start of 2019. And, on those terms at least, there is plenty to applaud, from an agency

that, less than three years ago, was most notable for a series of acquisitions that added regional scale if not stability, thanks to steady turnover of its regional leadership.

The turbulence soon subsided with the arrival of former Burson-Marsteller executive Matt Stafford to lead the region in 2016. Indeed, Stafford has overseen a dramatic revival in the firm's regional fortunes, including 11% growth in 2016 and 21% growth in 2017, with another 24% forecast for this year. That will take Cohn & Wolfe to around \$30m in regional revenue, generated by 350 people across operations in Greater China, India and Southeast Asia.

Hong Kong has been a key driver of this growth, up 53% last year and positioned to more than double in 2018. And the office's integration with

a new Shenzhen operation, along with a much stronger China business (accounting for almost 150 people) under Tiffany Bai, means that Cohn & Wolfe is regularly winning major mandates across the sub-region, many of which reflect Stafford's own technology sector strength. Over the past 18 months there has been new business from Tencent, Huawei Honor, Oppo, Vivo, Converse, Haier, Infinitus, Bosch and Siemens — much of which involves the full range of integrated marketing capabilities.

In India meanwhile, Cohn & Wolfe Six Degrees grew 53% in 2017 to more than \$3m, with another 24% forecast for 2018, as market leaders Zach James and Rish Seth broaden the focus of the 85-person agency beyond technology into corporate, public affairs and content — demonstrated by the high-profile

Ikea and PepsiCo wins, along with new business from Tata Sky, Bosch, Scania, Alcon, Regus and Diageo.

Southeast Asia continues to remain the most mature of Cohn & Wolfe's markets, with around 90 people spread across offices in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila and Singapore, although revenues were flat in 2017. And the firm has quietly opened an Australian office, leveraging Stafford's political background to land several public affairs mandates, notably including Huawei.

And the campaign work now reflects Cohn & Wolfe's evolution into a genuine regional contender, with SABRE-nominated efforts for BlueAir and Tencent. Clearly, more change is coming to Cohn & Wolfe, as the markets integrate with Burson-Marsteller to form an agency that will become one of the region's largest. But most of those mergers will be complementary and Stafford has moved quickly to finalise leadership.— AS

FINALISTS

Allison+Partners (MDC Partners)

Five years since entering Asia, Allison+Partners has not only built a credible regional presence, but has demonstrated that scale need not be a barrier to providing a broad range of strategic services. At around \$7m in regional revenue, after 45% annual growth, the agency might seem on the small side for a network, but its geographic footprint and depth in specific areas marks it out as a different beast from other firms in its weight class.

Indeed, with 80 people across offices in China, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Australia and India, the region now

accounts for 25% of Allison's global headcount, up from just 12 executives four years ago. Much of that expansion has been driven by digital, creative, measurement and content, under the leadership of China MD Jerry Zhu, Singapore GM Serina Tan and Paul Mottram, who oversees the All Told content operation. There was multi-market new business from BSA, UL and ClassPass along with the extension of assignments from ThoughtWorks, Schneider Electric and Kimpton. And there was plenty of local new business, including Cloud Foundry Foundation, Thales, Ingersoll Rand and GE Healthcare (China); ClassPass, Waze, SAP/Concur, Unilever Foundry (Singapore), Pinterest in Australia and Music.ly in India.

Underpinning Allison's expansion, furthermore, is the kind of integrated work that brings a particular focus on harnessing influence, in line with the firm's broader thought leadership platform. That includes a series of films designed to promote engineering for Singapore's EDB; increasing sales for Listerine across various Asia-Pacific markets; influencer marketing activity for Kimpton and thought leadership for UL and BSA. — AS

Ketchum (Omnicom Group)

Ketchum's regional footprint already looks more cohesive under new global CEO Barri Rafferty, who appears less willing to accept the meandering pace of progress that has characterised the firm's Asia-Pacific performance over the past decade. Already, there has been a significant leadership reshuffle, even if the new Asia-Pacific head — agency veteran Esty Pujadas — remains based some 8,000 miles away in New York. Simeon Mellalieu oversees regional

client development while the agency also overhauled its Greater China leadership, bringing in IPG executives Prince Zhang as CEO and Eunice Wong as chief growth officer, to oversee its 100 staffers across offices in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

In India, Girish Huria arrived as president to support partner/MD NS Rajan at the Ketchum Sampark operation which counts 140 people across Mumbai and Delhi. The firm remains one of the market's largest, growing 13% last year and expanding its portfolio beyond financial communications and corporate into healthcare and digital with new business from Essar Oil, Max Life and DHL. Elsewhere, Ketchum's Singapore operation became part of Omnicom PR Group, while its 25-person Korean office under Yonnie Woo had a strong year thanks to Olympic work (always a strong suit for Ketchum) for Samsung and P&G. And, the firm's Daggerwing consulting unit gives it credible employee engagement skills.

In particular, Ketchum has smartly repositioned its offering around a digital/social-first model that focuses on using content to drive recommendations and sales. This approach, which the agency dubs 'tribal commerce' appears to be reaping dividends, demonstrated by pure social/digital wins that include Mercedes-Benz, SIA, Costa Coffee and Bacardi, along with increasingly integrated work for a client roster that includes P&G, Hyundai, Booking.com and HPE. Underpinning the shift is a focus on new products, best illustrated by the Maestro tool that was developed for P&G in Asia under regional client director Jon Chin in Singapore,

identifying tribes and then helping to determine the blend of paid and earned required to drive purchase.

In Greater China, meanwhile, Zhang and Wong both bring a distinctly digital focus to the agency's work. That much is demonstrated by B2B work for Booking.com, which leveraged digital analytics to help improve online conversion and searches. For Bacardi, meanwhile, a content-driven campaign deployed digital creative to take consumers from social to commerce. This momentum was furthered by the eye-catching #LoveOverBias Olympics effort for P&G, along with regional new business from New Development Bank, Hyundai, P&G, NEC, Johnson Controls, Takeda, TransUnion, Whirlpool and General Mills. — AS

Ruder Finn (Independent)

Last year's Midsize winner continues to impress, amid a seamless leadership switch that saw China chief Elan Shou named Asia-Pacific CEO when long-term leader Jean-Michel Dumont returned to Europe to become Ruder Finn's global strategy director. Regional revenues were up 8% in 2018 to \$30m, and much of that was down to Shou's Mainland China operation, which remains one of the market's strongest, thanks to considerable depth across automotive and luxury, along with growing practices in travel & tourism, beauty and digital.

The agency's China client base favours these sectors, including such names as Hermes, Longines, Montblanc, De Beers, Mercedes-Benz, Lamborghini, Volkswagen, Bentley, Shanghai Disney Resort, Emirates, Four Seasons and L'Oreal. And much of the new business had an integrated flavour, including

assignments for Moët Hennessy Diageo, Almond Board of California, 3M, JD.com, VIP-Lux, Amazon and BMS. That reflects the firm's re-engineering of its integrated capabilities, which now includes digital media buying, campaign design and advertising, underpinned by the RFI Asia digital offering that is as advanced as any in the region, featuring a particularly impressive range of products and tools in such areas as data analytics, risk management and crisis simulation.

The mainland China operation is complemented by operations in Southeast Asia and India, both of which will soon be under new leadership with aggressive growth targets. All told, there are 465 staffers across the region, with around half of them based in mainland China. And there were a slew of new leadership appointments, including new MDs in Hong Kong and Beijing, and new heads of creative and planning, to join a leadership team that features Shu, Charles Lankester and David Ko.

Meanwhile, the firm's campaign work has experienced a noticeable uptick, illustrated by no fewer than 17 SABRE finalists, including campaigns for Moët Hennessy Diageo, Wrigley, Four Seasons Hotel, Porsche, Macy's, Visa and Midea. — AS

WE Communications (Independent)

Best-known for its technology credentials, WE has undergone a rapid transformation since Alan VanderMolen took charge of the region two years ago and embarked on an ambitious acquisition spree, buying top-rated outfits in China (Red Bridge), India (Avian Media) and Singapore (Watatawa). The net effect of this expansion, along with the earlier deal for Australian agency

Buchan, is that WE now possesses an offering that extends beyond technology through consumer, B2B, corporate and healthcare. And, it should be noted, it also possesses a leadership team that is stronger than most, featuring Penny Burgess in China, Nitin Mantri (India), Simon Pangrazio (Singapore), and Rebecca Wilson (Australia).

Acquisitions helped swell growth to 60% in 2017, but even without their impact WE still expanded by 20% during the calendar year, and is on track to reach \$25m in revenue this year. The Singapore operation focuses largely on technology and healthcare, while Mainland China is largely consumer and healthcare-oriented and Hong Kong veers towards corporate. In India, meanwhile Avian brings considerable strength across consumer, corporate and public affairs, while WE Buchan in Australia is best known for its corporate capabilities. All of which adds up to a regional offering in which technology now accounts for just a third of revenue, with consumer/corporate making up half, and healthcare accounting for the rest.

Over the past year, growth was fuelled by new business from Lenovo, which has expanded considerably, along with Shiseido, Intel, Lululemon, Olam, APRIL, Swire Properties and Metlife. Campaign highlights, meanwhile, included a SABRE-nominated virtual reality campaign for 'Zero Latency' in Australia, along with standout efforts for Honeywell and La Liga. In India, furthermore, Avian WE topped all agencies with six South Asia SABRE Awards, including highly impressive campaigns for Fortis Healthcare and McDonald's. — AS

2018 Australasian PR Consultancies of the Year

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore.

WINNER

Red Agency (Havas)

Launched in 2002, Red has become the star performer in the Havas Australia group, now numbering 90 people and exporting its model across the wider Havas network. Much of that is down to the leadership of James Wright, who joined Red in 2011 and has since been named global CEO for Havas PR. Red's senior team also includes executive directors Jackie Crossman and Dav Ghiassi, the latter of whom runs the firm's 24-person social media team, which has grown considerably to cover creative, strategy, paid, insights and optimisation, community management and content production.

2017 marked Red's best year ever, as the agency underlined its presence as Australia's hottest PR agency — growing by 70% and securing major new business from Toyota, Vivid, Lexus, Moet-Hennessy, Booking.com and Menulog. A further 40% growth is forecast for 2018, suggesting that Red's momentum is firmly established in the marketplace. Existing clients include Amazon Web Services, Heineken, Coca-

Cola, Cadbury, Destination NSW, Menulog, Origin Energy, Qatar Airways, Capgemini and Yahoo7.

Red's impressive momentum, though, is hardly limited to numbers and new business alone. The firm's work is highly impressive, led by the Palau Pledge global campaign, and also including standout efforts for the Fund for Peace, Australian Macadamias, the Mormon Church, Ben & Jerry's and Chandon. All of these campaigns demonstrated the kind of cultural intelligence that underscores Red's desire to 'be the change', helping it land awards across the globe, and underpinned by a thought leadership approach that is also sharper than most. — AS

FINALISTS

Eleven (Whybin\TBWA)

Now firmly ensconced as one of the region's top firms, after consecutive Agency of the Year honours, Eleven remains one of the most creative agencies in one of the world's most creative PR regions. After three years of 80% growth, Eleven opted to stabilise its client base in 2018, turning down opportunities but still managing to win every one of its pitches, except one. That meant the agency added MasterCard, the entire Kellogg's portfolio and Spotify, while continuing to net a slew of awards. Other new business included Solotel Group and Campari's entire creative business, joining a client roster that features Tourism New Zealand, MJ Bale, Gatorade, ANZ, Philips and Krispy Kreme.

The firm retains a core belief in the power of public relations to drive conversations and cultural relevance,

and continues to develop cutting-edge products and campaigns to support this vision, in particular the Disruption Live methodology of insights mining, open briefing and audience planning that has helped return some tremendous work for M.J Bale and Gatorade. The agency's D-Live methodology includes specific components — the Back\slash cultural capability that focuses on Instagram and daily video, powered by culture spotters from the broader TBWA global network; Cultural Research Labs, which help identify a brand's place in culture; CLUE, a new consumer data analytics engine; and Disruption Labs, which asks what keeps brands up at night.

Roberto Pace has served as MD of the firm's three offices (Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland) since mid-2015, helping to renew the firm's reputation for innovation, alongside GM Fiona Milliken and new Melbourne head Kiefer Casamore. There is a strong focus on training and development, to immerse staff in relevant cultural trends, along with all the usual workplace perks associated with a progressive agency culture.

All of that paid off with some inspiring work. MJ Bale's 'Coolest Suit on the Planet' sent a weatherman to test the brand's wool suits in the hottest places on Earth, while Gatorade's 'Bolt Rate' created a new metric to measure the speed at which cricketers run between wickets. — AS

Herd MSL (Publicis Communications)

Last year's Australian Agency of the Year, just a few months after its acquisition by Publicis Groupe and its integration into MSL's formidable

Asia-Pacific capabilities, Herd MSL has not been resting on its laurels, seeing its revenues grow by 27% last year—a team of 60 generating \$10.6 million—with new business wins spanning the consumer (Jaguar, Lenovo, AB InBev – Corona, Fat Yak, Coca-Cola, 2XU, Gumtree, Groupon), technology (nbn Co, Lenovo, Xero), and government (CSIRO, Treasury, Department of Health) sectors. They join a blue-chip roster that includes American Express, Salesforce, Facebook, Airbnb, Instagram, INGDirect and more.

The Herd brand was introduced in 2016, formed by the coming together of established agencies N2N (best known for its business-to-business technology expertise,) and Fuel (with more of a consumer focus), and the integration of social media specialist Touch Creative. Digital continues to be a significant source of strength, with founder Jamie Verco leading the digital practice and the continued integration of Touch, a content team that offers design and video production services. It is largely that expertise that has helped the agency expand beyond its technology roots to offer strong capabilities in consumer and corporate communications, public affairs, and the technology and healthcare sectors.

The digital work has also underpinned much of the firm's award-winning work, including the Coca-Cola “Characters of the Cross” campaign that earned recognition from SABRE and PRIA for turning over an iconic billboard in Sydney's Kings Cross neighbourhood to the community, allowing people to share images and stories to promote the brand's partnership with Vivid Sydney. For Airbnb, meanwhile, the “Until

We All Belong” initiative focused on marriage equality during the runup to a historic vote in Australia and earned the agency a Silver Lion at Cannes.

Another critical development in 2018 saw the firm complete version 2.0 of its proprietary measurement platform ROAR, which provides real time insight into campaign performance and offers clients access to results via an app.—PH

OPR Agency (WPP AUNZ)

Since 2001, Ogilvy PR has built what is probably Australia's largest PR business, thanks to the acquisitions of Howorth (B2B/tech), Parker & Partners (public affairs/corporate), Impact (employee engagement) and Savage & Horrigan (now known as Cannings). And the 17 years since have seen it deepen its capabilities considerably, adding consumer brand agency Pulse Communications, specialist health agency opr Health — all adding up to 110 professionals across offices in Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney.

The kind of specialist sector expertise helps to differentiate OPR from its rivals, and ensures a broad base that continues to grow despite its size. Fee income was up by 7% in 2017, thanks to strong pitch conversation and organic growth from social, digital and strategy. New business included KFC, Coca-Cola, Invictus Games, Ausgrid, Crown and Transport NSW, joining a client roster that includes Microsoft Australia, Netflix, Canon, Amex, Ikea, SAP, NAB, AstraZeneca, Mars and Ford.

And, under CEO Richard Brett, OPR has also bolstered efforts to provide a more integrated offering, hiring Bridget Jung as its first ECD, to join a leadership team that also features

business/technology MD Graham White, corporate MD Leon Beswick and Pulse MD Jacqui Abbott. And while OPR's specialist practices remain its drawcard, more than 40% of clients work across businesses, fuelled by collaborative units that cover such areas as media training, storytelling, issues/crisis, content/editorial and strategic planning.

Campaign highlights include the Xbox One X launch, which saw the creation of the Stay N' Play Boutique for gaming sleepover experiences, and the UBank Science of Spending & Saving experiment, which helped change Australian spending and saving behaviour. — AS

WE Buchan (WE Communications)

Alongside its acquisition by WE in 2016, Buchan has expanded its capabilities beyond its corporate and financial heartland, into consumer, technology and healthcare. Tom Buchan remains in place as executive chairman, with Rebecca Wilson leading operations as CEO, supported by MD Gemma Hudson and the leadership team comprising, Kyahn Williamson, Michelle Ryan, Sarah Aldridge, and Nichole Provatas.

That expansion helps to explain WE Buchan's impressive rate of growth, up 5% in 2017 and forecasting a 40% increase in 2018. Corporate and investor still accounts for more than 50% of revenues, but there has been sustained growth across consumer, technology and healthcare, for such clients as Adobe, Allianz, L1 and Bolton Clarke.

The firm's Zero Latency work, in particular, stands out — creating the first VR marriage proposal to boost the company's presence with females. For Allianz, meanwhile, WE Buchan

developed the #InspirationShared platform, helping to bolster the company's commitment to diversity and inclusion. — AS

2018 Greater China PR Consultancies of the Year

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore:

WINNER

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic Group)

Weber Shandwick has posted impressive regional growth over the past three years and Greater China exerts a compelling influence over that expansion, with the sub-region accounting for 51% of regional revenues. More than a third comes from mainland China, where 2017 growth was flat in line with tougher market conditions, but has already rebounded to 18% growth in 2018, reflecting the investment in capabilities that has resulted in a much clearer focus on digital, data and creative. The firm now has 400 people across offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Taiwan and Hong Kong, bolstered by the 2017 acquisition of data consultancy Bomoda.

We'll get to mainland China shortly, but first, special mention should probably be made of Weber Shandwick's stellar Hong Kong office, which under the long-term leadership of Albert Shu continues

to defy gravity in impressive fashion, submitting 7.5% growth in 2017, after seven consecutive years of double-digit growth. That takes Hong Kong revenue to an estimated \$15m, making Weber Shandwick the market's largest international agency, with strength across healthcare, corporate and consumer, and a client base that includes AXA, Facebook, HK Jockey Club, MasterCard, Pfizer, Samsung, China Duty Free and Fidelity.

Under the leadership of chairman David Liu and president Darren Burns, meanwhile, China has established itself as a global innovation centre for Weber Shandwick, thanks in large part to the C3 platform that connects content to commerce. The firm has also developed an influencer management tool called Kloud, and has worked hard to make inroads into integrated digital and creative assignments, hiring senior talent across analytics and creative. Indeed, the firm's China operation now counts 40 content people in China alone, supported by Bomoda's data analytics capabilities, helping position Shanghai as Weber Shandwick's fastest-growing major global office, up 42% in 2018.

Accordingly, there was new business from Aldi, General Mills, GE Social, Hyatt, Oppo, Turkish Airlines, Vanguard, Victoria's Secret, Vivo and Wrigley, to go with growth from existing clients Nike, ExxonMobile, GSK, GE, Microsoft, MasterCard

and Nestle. Campaign highlights, meanwhile, included a Hong Kong campaign that changed government policy on mental health; the SABRE-shortlisted 'Secret Detective' effort for GSK's Lamisil that helped the product launch with considerable success; and, a confidential data-driven initiative on behalf of a major beauty player, which helped to reshape its entire social media and CRM story. — AS

FINALISTS

BlueFocus Digital (BlueFocus Communication Group)

Since its launch in 1996 (then known as Blue Focus PR), Oscar Zhao's company has grown into the largest public relations consultancy in China and one of the top 10 public relations businesses in the world, with 2017 fee income (per our 2018 Top 250 ranking) of more than \$320 million—up by 12% last year.

Today, BlueFocus Digital employs more than 1,500 people offering a unique blend of digital marketing and public relations services in China across offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Xi'an. The firm is led by CEO Richard Jiao, supported by COO Stanley Xiao, chief strategy officer Yorf Guo, VP Bruce Zhu and SVP Donna Li. As such, BlueFocus Digital is the China market leader in many areas — mobile advertising, OTT, and on Google/Facebook.

Accordingly, it represents many of the country's largest companies (Tencent, NetEase, JD.com, Alex, FAW-Volkswagen). New business over the past 12 months came from L'Oréal, Air China, Transsion, Great Wall Automobile and Chery Automobile.

Since 2017, furthermore, the firm has continued to bolster its market-leading digital capability, rolling out new platforms and products based on data technology, including smart TV advertising, CRM marketing and social media management. Around 87% of group revenues now come from data tech-related business, and more than 20% of the firm's creative work is developed by intelligent robots designed by the agency itself.

Campaign highlights; an AR restoration campaign for nine city gates in old Beijing on behalf of Baidu; the Samsung Note8 'renaissance' influencer campaign and work for OnePlus and Dyson. — AS

FleishmanHillard (Omnicom Group)

Despite a management restructuring that saw the retirement of long-term China leader Li Hong, FleishmanHillard's Greater China operation continues to motor along in some style, with Greater China president Rachel Catanach supported by a new leadership team that includes COO Lichi Hsueh, GM Judy Wei in Beijing, GM Yisi Liu in Shanghai, and GM Geoff Bilbrough in Hong Kong. That team is supported by new specialist hires as FleishmanHillard rebalances its portfolio towards Shanghai (which grew at a double-digit clip), with Graham Fordyce arriving as China ECD and Helen He joining from @Comms to lead digital as SVP.

Greater China remains the single largest driver of FleishmanHillard's Asia-Pacific revenue, led by the Hong Kong office that has carved out a specific niche when it comes to helping China brands go global. That portfolio includes major global mandates for Alibaba and Huawei, both of which feature on a Greater China client roster that also includes GM, Hongkong Land, Nike, Corning, Harley Davidson, J&J and Blancpain. There was also new business from BNY Mellon, ICBC, LaSalle Investment, FC Barcelona, Liverpool FC and Tencent's international business group — underlining FleishmanHillard's strength across consumer, sports/entertainment, financial services and corporate.

The firm's thought leadership has brought a specific focus on the critical areas of cybersecurity and artificial intelligence. And Fleishman's Greater China work continues to impress, including a particularly imaginative SABRE-nominated campaign that positioned Harley-Davidson around the Rap of China reality show, along with similarly creative efforts for Hongkong Land and Beyond Ventures — AS

Ogilvy (WPP)

With fee income estimated at more than \$75m, Ogilvy PR remains the largest international PR consultancy in China, a position it has held with distinction for many years. The firm's regional CEO Scott Kronick, of course, made his name in the market, and remains based in Beijing, surrounded by a handpicked leadership team that has, for the most part, remained in place for more than a decade. That kind of stability continues to pay off for Ogilvy PR in Greater China, where Kronick

and China/Hong Kong president Debby Cheung oversee a network that includes offices in Hong Kong, Taipei, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Beijing and a new operation in Shenzhen, adding up to around 650 staffers, a little more than half of the network's total Asia-Pacific headcount.

Despite tougher market conditions, and the agency's own shift to the 'One Ogilvy' model, Ogilvy's PR operation remains in fine fettle in Greater China, exemplified by a content to commerce capability that works for Chando, Brita, Elixir, Anissa and Nescafe, and the launch of two new data products — one focused on WeChat and the other a global KOL management system for Huawei from Hong Kong.

All of which helped drive upper single-digit growth in 2017, bringing in new business from Vivo, Amazon, Xi'an Tourism, Alfa Romeo, Hennessy, Costa, Tencent, Allianz, 3M, Marriott, UOB and Swarovski. The firm's reputation with large local players and outbound-focused government entities remains second to none, typified by high-level support for the Xi'an Government's efforts to promote itself as an international investment destination. Those new accounts join an existing client roster that includes Huawei, Tencent, IBM, Dell, Intel, Mercedes-Benz, Nestle, Jala, Shiseido and Ford.

But it is not just the agency's scale that impresses in China. The work continues to demonstrate the kind of 'next chapter' thinking that has been in place for several years now, thanks to a strong creative contingent and one of the strongest digital units in the market. The firm's '52 Mayors' campaign for Wanda, for example, helped rebuild Danzhai

village by promoting it through social influences. For Chando, the firm created a Mother's Day campaign that inspired young Chinese women to appreciate their unique features, driving 118% uplift in ecommerce sales. And for Huawei in Hong Kong, the agency live streamed local hero Rex Tso's boxing fight, helping the brand move from fifth to third in the market.

Meanwhile, Ogilvy's focus on upgrading its planning, products and services continues to bear fruit. It is worth noting that, while the broader group grapples with the challenges of becoming one agency, Ogilvy PR is already a central presence at Ogilvy China, evidenced by the senior roles held by Cheung (who oversees Shanghai), Beijing president Selina Teng and Guangzhou MD Frangelica Liang. — AS

Ruder Finn (Independent)

Ruder Finn's regional revenues were up 8% in 2018 to \$30m, and much of that was down to a Mainland China operation that remains one of the market's strongest, with around 400 people including new Asia-Pacific CEO Elan Shou, who is based in Shanghai. Shou took on the top job when Jean-Michel Dumont returned to Europe to become Ruder Finn's global strategy director, and her elevation reflects the manner in which the agency's China operations have outperformed in recent years, thanks to considerable strength across automotive and luxury, along with growing practices in travel & tourism, beauty and digital.

The agency's China client base favours these sectors, including such names as Hermes, Longines, Montblanc, De Beers, Mercedes-Benz, Lamborghini, Volkswagen, Bentley,

Shanghai Disney Resort, Emirates, Four Seasons and L'Oreal. And much of the new business had an integrated flavour, including assignments for Moet Hennessy Diageo, Almond Board of California, 3M, JD.com, VIP-Lux, Amazon and BMS. That reflects the firm's re-engineering of its integrated capabilities, which now includes digital media buying, campaign design and advertising.

In addition to Shou, key leaders included IMC practice leader Long Xi, new Hong Kong MD Paul Yang, and new group creative and planning directors, in Santi Yan and Paul Wang, respectively. Unsurprisingly, the best of the firm's work blends consulting with integrated marketing strength, with specific campaign highlights for the Singapore Tourism Board, 3M, Midea, Porsche China, Shanghai Disney Resort and Bristol Myers Squibb. — AS

2018 India PR Consultancies of the Year

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore:

WINNER

MSL India (Publicis Groupe)

Three years after a wide-ranging restructuring that consolidated leadership of one of India's biggest PR operations under Amit Misra, 2017 can probably be viewed as the year when MSL India finally hit its stride across

all areas. Another year of double-digit revenue growth (+14%) and impressive profitability confirmed the agency's stellar operational performance, but it was MSL's campaign work that finally caught up over the past 12 months, led by the remarkable 'Touch of Care' campaign for P&G's Vicks, which swept the SABRE Awards South Asia and looks set for further global recognition.

The work, also exemplified by campaigns for Airbnb, SBUT and HPCL Roads, reflects how MSL has transformed its operation away from a generalist agency towards a platform with strong pockets of excellence. That focus on specialisation is more challenging in India than most markets, but MSL's

focus on retention and culture has ensured that productivity among its 550-strong workforce is up, while turnover levels remain relatively low. And the firm's client relationships demonstrate strong net performer score metrics across all categories.

That reflects MSL's focus on a smaller client roster that delivers more value, with a strong new business haul that included Alibaba, Amazon Web Services, Bacardi India, Instagram, LaLiga, Mercedes Benz, Ola, Puma, Sony Sports and WhatsApp. They join an existing client roster that features Coca-Cola, Dell, Facebook, Mondelez, Netflix, Panasonic, SAB Miller / ABInbev, Star Plus, Volkswagen and Xiaomi.

MSL's transformation also involves a more integrated entity, embracing a structured strategic planning approach that involves horizontal specialists in video, content, social voice and data. The firm has also realigned its expertise to focus on the energy, healthcare, automotive, manufacturing and F&B sectors, delivering a range of counsel across citizenship, crisis, employee engagement, financial comms, corporate and public affairs.

With the MSL brand serving as the flagship operation, 20:20 MSL has benefited from a specific focus on technology and unicorns, while Publicis Consultants has developed a credible startup and innovation offering. The diversity of the firm's talent pool reflects this approach. Viju George oversees 20:20 and Publicis Consultants, while new hires included heads of social voice and content. — AS

FINALISTS

Adfactors (Independent)

Long regarded by Indian market watchers as the best corporate and financial specialist in the market, Adfactors has diversified its offering to a remarkable extent in recent years, helping it to net the \$5m Tata mandate from Edelman in the year's biggest account shift. The firm's creative prowess has grown commensurate with that expansion, helping Adfactors become one of the most successful PR firms at the South Asian and Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards over the past three years, thanks to assignments for State Bank of India, Mahindra & Mahindra, Vodafone and Godrej.

The mammoth Tata assignment was just one of a number of big wins in 2017, with others including Essar Group, Apollo Hospitals, Samsung India, ACC Ambuja, Bajaj Electricals. The firm also continues to work for energy and infrastructure conglomerate Adani Group, Bombay Stock Exchange, Citibank, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Jet Airways, Mahindra Group, State Bank of India and Vodafone India—a veritable who's who of Indian market leaders and giant multinationals, to whom it provides public and investor relations services at a high level.

With 2017 fee income of close to \$28 million—following 16% growth—Adfactors ranks among the top 75 PR agencies in our global ranking of PR firms, and is the largest Indian firm on the list. It now has 600 people in 13 Indian offices, with overseas outposts in Singapore, Sri Lanka, and the UAE. And its investment in new services is second to none, focusing on training and development, human resources, and digital transformation.

Notable campaign highlights included When Jailbirds Sang, a campaign for Godrej that used former criminals to help sell locking solutions; a tech-fuelled campaign to protect children on behalf of Vodafone; and helping OYO successfully lower the GST on budget hotels. — AS

Avian WE (WE)

After rising to become one of India's top PR consultancies over the past 12 years, few were surprised to see Avian Media snapped up by WE Communications in early 2018 following a lengthy courtship. Any agency acquisition carries significant risk, but this one appears to be more considered than most, with the zeal of owners Nikhil Khanna and Nitin

Mantri instantly turning WE into a far more credible South Asian force, at the same time giving Avian the kind of global network it has long craved.

Khanna and Mantri remain supported by a leadership team that includes co-founder Manash Neog and regional head Neha Mehrotra. And the firm is in fine fettle — even if revenues were effectively flat at \$4.4m after several years of meteoric growth, Avian caught the eye at the South Asian SABRE Awards, topping all agencies with six awards following some stellar work for Fortis, McDonald's and Philips.

Avian's new business engine continues as the one of the sharpest in the market, adding Deloitte, Aviva, MasterCard, Facebook, Pratt and Whitney, Reckitt & Benckiser, Amazon and Tata Trust, to an existing client base that already included Airbus, Coca-Cola, Vistara, Dell, eBay, Google, Maruti Suzuki, Philips and Qualcomm.

And like all of the best PR firms, Avian's growth has been driven by a unique culture, which starts with Khanna and Mantri's focus on values and deliverables — the firm has worked hard to cultivate a workplace that is collaborative, entrepreneurial and creative, bolstered by its SEED year-long induction programme. Those values continue to drive Avian's progress into a world-class multidisciplinary firm with strength across consumer, corporate, public affairs and crisis. There is also a market-leading digital and content capability, and a commitment to thought leadership initiatives that has helped underpin its 'clients for life' philosophy. Mantri, meanwhile, is a tireless presence

on the industry scene, helping to elevate the profile of public relations in India and beyond. — AS

Genesis Burson-Marsteller (WPP)

After celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2017, Genesis Burson-Marsteller remains the benchmark for international PR agencies in Asia-Pacific, and will soon become considerably bigger when it merges with the tech-focused prowess of Cohn & Wolfe Six Degrees.

And while other firms have fallen by the wayside, GBM remains as relevant as ever, with founder Prema Sagar continuing to oversee a stable leadership team that includes president Nikhil Day, COO Atul Sharma and CMO Deepshikha Dharmaraj. After being named India Consultancy of the Year in 2017, GBM has continued to impress, growing by around 10% to more than \$10m in fee income, fuelled by new business from a client roster that includes Zee, Diageo, Uber, L'Oréal, Microsoft, Star Sports, HP, GE, Tetra Pak and Ford.

Those are impressive numbers, and they reflect the evolution of GBM's work beyond corporate, financial and public affairs into digital, via a thriving content studio and design operation that is built on realtime apps and

intelligence, drawn from a headcount of more than 330 executives across six India offices. The firm's focus on training, meanwhile, remains arguably the strongest in the market, a legacy of the Associate Learning Programme which has developed many of India's PR leaders since it began 13 years ago. And there was considerable disciplinary expansion — focusing in 2017 on agnostic capabilities such as media relations/intelligence, creativity, social media and content.

The work bears out the success of GBM's approach, thanks to SABRE-winning efforts such as 'Carton Le Aao, Classroom Banao' for Tetra Pak and 'Mumbai Life Line 3' for the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation. —AS

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic Group)

Despite keeping something of a low profile since a management shakeup installed Valerie Pinto as India CEO in 2014, Weber Shandwick's 2017 performance in the market reflects the benefits of being part of the world's best PR firm over the past five years. Topline India revenue grew 18%, supported by a host of network-friendly metrics that mark Weber Shandwick out as a slightly different beast from its rivals in the

market. There was a rise of 70% in revenue per client, while business from the agency's top 20 clients grew by 38%, with digital assignments up 58% and integrated briefs accounting for 40% of total business wins.

All of which added up to client retention of almost 90%, with a roster that features Amazon, Boeing, Canon, Experian, Goldman Sachs, Hyatt Hotels, Hero Motor Corp, Honeywell, JK Tyres, Merck for Mothers, MSD, Pernod Ricard, Toyota, The Oberoi Group, Twitter and Zippo. And there was plenty of new business too, including Adani, Bausch & Lomb, Disney, Huawei, HDFC Ergo, Jet Privilege, LA Tourism, Mattel, Mashreq Bank, Nestle, Quest Global, Shire, Tata Motors, Tinder, Turkish Airlines, TVF and Vivo.

Meanwhile, the firm's work continues to demonstrate the kind of creative flair that has turned Weber Shandwick into an awards factory in recent years. In particular, the #DontForgetMoms campaign for MSD for Mothers helped to raise awareness and instigate action to ensure the wellbeing of mothers during childbirth. There was also the second phase of the highly successful Daughters of Mother India effort, along with SABRE-nominated work for Marvel India. — AS

2018 North Asia PR Consultancies of the Year

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners

were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore.

WINNER

Dentsu PR (Dentsu Inc)

Founded in 1961, Dentsu has been a leader in the Japanese public relations market for five decades.

But for much of that time, foreign competitors in particular complained that the firm was a leader largely by virtue of the power wielded by its ad agency parent company—in a market where PR was until recently seen as a poor cousin of advertising—and suggested that the firm was focused on old-fashioned

media relations and events rather than more sophisticated reputation management or more modern digital and social capabilities.

That was always an oversimplification, but today any such criticism is absurd. Like marketing communications businesses across the world, Dentsu has seen clients looking for more integration and more earned-first ideas, and the advertising and PR businesses have converged in ways that have brought out more creativity and originality—and elevated Dentsu to new heights in international awards competitions such as SABRE (its 31 nominations in our Asia-Pacific competition are more than any other agency) and the Cannes Lions.

It was particularly interesting to see how much of the firm's work over the past 12 months targeted women in ways that would surprise those who still think of Japan as a society in which traditional roles are rigid and unchanging: the firm's work on the "Nameless Chores" campaign for Daiwa or the "Changing Housework from a Job to Joy" for Procter & Gamble challenged stereotypes in the home, while its "Hiring Campaign for Housewives" for McDonald's highlighted the ways in which women are moving into the workforce. In another campaign focused on changes in Japanese attitudes, the "Great Failure" program for Froebel-Kan focused on the excessive pressure to succeed placed on young students. In almost all these instances, the line between PR and digital and social and advertising was blurred but the results were undeniable.

In a more traditional realm, the firm continues to produce its invaluable Guide to PR in Japan, to focus on professional development (120 certified PR planners through the Public Relations Society of Japan), and to highlight corporate citizenship (ISO certificates for environmental management and information security). While financial metrics for the Japanese industry remain opaque, Dentsu is one of the two largest PR firms in the market, and its account list, spanning both multinational and Japanese clients (Starbucks Coffee Japan, Conseil Interprofessionnel du Vin de Bordeaux, Cabinet Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Ministry of Finance Japan, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Ministry of Defense, Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau) is unparalleled.—PH

FINALISTS

PR One (Independent)

With fee income in excess of \$19 million (up by more than 14% last year) and a team of 150, PR One is the largest Korea-based agency in our global ranking, finding itself just outside the top 100 but clearly knocking on that particular door. But it is not just its size that makes it a leader in the Korean public relations market: PR One has broad capabilities that span consumer and corporate, financial and public affairs, digital and creative; sector expertise in financial services, healthcare and tech; and supplemental services that are far from ubiquitous in South Korea, including a focus on employee communications and culture change.

With PR in Korea undergoing a "fourth industrial revolution," PR One has been keeping pace with—and

in some cases leading—changing client demands. Its digital and social media capabilities are formidable, including content creation designed to reach consumers in immediate and interactive ways, and a dedicated influencer marketing capability. At the same time, the firm has not neglected increasing demand for more sophisticated corporate reputation management capabilities, bringing in experts from the fields of risk management and culture change to enhance its offering to the C-suite.

So highlights of the firm's work over the past 12 months showcase a wide range of expertise. PR One has conducted a comprehensive integrated campaign—including television advertising—for the Ministry of Health & Welfare to improve awareness of low fertility and potential solutions. For IKEA Korea, meanwhile, the firm's PR work has helped enhance the retailer's positive brand awareness in the Korean market. And the firm has developed corporate social responsibility programming for Standard Chartered Bank Korea and won awards for its work on infectious disease prevention for the Korean Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Other notable clients include LOTTE-Nestlé Korea, Nikon Imaging Korea, Qatar Airways, Korea Health Supplements Association, Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power, and UnionPay International, while new business successes include Amway Korea, Epson Korea, IKEA Korea, P&G Febreze, and the SJA Jeju school.—PH

Sunny Side Up (Independent)

A top three player in the Japanese public relations market, which continues to be dominated by domestic agencies—generally

regarded as better connected to the Japanese media and better attuned to the Japanese consumer—Sunny Side Up is perhaps best known for its work in the events space, and in sports marketing in particular (the firm represents the Tokyo Marathon, several Japanese Olympians, and numerous corporate sponsors), something that should stand the firm in good stead over the next 18 months, during the build-up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

But Sunny Side Up reported fee income of more than \$120 million for 2017, up by 6% and enough for it to rank among the top 20 firms in the world according to The Holmes Report's annual ranking. To achieve that, it has expanded into broader consumer and corporate PR activities, adding digital expertise to its experiential core. (It also operates several other businesses, in areas as diverse as human resource management, athlete management, and restaurant management.)

While untangling all of that can be a challenge, there's no doubt that SSU is a serious player in the PR business, with a client list that includes Japanese market leaders such as convenience store chain Family Mart, Japan Tobacco, Happinet (toys, games, videos), Yucho Bank (Japan Post), and Fuji Creative Corporation, and overseas multinationals including Nestle Japan, Moet Hennessy Diageo, and Lotte. New business last year came from Conrad Osaka, Okinawa Prefecture, Domino's Pizza Japan, the 2019 Rugby World Cup, and the French Open Junior Wildcard Tournament.

Highlights including the work the firm has implemented for the Shibuya Countdown Organizing Committee

in preparation for the impending Games; support for the fourth year of the RockCorps live music event, which relocated from Fukushima to Tokyo; and a massive media event for the opening of Ginza Six, a new multi-function facility in the heart of the Ginza district. In addition to its Japanese headquarters, Sunny Side Up has additional operations in South Korea and Hawaii. — PH

Synergy H+K Strategies (WPP)

Like many international players in North Asia, H+K Strategies' operations are weighted towards one market in particular — in this case Korea, where Synergy H+K Korea's 60-plus team continues to outperform despite a difficult political and economic environment. Revenues were up 14%, profits increased 67% and headcount grew by a healthy 10% — driven in part by the firm's impressive work for the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, for which it served as global AOR.

Under the long-term leadership of HS Chung, Synergy H+K's client roster has performed particularly strongly in terms of technology (up more than 50%), while the overall client roster includes such names as Singapore Tourism Board, LG Electronics, Hanwha, P&G, Allianz Life, UFC and Chanel. In addition to bagging the Olympics remit, meanwhile, there was also significant new business from Computer, Crocs and Korean Air.

All of which explains why WPP chose to consolidate Ogilvy's PR operations in Korea under H+K (a similar move took place in the opposite direction in Japan) in 2018. Chung has built a stable leadership team that has ensured the highest staff retention rate (88%) of any H+K operation in the region. — AS

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic Group)

Weber Shandwick's Japanese operations can trace their roots back to 1959, when International PR—later acquired by what was then Shandwick—was first established. Its Korean presence is much more recent, with the office founded eight years ago, under the leadership of Tyler Kim, who also serves as the firm's regional operations chair. But both of the North Asia offices have been on a similar trajectory in recent years, with Japan (+5%) and Korea (+5%) both submitting solid performances in 2017.

In Tokyo, the story continues to be about Weber Shandwick's perseverance and ability to thrive despite challenging economic conditions. Success has come from expanding digital and social capabilities in the local market, alongside a restructuring that has shifted the 60-person agency away from practice teams to taskforce units that feature more centralised services. New clients include Las Vegas Sands, Netflix, Turkish Airlines, JFOODO (Japanese Tea) and Manuka Honey, joining a client roster that already features Amazon, Facebook, Intel, JETRO, MasterCard, Tokyo 2020, TEPCO and VMware. And, notably, the firm is starting to export work from Japan to global markets.

In Seoul, which Kim has taken from a one-man office to a team of more than 100, growth has been fuelled by integrated marketing and specialist digital work, bolstered by senior hires across consumer, digital and content. Also helping matters was the merger with McCann Health, which turned Weber Shandwick into one of the market's largest digital and healthcare marketing firms,

with more than 20% of its staff specialised in such areas as digital production and creative services.

New Korean clients included Acuon, GM (Chevrolet), Hanwha Group, Hyperconnect, Nestle, Netflix

Consumer and Zinus, joining existing clients such as Adobe, Boeing, Goldman Sachs, KAYAK, LG Display, MBK Partners, MasterCard, Netflix Corp., Samsung Electronics, SAP and TetraPack. The Korean office's

campaign flair also stands out, demonstrated by the Alba Chankuk effort that changed perceptions of the country's part-time workers.—AS

2018 Southeast Asia PR Consultancies of the Year

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore.

WINNER

H+K Strategies (WPP)

H+K's Southeast Asian network has always served as one of the market's most well-rounded offerings, with more than 100 staffers across offices in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, accounting for 15% of the WPP network's Asia-Pacific revenue. But that stability is today being complemented by sustained growth, led by a Thai operation that remains H+K's star performer in Southeast Asia. The 46-person Bangkok office must rank as the country's largest international PR firm, and has grown at a double-digit rate for each of the past 15 years, under the leadership of Kanpirom Ungpakorn. In Singapore, meanwhile, a resurgent 28-person office under MD Michelle Tham grew topline (+12%) and bottomline (+18%) in some style. And in Malaysia, meanwhile, the firm has 15 people under Tham's leadership.

Growth has been led by an increasingly diversified talent mix that features particular expansion in digital and content creation. New business included China Fortune Land Development, Deoleo, Eu Yan Sang, Huawei, Ministry of Social and Family Development Singapore, Mercer, Nestle, Singapore Institute of Technology and the World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation, who join an existing client roster that features Experia Events, Ford, HSBC, LG Electronics, Microsoft, Nikon, Overseas Union Enterprise, Shell, Tata Communications and Telenor.

Notably, much of the new business reflects integrated assignments, underpinned by a slew of digital and creative hires in all three markets, including Mullika Angsuwattana and Wachiraporn Pornpitayalert in Thailand; Vanessa Heng as creative director in Singapore; and Vicky Wong as integrated comms director in Malaysia. Southeast Asian clients are also driving growth across H+K's global network, notably Deoleo's Bertolli Olive Oil.

Technology remains H+K's biggest sector in the region, evidenced by such clients as Huawei, Mercer, Honor and Spotify, while Singapore is best-known for its public sector prowess, and Thailand brings a strong consumer marketing edge. Campaign highlights included the

SABRE-winning Bertolli campaign that sold the benefits of olive oil to Thai consumers; making Huawei the number-one ranked smartphone in Malaysia; developing the ASEAN communications masterplan, and other noteworthy efforts for the NLB, Experia, Alibaba, Facebook and the Singapore Institute of Technology. — AS

FINALISTS

Echo Myanmar (Independent)

Let's be clear: with a population of 52 million (dwarfed by its neighbors China and India) and a history of ethnic strife, Myanmar is still an emerging market as far as the public relations profession is concerned, and its emergence was made more difficult over the past 12 months by a sluggish economy and religious conflict that contributed to international uncertainty about the stability of the market.

Against that backdrop, the emergence of Echo Myanmar—it quadrupled in size last year—as a major player in the South-East Asia public relations business is even more impressive. With a team of 40, the firm is the clear leader among local firms, and is a fierce advocate for professional public relations in its home market and for the profile of Myanmar in the region. While fee income remains modest (around \$650,000), the firm

has earned its place on the shortlist for South-East Asia agency honors for the second consecutive year.

In large part, that's because of the work, including its "Microsoft Pirates a Celebrity" stunt, which drew attention to the problem of software piracy in dramatic fashion and earned a couple of SABRE Awards' nominations, building on the success of "Lighting the Way Forward," a campaign for Myanmar Post & Telecommunications which won an award in last year's competition. Echo's client roster includes Coca-Cola (corporate and consumer brands), Microsoft, Myanmar Post & Telecommunications, KBZ Bank, Facebook, Huawei (corporate and devices), Tencent, IFC/World Bank, and the Ministry of Construction.

Under the leadership of PR head Burhan Omar, a Malaysian with experience at Hill+Knowlton and CIMB Bank, and social-digital practice head Su Shwe Yee Htun, formerly of Havas, the firm continues to pioneer new services, including the development of a local social listening capability and some sophisticated measurement tools focusing on share of voice and message pull-through, all while maintaining a local leadership position in public affairs, reputation and crisis management, and technology. All of which puts Echo well on the way to fulfilling its ambition of "making the large multinational agencies nervous" when they see its name on a client's shortlist.—PH

Eon (Independent)

"Events Organizer Network" (EON) was founded in Manila, Philippines in 1998 by the triumvirate of career diplomat Junie del Mundo, artist/writer Jeannie Javelosa, and

Ambassador Romeo Manalo. Since then, it has grown in ways that transcend its origins, establishing itself as the most forward-thinking public relations firm in its market, rebranding as EON The Stakeholder Relations Group (with dedicated units focused on public relations, public affairs, events, and digital) and continuing to thrive in a market that has not exactly been the most stable part of the world (or the region) in recent years.

Fee income last year topped \$4 million, up by more than 30% despite the vagaries of the Philippine market, with new business from corporate clients such as Netflix, Nissan, Samsung, Air Asia, Pepsi-Cola Products and fashion brands Christian Louboutin and Louis Vuitton, as well as governmental work for the ASEAN Chairmanship of the Philippines, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, and the Civil Service Commission of the Philippines. They join a client roster that includes the likes of multinationals Spotify, Visa, FedEx, Uniqlo, Nike, BMW, HP, Delta Airlines as well as Resorts World Manila and the Taiwan External Trade Development Council.

The firm's best work included the "Make Room" campaign, which told real-life stories of inspiration and hope on behalf of the Kythe Foundation and its Child Life Program, encouraging the audience of kind-hearted Filipinos to find ways to help children heal in more holistic ways, and "No BS bes," a Valentine's Day initiative for Spotify designed to undercut the melodrama that sometimes accompanies the holiday and include even those not in a romantic relationship ("bes" being shorthand for "best friend").

The firm—which is Edelman's affiliate in the market—also promoted the global agency's annual Trust Barometer research in the Philippines, one example of the thought leadership and commitment to new thinking that has kept EON on top. Having created a new chief innovation officer role in 2017, the firm continued to develop its research and analytics capabilities, and to expand its EON U professional development offer. It also added Arvon Fernandez to lead digital marketing arm DiG, bringing experience from the likes of Publicis Manila, DDB Philippines, Harrison/McCann, Ace Saatchi & Saatchi, and Arc/Leo Burnett. Emmanuel Escondo, an award-winning director, also joined as head of a newly formed multimedia production unit.—PH

Mutant Communications (Independent)

Launched in 2012, Mutant has emerged as one of the best of a new generation of Southeast Asian PR firms, led by former journalist and communications consultant Joseph Barratt. Now numbering 25 people, Mutant's leadership team also includes Lina Marican, who has risen to MD after previously working in-house and at agencies. And there have been some notable hires too: Byravee Iyer as managing editor and former Randstad PR head Matthew De Bakker as director — exemplifying the firm's focus on turning content marketing into lead generation and real business outcomes.

While probably best known for its technology prowess — the firm represents Monster.com, Hootsuite, and Zendesk, along with a number of major social networking platforms — Mutant's offering extends beyond the typical B2B heartland into

consumer and corporate for such companies as Pure Group, Singapore Toys, Kimberly-Clark, STGCC, 4 Fingers and Rockstar Games. An impressive new business haul saw the business effectively double its revenues in 2017 to S\$1.4m, with the pivot towards in-house editorial helping underpin expansion.

Campaign highlights included SABRE-nominated efforts for TaxiBaby and Meltwater, along with 'My First Jobs' for Monster.com. — AS

PRecious Communications (Independent)

Lars Voedisch launched PRecious in 2012, at a time when several new Southeast Asian consultancies were springing up. Voedisch's background, however, from senior

roles at DHL, FleishmanHillard and H+K Strategies, marked PRecious out as one to watch, as did his expertise from running analytics consultancy Commetric. Unsurprisingly, then, PRecious has grown at a steady clip to 40 people across Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand, with two more markets forecast to launch in the next 12 months.

The firm's focus is on B2B technology and consumer, along with a specific arm — PRecious Sparks — that has worked with more than 100 startups, including twelve unicorns. Having started life as a classic media relations firm, PRecious has since broadened its approach considerably across crisis, influencer marketing and digital, underpinned by an evaluation focus on conversion and lead generation.

Revenues are expected to reach around S\$3m by the end of this year, after 50% growth in 2017, powered by a new business haul that includes Electrify, Hashgraph, Entrepreneur First, Ascott, Hotel and Nickelodeon, who join an existing roster that features McAfee, Out Systems, Software AG, Young Living, Brotzeit and Lufthansa. Significantly, 80% of PRecious' work comes from recommendations.

Voedisch is supported by a senior team that includes head of business growth and innovation Prayank Gupta and B2B head Melinda Ilagan. Campaign highlights, meanwhile, include supporting Artbox Singapore, helping Yotel launch in Singapore, and positioning both Electrify Asia and Software AG as thought leaders. — AS

2018 Consumer PR Consultancies of the Year

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore.

WINNER

AKA Asia (Singapore/Independent)

AKA Asia has been on an upward trajectory since it was founded by former Grayling directors Kate O'Shea and Amy Wright in 2008, but 2017 was a particularly good year for the firm. Total revenue grew by 46% to \$4.2m (SGD), and the agency doubled its margin in 12 months. AKA Asia

also secured more retainers in the first quarter of 2017 than any other year on record, and added 10 to its headcount, bringing its staff to 31.

The growth reflects the transformation of the firm from a creative PR shop to an award-winning integrated comms consultancy, as comfortable competing with digital and advertising agencies as with its traditional rivals in the PR space. Growth has been driven by an increased focus on design and production, along with broad capabilities across corporate, consumer and digital. Over the past 12 months, there was new business from Deliveroo, Manulife, Discovery Networks APAC, BreadTalk, Giant, AsiaMalls, OPPO, and ScienceFest 2018, joining existing

clients such as Jetstar, Bugaboo, EDB Precision Engineering, Costa Coffee and Treasury Wine Estates.

The client roster is impressive enough, but what also catches the eye is AKA's ability to deliver multi-channel integrated work — and in surprising ways. The campaign AKA crafted for Jetstar Asia, for example, encouraged people to stay home for the Lunar New Year, using the occasion to promote the company's values (and low-cost travel the rest of the year) rather than have the budget airline battle it out with competitors for holiday business. Jetstar offered travelers who booked peak travel day flights the chance to change their flights for free if they decided to stay home instead. — DM

FINALISTS

History Will Be Kind (Australia/Independent)

From the outset of the year, Australia's History Will Be Kind decided 2017 would be its game-changing year, and the agency appears to have achieved its mission, pitching and winning some of the most coveted accounts in the business — Google, YouTube, Nestle and Marriott International. The year marked a continuation of the growth trajectory the firm has been on since its creation four years ago, fueled by an aggressive new business program, 24 new client wins, retention of foundation clients and what founder (and former Weber Shandwick Australia chief) EJ Granleese calls “an insatiable hunger to make a mark.”

In 2017, HWBK made its mark in a very concrete way through its PR support of Go Gentle Australia's “Stop the Horror” campaign aimed at influencing politicians to approve the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill in Victoria. Working with ad agency Cummins & Partners, HWBK developed an integrated strategy to reframe the suffering of a terminally ill patient as a thing of horror, with a short film documenting the real-life story of a terminally ill man's final days at the center. The distressing six-minute film allowed viewers to “Stop the Horror” by opting out of the film, which directed them to a landing page with information on taking action. Ultimately, Parliament legalized voluntary assisted dying in Victoria, making it the only Australian state where assisted dying is legal.

All of which are steps toward fulfilling the lofty aims with which the firm was launched — “creating moments in history for clients.” Granleese started

the firm to manage reputations, raise profiles, launch products, and most interestingly, to start movements, which, as “Stop the Horror” shows, it already is doing. — DM

Reuter Communications (China/Independent)

Since launching her agency in 2010, Chloé Reuter has grown her business in keeping with China's growing penchant for the kind of luxury brands Reuter Communications specializes in promoting. Expanding from a one-woman operation to a team of 60 across four offices, Reuter's fee income rose 60% year-over-year in 2017. New business came from an impressive list of brands including Hilton, Canada Goose, Estee Lauder, Maison Margiela and Disney, joining a roster already including the likes of Gemfields, Sotheby's, Pierre Marcolini, Delvaux and Swarovski.

Reuter's work is embedded with the keen cultural sensitivity overseas brands must exhibit, and embrace, for their businesses to flourish in China. With on-the-ground teams in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, as well as Dubai, Reuter teams possess both keen understandings of the affluent communities its clients are targeting, and the local experience and expertise to support them in doing so successfully.

Reuter, however, stays diligently abreast of the changes rapidly unfolding in China — and in Chinese consumerism — and has responded by growing and integrating digital capabilities. Today, Reuter specializes in social media management, digital and offline PR, and influencer engagement. The firm recently launched a research and insights division to help guide campaigns. Reuter also launched

a stand-alone website, The Luxury Conversation, that positions the organization as a thought leader in the China luxury market while increasing partners' visibility. — DM

Sinclair (Greater China/Independent)

Kiri Sinclair founded the eponymous firm in 2009 to deliver integrated campaigns from its office in Hong Kong across Asia. Today, with a second office in Shanghai, business is good. Revenues last year were up 52% year-over-year, rising to \$2.7m. The firm's headcount rose to 35 from 21 the year before. The growth was fueled by new business from the likes of Alibaba, Banyan Tree, Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong Trade Development Council, P&T Group and PURE Group, adding to a client roster already including Pirata Group, Singapore Tourism Board and Tourism Australia.

While remaining true to its core tenet — impacting business through storytelling — 2017 was a seminal year in Sinclair's evolution, one in which the firm repositioned itself from a lifestyle agency to a full-service corporate and consumer brand consultancy with expanded capabilities. In addition to new branding, Sinclair showcased its integrated approach to communications, while also investing in a measurements & insights team and launching a content creation group. New business leads rose 30%. Sinclair is also committed to fostering a culture centered on collaboration, while also providing individuals' opportunities to improve their abilities and performances. The firm offers mentoring and internal training, as well as monthly team activities. Staff are encouraged to pursue external training and conferences.

Sinclair's work last year included the "Singlish Fun" campaign it crafted for the Singapore Tourism Board, aimed at driving Hong Kong residents to visit Singapore. The multifaceted campaign reached young professionals through influencers, partnerships and media showcasing Singapore's nightlife as well as outdoor adventures. A travel guide illustrated by a 10-year old Hong Kong artist who had visited Singapore was the centerpiece of efforts to drive multi-generational travel. The efforts paid off, increasing the number of visits to Singapore last year by 370,000. — DM

W Asia (Singapore/Independent)

2017 was a banner year for W Asia, the fast-growing consumer PR firm that UK heavyweight W Communications

launched in Singapore three years ago in a bid to bring its disruptive mentality — based around the concept of 'creative commerce' — to clients in the region. On the heels of being named New Consultancy of the Year in 2016 — W built sturdier foundations during the past 12 months, supported by the backing of its UK parent firm, one of the top agencies in that market.

Propelled by a 16-person team (and a 100% staff retention rate), W Asia posted 50% growth in 2017, achieving an annual billing of \$1.5m in its third year of operation. During that time, the firm consolidated the handling of Moët Hennessy & Diageo Singapore's portfolio — expanding its work for Champagne brands from Moët & Chandon and Krug to Veuve Clicquot, as well as

premium spirits from Belvedere, Hennessy and Glenmorangie. Other new business includes travel clients Club Med, Travelodge Asia and Banyan Tree Hotels, digital brands Zuji, Carro, eatigo and PropertyGuru, and American Express.

W Asia is keenly focused on hiring and grooming young, local talent, reflected in its W Fast-Track Scheme — a program under which university students join the firm as trainees ready to be hired after graduation. In the last year, the firm also launched a program to spotlight creativity, most recently through a French-themed BBQ that included showcasing the best work from Cannes Lions. With last year's launch of the agency's W Passport program, staff travel to W's global offices for training. — AS/DM

2018 Corporate & Public Affairs Consultancies of the Year

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore.

WINNER

Adfactors (India/Independent)

Long regarded by Indian market watchers as the best corporate and financial specialist in the market, Adfactors has diversified its offering to a remarkable extent in recent years, helping it to net the \$5m Tata mandate from Edelman in the year's biggest account shift. The

firm's creative prowess has grown commensurate with that expansion, helping Adfactors become one of the most successful PR firms at the South Asian and Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards over the past three years, thanks to assignments for State Bank of India, Mahindra & Mahindra, Vodafone and Godrej.

The mammoth Tata assignment was just one of number of big wins in 2017, with others including Essar Group, Apollo Hospitals, Samsung India, ACC Ambuja, Bajaj Electricals. The firm also continues to work for energy and infrastructure conglomerate Adani Group, Bombay Stock Exchange, Citibank, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Jet Airways, Mahindra Group, State Bank of India and Vodafone India—a veritable who's who of Indian market

leaders and giant multinationals, to whom it provides public and investor relations' services at a high level.

With 2017 fee income of close to \$28 million—following 16% growth—Adfactors ranks among the top 75 PR agencies in our global ranking of PR firms, and is the largest Indian firm on the list. It now has 600 people in 13 Indian offices, with overseas outposts in Singapore, Sri Lanka, and the UAE. And its investment in new services is second to none, focusing on training and development, human resources, and digital transformation.

Notable campaign highlights included When Jailbirds Sang, a campaign for Godrej that used former criminals to help sell locking solutions; a tech-fuelled campaign to protect

children on behalf of Vodafone; and, helping OYO successfully lower the GST on budget hotels. — AS

FINALISTS

Honner (Australia/Independent)

A veteran of respected UK corporate specialist Fishburn, of Australian institutional investment journal Super Review, and of the banking sector in both the UK and Australia, Philippa Honner launched her own communications firm in 1997 and has built it over the past two decades into the leader in the financial services sector, working with a range of companies from fintech start-ups to listed investment companies and major superannuation funds. Key clients include big-four bank National Australia Bank, \$64 billion superannuation fund UniSuper, the world's largest listed hedge fund manager Man Group and a top 50 global asset manager, Janus Henderson Investors as well as Australian Ethical, BetaShares, Saxo Capital Markets, Pengana Capital, MetLife and Cromwell Property Group.

Last year continued a healthy growth trend, with a team of 16 generating fee income of around \$3.5 million—up by about 15% on the previous year. New business came from CreditSmart (consumer credit reporting education program); Bell Direct (share trading platform); Chi-X (alternate share market to the ASX); Six Park (robo advice); asset managers Plato and Antipodes; Super Friend (a mental health foundation for which the firm provides pro-bono support).

Given the history of its founder, it's not surprising that Honner has always kept one eye on international markets—it was a founding

member of the Global Fintech PR Network and is a longtime member of Global Communication Partners (a financial and corporate communications agency network of leading independent PR consultancies)—but it took things to another level last year, opening its own marketing office in New York (helmed by Philippa Honner herself) and joining the PROI network.

The firm has also been expanding its service offer, developing an in-house content team led by 20-year media veteran Rebecca Thurlow to help clients stand out in an increasingly crowded space, and has been working with client Ariel Investments, with which it co-authored a submission to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission's review of its financial literacy strategy, urging greater involvement by the financial firms. Highlights in terms of the client work included handling the IPO of Plato Income Maximiser and supporting the launch of Japanese fintech Moneytree into the Australia Market.—PH

North Head (China/Independent)

Launched less than a decade ago, North Head continued its pattern of growth in 2017, its fee income up 20% to reach \$2.9m by year's end. Since its 2010 launch, North Head has adhered to an integrated approach to communications services, with a focus on quality and excellence. The firm has earned a balanced portfolio of private and public sector as well as Chinese and multinational clients. New business in 2017 included the likes of Apple, Amazon, AstraZeneca, the European Union Delegation in Beijing, Mattel, and Sanofi, joining an impressive client roster populated

by names such as PhRMA, Eastman, CITIC, Roche, Novartis, Cummins, McDonalds, Ferrero and Honeywell.

With one of China's largest healthcare practices, North Head works with a range of international healthcare companies, as well as two of the largest pharmaceutical industry associations—the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), and the R&D-Based Pharmaceutical Association Committee (RDPAC) in China. Main priorities have included raising their reputations among key stakeholders and advocacy on China's healthcare reform. And, with social and digital channels rapidly becoming a staple of communications in China, North Head has strived to stay ahead of the curve through innovative solutions to client needs. In the last year, the firm strengthened its digital team and added capabilities — social media content creation, working with influencers and helping clients build and maintain digital platforms among them — while maintaining its core competencies in healthcare, public affairs and strategic communications.

North Head operates under the watch of managing director John Russell and senior executive director Robert Magyar — both founding partners of the agency. Russell brings expertise garnered over his nearly 30-year career in public affairs across Asia, Europe and the US. Magyar has logged 15 years in corporate communications in Japan as well as China. — DM

Redhill Communications (Singapore/Independent)

2017's New Consultancy of the Year, Redhill Communications' business surged last year, with fee income of \$1.5m (SGD) — up from \$500,000

(SGD) in 2016. Redhill during 2017 tripled its team as well, creating a firm more than 45-people strong serving clients across sectors in Singapore, Yangon, Bangkok, Phnom Penh, Kuala Lumpur, Colombo, Jakarta, Tokyo, Hong Kong, New Delhi, San Francisco, Berlin and London. All of which reflects the tenet around which Redhill was created — that brand communications should be generated by local teams who understand their markets best.

Before launching Redhill in September of 2015, Jacob Puthenparambil had held communications positions with Government of India's Ministry for External Affairs, ASDA's Burson-Marsteller in the Middle East, and the UN's MURgency global response network in San Francisco. Partner Surekha Yadav, meanwhile, has a background that spans software development and finance. Together, they bring a wealth of international and business experience to a new firm, which helps to explain how Redhill has grown from five people in 2015 to what it is today.

With its offices in key hubs like Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Colombo, Redhill's reach across Southeast Asia means on-the-ground services for a roster of clients including the region's largest venture capital firms. Other high-profile companies also on that list include Unilever, General Mills, Emirates, Grab, MundiPharma, UOB FinLab, Singapore Police Force and MetLife.

Charged with supporting Emirates' inaugural Cambodia flight last year, the firm rolled out a campaign positioning the airline's arrival as a milestone in Phnom Penh reaching the status of a global city. The airline's

new route moved beyond being an aviation story to an economic one. Emirates' arrival was covered by outlets from rural radio networks to national broadcasters and government websites. After his office reached out, Prime Minister Hun Sen attended the launch event. — DM

Sefiani Communications Group (Australia/Independent)

Robyn Sefiani's firm, closing in on its 20th anniversary, has been alternating between our Australian and Corporate Agency of the Year list since the first year of our Asia-Pacific awards, a tribute to the firm's consistency and the respect that it is held in by its peers in the market—both of which give it a stature in the Australian marketplace that is out of proportion to its relatively modest (20 person) size.

The past few years have seen a successful expansion and diversification strategy take shape, with Sefiani transforming itself from a relatively traditional corporate and financial communications specialist into something broader, more creative, and more modern—all without losing sight of the strategic thinking that has set the firm apart since it was founded by Sefiani upon her departure from Edelman. That transformation contributed to impressive growth last year, with fee income up to \$4.8 million—an increase of better than 35%.

The firm continues to do both corporate and financial work and public affairs and issues management exceptionally well, often partnering with global agencies who lack their own presence in the Australian market, while its consumer/challenger subsidiary Kite is making a name for itself in

the creative realm. Key clients such as EY, Rest, Rothschild, Landbridge, Allen & Overy, Everlight Radiology, McGrathNicol, BaptistCare, Hotels.com, and Foodbank were joined by a bumper crop of newcomers including Northern Trust, The Communications Alliance, Lederer Group, Liberty OneSteel, Johnson & Johnson Medical, Bazaarvoice, New Hope Mining, Hammons Holdings, Australian Custodial Services Association, Australian Reinsurance Pool Corporation.

While corporate and C-suite reputations have come under more intense through government-led enquiries and increasing activism, Sefiani's wisdom and experience were in high demand. It provided pro bono counsel to privacy campaigner Briana Rose—the victim of “revenge” exposure on the internet—to get the law changed to make the taking and sharing of intimate images without consent a criminal offence. It also assisted Rothschild in the global announcement of its lead involvement in the sale of Westfield's shopping centre portfolio to French property giant Unibail-Rodamco; helped EY with a national thought leadership platform; and worked with various clients in preparation to face an IBAC Enquiry in Victoria; a Parliamentary Senate Enquiry into superannuation; and class action litigation. And Kite developed an integrated campaign for NT Tourism to encourage Aussies to book trips to the Northern Territory in the hot wet season.—PH

2018 Digital PR Consultancies of the Year

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore.

WINNER

Edelman (DJE Holdings)

Edelman's digital capabilities have always remained a notch above most of their rivals, and now account for more than 15% of the firm's revenues in Asia-Pacific, even if that number is slightly misleading because that's only the firm's pure-play digital activity. A broad restructuring has moved those capabilities into a horizontal construct that spans the firm's brand and reputation practices across all markets. So while there were some key departures (including digital president and MD Gavin Coombes and Martin Shaw, respectively), the restructuring has ensured that all aspects of digital — including those more readily associated with advertising agencies — are delivered across Asia-Pacific, under the remit of returning chief digital officer John Kerr.

Edelman has invested significant sums in this initiative, across such specialist areas as search engine marketing, social media optimisation, paid media and measurement/analytics, building centralised hubs that feature skills and talent that each of its markets can tap into on a local basis. Edelman's data and analytics operation, meanwhile,

remains one of the sharpest in the region — demonstrated best by the predictive intelligence centre it has formed in conjunction with Singapore's Economic Development Board. That approach is also illustrated by the SABRE-nominated Shell Emotion Tracking campaign in Malaysia (which has since gone global), an analytics-based initiative that used wearables, chatbots and drive performance technologies to track, measure and correlate driver emotions with driver performance and contextual and environmental factors from personality to diet, music, health, weather and traffic.

As you would expect, there was also sophisticated digital marketing work in the brand marketing area — notably, a creative technology campaign for HP; an interactive lunchbox for Extra; and, superior digital video for Surf Excel and Johnson & Johnson Vision. Meanwhile, the firm's digital savvy is also transforming its corporate reputation practice, via work for AstraZeneca and AIAC. And the firm has a new startup offering that helped to launch Japanese app Eight in India, developed global research for China's Ecovacs Robotics, and drove global ecommerce through social media for Zerotech. — AS

FINALISTS

BlueFocus Digital (BlueFocus Communication Group)

Since its launch in 1996 (then known as Blue Focus PR), Oscar Zhao's company has grown into the largest public relations consultancy in China and one of the top 10 public relations businesses in the world, with 2017

fee income (per our 2018 Top 250 ranking) of more than \$320 million—up by 12% last year. Today, BlueFocus Digital employs more than 1,500 people offering a unique blend of digital marketing and public relations services in China across offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Xi'an. The firm is led by CEO Richard Jiao, supported by COO Stanley Xiao, chief strategy officer Yorf Guo, VP Bruce Zhu and SVP Donna Li. As such, BlueFocus Digital is the China market leader in many areas — mobile advertising, OTT, and on Google/Facebook.

Accordingly, it represents many of the country's largest companies (Tencent, NetEase, JD.com, Alex, FAW-Volkswagen). New business over the past 12 months came from L'Oreal, Air China, Transsion, Great Wall Automobile and Chery Automobile. Since 2017, furthermore, the firm has continued to bolster its market-leading digital capability, rolling out new platforms and products based on data technology, including smart TV advertising (its OTT platform), CRM marketing (Otype), social media management (Colorfull) and situational marketing (BlueMP).

That capability marks BlueFocus Digital out as a different breed from many of its more traditional PR rivals. Around 87% of group revenues now come from data tech-related business, and more than 20% of the firm's creative work is developed by intelligent robots designed by the agency itself. Campaign highlights include several SABRE-nominated efforts: AR restoration campaign for nine city gates in old Beijing on behalf of Baidu; the Samsung

Note8 ‘Sistine Chapel Dome Moving Project’; influencer marketing work for Pantene; and Winter Olympics efforts for P&G. — AS

Ketchum (Omnicom Group)

Rather than attempting to compete via scale, in a region where its regional footprint is dwarfed by several rivals, Ketchum has smartly repositioned its offering around a digital/social-first model that focuses on using content to drive recommendations and sales. This approach, which the agency dubs ‘tribal commerce’ appears to be reaping dividends, demonstrated by pure social/digital wins that include Mercedes-Benz, SIA, Costa Coffee and Bacardi, along with increasingly integrated work for a client roster that includes P&G, Hyundai, Booking.com and HPE. Underpinning the shift is a focus on new products, best illustrated by the Maestro tool that was developed for P&G in Asia, identifying tribes and then helping to determine the blend of paid and earned required to drive purchase.

In Greater China, particularly, a revamped leadership team features CEO (and former IPG Mediabrands chief digital officer) Prince Zhang, along with chief growth officer Eunice Wong, both of whom bring a distinctly digital focus to the agency’s work. That much is demonstrated by B2B work for Booking.com, which leveraged digital analytics to help improve online conversion and searches. For Bacardi, meanwhile, a content-driven campaign deployed digital creative to take consumers from social to commerce. All told, social/digital now accounts for 20% of Greater China work, up from 14% a year ago, as the firm builds stronger partnerships with Baidu

and Tencent, and upgrades its talent to develop shortform video for popular platforms as Douyin. — AS

RFI Asia (Independent)

Ruder Finn’s digital capabilities in Asia were transformed by the 2016 acquisition of Daylight Partnership, the firm founded by former WE Communications regional chief David Ko. Combined with Ruder Finn Innovation Studios (RFI), that gives the firm a 50-person digital presence across China, Hong Kong, Singapore and India — with specific strengths in product development and analytics. Unsurprisingly, that has bolstered the firm’s prowess as an integrated marketing consultancy, particularly in China where its ‘digital media centre’ works on behalf of a host of automotive, travel and tourism, beauty and F&B clients — across paid media buying on Weibo and WeChat; digital campaign design, branded content and social media management.

RFI’s product development, meanwhile, demonstrates a clear focus on innovation, via such efforts as immersive storytelling, ‘dark social’, marketing chatbots, WhatsApp for business and interactive content. That is supported by an array of products, including influencer analytics tool Beacon, a risk management app called Riskstat and the Sonar crisis simulation platform.

All of this adds up to an impressive array of clients, including new business from AmGen, L’Oreal, Subway, JLL, HSBC and some eye-catching campaign work. For example, RFI has served as lead creative agency on campaigns for Audemars Piguet, Deutsche Bank, HSBC and the Peninsula Group, while its work for Porsche China, Shanghai

Disney Resort, Singapore Tourism Board, 3M, Midea, BMS and Hennessy demonstrates how digital is driving its integrated marketing capability. — AS

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic Group)

After several years of sustained investment, Weber Shandwick’s digital operation now stands as one of the region’s strongest, accounting for around 12% of overall regional revenue, although this proportion only includes purely digital activity. Indeed, the firm has seen a major uptick in integrated and digital briefs, accounting for particular growth in Hong Kong (+173%), Korea (+48%) and Singapore (+14%), for a client roster that was bolstered by the addition of Fidelity, Hotels.com, General Mills, GSK, Inditex Group, Nespresso, ExxonMobil, Victoria’s Secret and American Airlines.

In China, meanwhile, the acquisition of data and insights consultancy Bomoda brings specific expertise into Chinese social media platforms, helping to drive some inspiring work, including a confidential data-driven initiative on behalf of a major beauty player, which helped to reshape its entire social media and CRM story. All told, the agency now employs more than 40+ content specialists in China alone, along with 25 analytics specialists across the region.

And the firm’s product range has proven especially compelling, underpinned by a content to conversion offering that helps to turn mobile and online campaigns into lead-generating ecosystems, on behalf of such clients as AWS and GSMA. The China operation, in particular, serves as global innovation centre for the firm’s new

X Practice, developing the C3 and Kloud tools that are now deployed globally by Weber Shandwick. — AS

2018 Financial PR Consultancies of the Year

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore.

WINNER

Newgate Communications (Porta Group)

It wouldn't be quite right to say that it has all been smooth sailing since Citigate veteran and Porta Group founder David Wright launched Newgate Communications seven years ago—the past few months have seen the departures in quick succession of Porta CEO Steffen Williams and Newgate leader Gavin Devine—but it is reasonable to claim that the Asia-Pacific operations have been perhaps the most consistently successful part of the operation, expanding geographically, rising in the Mergermarket rankings of advisors to M&A transactions, and earning the respect of longer-established competitors in the region.

The firm launched its Hong Kong operations in early 2013, under the leadership of former Kreab Gavin Anderson exec Richard Barton, tapped another KGA veteran Terrence Foo to expand into Singapore a few months later, recruited a team of 20 from Gavin Anderson to launch in

Australia the same year, expanded into mainland China with a Beijing office in 2014, and added a Shanghai presence under Asia-Pacific co-founder Grace Zhang earlier this year. Much of that leadership team is still in place—Barton, Australian managing director Brian Tyson, Foo, and Sue Vercoe, who leads the research group out of Sydney—and were joined last year by 25-year veteran Raj Seth as partner in Hong Kong and Clarence Fu, who brings two decades of corporate and financial experience to Singapore.

The Asia-Pacific operation contributed about \$23 million of Newgate's 2017 PR fee income, about half of the \$47 million total, and grew by about 37%, with new business coming from Hillhouse (China's largest asset management group), global consulting firm Alvarez & Marsal, and e-commerce company Pinduoduo in Greater China; electrical distributor Endeavour Energy, travel company Expedia, and GOLDOC (the Brisbane-hosted Commonwealth Games) in Australia; and IHH Healthcare Berhad, Azalea Asset Management, Cromwell European REIT and Super Group in Singapore.

As is often the case, the financial transaction work—high-value, high-margin assignments in a super-competitive space—were the most eye-catching, with Newgate coming in at number five in Asia (excluding Japan) in terms of the volume of transactions worked (23) last year and number three in terms of the value of

those transactions. Other highlights included Newgate Hong Kong's work with AIG and its Director's & Officer's Insurance product, and PR for Pinduoduo's NASDAQ IPO; Newgate Australia's work with Sydney Metro, Australia's largest public transport project; and Newgate Singapore's IPO campaign and stakeholder plan for Cromwell European REIT. From M&A to IR to strategic corporate communications, Newgate is now firmly established in the front rank of Asia-Pacific consultancies. — PH

FINALISTS

Ashton Consulting (Japan/ Independent)

The Japanese public relations market in general is dominated by the indigenous agencies with their roots in advertising or events, firms like Dentsu and Vector and Sunny Side Up. But those firms do not show up on the lists of M&A advisors, which are dominated by multinationals like Brunswick, FTI and Edelman—with one notable local exception.

Ashton Consulting was founded in Tokyo by John Sunley in 2000, and added business partner Dan Underwood in 2002. Their goals were twofold: to transform the way Japanese companies communicate with the world and to provide foreign companies with the level of communications sophistication and value they were used to in a market that was still dominated by traditional publicity. It has succeeded

to the extent that it was ranked by Mergermarket among the top five firms in Japan in terms of the volume of transactions handled last year and number six in terms of the value of deals worked (it was up to number two on that metric in the first half of 2018).

With a team of 25 consultants, Ashton has a balanced portfolio of Japanese and international clients, including Mitsui & Co., Novartis, MUFG, Caesars Entertainment, Mazda, Fancl, BlackRock, Rolls-Royce, Jetstar Japan, and Kirin. There was new business last year from Chugai Pharma, Cardano Foundation, Japan Renewable Energy, ValueAct Capital, Estee Lauder, Fastbooking, Bayer Yakuhi, Seiko Watch, Pavilion Alternatives Group, and Ruckus Networks.

Beyond its financial transaction work, Ashton handled numerous crisis situations last year, ranging from regulatory issues in the pharmaceutical sector to allegations of human rights abuse to data privacy issues. It has also worked with foreign shareholders on activist campaigns, and helped clients with activist defense. It has also helped several local clients expand their investor relations efforts to deal with different demands on governance in international markets. — PH

Cannings Purple (Australia/WPP)

The fact that Cannings Purple has its headquarters in Perth provides a clue about its strength in the extractive industry sector, but even with a Sydney office you might not as easily intuit that one of the region's strongest financial communications firms has emerged from Western Australia, where the economy has been sluggish in recent years.

Nevertheless, Cannings Purple—established in 2004 as Purple Communications, it changed its name after selling a 49% stake to STW (now part of WPP) in 2012—has built a thriving corporate and financial business in a challenging environment, filling a gap in the market that followed the decline of some of Australia's prominent financial PR pioneers. Mergermarket's rankings put the firm just outside the top 10 in Asia-Pacific in terms of the volume of M&A work last year (a dozen deals) and it is holding on to a top 20 spot so far this year. But the firm has plenty of expertise beyond the transaction space: in crisis communications (it launched a first-of-its-kind Notifiable Data Breach crisis preparedness product in response to new legislation), public affairs, ongoing investor relations and broad corporate affairs.

The average growth over the past five years has been better than 25%, and while as part of WPP the firm doesn't disclose financial information its team of 40 is clearly generating better than average fees per capita given the nature of most of its work. There was new business from Shell Australia, Jupiter Mine, Wesfarmers, global resources company South32, Eastern Field Developments, the York Rizzani Joint Venture (the civil engineers and contractor that delivered the newly opened Matagarup Bridge), Australian Gas Infrastructure Group, and more, while the company continued its work with The Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA, LandCorp, Australian Mines, SAI Global Property, Gold Road Resources, Murdoch University, Kidman Resources, Citic Pacific Mining, and Perth Mint.

Cannings Purple is known for a collaborative, team-first culture, which was undoubtedly a factor in attracting some impressive new talent in recent years: former Deloitte chairman Keith Jones joined to chair the board two years ago, and the past year has seen an emphasis on stakeholder engagement capabilities under associate director Charlie Wilson-Clark and media outreach under the leadership of director of media strategy Peter Klinger. Ruth Callaghan was promoted to the newly created role of chief innovation officer, a new role focused on expanding the firm's digital and data-driven solutions.—PH

Edelman (DJE Holdings)

While Edelman's US and UK operations have attracted many plaudits for their financial communications growth, the firm's Asia-Pacific operations demonstrate that its transformation into a credible capital markets contender is not limited to those two regions alone. Specifically, Edelman has risen to second spot on Mergermarket's PR Advisors ranking for H1 2018 in Asia-Pacific ex Japan, by value, occupying the same position in Japan by deal count — remarkable progress for a firm that did not possess a regional financial communications capability as recently as three years ago.

And much of the work, meanwhile, combines bread and butter investor relations with the kind of issues management counsel that has long been a hallmark of Edelman's corporate offering, along with specialist industry expertise in healthcare, F&B, financial services and technology.

Highlights included supporting Walmart in India's largest FDI deal, the \$16bn acquisition of e-commerce giant Flipkart, in the face of considerable opposition to the transaction from local parties, and ensuring Indonesia's Traveloka preserved a strong local perception during a \$500m investment round from foreign companies. — AS

SPRG (Independent)

It is now 23 years since Richard Tsang launched Strategic Public Relations Group in Hong Kong, and while it has expanded into a network of 15 offices across Asia and established capabilities in consumer marketing and corporate social responsibility, it remains best known as a market leader in the financial communications space in what remains one of the world's most dynamic business centers. The

firm's staff of 310 service 160 long-term clients. SPRG ranked No. 1 in the IPO/IR market last year with 43 IPOs completed in 2017 — bringing the all-time total to 418; IPO/IR and corporate marketing accounted for 45% and 55% of the agency's yearly revenue respectively, reflecting the strength of the corporate marketing capabilities that SPRG has cultivated since launching as a four-person shop with a focus on IR.

Longtime clients include Google, P&G, H3C, UC Rusal and 3D Gold, and there was new business over the past year from the likes of Asia Pulp & Paper (SPRG's first global client), SES World Skies Singapore, S&P Global Asian Holdings and Veritas. Built on a philosophy of giving back to the community, the agency has reaped numerous awards for its own corporate social

responsibility initiatives. As the operator of its own CSR platform that links up corporations, NGOs and volunteers to help those in need, SPRG acts as a bridge to encourage its clients and staff and families to donate and participate as volunteers at community events.

With the firm's headcount expanding across Asia, generating fee income in excess of \$23 million, SPRG is one of the largest independents in the region. There are offices in Hong Kong, China (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou), Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia that can offer coverage to rival the western multinationals. SPRG continues to differentiate itself by its focus on a culture where local staff can flourish, with its workforce including a number of employees who have been with the organization for more than a decade. — PH/DM

2018 Healthcare PR Consultancies of the Year

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore.

WINNER

FleishmanHillard (Omnicom Group)

Healthcare public relations is seen as a recent growth driver among many of the major multinational agencies operating in the region, but there is nothing new about FleishmanHillard's emphasis on the sector, which has been a key

component of its regional business since it expanded into Asia more than 20 years ago. Its capabilities have expanded from pharmaceutical marketing to include market access, regulatory and legislative issues, clinical trial work, and technical medical communications across the full lifecycle of products from drugs to devices.

The firm has strong healthcare teams in Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Mumbai, New Delhi, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, Sydney, Tokyo, and also collaborates with other Omnicom-owned healthcare-focused agencies to deliver an even broader array of services across even more markets. More and more of that work involves

engaging directly with consumers, as they look for information themselves rather than blindly following "doctor's orders," leading to increased demand for digital and social content.

Fleishman's healthcare business was once again the star performer among its regional practice groups in 2018, up 24% for a client roster that includes Amgen, Reckitt Benckiser, GSK, Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer's oncology portfolio. And that growth was underscored by SABRE-nominated work for J&J, which addressed diversity and inclusion in India. — AS

FINALISTS

Enzaim Health (Korea/Independent)

The healthcare sector should be fertile territory for public relations firms in the Asia-Pacific region. The issues that help healthcare specialists flourish in other markets—a regulated environment that precludes much advertising, the benefits of an educated and informed patient base, a myriad of issues from safety to pricing—are amplified in Asia by the opportunity presented by an expanding middle class and an ageing population. In Korea, there are more than 6.8 million people over the age of 65, and about half live in poverty. And yet, the market is home to relatively few sophisticated healthcare specialists.

Enzaim Health was founded in 2003 as The Communication Enzaim under the leadership of CEO Dingseok Kim and has expanded to offer expertise in public relations, marketing, public education and publications to a client list that includes both corporate and government clients: MSD Korea, Pfizer Korea, Gilead Korea, Omron Korea, Nestle Korea, Eisai Korea, Astellas Korea, Korea CDC, Korea Medical Association, the Ministry of Health & Welfare.

The firm is mission-driven, balancing “people, nature and animal” through four core values: health for all, professionalism, creativity, and ownership. That has helped to attract an impressive team, including PR practice leader Song-hee Kim, whose background spans journalism and in-house communications roles. The seven-person PR team has expertise in corporate branding, corporate social responsibility, health

education campaigns, and consumer health (food, cosmetics and lifestyle products and services). — PH

SPAG Asia (Independent)

In the five years since its launch, SPAG has already established itself as an industry game changer in the Asia-Pacific market as a cross between a public affairs and healthcare shop with three distinct brands: SPAG Asia, D Yellow Elephant and Giga Health (which was acquired in 2016).

Since its 2013 launch, the firm has grown consistently by at least 80% year-over-year while still keeping headcount low with the philosophy that one right individual is worth more than 10 others. SPAG serves an impressive client roster that includes Novartis, Johnson & Johnson, Abbott, Pfizer, Baxter and Boston Scientific among others. The firm has never lost a client.

In 2017, SPAG laid the groundwork for continued success by developing a four-year growth plan that includes the creation of a holding company (Strategic Partners Group) for its brands; rolling out new offerings such as a food & nutrition practice; and taking its business to Europe through partnerships with life science companies targeting the Asia-Pacific region. All of which are in sync with SPAG’s overarching strategy of growing its business through expanding its capabilities rather than its client roster; SPAG has doubled, and even tripled, revenue from existing clients by expanding its breadth of services. The firm is banking on big payoffs, with projections calling for its fee income to rise from its current \$4m to \$12-15m within four years. — AaS

Weber Shandwick (Interpublic Group)

Accounting for around nine percent of its regional revenue, Weber Shandwick still believes its healthcare practice is underweight in the region, despite rebounding into 2018 growth following a flat 2017. Key clients include Pfizer, Abbott, Johnson&Johnson, Ocean Spray and Merck, and there was also new business over the past 12 months from Convatec, Gilead, Grail, IFPMA, Novartis, Pierre Fabre and Roche.

In particular, 2017 saw Weber Shandwick expand its healthcare professionals offering via the hire of scientific director Cathy Chow, enabling the firm to offer more specialised educational counsel for brands across the region. And the firm’s public awareness campaign work remains among the best in the region, exemplified by SABRE nominated efforts for MSD India, Lamisil and Gardasil, all campaigns that also integrate a strong digital component.

Indeed, that digital focus is likely to help Weber Shandwick’s healthcare practice shed its underweight status. Already, the firm has won lead agency work for 3 GSK in China, along with assignments for Novartis and Manuka Honey. — AS

2018 Technology PR Consultancies of the Year

The 2018 Asia-Pacific PR Consultancies of the Year are the result of an exhaustive research process involving more than 100 submissions and meetings with the best PR firms across the region. Consultancy of the Year winners were announced and honoured at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards on 11 September in Singapore.

WINNER

IN.FOM (Independent)

No longer the new kid on the block after seven years of remarkable growth, IN.FOM continues to bring plenty of energy to an offering that has already won multiple Agency of the Year Awards from the Holmes Report. And the firm's performance over the past 18 months proves that it looks set to navigate the difficult teenage years as successfully as it handled its inception, with eye-catching growth of 50% to US\$3.7m.

That expansion was underpinned by new business from Ruckus Networks, Expedia and SGInnovate, along with increased spend from key existing clients Microsoft and UnionPay. Other important relationships include Xbox, Engine, CA Technologies, Herbalife, Intralinks, Intel and Nokia — with IN.FOM increasingly taking on regional duties from its Singapore hub.

Despite the growth, IN.FOM continues to eschew the scale and bureaucracy of established firms in favour of an approach that prizes sustainable employee and client relationships. The leadership team includes managing partners Wong Voal Voal and Mike Liew, who bring impressive pedigrees with global agencies H+K and Burson-Marsteller,

respectively, and who understand the transformation of marketing and technology. And there continues to be considerable investment in talent and training, including twice-yearly pay adjustments and bonuses to convince the market's best talent that IN.FOM is the best place to build their careers. An up and coming generation of leaders suggests that this approach is paying off, with non-traditional PR revenue also growing commensurate with a broader skill base.

As ever, the work impresses — including seven Diamond/Gold SABRE nominations and two IN2 SABRE Awards — for multiple campaigns conducted on behalf of Microsoft, SGInnovate and Expedia. — AS

FINALISTS

The Hoffman Agency (Independent)

22 years ago, Hoffman became the first US tech consultancy to set up shop in Asia. By 2017, that long tenure served to reinforce the perception that the agency was stagnating in the region, with revenue barely growing in the five years since it crossed \$5.5m in 2012. But, in line with a broader global reshaping of its business, Asia-Pacific has also seen its fortunes transformed under a new leadership team overseen by ex-Google veteran Caroline Hsu, who joined as Asia-Pacific MD in mid-2017.

Hsu has wasted little time in disrupting Hoffman's regional leadership team, hiring Jason Cao as China GM, Miranda Lee as GM of Korea, Marc Sparrow as GM of Hong Kong and promoting Maureen Tseng to GM of Singapore. That quartet has joined North Asia head Shingo Nomura and global operations VP

Lydia Lu in overhauling Hoffman's approach in the region, already driving a 19% increase in revenue to \$7.3m. It is worth noting that Asia is now Hoffman's largest region, accounting for more staff and revenue and actively exporting work to the rest of the global network.

In particular, Hsu has brought a strong focus on the startup economy, starting with her native Taiwan, where the firm opened an office last year, adding to its existing network of operations in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Korea, Indonesia and Taiwan. There was new business from La French Tech, Monaco, Adobe, Johnson Control, Cloudera, Taiwan Tech Area, JOS, Airbnb and BlackBerry, joining an existing client roster that features Nutanix, AppAnnie, Nokia Digital Health, Niantic Labs and NIVIDA.

A stronger focus on digital and WeChat is already reaping dividends in China, while a new Jakarta office has extended Hoffman's Southeast Asian presence. And, across the region, the firm is developing and packaging digital services that integrate SEM, SEO, design, website development, storytelling and social, selling them not just to tech companies, but also to consumer companies such as Sentosa Resorts (Singapore) and Ice Age Water (Korea). And the work also reflects Hoffman's progression, including a SABRE-nominated effort for Crypto.com. — AS

Rice Communications (Independent)

Following a year of growth ending with 36 staffers in Singapore, Myanmar, Hong Kong and now China,

and fee income of SGD\$4.2 million, Rice Communications is well on its way to establishing itself as one of the leading independents in South-East Asia. The agency's success reflects its focus on workplace culture to achieve stability and consistency in an often turbulent marketplace, and the leadership of Sonya Madeira, who founded Rice in 2009, and partner/director James Brasher to compete with larger multinationals for regional assignments in the technology sector: more than 80% of Rice clients are now serviced in multiple markets.

While technology remains Rice's core business, the agency has expanded into consumer, digital and corporate communications, as well as marketing tech, hospitality, financial services, and some government work. New business over the past 12 months came from Marks & Spencer, HEXA, WWF Myanmar, Internet Society, Pure Storage, MySkillsFuture, AdKnowledge Asia, Blu, Prudential, DataXu, joining a roster of existing clients such as Palo Alto Networks, Pure Storage, Digital Realty, Thales, ESET, Ooyala and National Instruments.

High-profile assignments included the "At the Beating Heart of Singapore" campaign Rice conducted for Hilton Garden Inn to support the brand's entry into Singapore with the opening of its first hotel in Little India. The multifaceted initiative highlighted the brand's "bright" values — influencers received hand-delivered sunflowers; videos showed employees exploring Little India's bright lights and sounds; and international media were shown the neighborhood's warmth. The hotel's launch garnered 190 pieces of coverage; The #BrightStories videos were viewed more than 38k times. — PH/DM

Sling & Stone (Australia/Independent)

Founder/CEO Vuki Vujasinovic started Australian firm Sling & Stone just over seven years ago with just one solid client and a compelling position as the firm for "the world's best challengers, disrupters and entrepreneurs." It turns out there were plenty of those potential clients in the Australian market, and Sling & Stone doubled in size through each of its first five years. It has doubled again over the past two years—fees were up by better than 20% last year—and now has a team of 45, adding satellite offices in New Zealand and the US to its Australia headquarters.

It's not just the quantity of business that has been attracting attention, however; the firm has been winning some big, high-profile pitches. In the past 12 months it has added names like Uber and Uber Eats, Nest, Anki, Goose Island, Zillow, Visa, and OrbitRemit. At the same time, a new "startup package" has made it easier for early-stage, venture-backed companies to work with the agency. And Sling & Stone has retained most of its longstanding clients, including Twitter, Kogan.com, Xero, Amazon Prime Video, BigCommerce, Slack, Stripe, Domain, Nearmap, and Autodesk.

The firm's work with Twitter has focused on discovering and amplifying the untold stories of how communities use the platform to unite. Among the highlights: it conducted the world's first underwater live broadcast from the Great Barrier Reef; support for Twitter's partnership with Australian Marriage Equality; amplifying the voice of Australia's Indigenous communities with campaigns like #ChangeTheDate and

#IndigenousDads; and supplying political journalists with real-time data on the New Zealand elections.

At the heart of the firm's growth strategy is a focus on creating an "employer-of-choice" work environment, earning Sling & Stone trophies in our Best Agencies to Work For research for the past three years. The firm has been able to safeguard its culture from the vicissitudes of rapid growth, suggesting that its workplace is functioning as a competitive advantage versus rivals. Employees scored it highly across all categories, including management, culture, professional development, client service, empowerment and communication, reflecting a workplace that features state-of-the-art technology, collaborative and open workspaces, weekly cultural activities and health and wellness benefits.—PH

Text100 (Next15)

It is sometimes easy to envy global agencies, with their bigger brands and flags on the map, but the flipside is that client decisions are sometimes impossible to control. So it proved for Text100 Asia-Pacific, which over the past 12 months lost its two biggest global clients — Lenovo and IBM — both of which, had significant implications for the firm's regional revenue. Luckily, Text100's 20-year presence in Asia-Pacific continues to translate into strategic depth in key markets across India, Australia, Southeast Asia and Greater China. And, under the leadership of Lee Nugent, the firm has transformed its capabilities, supported by a restructured leadership team that also features Sunayna Malik

in India, Marc Ha in Singapore, Meiling Leow in Southeast Asia and Rosemary Merz in Hong Kong.

Overall revenues were effectively flat at around \$20m in 2017, with profits up slightly to around \$3.7m from 305 staffers in the region. There was significant new business (much of it multi-market) from Oracle, Alipay, Skyscanner, Airbnb, Ernst & Young, Xero, Concur, Radisson Hotel and AirAsia — joining an existing client roster that features VMware, Adobe, Rolls Royce, NetApp, Four Seasons, DHL, British Council, IKEA and DHL

In particular, the firm has invested considerable resources into talent and training, enhancing its leadership across creative, insight/analytics and business development. There is a central creative hub led by a new regional CD, developing above-the-line work for Fortinet, influencer video content for Rolls Royce and website creation for Engineers Australia. And Text100's digital capabilities remain sharper than most, including offerings in strategic planning (buyer persona development, buyer journey mapping), content marketing (master

narrative and story Arcs, point of view, film), and digital marketing (SEO, search & PPC, lead generation). In keeping with its B2B strength, furthermore, Text100 also formalised a strategic engagement with LinkedIn, becoming the only APAC-networked agency to get certified as a LinkedIn Content Marketing Agency.

All of which helps to explain why Text100 continues to deliver standout work on behalf of its clients, resulting in six SABRE nominations, for Zebra Technologies, NetApp, CenturyLink and Lazada. — AS

2018 New PR Consultancies of the Year

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WINNER

First Partners (India)

Since its mid-2016 launch, First Partners has built an impressive client roster, including 15 major players that are a healthy mix of multinational brands, large Indian corporations, government mandates and industry associations. During its short existence, the firm has also built a staff of 30, who support the likes of Rolls-Royce (a global aerospace technology leader), global health food company Danone and the Indian conglomerate ITC

across six fully-owned offices in the cities of Noida, Gurugram, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai and Kolkata.

Business surged for First Partners in 2017, with the agency experiencing 750% year-over-year growth. The firm handled one of the year's most high-profile events — the launch of India's first bullet train project, inaugurated by the prime ministers of India and Japan. The firm rallied massive media support for the project, and helped change public sentiment for the bullet train — which critics called wasteful given India's ailing railway infrastructure — by positioning it as something Indians could be proud of. Elsewhere, consumer research for Danone made headlines by revealing urban India is protein deficient, just like its rural communities. Both of those campaigns won SABRE South Asia Awards, alongside work for reflecting the pedigree that founders Atul Ahluwalia and Dilip Yadav bring from their time at Corporate Voice.

First Partners has also rolled out proprietary tools, including one that ties communications to business outcomes, and addresses them as such. Also last year, the agency created partnerships — including one with the ad agency Quantum Communications, helping give First Partners the heft it needed to win government clients that typically wouldn't work with such a young agency. As a result, India's Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs' (MOHUA) flagship programme Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Mission) is among First Partners' clients. — DM

FINALISTS

On Purpose (India)

Founded by international agency veteran Girish Balachandran upon the mission of driving social change in India, On Purpose has built a non-traditional team made up of individuals from uncommon backgrounds, a move that fosters new approaches to helping brands envision and adopt their company

ethos — and then deliver on them. A former street artist is now the firm's visual communications strategist, for instance. Individuals with previous careers ranging from radio announcing to working at Goldman Sachs have been tapped for tasks like editing, community building and research.

That, combined with the firm's commitment to building campaigns around research, has garnered

On Purpose's offices in Delhi and Bangalore an impressive list of clients in the short time since its April, 2017 launch. The firm, for instance, has worked with Sesame Workshop India, creating a strategic framework to combat childhood obesity in India. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, through its support of the agency M4ID, tapped On Purpose to use storytelling to address the vulnerability of very young children in the state of Bihar,

while the Raza Foundation hired On Purpose to promote arts and culture. On Purpose also works with companies that are not inherently purpose-driven, like those above, but want to further their own actions in the space. Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages tapped On Purpose to work on CEO messaging, while Cisco charged the firm with creating a narrative laying out the company's commitment to India. — DM

Best Agencies To Work For - Asia-Pacific

Best Agency to Work For is possibly the only predictive award the Holmes Report gives out. By this, we mean there's a direct correlation between the agencies on this list and those that take home our biggest honor (often times at some point in the future) — Agency of the Year recognition. That's, in part, because firms that take culture seriously tend to attract and retain smart and creative talent who, in turn, produce stellar work. It's a simple formula but one that's easily overlooked amid the breathless pace and tremendous pressures that are a seemingly inevitable reality of agency life. But this pace is exactly why agencies shouldn't underestimate the power its culture has on the work its employees produce.

The firms recognized on the rankings include a few holding companies firms, but mostly independents. Some have generous benefits, others prioritize professional development or interesting work that keeps talent engaged. We're working on an in-depth feature that will more deeply explore the factors that drive employee engagement

within our industry. All participating firms can also obtain their own results mapped against either the industry or its competitive set.

Trophies for the top ranked agencies in each category were presented at the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards in Singapore on 11 September.

BEST AGENCY TO WORK FOR, ASIA-PACIFIC NETWORK

#1 Text100 (Next 15)

Always highly-rated for its progressive workplace culture, Text100 takes top spot among networks in 2018, thanks to a well-rounded offering that scores particularly high across Management, Culture and Empowerment. And the agency Next 15 agency accomplished this despite overhauling its internal people structure in 2017, flattening hierarchies and helping staff better build their careers.

#2 FleishmanHillard (Omnicom)

#3 Zeno Group (DJE Holdings)

#4 WE (Independent)

#5 Ogilvy (WPP)

BEST AGENCY TO WORK FOR, NATIONAL

#1 AKA Asia (Independent)

Singapore consultancy AKA takes top spot for the first time in its history. AKA's workplace offering drew strong employee affirmation across all categories, in particular Management, Culture, Professional Development, Client Service, Empowerment and Communication. All of which is testimony to the 31-strong agency's focus on a model that does not deploy siloes, instead challenging staffers to work in cross-matrix teams that aim to broaden experience, grow capability and encourage well-rounded, future thinking communications professionals.

#2 Honner (Independent)

#3 Sefiani (Independent)

#4 Sunny Side Up

#5 Maverick (Independent)

BEST AGENCY TO WORK FOR, SPECIALIST

#1 Sling & Stone (Independent)

Perennial winner Sling & Stone again takes top spot, marking its third consecutive triumph as a Best Agency to Work For. Remarkably, the Australian firm has been able to safeguard its culture from the vicissitudes of rapid growth, suggesting that its workplace is functioning as a competitive advantage versus rivals. Employees scored the firm highly across all categories, including Management, Culture, Professional Development, Client Service, Empowerment and Communication, reflecting a workplace that features state-of-the-art technology, collaborative and open workspaces, weekly cultural activities and health and wellness benefits.

#2 MullenLowe Salt (Independent)

#3 Mutant Communications
(MDC Partners)

#4 Allison+Partners (MDC Partners)

#5 Rice (Independent)



The Global SABRE Awards

From more than 5,500 entries submitted around the world to The Holmes Report's SABRE Awards competition, the judges selected 40 to receive Global SABRE Awards at the PProvoke18 Global Public Relations Summit in Washington.

The SABRE Awards — which include competitions for the Americas, EMEA, Latin America and the Asia-Pacific region — attract more than 5,500 entries from more than 60 countries, so that the winners of the Global awards are the elite of the elite, representing best practice in categories ranging from social media to social responsibility, from public affairs to employee communications.

Also honoured were our 2018 Global Agencies of the Year.

Our 40 best campaigns were ranked from 40 to one, including Campaign of the Year, at the Global SABRE Awards on 24 October:

1. #TOOCOOLFORPLASTICS

Iceland with Weber Shandwick

2. AFLAC "OUTDUCKS" A REPUTATIONAL DEFICIT

Aflac with Aflac with FleishmanHillard, Ken Willis Inc., Carol Cone On Purpose and Marina Maher Communications

3. CHANDO "BEAUTIFUL SURGERY LINES" CAMPAIGN

JALA Group Company with Shanghai Soho Square Advertising Co., Ltd.

4. VICKS 'TOUCH OF CARE' THAT MOVED MILLIONS

P&G Vicks with 20:20 MSL

5. BLOOD NORMAL

Libresse with Ketchum and Myriad PR

6. TINTA PARA EL ALMA

Payless Shoesource Costa Rica with CCK

7. WHEN JAILBIRDS SANG

Godrej Locking Solutions and Systems with Adfactors PR

8. LIFE UNCENSORED

Pfizer with Ogilvy SA

9. PALAU PLEDGE

The Palau Legacy Project with Host/Havas and Red Agency

10. P&G THE TALK

P&G's My Black Is Beautiful with EGAMI Group

11. OUR FREEDOM IS (STILL) NOT GRANTED

O2 Czech Republic, O2 Slovakia with Triad Advertising (SVK), Seesame (SVK) and FleishmanHillard (CZ)

12. CHECK YOUR BALLS

Young Cancer / Ung Cancer with Cohn & Wolfe

13. KAN'S STREAM STORE - THE WORLD'S FIRST LIVESTREAM STORE

ABN AMRO with NewsLab, Buutvrij and UM

14. EVEREVE TURNS #DRESSLIKEAMOM INTO THE ULTIMATE COMPLIMENT

Evereve with Carmichael Lynch Relate

15. BE REAL': MICROSOFT PIRATES A CELEBRITY

Microsoft with Echo Myanmar

16. ALL AGES, ALL RACES, ALL GENDERS: HELPING MAC COSMETICS CONTINUE ITS DIVERSITY & INCLUSION JOURNEY

MAC Cosmetics with Praytell Agency

17. #FORCEOFNATURE: MAKING THE OUTDOORS THE LARGEST LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

REI with Edelman

18. THE COLOR OF INCLUSION

Mattel, UNO with Weber Shandwick

19. THE ONE CHIP CHALLENGE

Paqui with Olson Engage

20. SOUND SO LOUD YOU CAN SEE IT

Sony with Hope&Glory

21. SHELL EMOTION TRACKING

Shell with Edelman

22. PROJECT HORIZON: ONE OF THE BIGGEST MERGERS IN THE REGION, DELIVERED SUCCESSFULLY

Mubadala Investments Company

23. MAKING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS: A TINDER COUPLE GOES VIRAL

Tinder with M Booth

24. MEDTRONIC PUTS 5,000 EMPLOYEES FIRST IN WAKE OF HURRICANE MARIA

Medtronic

25. FINLANDIA BY FOREST MACHINES

Neste and Ponsse with Kurio

26. DON'T BE AN ACCIDENTAL DRUG DEALER - A CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT TENNESSEE'S OPIOID EPIDEMIC

BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee with MP&F Public Relations

27. BUILDING HONDA'S REPUTATION IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE FOREIGN-OWNED CARMAKER

Honda North America with APCO Worldwide

28. BK LOVING IT

BURGER KING Deutschland GmbH with Emanate GmbH and Grabarz & Partner Werbeagentur GmbH

29. CHANGING HOUSEWORK FROM A JOB TO JOY

Procter and Gamble Japan K.K. with Dentsu Inc. and Dentsu Public Relations Inc.

30. "SEU LEITE PODE SALVAR VIDAS"

Unilever I Baby Dove with In Press Porter Novelli

31. SIEMENS AIRDROP

Siemens South Africa with Atmosphere Communications together with the King James Group Companies

32. BAR ON THE EDGE

Brewdog with Manifest New York

33. BE VOCAL: SPEAK UP FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Inc. with Biosector 2

34. ECLIPSING THE ECLIPSE

Royal Caribbean International with Weber Shandwick

35. CARNIVAL CORPORATION RALLIES THE INDUSTRY TO SHOW THE CARIBBEAN IS OPEN

Carnival Corporation with LDWW

36. TOSTITOS PARTY SAFE BAGS

Frito-Lay with Ketchum

37. AMERICAN GREETINGS GIVE MEANING

American Greetings with MullenLowe

38. FORD KSA: WOMEN IN THE DRIVING SEAT

Ford Middle East with ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller

39. COMMUNICATING VALUES IN THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Salesforce with Zeno Group and Nectar

40. MR. CLEAN, THE UNDISPUTED WINNER OF THE SUPER BOWL

P&G Mr. Clean with Citizen Relations



The SABRE Awards North America

PLATINUM SABRE AWARD FOR BEST IN SHOW

Aflac “Outducks” a Reputational Deficit—Aflac with FleishmanHillard, Ken Willis Inc., Carol Cone On Purpose and Marina Maher Communications

DIAMOND SABRE AWARDS COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Communicating Values in the Fourth Industrial Revolution—Salesforce with Zeno Group and Nectar

CEO OF THE YEAR

John Legere, the Un-Carrier CEO—John Legere, T-Mobile

BRAND-BUILDING

Road to Worldwide Relevancy—Turtle Wax with Zeno Group

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Building Honda’s Reputation in Washington, D.C. as the Most Effective Foreign-Owned Carmaker—Honda

RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Rallying Big Data, AI and PR In Defense of Fairness Opinions—Duff & Phelps with Greentarget

MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

Columbia Gas of Ohio Energy Efficiency Saving Matters—Columbia Gas of Ohio with Fahlgren Mortine

GOLD SABRE AWARDS: PRACTICE AREA CATEGORIES

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING

Living Acres: Preserving Monarch Butterflies—BASF Crop Protection with Padilla

CONSUMER MARKETING (EXISTING PRODUCT)

Mr. Clean, the Undisputed Winner of the Super Bowl—P&G Mr. Clean with Citizen Relations

CONSUMER MARKETING (NEW PRODUCT)

Friends Again—Bank of America with Burson-Marsteller

INTEGRATED MARKETING

Tostitos Party Safe Bags—Frito-Lay with Ketchum

INSTITUTIONAL IMAGE

Aflac “Outducks” a Reputational Deficit—Aflac with FleishmanHillard, Ken Willis International, Carol Cone ON PURPOSE and Marina Maher Communications

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

Medtronic Puts 5,000 Employees First in Wake of Hurricane Maria—Medtronic

EMPLOYER BRANDING

Think Next. Now.—CSRA Inc. with REQ

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

J&J Takes Over #JPM17—Johnson & Johnson with Marina Maher Communications

CAPITAL MARKETS

An All-Time High for Financial Communications—Abbott

CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

The Color of Inclusion—Mattel, UNO with Weber Shandwick

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Creating a Community’s Voice in the Wake of a Tragedy: OneOrlando Alliance—Pro Bono/OneOrlando Alliance with Edelman

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Estée Lauder Companies’ Breast Cancer Campaign Reaches 25-Year Milestone - The Estée

Lauder Companies' Breast Cancer Campaign with M Booth, Spring Studios New York and Reason2Be

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Childhood Enders Campaign—Save the Children with Weber Shandwick

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Heroes Among Us: Sutter Health Emerges as a Role Model for Natural Disaster Response in 2017—Sutter Health with Weber Shandwick

ISSUES MANAGEMENT

2018 Bayer Bee Care Program—Crop Science, a division of Bayer with Porter Novelli, BBDO and Mastermind Marketing

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Free Lunch for 1.1 Million Public School Students in NYC—New York State Health Foundation with Global Strategy Group

CORPORATE MEDIA RELATIONS

Staring Down The Street: State Street's Fearless Girl—State Street with Ogilvy, River Communications and Water & Wall Group

PRODUCT MEDIA RELATIONS (CONSUMER)

Handle With Care—Gillette with Ketchum supported by Ad Agency: Grey New York

PRODUCT MEDIA RELATIONS (TRADE)

Taking Blockchain from Geekdom to Game Changer—IBM with Ketchum

DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

Undeniably Dairy—Dairy Management Inc. with Edelman

SOCIAL NETWORKING CAMPAIGN

#NuggsforCarter—Wendy's with Ketchum

INFLUENCER MARKETING

American Greetings Give Meaning—American Greetings with MullenLowe

BRANDED JOURNALISM

Aspiring Toward a World Free from HPV-Related Cancers and Diseases—Merck with Zeno Group

WORD OF MOUTH

Bar on the Edge—Brewdog with Manifest New York

GUERRILLA MARKETING

For The Love of Hot Dogs—Oscar Mayer with Olson Engage

PUBLICITY STUNT

Garden of Life Cultivates #Organic and #Non-GMO Leadership Position—Garden of Life with Carmichael Lynch Relate

SPECIAL EVENT

Pay With Honest, Get Honest Tea—Honest Tea with M Booth

SPONSORSHIP

The NFL Tastes The Rainbow—Skittles with Olson Engage

TRADE SHOW

CES: A Device Like No Other by American Greetings—American Greetings with MullenLowe

MARKETING TO MEN

The Find Your Magic Initiative—Unilever/AXE with Edelman

MARKETING TO WOMEN

Evereve Turns #DressLikeAMom Into The Ultimate Compliment—Evereve with Carmichael Lynch Relate

MARKETING TO YOUTH

Make America Bait Again: Turning the Participation Tide for Fishing and Boating—Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation with Exponent PR

MULTICULTURAL MARKETING

P&G "The Talk"—P&G's My Black Is Beautiful with EGAMI Group

GOLD SABRE AWARDS: INDUSTRY SECTOR CATEGORIES

AUTOMOTIVE

Thor Trucks: Beating Tesla to the Streets—Thor Trucks Inc with the Bulleit Group

FASHION AND BEAUTY

All Ages, All Races, All Genders: Helping M·A·C Cosmetics Continue Its Diversity & Inclusion Journey—M·A·C Cosmetics with Praytell Agency

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Catelli 150th Family Reunion—Catelli Pasta with Proof Inc.

HOME AND FURNITURE

Global Launch of the IKEA Place App—IKEA with Allison+Partners

CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Stand With Ribs—The Clorox Company / Kingsford Charcoal with Current Marketing

ENTERTAINMENT

The Timberwolves Launch a #NewEra—Minnesota Timberwolves with Olson Engage

FINANCIAL SERVICES

American Express Cobalt Card—American Express

FOOD SERVICE

Breaking the Interstate ... and a Sales Record - Krispy Kreme Original Glazed Doughnut's 80th Birthday—Krispy Kreme Doughnuts with FleishmanHillard

RETAILERS

#ForceofNature: Making the Outdoors the Largest Level Playing Field—REI with Edelman

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Eclipsing the Eclipse—Royal Caribbean International with Weber Shandwick

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Remembering Hurricane Andrew: Miami-Dade's Unbreakable Spirit—Florida Power & Light Company with rbb Communications

CHEMICALS AND INDUSTRIALS

Countdown to Day One: Creating DowDuPont—DuPont with Gagen MacDonald and Think Marketing

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FIRMS

Bringing Business Chemistry to Life—Deloitte with Hill+Knowlton Strategies and Grey Market Digital

REAL ESTATE AND CONSTRUCTION

Schindler Elevator Creates Sales Lift with Social Listening—Schindler Elevator Corporation with G&S Business Communications

TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS

Taking Flight to Explain Complicated Technology from Cockpit to Cabin—Honeywell Aerospace with WE Communications

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

TV is Art: The Frame—Samsung Electronics America with Allison+Partners

TECHNOLOGY: HARDWARE

HPE Takes Its Mars-Shot—Hewlett Packard Enterprise with Interfuse Communications, a Ketchum Company

TECHNOLOGY: SOFTWARE AND SERVICES

Swipe Right for Good: Tinder's #FundHerCause for International Women's Day—Tinder with M Booth

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Disrupting the Duopoly: Launching the ZTE Axon M—ZTE with Grayling

WEB-BASED BUSINESS

Making Meaningful Connections: A Tinder Couple Goes Viral—Tinder with M Booth

ANIMAL CARE

If This Dog Could Talk—Merck Animal Health with GCI Health

CONSUMER HEALTH

Empowering the LGBT Community to F*ck w/out Fear—Los Angeles LGBT Center with Weber Shandwick

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Don't Be An Accidental Drug Dealer - A Campaign To Combat Tennessee's Opioid Epidemic—BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee with MP&F Public Relations

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

Evolving a Brand's Heart Health Mission—Omron Healthcare with MWWPR

PHARMACEUTICAL RX

Be Vocal: Speak Up for Mental Health—Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Inc. with Biosector 2

ASSOCIATIONS

Meet the Elevators—Elevate Minnesota with Olson Engage

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Making a Dent in College Debt: Freshman Year for Free Launch—Modern States Education Alliance with RoseComm

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

By Air, By Land or By Sea—Department of Defense Warrior Games with Edelman

NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

YES Means Test: Empowering Sexually Active Young Adults to Get Tested for STDs—American Sexual Health Association with Edelman

GOLD SABRE AWARDS: GEOGRAPHIC CATEGORIES

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN

Pure Earth Highlights Global Impact of Pollution to Public Health Problem and Economics—Pure Earth with TogoRun

MULTIMARKET CAMPAIGN

Carnival Corporation Rallies the Industry to Show THE CARIBBEAN IS OPEN—Carnival Corporation with LDWW

CANADIAN CAMPAIGN

It's About mBC Time—Pfizer Canada Inc. with NATIONAL Public Relations

SILVER SABRE AWARDS: AGENCY MANAGEMENT

PR AGENCY EMPLOYEE PROGRAM

Clean Up At Cannes—Golin

PR AGENCY CITIZENSHIP

Mi Casa Es Tu Casa—Weber Shandwick

PR AGENCY MARKETING

Day One Agency Perspectives—
Day One Agency

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP IN PR

Authenticity as a Driver of Reputation:
Leveraging Original Research to
Spark Conversation—Cohn & Wolfe

**PR AGENCY NEW PRODUCT OR
OFFERING**

W20 Socialgraphics—W20



The In2 Innovation SABRE Awards North America

Olson Engage took home eight trophies — included the coveted Best in Show honors — at the Innovation SABRE Awards North America held at the InterContinental Hotel in New York on 13th February.

The winners of the night included:

BEST IN SHOW #1

The One-Chip Challenge
Paqui with Olson Engage

“The CEO called out this marketing campaign on an earnings call with analysts! In a category with lots of giants this was a way to stand out and resulted in a sales lift.”

BEST IN SHOW #2

Eclipsing the Eclipse
Royal Caribbean International
with Weber Shandwick

“An iconic and culturally relevant way to bring in younger consumers — with impressive business results to show for the eclipse cruise.”

BEST IN SHOW #3

The Talk” – Creating a National Movement to End “The Talk” and Racial Bias
Procter & Gamble / My Black Is Beautiful with EGAMI Group

“Taps into the unique conversations black parents have with their children to prepare them for biases — the video brought people into the black parenting experience. Memorable and resonates with cultural and social movements right now.”

BEST IN SHOW #4

Encourage Everyday Connections
with Give Meaning
American Greetings with
MullenLowe U.S.

“Beautiful, moving videos use everyday moments to provoke conversation and increase purchase consideration especially for a new generation.”

BEST IN SHOW #5

Staring Down The Street:
State Street’s Fearless Girl
State Street with Ogilvy,
River Communications,
Water and Wall Group

“It was a zeitgeist moment — it went beyond viral. Incredibly bold move with results that blew me away.”

EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

LIVE EVENTS

Eclipsing the Eclipse
Royal Caribbean International
with Weber Shandwick

“An iconic and culturally relevant way to bring in younger consumers — with impressive business results to show for the eclipse cruise.”

DIGITAL PROMOS & ACTIVATIONS

The One-Chip Challenge
Paqui with Olson Engage

“The CEO called out this marketing campaign on an earnings call with analysts! In a category with lots of giants this was a way to stand out and resulted in a sales lift.”

SPONSORSHIPS

Driving Rare Disease Dialogue with a Daytime Drama – VoicesofMPN
General Hospital Integration
Incyte with W2O Group

“Integrating with General Hospital was a smart and creative way to raise awareness about a rare blood cancer — with an impactful mix of traditional and social media support.”

TRADE SHOWS & AWARDS

Women’s Health In Bloom
AMAG Pharmaceuticals with
Marina Maher Communications

“A visually disruptive, three-dimensional branded sculpture of a vulva handcrafted of 16,000 live roses — bold and brave.”

EARNED MEDIA

BEST IN DIGITAL/PRINT CONSUMER MEDIA (EARNED)

The One-Chip Challenge
Paqui with Olson Engage

“True media exclusive with Mashable earned them handsomely. Media, brand and sales metrics are indicative of innovation and creativity.”

BEST IN DIGITAL/PRINT B2B MEDIA (EARNED)

How SAP Ariba Technology is Stomping Out Modern Slavery
SAP Ariba with PAN Communications

“Brave — shows how SAP Ariba is going beyond typical CSR and looking to combat human trafficking within supply chains. The Fast Company story sets up the story beautifully and quickly segues into how technology can help solve this.”

BEST IN BROADCAST MEDIA (EARNED)

A sneak peek inside Microsoft’s AI research labs – BBC Newsnight
Microsoft with WE Communications

“BBC isn’t an easy media outlet — and I like how they laid out the challenges and then carefully managed each of these throughout the process. The final segment was fantastic coverage.”

PRODUCT REVIEWS (EARNED)

Pantene Gold Series Launch Initiative
Pantene (P&G) with DeVries Global

“Good insight — African American women aren’t interested in Pantene — used to drive a campaign to make ‘beautiful hair’ more inclusive.”

BEST EARNED MEDIA WITH INFLUENCERS + COMMUNITIES

Bites at 30,000 Feet
JetBlue with MullenLowe U.S.

“Reached the right influencer with a clever and integrated thinking.”

BEST PERSUASIVE CONTENT

“The Talk” – Creating a National Movement to End “The Talk” and Racial Bias
Procter & Gamble / My Black Is Beautiful with EGAMI Group

“Depicts the conversations black parents have with their children to prepare them for biases. Moving, memorable and resonates with cultural and social movements right now.”

BEST CONTENT CREATION FOR MEDIA SITES (EARNED)

Trans102
M.A.C. Cosmetics with Praytell

“Smart strategy to move the conversation beyond Caitlyn Jenner — extensive research in the next phase of the video and it pays off with nearly 7m views!”

SPONSORED & PAID MEDIA

BEST CONTENT CREATION FOR MEDIA SITES (PAID)

Fight Dirty
Method with Kovert Creative

“Creative use of humor and leveraging a popular comedic celebrity.”

BEST INFLUENCER PROGRAMS + ENDORSEMENTS (PAID)

Creating the Summer of Spritz with Aperol
Campari America with M Booth

“Very strategic strategy that positioned Aperol against rose for day drinking — exceptional work that pulled through on strong metrics: awareness, consideration and sales.”

BEST MEDIA PARTNERSHIP

Uncharted Waters
Land O’Lakes with Exponent PR

“The effort was such a success that Land O’Lakes has enlisted Exponent PR to take the conversation to the next level.”

BEST IN SEO/CONTENT DISTRIBUTION (PAID + ORGANIC)

CloudCraze Digital Commerce ROI Campaign
CloudCraze with Walker Sands

“Resulted in 39% increase in traffic and a 78% increase in leads Q3 2016 over Q3 2017.”

BEST IN DIGITAL MARKETING/ ADVERTISING

Feeding the World, Acre by Acre
DuPont Crop Protection
with Exponent PR

"It was a smart and methodological approach to reaching a hard-to-reach audience, tackling a global problem. Results boosted visibility and supported sales."

SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

BEST USE OF INTEGRATED SOCIAL MEDIA

Arla's 12 Days of Grilled Cheese
Arla with Carmichael Lynch Relate

"Who doesn't love grilled cheese? They got that. Excellent sales lift and partnerships. Fired on all cylinders — execution, strategy."

BEST USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Adobe Make It On Mobile
Adobe with Golin

"The goal of collaborating influencers with the community was an astonishing success — original goal of 60 pieces of branded content was surpassed by 112%."

BEST USE OF VIDEO NETWORKS

EnLIVEning the Conversation: Creating
New Pathways for the MS Patient
Teva Neuroscience with
Rx Mosaic Health

"This was the first use of Facebook Live to show a patient living with this disease — an inventive way to solve the need patients have to connect."

BEST IN REAL-TIME ENGAGEMENT

The Debate Headache
GSK Consumer Healthcare,
Excedrin with Weber Shandwick

"Brave — Excedrin didn't need to wade into politics but found a strategic entry. The move paid off with 10% sales lift from previous year."

BEST MEME/VIRAL CAMPAIGN

Staring Down The Street:
State Street's Fearless Girl
State Street with Ogilvy,
River Communications,
Water and Wall Group

"It was a zeitgeist moment — it went beyond viral. Incredibly bold move with results that blew me away."

BEST USE OF GAMIFICATION/USER- GENERATED CONTESTS

Catelli 150th Family Reunion Contest
Catelli Pasta with Proof Inc.

"Impressive how the contest succeeded in tapping into a human emotion and the community responded with 4,580 entries."

BEST IN CROWDSOURCING & CO- CREATING

Writing Pimax Into The
Record Books (Winner)
Pimax with Dynamo Communications

BEST USE OF PHOTO NETWORKS

Queso Cup
Chipotle Mexican Grill
with Day One Agency

"The Queso Cup became the most engaged Instagram campaign in Chipotle's history."

BEST USE OF BLOGS

'Great American Eclipse'
Flight (Winner)
Alaska Airlines with C+C

BRAND CONTENT & CREATIVITY

BEST IN BRAND NARRATIVES

"The Talk" – Creating a
National Movement to End
"The Talk" and Racial Bias
Procter & Gamble / My Black Is
Beautiful with EGAMI Group

"Powerful, moving narrative that extends P&G narrative as a cause-driven conglomerate on the back of #LikeAGirl, #SharetheLoad."

BEST IN DIGITAL BRAND PLATFORMS

Microsoft Story Labs
Microsoft

"Fantastic variety of communication styles — dynamic and compelling stories on sometimes dry topics."

BEST IN BRAND FILM/VIDEO

Encourage Everyday Connections
with Give Meaning
American Greetings with
MullenLowe U.S.

"Beautiful, moving videos use everyday moments to provoke conversation and increase purchase consideration especially for a new generation."

BEST IN BRAND ANIMATION VIDEOS

Invest Like a Feminist
Pax World Management
with RF Binder

"Effectively evokes the challenges women face in gender pay equality, corporate leadership and basic human rights globally."

BEST USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS + PHOTOGRAPHY

All Pink Starburst
Starburst with Olson Engage

“Pop-worthy imagery in a campaign where social media images led the design.”

BEST IN AUDIO: PODCASTS + MUSIC

T.R.I.P. Through The Multiverse
The Lights Out + Aeronaut Brewing Co. with Adam Ritchie Brand Direction

“Creative integration of music, design, beer and a studio album — they released an album on a beer can!”

BEST IN IDENTITY BRANDING

Meet the Elevators
Elevate Minnesota with Olson Engage

“Campaign led directly to positive awareness — with the numbers to prove it. Design reflects the brand ethos.”

BEST IN SOCIAL GOOD + PUBLIC SERVICE

Staring Down The Street:
State Street’s Fearless Girl
State Street with Ogilvy,
River Communications,
Water and Wall Group

“This was especially powerful in a year when being a woman was both challenging and empowering. It created a guideline for having women on boards — and resulted in other organizations asking how to do that.”

ANALYTICS + INSIGHTS

BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA OR ANALYTICS FOR AUDIENCE INSIGHTS OR INFLUENCER TARGETING

J&J Takes Over #JPM17
Johnson & Johnson (J&J) with Marina Maher Communications (MMC)

“This smartly took insights that have been traditionally reserved for B2C into a B2B environment with a deep understanding of who the stakeholders were and developing strategic content to reach them at the right time. The results showed a significant increase in performance.”

BEST USE OF ORIGINAL/ COMMISSIONED RESEARCH FOR ENGAGEMENT

Jameson Gives Promising Musicians A Shot
Pernod Ricard USA / Jameson Irish Whiskey with Ketchum

“Liked how it was cause-based with good follow-through with the event.”

BEST IN MEASUREMENT, POST-CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

Bringing a New Generation of Campers to KOA
Kampgrounds of America (KOA) with Allison + Partners

“Robust and insightful metrics following a highly-targeted campaign to update consumer perceptions around camping.”

BEST IN MARKETING TECHNOLOGY

W2O Socialgraphics
W2O Group

“Impressively identifies groups of individuals who self-select into highly-specific ‘media ecosystems’ to develop highly relevant content.”

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

BEST AGENCY MARKETING

Protecting and Predicting Against Reputation Risk in Real Time
Weber Shandwick

“Relevant and timely to help companies navigate this era of activism and uncertainty — it would make me hire Weber Shandwick.”

BEST AGENCY DISRUPTION - TOOLS & TACTICS

Just Drive Media

“Case studies demonstrated true business value.”

BEST AGENCY BLOG, EDITORIAL, COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM

Introducing the Periodic Table of Business Storytelling Microsite
The Hoffman Agency

“Built a platform that serves as a resource for the communications industry — professionals and students, while also bringing differentiation among prospects and clients.”

BEST INITIATIVE — AGENCY

Driving Thought Leadership Among Emerging Leaders
W2O Group

“Inspiring future-looking program.”

BEST LIVE/DIGITAL EVENT — AGENCY

#PrepareToProtect
Healthcare Share Events
Weber Shandwick

“Interactive crisis scenario provides real value to clients.”

INNOVATION EXCELLENCE — AGENCY PROFESSIONAL

Rebecca Reeve, Rsquared
Communication
SPECIAL CAMPAIGNS

BEST USE OF SOCIAL AND DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT ACROSS SECTORS

CORPORATE/B2B

The Wolf with Christian Slater
HP, Inc.

“A series focused on the dangers of unsecured printing, starring Christian Slater required a thoughtful and complex strategy that resulted in impressive purchase intent.”

CONSUMER GOODS

Nuggs for Carter
Wendy’s with Ketchum

“The tone nailed it — quick proactive, quick-thinking approach drove exactly the conversation Wendy’s needed.”

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

For Two-plus Years ASE Thought the Storm Would Blow Over. It Didn’t.
ASE Group with the Hoffman Agency

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

How innovative communications impact business transformation
Bristol-Myers Squibb with
Gagen MacDonald

HEALTHCARE

Be Vocal: Speak Up for Mental Health
Sunovion Pharmaceuticals
with Biosector 2

“Powerful videos that take a brave look at mental health — both the struggles and the power of hope and recovery.”

FINANCIAL SERVICES/INSURANCE

“Official Card of Sounders
FC Fans” Campaign
BECU with C+C

“Not only was the idea smart and creative — the end result was 52,000+ credit card signups, that’s very difficult to pull off.”

SOCIAL GOOD/NON-PROFIT

Sister March: Building A Movement
Sister March with InkHouse

“By January 21, there was at least one march in every U.S. state, many U.S. territories, and on ALL seven continents.”

GOVERNMENT/PUBLIC AFFAIRS/ LOBBYING

Meet the Elevators
Elevate Minnesota with Olson Engage

“Campaign led directly to positive awareness — with the numbers to prove it. Rebrand reflects the brand ethos.”

TECHNOLOGY

Writing Pimax Into The Record Books
Pimax with Dynamo Communications

“Liked how they laid out the very real challenges — and was able to get get a much bigger competitor to notice.”

LEAN MARKETING

Writing Pimax Into The Record Books
Pimax with Dynamo Communications

“Liked how they laid out the very real challenges — and was able to get get a much bigger competitor to notice.”

MICRO MARKETING

Hinge Milestone Marketplace
Hinge with SourceCode
Communications

“A clever, affordable campaign that led to downloads in the crowded dating app space.”

NEW TO MARKET

BEST NEW COMPANY LAUNCH
The One-Chip Challenge
Paqui with Olson Engage

“The CEO called out this marketing campaign on an earnings call with analysts! In a category with lots of giants this was a way to stand out and resulted in a sales lift.”

BEST NEW PRODUCT LAUNCH

The One-Chip Challenge
Paqui with Olson Engage

“The launch strategy drove the product design — and led to a relatively small player taking on some giants in a memorable and impactful way.”

INNOVATION EXCELLENCE

MOST INNOVATIVE PROJECT - UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE LEVEL

#PRDiversity: The Struggle is Real
The City College of New York (CCNY), the Branding + Integrated Communications program (BIC)

INNOVATION EXCELLENCE — BRAND PROFESSIONAL

Franz Paasche, PayPal

INNOVATION EXCELLENCE — INDUSTRY DISRUPTER

Antonio Lucio, HP



The SABRE Awards EMEA

PLATINUM SABRE AWARD FOR BEST IN SHOW

#toocoolforplastics—Iceland with Weber Shandwick

DIAMOND SABRE AWARDS COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Project Horizon: One of the Biggest Mergers in the Region, Delivered Successfully—Mubadala Investments Company - Group Communications

CEO OF THE YEAR

CEO of the Year - Frans van Houten—Royal Philips

BRAND-BUILDING

Blood Normal—Libresse with Ketchum and Myriad PR

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Project Horizon: One of the Biggest Mergers in the Region, Delivered Successfully—Mubadala Investments Company - Group Communications

RESEARCH AND PLANNING

EY Brand Marketing Research – Finding the Audience for the Digitisation Debate—EY with Commetric

MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

Life Uncensored—Pfizer with Ogilvy South Africa

GOLD SABRE AWARDS GEOGRAPHIC CATEGORIES AFRICA

Siemens AirDrop—Siemens South Africa with Atmosphere Communications together with the King James Group Companies (King James the Second, King James Digital and King James Digital Media)

THE BALKANS

The Magic Chair—Magic Makers with Jazz Communication and Rogalski Damaschin PR

THE BALTIC

A Public Initiative “Freedom to Rock’n’Roll”—Festivaliu aljansas with Fabula Hill+Knowlton Strategies

BENELUX

Pact for Life—Pfizer with Ogilvy and Social.Lab

DACH

Are You Chris? A Disease Awareness Campaign in Hepatitis C—Gilead Sciences Europe Ltd with Cohn & Wolfe and Medizin und Markt

CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPE

Blazing the Trail (Razíme Cestu)—LMC with AC&C Public Relations

FRANCE

Repair Days—Carglass with Wellcom

IBERIA

UNEXPECTED OPENING—Unibail-Rodamco (Glòries Shopping Mall) with DICOM EVENTS

MEDITERRANEAN

Chat Yourself Italia—Longeva with Burson-Marsteller Italy

THE MIDDLE EAST

SYFY - No End House for Middle East—Channel Zero, SYFY with Edelman Middle East

NORDICS

Check Your Balls—Young Cancer / Ung Cancer with Cohn & Wolfe

RUSSIA AND THE CIS

Beyond the Capitals—Google Russia with Ketchum Moscow

TURKEY

Talking Paintings—Turk Telekom

**UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND
(SMALL BUDGET)**

Brie-Once—East Village
E20 with Hope&Glory

**UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND
(MID BUDGET)**

Is It a Plane? Is It a Train? The
Launch of Linténair—Trainline
with Red Consultancy

**UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND
(LARGE BUDGET)**

A Smart Strategy for a Smart
Crossing—Direct Line with Mischief PR

MULTI-COUNTRY PROGRAMME

Hidden Treasures of Creativity—
Adobe with Golin

GLOBAL PROGRAMME

ReConnect: The World's Biggest
Recruitment Programme for Career-
Break Women—Vodafone Group

PRACTICE AREAS

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS

Kaan's Stream Store - The World's
First Livestream Store—ABN AMRO
with NewsLab, Buutvrij and UM

**CONSUMER MARKETING (EXISTING
PRODUCT)**

MAIA for ADT—ADT with Unity

**CONSUMER MARKETING (NEW
PRODUCT)**

Sound So Loud You Can See
It—Sony with Hope&Glory

INTEGRATED MARKETING

F*ck like a Finn—RFSU with Miltton

INSTITUTIONAL IMAGE

Scammer Nanas—Get Safe
Online with Unity

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

The Polar Race—Hennig-
Olsen Is with Nucleus AS

EMPLOYER BRANDING

Serve Your Country—McDonald's
Sweden with Prime Weber
Shandwick and Nord DDB

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Taking a Stand for Globalization:
An Outreach Campaign During
Germany's G20 Presidency—
Deutsche Post DHL Group

**CAPITAL MARKETS
COMMUNICATIONS**

"Reaching the Point of No
Return" – A Shareholder Activism
Campaign—Franklin Templeton
Investment Management Ltd –
Fondul Proprietatea with GOLIN

CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

The Coffee Line—Shell with
Hill+Knowlton Strategies

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Don't Tell Martti—Crisis
Management Initiative (CMI) with
Miltton, Miltton Creative and
Cocoa Mediaproductions

**CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY**

Our Freedom Is (Still) Not Granted—
O2 Czech Republic and O2 Slovakia
with Triad Advertising (SVK), Seesame
(SVK) and FleishmanHillard (CZ)

PUBLIC EDUCATION

SERIOUS PLAY: LEARNING CODING AT
SCHOOL—Clementoni with Omnicom
Public Relations Group, Italy/Ketchum

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Slaughterhouse Becomes Open
House: From Horror Story to Role
Model—DEBRA GROUP with Whyte

ISSUES MANAGEMENT

Fighting the #1 Fake News Story in
The Netherlands—Recybem B.V.
with Hill+Knowlton Strategies

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Girls in STEM—Microsoft
Europe with Creation

CORPORATE MEDIA RELATIONS

ATM Gold—Barclays with Hope&Glory

**PRODUCT MEDIA RELATIONS
(CONSUMER MEDIA)**

ManFran—Virgin Atlantic
with Weber Shandwick

**PRODUCT MEDIA RELATIONS (TRADE
MEDIA)**

Global Launch of the IKEA Place
App—IKEA with Allison Partners

DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

PICK THE PENCIL" RHEUMATOID
ARTHRITIS AWARENESS
CAMPAIGN"—ABBVIE GREECE
WITH PHOCUS AGENCY

**SOCIAL MEDIA/SOCIAL NETWORKING
CAMPAIGN**

Nimue 12 Week Challenge
#NoMakeUpBride—Nimue
with Ogilvy South Africa

INFLUENCER MARKETING

Cyberbullying: Not Okay—The
Norwegian Directorate for Children,
Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir)
with Geelmuyden Kiese, Sande
Fredin, and Hinda Fahre.

BRANDED JOURNALISM

Yours, Mrs Claus—
ActionAid with Unity

WORD OF MOUTH

#EtsyForYou—Etsy with Alfred

GUERRILLA MARKETING

The Refugee Walk—
Vluchtelingenwerk
Vlaanderen with LVTTPR

PUBLICITY STUNT

BK LOVING “IT”—BURGER KING
Deutschland GmbH with Emanate
GmbH, Grabarz & Partner

SPECIAL EVENT

Biased Sports Commentators—
Oddset with Jung Relations / DDB

SPONSORSHIP

AIB Backing Club & County
#TheToughest—AIB with
Wilson Hartnell

TRADE SHOW

The Impossible Signing Sessions—
bol.com with LEWIS Global
Communications and DDB

MARKETING TO MEN

L’Eau de Chris—CALM &
TOPMAN with W

MARKETING TO WOMEN

Offer Strength—Pantene (P&G)
with Graffiti PR, part of MMK+

MARKETING TO YOUTH

Duracell: Big Battery Hunt—Duracell
with Hill+Knowlton Strategies

MULTICULTURAL MARKETING

One Book for Peace—Inter-Religious
Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina

INDUSTRY SECTORS

AUTOMOTIVE

Ford KSA: Women in the Driving
Seat—Ford Middle East with
ASDA’A Burson-Marsteller

FASHION AND BEAUTY

Borotalco’s Stop the Stink
Hotline—Bolton Austria /
Borotalco with Ketchum Publico

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Fazer Cricket Bread – Building
Innovative Bakery Brand—Fazer
Bakery with SEK and Dagmar

HOME AND FURNITURE

Game of Throws—IKEA
with Hope&Glory

CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Lynx: Giving British Masculinity
a New Voice—Lynx with W

ENTERTAINMENT

Second Life for Stadium Seats
Amsterdam ArenA—Amsterdam
ArenA with Leene Communicatie

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Challenging Your Appetite for
Risk with the Launch of ‘Click &
Investaurant’—Investec with Frank PR

FOOD SERVICE

KFC Battle—KFC with Orta CG

RETAILERS

#toocoolforplastics—Iceland
with Weber Shandwick

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

The Year of Nice—Monarch
with Tin Man

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Finlandia by Forest Machines—
Neste and Ponsse with Kurio

CHEMICALS AND INDUSTRIALS

#catchcurious for Merck—
Merck with fischerAppelt

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FIRMS

Henkel Recipe: How to Become
the Best Employer—Henkel
Slovensko with Seesame
Communication Experts

REAL ESTATE AND CONSTRUCTION

Aliseda Inmobiliaria: How
Kids Imagine the House of the
Future—Aliseda Inmobiliaria
with LLORENTE & CUENCA

TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS

Khalifa bin Salman Port—APM
Terminals with Memac Ogilvy

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

Sound So Loud You Can See
It—Sony with Hope&Glory

TECHNOLOGY: HARDWARE

Surface AntyLuwr—Microsoft Poland
with dfusion communication

TECHNOLOGY: SOFTWARE AND SERVICES

The Data Dollar Store—Kaspersky
Lab with Radley Yeldar

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Our Freedom Is (Still) Not Granted—
O2 Czech Republic, O2 Slovakia with
Triad Advertising (SVK), Seesame
(SVK) and FleishmanHillard (CZ)

WEB-BASED BUSINESS

The Psychology of Scamming—
Gumtree with Red Consultancy

ANIMAL CARE

Animal Heroes of Norway—Agria
Dyreforsikring with Gambit
Hill+Knowlton Strategies

CONSUMER HEALTH

THEY WOULD STAY ALIVE Dead
Poets Society Reloaded—Hungarian
National Association of Pensioners
with DeepInsight Creative Agency

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Pooh – The Bionic Cat—Central Vet Clinic, Sofia, Bulgaria with SiteMedia Consultancy Bulgaria

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

Cutting through the Silence on World Hearing Day—MED-EL with Porter Novelli London

PHARMACEUTICAL: RX

“J’ose contre la fibrose!” (“I dare against fibrosis”)—Roche France with dna Switzerland

ASSOCIATIONS

#ISeeMore—The Institution of Engineering and Technology with Tin Man

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Postcards from the Past: A Story of the People Who Conquered Time and Space—The Museum of Cosmonautics

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

MADE VISIBLE—TCS

NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

#SmallTalkSavesLives - Sarah’s Story—Samaritans and Network Rail with Pegasus and Progress Films



The In2 Innovation SABRE Awards EMEA

More than 25 public relations firms from across the EMEA region were presented with In2 SABRE Awards during our In2 Innovation Summit at the National Maritime Museum in Amsterdam on 23 May.

The In2 SABREs recognize excellence in various categories of innovation and insight—with an emphasis on content creation—as well as PR agency management and marketing.

BEST IN DIGITAL/PRINT CONSUMER MEDIA (EARNED)

The 72 Hour Cabin—Visit Sweden with Prime Weber Shandwick (lead agency) and Nice One (production company)

BEST IN DIGITAL/PRINT B2B MEDIA (EARNED)

Introducing Jane Whittaker, COO and CTO of Keystone Games—Keystone Games with Big Ideas Machine

BEST IN BROADCAST MEDIA (EARNED)

Oil Alert Wadden Sea—Rijkswaterstaat with Maatschap voor Communicatie and Leene Communicatie en VormVijf

BEST IN PRODUCT REVIEWS (EARNED)

Posture Straight Talk—Upright Technologies with Kaizo

BEST EARNED MEDIA WITH INFLUENCERS + COMMUNITIES

Check Your Balls—Young Cancer / Ung Cancer with Cohn & Wolfe

BEST PERSUASIVE CONTENT

Cyberbullying: Not Okay—The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) with Geelmuyden Kiese, Sande Fredin and Hinda Fahre

BEST CONTENT CREATION FOR MEDIA SITES (EARNED)

NOW TV Gets Grimey For The Walking Dead—NOW TV with Fever PR

BEST CONTENT CREATION FOR MEDIA SITES (PAID)

Trust in Education—The Danish National Union of Upper Secondary School Teachers (Gymnasielærernes Lærerforening – GL) with Geelmuyden Kiese Denmark

BEST INFLUENCER PROGRAMS + ENDORSEMENTS (PAID)

#dotknijemocji—Canon Poland with dfusion communication

BEST MEDIA PARTNERSHIP

Philips Hue Finds Its VOICE—Philips Lighting UK with Ketchum, Havas and Pelling

BEST IN DIGITAL MARKETING/ ADVERTISING

Sleep to Snow—Caledonian Sleeper with Weber Shandwick

BEST USE OF INTEGRATED SOCIAL MEDIA

Life Uncensored—Pfizer with Ogilvy South Africa

BEST USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Tabatha: The Think.Act. Breathe Chatbot—Boehringer Ingelheim with Cohn & Wolfe

BEST USE OF VIDEO NETWORKS

MewTube: Black Friday for Argos—Argos with Hope&Glory

BEST USE OF PHOTO NETWORKS

#LookBackAtNikon—Nikon with Brands2Life

BEST USE OF BLOGS

Digital Empowers—Tata Consultancy Services

BEST IN CROWDSOURCING & CO-CREATING

Bright Minds Challenge—Royal DSM with SalterbaxterMSLGroup

BEST IN REAL-TIME ENGAGEMENT

THE GREAT CZECH PRESIDENTIAL DUEL—MICHAL HORACEK, CZECH PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE with Ewing Public Relations, s.r.o.

BEST MEME/VIRAL CAMPAIGN

BK LOVING “IT”—BURGER KING Deutschland GmbH with Emanate GmbH and Grabarz & Partner Werbeagentur GmbH

BEST USE OF GAMIFICATION/USER-GENERATED CONTESTS

Save Tropical House—The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation with Gambit Hill+Knowlton Strategies

BEST IN BRAND NARRATIVES

Project Horizon: One of the Biggest Mergers in the Region, Delivered Successfully—Mubadala Investments Company - Group Communications

BEST IN DIGITAL BRAND PLATFORMS

Virtually Real—HTC Vive with Hope&Glory

BEST IN BRAND FILM/VIDEO

Lynx ‘Find your Magic’ with Anthony Joshua—Lynx (Unilever) with W

BEST IN BRAND ANIMATION

Catching the Butterflies—Merck with Porter Novelli London

BEST USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS + PHOTOGRAPHY

The Gift of Growing Up—World Child Cancer with Pegasus

BEST IN AUDIO: PODCASTS + MUSIC

What’s Cool?—RUStelefonen with Nucleus AS

BEST IN IDENTITY BRANDING

PIMFA – Brand and Logo Development—Personal Investment Management & Financial Advice Association (PIMFA) with Cicero Group

BEST IN SOCIAL GOOD + PUBLIC SERVICE

The World’s Most Eligible Bachelor—Ol Pejeta Conservancy with Ogilvy Africa / SuperSonic Africa / Black Bean Productions

BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA OR ANALYTICS FOR AUDIENCE INSIGHTS OR INFLUENCER TARGETING

EY Brand Marketing Research – Finding the Audience for the Digitisation Debate—EY with Commetric

BEST USE OF ORIGINAL/ COMMISSIONED RESEARCH FOR PR

Travel in a Post-Brexit Era—HomeAway with Hotwire

BEST IN MEASUREMENT, POST-CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

#ISeeMore—The Institution of Engineering and Technology with Tin Man

BEST IN MARKETING TECHNOLOGY

Mingla: Revolutionising Professional Networking—Miltton

SILVER SABRES

PR AGENCY EMPLOYEE PROGRAM

#ProVisionGreen Creative Teambuilding: Let the Birds Stay Home—Pro-Vision Communications

PR AGENCY CITIZENSHIP

5th Football World Cup of Children from Care Homes—Hope for Mundial

PR AGENCY MARKETING

Who Kidnapped CEO Hans Geelmuyden?—Geelmuyden Kiese

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP IN PR

‘The Middle East: A Region Divided’ - The Ninth Annual ASDA’A Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey 2017—ASDA’A Burson-Marsteller



The SABRE Awards Asia-Pacific

Winners were announced during the 2018 Asia-Pacific SABRE Awards ceremony, which was held at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Singapore, on September 11.

IN2 SABRE Award Winners, which recognize excellence in multimedia content creation, have been unveiled here.

PLATINUM SABRE AWARD FOR BEST IN SHOW

Chando Beautiful Surgery Lines “Campaign”—JALA Group Company with Shanghai Soho Square Advertising Co., Ltd

DIAMOND SABRE AWARDS

COMPANY OF THE YEAR
Shanghai Disney Resort

CEO OF THE YEAR

Kanchana TK — Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India

THE DIAMOND SABRE AWARD FOR BRAND-BUILDING

BECOMING A PROUD SPONSOR OF KOREAN MOMS AT PYEONGCHANG 2018—P&G with Ketchum

THE DIAMOND SABRE AWARD FOR REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Monaco - Cryptocurrency in Every Wallet—Monaco with The Hoffman Agency

THE DIAMOND SABRE AWARD FOR RESEARCH & PLANNING

Nameless chores—Daiwa House Industry Co., Ltd. with Dentsu Public Relations Inc.

THE DIAMOND SABRE AWARD FOR MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

Launching Majestic Princess: Where Western Luxury Meets Chinese Flavour—Princess Cruises with Burson-Marsteller Shanghai

GOLD SABRE AWARDS

GEOGRAPHIC CATEGORIES

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

Stop The Horror—Go Gentle Australia with History Will Be Kind

GREATER CHINA

Chando Beautiful Surgery Lines” Campaign”—JALA Group Company with Shanghai Soho Square Advertising Co., Ltd

INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT

Carton Le Aao, Classroom Banao—Tetra Pak India with Burson Cohn Wolf (Genesis Burson-Marsteller)

JAPAN

Changing Housework from a JOB to JOY—Procter and Gamble Japan K.K. with Dentsu Public Relations Inc.

KOREA

It’s Not You. It’s the Iron—Philips with Weber Shandwick

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Shell Emotion Tracking Study—Shell Malaysia with Edelman

MULTI-COUNTRY CAMPAIGN

Man’s Best Friend - Introducing the Hotels.com Pug Mascot—Hotels.com with Weber Shandwick Singapore

REGIONAL CAMPAIGN

Bring Out The Bold With Listerine Healthy White—Listerine with Allison+Partners

GLOBAL (LED OUT OF ASIA-PACIFIC WITH WORK IN OTHER REGIONS)

Palau Pledge—The Palau Legacy Project with Red Agency and Host/Havas

GOLD SABRE AWARDS

PRACTICE AREAS

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING

SAP CX Consumer Insights Campaign
2017—SAP Customer Experience
with FleishmanHillard Singapore

CONSUMER MARKETING (EXISTING PRODUCT)

Vicks ‘Touch of Care’ that Moved
Millions—P&G Vicks with 20:20 MSL

CONSUMER MARKETING (NEW PRODUCT)

Do You Dare?—Mills & Boon
with FORWARD Agency

INTEGRATED MARKETING

Dr.Ci:Labo and the Puru
Puru Movement—Johnson
& Johnson with Golin

INSTITUTIONAL IMAGE

LOCOMO CHALLENGE—
LOCOMO CHALLENGE COUNCIL
with hakuhodo co.ltd

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

METRO Calendar Connects
every employee on WeChat—
METRO with Ruder Finn China

EMPLOYER BRANDING

Diversity and Inclusion—Johnson and
Johnson with FleishmanHillard India

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

From the Industrial to the Invisible
Revolution: Heralding the Age of AI
in Asia—Microsoft with IN.FOM

CAPITAL MARKETS COMMUNICATIONS

Razer’s IPO in Hong Kong—Razer
Inc. with Instinctif Partners

CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

Carton Le Aao, Classroom Banao (Get
Your Carton and Make A Classroom)—
Tetra Pak with Burson Cohn Wolf
(Genesis Burson-Marsteller)

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

They Built This City - Revealing
the Sacrifices by Migrant
Workers in Singapore—Paya
Lebar Quarter by Lendlease with
FleishmanHillard Singapore

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

STORY CAN Stop Bullying—Coca-
Cola Foundation with Ogilvy Taiwan

PUBLIC EDUCATION

PET Bottles: What is recyclable
is not a Waste!—PET Packaging
Association for Clean Environment
(PACE) with First Partners

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

RESCUING CRYPTO-CURRENCY
FROM INDIA’S BIGGEST
FINANCIAL CRISIS—Koinex with
Value 360 Communication

ISSUES MANAGEMENT

Addressing Privacy Breach: the
taking and sharing of intimate
images without consent—Briana
Rose: Privacy Campaigner with
Sefiani Communications Group

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Addressing Privacy Breach: the
taking and sharing of intimate
images without consent—Briana
Rose: Privacy Campaigner with
Sefiani Communications Group

CORPORATE MEDIA RELATIONS

Making India the Global
Food Hub—Ministry of Food
Processing with Burson Cohn Wolf
(Genesis Burson-Marsteller)

PRODUCT MEDIA RELATIONS (CONSUMER MEDIA)

Capture Different—GoPro with
FleishmanHillard India

PRODUCT MEDIA RELATIONS (TRADE MEDIA)

Finding the X Factor: Unveiling OPPO
Flagship Phone Find X to the World—
OPPO with BCW (Burson-Marsteller)

DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

It’s Not You. It’s the Iron—Philips
with Weber Shandwick

SOCIAL MEDIA/SOCIAL NETWORKING CAMPAIGN

DreamLab DreamJob Campaign—
Vodafone Foundation with
Hill+Knowlton Strategies, J Walter
Thompson, and Wavemaker

INFLUENCER MARKETING

“Find What Matters” A New Creative
Brand Communications Platform
for Consumer Engagement by
Hennessy—Moët Hennessy
Diageo with Ruder Finn China

BRANDED JOURNALISM

Great Failure—FROEBEL-KAN
CO., LTD. with dentsu inc.

WORD OF MOUTH

Man on the Curtain—LEOPALACE21
with DENTSU INC.

GUERILLA MARKETING

‘Be Real’ : Microsoft Pirates
A Celebrity—Microsoft
with Echo Myanmar

PUBLICITY STUNT

Ben and Jerry’s 2 Scoop Ban—Ben
and Jerry’s with Red Agency

SPECIAL EVENT

Great Failure—FROEBEL-KAN
CO., LTD. with dentsu inc.

SPONSORSHIP

BECOMING A PROUD SPONSOR OF KOREAN MOMS AT PYEONGCHANG 2018—P&G with Ketchum

MARKETING TO MEN

With Ayyappa's blessings, Vodafone protects children—Vodafone India

MARKETING TO WOMEN

Chando Beautiful Surgery Lines" Campaign"—JALA Group Company with Shanghai Soho Square Advertising Co., Ltd

MARKETING TO YOUTH

Cosplay Encyclopedia—Kodansha with Dentsu Inc

GOLD SABRE AWARDS

INDUSTRY SECTORS

AUTOMOTIVE

Mercedes-Benz Star Fund World Heritage Sites Sustainable Livelihood Project—Mercedes-Benz China (Beijing Mercedes-Benz Sales Service Co., Ltd.) with Ruder Finn Asia Limited

FASHION & BEAUTY

SK-II #ChangeDestiny I Never Expire Campaign—P&G with DeVries Global

FOOD & BEVERAGE

Australian Macadamias announces Macadamia—Australian Macadamias with Red Agency

HOME & FURNITURE

Just laugh, SING and be secure—Godrej Security Solutions with Adfactors PR

CONSUMER PRODUCTS

When Jailbirds Sang—Godrej Locks with Adfactors PR Pvt. Ltd.

ENTERTAINMENT

Simcity Buildit School of Politics—Electronic Arts K.K. with dentsu

FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Great Singapore Replay—Temasek with ZENO COMMUNICATIONS SINGAPORE PTE LT

FOOD SERVICE

foodpanda Leads the Sustainability Change—foodpanda with W Asia

RETAILERS

We are Here To Create—adidas Singapore with Creation Singapore

TRAVEL & TOURISM

Jetstar Asia - Stay Home this Lunar New Year— Jetstar Asia with AKA Asia

ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES

VOICING CHILDREN'S PLEA FOR SAFE DRIVING— Shell Myanmar with TODAY Ogilvy & Mather

CHEMICALS & INDUSTRIALS

Sinopec Open Day— SINOPEC with BrunswickGroup

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FIRMS

Transforming Bell Pottinger Asia into Klareco Communications: a phoenix from the ashes— Klareco Communications

REAL ESTATE & CONSTRUCTION

They Built This City - Revealing the Sacrifices by Migrant Workers in Singapore— Paya Lebar Quarter by Lendlease with FleishmanHillard Singapore

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

HUAWEI X Rex Tso "From Zero to Hero"— Huawei Mobile with Ogilvy

TECHNOLOGY: HARDWARE

Penny's New Year Party— NVIDIA with Hill+Knowlton Strategies

TECHNOLOGY: SOFTWARE & SERVICES

Orchestrating a Choral Symphony: Driving sales impact through employee advocacy and social selling—NetApp with Text100

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

A Green Goodbye—Vodafone India with Adfactors PR

WEB-BASED BUSINESS

Kobo's Bookstore Therapy: A YouTuber's Diagnosis— Rakuten Kobo with Ogilvy

CONSUMER HEALTH

Granny's Secret—Prevail with Hill+Knowlton Strategies

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Better Half's Bitter Truth—Nova IVI Fertility with Adfactors PR

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

Intel: Envisioning Hope for Autism—Intel with Ogilvy Beijing

PHARMACEUTICAL: RX

Every Life is Precious—Sanofi Genzyme with Spag Asia

ASSOCIATIONS

Batting for a lower GST for Budget Hotels—OYO with Adfactors PR

EDUCATIONAL & CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

RESETTING THE NTU SINGAPORE CORPORATE IDENTITY—Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Palau Pledge—The Palau
Legacy Project with Red
Agency and Host/Havas

NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Facing up to Schizophrenia: the
fight for better support, treatment
and acceptance—Hong Kong
Association of Psychosocial
Rehabilitation with Weber Shandwick



IN2 INNOVATION SUMMIT 2018 ASIA-PACIFIC

The In2 Innovation SABRE Awards Asia-Pacific

The 2018 In2 SABRE Awards, which recognize excellence in multimedia content creation, were presented at a lunchtime ceremony at the Asia-Pacific In2 Innovation Summit, which was held at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Singapore, on September 11.

A complete list of winners follows:

DIGITAL AND PRINT MEDIA

Stop The Horror—Go Gentle
Australia with History Will Be Kind

BROADCAST MEDIA (RADIO/ TELEVISION)

Canon captures Down
Under From Above—Canon
Australia with opr Agency

CREATION OF PERSUASIVE CONTENT

Cosplay Encyclopedia—
Kodansha with Dentsu Inc

BEST IN PRODUCT REVIEWS (EARNED)

Gong Cha Singapore - Comeback
Kid of 2017—Gong Cha Singapore
with Huntington Communications

MEDIA PARTNERSHIP

MOTRIN® Children Fever Express
2017—Shanghai Johnson & Johnson
Pharmaceuticals Ltd. with BCW

BEST INFLUENCER PROGRAMS ENDORSEMENTS (PAID)

Uncle Siu's English Reading Week—
Book Depository with Golin

ADVERTISING - BROADCAST, DIGITAL OR PRINT.

Unlock the Amazing Winter Olympic
Experience Together—P&G(Procter
& Gamble) with Bluefocus
Digital Marketing Agency

BEST USE OF GLOBAL SOCIAL NETWORKING PLATFORMS

Porsche boldly uses LinkedIn as
its corporate communications
platform—Porsche LinkedIn
with Ruder Finn China

BEST USE OF VISUAL SOCIAL PLATFORMS

Play With Your Food—
LOTTE with Dentsu Inc.

BEST USE OF ASIAN SOCIAL PLATFORMS

Chando Beautiful Surgery
Lines” Campaign”—JALA Group
Company with Shanghai Soho
Square Advertising Co., Ltd

BEST USE OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Launching China's first Super Test
Drive auto vending machine—
Ford with H+K Strategies

BEST IN REAL-TIME ENGAGEMENT

Overcoming All Odds: Celebrating
the Chalkboard IT Teacher—
Microsoft Asia with IN.FOM
UFC FIGHT NIGHT: SHANGHAI 2017—
UFC & WME-IMG with FleishmanHillard

BEST MEME/VIRAL CAMPAIGN

Pampers Positive—Procter & Gamble
(P&G) with MSLGroup (Vietnam)

BRAND DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Shell Emotion Tracking Study—
Shell Malaysia with Edelman

DIGITAL NEWSROOMS

Owning the News Agenda with
a Modern Brand Newsroom—
Microsoft Asia with IN.FOM Pte Ltd

DIGITAL VIDEO

Changing Housework from a JOB to
JOY—Procter and Gamble Japan K.K.
with Dentsu Public Relations Inc.

**BRANDING AND IDENTITY-
INCLUDING LOGO AND OTHER
DESIGN WORK**

RESETTING THE NTU SINGAPORE
CORPORATE IDENTITY—NANYANG
TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
with Nanyang Technological
University, Singapore



The SABRE Awards South Asia

The winners and certificate of excellence recipients were announced at the awards ceremony in New Delhi on 25 July.

PLATINUM SABRE AWARD FOR BEST IN SHOW

Vicks 'Touch of Care' that Moved Millions—P&G Vicks with 20:20 MSL

THE DIAMOND SABRE AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE C-SUITE

COMPANY OF THE YEAR
Maruti Suzuki India

CEO OF THE YEAR
Mr. Manu Jain—XIAOMI

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN BRAND-BUILDING

Vicks 'Touch of Care' that Moved Millions—P&G Vicks with 20:20 MSL

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN CREATIVITY

When Jailbirds Sang—Godrej Locks with Adfactors PR Pvt. Ltd.

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

The Viral Truth - As Pure As A Blessing —ITC Ltd. - Foods Division with Madison Public Relations

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

Leveraging Holistic PR Measurement To Raise the Bar of Godrej's Corporate Reputation Management—Godrej Group with Eikona PR Measurement

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN RESEARCH & PLANNING

India Protein Movement: Not just rural, urban India too is protein deficient! —Danone India with First Partners

PRACTICE AREA CATEGORIES

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING

Empowering SMEs: Instappy—Instappy with Value 360 Communications

CORPORATE IMAGE

Transforming Philips to a healthcare brand—Philips India with AvianWE

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Carton Le Aao, Classroom Banao (Get Your Carton and Make A Classroom)—Tetra Pak with Burson Cohn & Wolfe (Genesis Burson-Marsteller)

CRISIS/ISSUES MANAGEMENT

Mumbai Life Line 3- Connecting the Unconnected—Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation with Burson Cohn & Wolfe (Genesis Burson-Marsteller)

DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

Vicks 'Touch of Care' that Moved Millions—P&G Vicks with 20:20 MSL

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

Viacommunity Week - Karma Workouts!—Viacom18 Media Pvt. Ltd. with Rickshaw communique

FINANCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Paytm Payment Bank – Dawn of a new era of Digital Banking—Paytm with Value 360 Communications

INTEGRATED MARKETING

Flavours Without Borders—McDonald's India (West and South) with Avian WE

MARKETING TO CONSUMERS (NEW PRODUCT)

Launch of Hyundai Next Gen Verna – Cars are the New Gadgets!—Hyundai Motor India with First Partners

MARKETING TO CONSUMERS (EXISTING PRODUCT)

Vicks 'Touch of Care' that Moved Millions—P&G Vicks with 20:20 MSL

MEDIA RELATIONS

Securing the Throne with Game of Thrones Season 7—Star World with Creation India

PUBLIC AFFAIRS/GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Powering sustainable travel and women empowerment in rural India through home sharing—Airbnb India with Chase India

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Fortis Healthcare "More to Give" Campaign—Fortis Healthcare with AvianWE

SPECIAL EVENT

India's First Bullet Train: Silencing critics @ speed of train—National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) with First Partners & Quantum Communications

INDUSTRY SECTOR CATEGORIES

ASSOCIATIONS

Batting for a lower GST for Budget Hotels—OYO with Adfactors PR

CONSUMER PRODUCTS/SERVICES

Classmate: Much more than a Notebook!—ITC Limited with First Partners

FASHION AND BEAUTY

"There is more to motorcycle than meets the eye!"—Royal Enfield Gear Business with AvianWE

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Empowering India's Dying MSMEs with Aye Finance—Aye Finance with Value 360 Communications

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Mars Wrigley Confectionery launch M&Ms in India—Mars Wrigley Confectionery with Edelman India

HEALTHCARE

Vicks 'Touch of Care' that Moved Millions—P&G Vicks and 20:20 MSL

INDUSTRIAL/MANUFACTURING

Maruti Suzuki Road Safety Campaign for employees—Maruti Suzuki India Limited

MEDIA, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

#NoConditionsApply—Times of India Metro Supplements

NOT FOR PROFIT

Free Condom Store - AHF India—Aids Healthcare Foundation India Cares with AvianWE

PUBLIC SECTOR/GOVERNMENT

Powering Indian Police with Artificial Intelligence: Staqu—Staqu Technologie with Value 360 Communications

TECHNOLOGY

Capture Different—GoPro with FleishmanHillard



The SABRE Awards Latin America

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN BRAND-BUILDING

Inside the Box: Packaging for Consumer Education—Tetra Pak with JeffreyGroup

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Venda Seu Peixe—Banco Santander with In Press Porter Novelli

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Why Does My Mobile Phone Have No Reception in São Paulo?—Abrintel with S/A LLORENTE & CUENCA

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

70 Years LG Electronics—LG ELECTRONICS with MG Consulting

MEXICO

Dual Year Germany - Mexico 2016 - 2017—Goethe-Institut - Mexiko with Another Company Mexico

CARIBBEAN

RD Fluye, A Citizen Movement to Improve Road Mobility and Safety, Powered by Domino's—Domino's Pizza with LLORENTE & CUENCA

CENTRAL AMERICA

Tinta Para el Alma—Payless Shoesource Costa Rica with CCK

ARGENTINA

Memoria AMIA—AMIA

BRAZIL

“Seu Leite Pode Salvar Vidas”—Unilever I Baby Dove with In Press Porter Novelli

SOUTH AMERICA (EXCLUDING ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL)

Looking for Marco's Mom—redBus with Burson-Marsteller

MULTI-MARKET

Empowering Health Journalists in Latin America—Roche Latin America with Edelman Miami

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING

Heróis de Fibras—DuPont Kevlar with Talquimy Comunicação

CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

Equally Welcome—Marriott with JeffreyGroup

CORPORATE IMAGE

The Modern Communication Factory—CA Technologies with S/A LLORENTE & CUENCA

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Amazon Warriors Safe Collection—Ananse with Little George (Ketchum)

CRISIS/ISSUES MANAGEMENT

Mission: Save the World—Kaspersky Lab with JeffreyGroup

DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

Venda Seu Peixe—Banco Santander with In Press Porter Novelli

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

180 Years of thyssenkrupp in South America—thyssenkrupp with Ideal H+K Strategies

FINANCIAL/CAPITAL MARKETS COMMUNICATIONS

Banco Sabadell Personal Banking: Breaking Paradigms—Banco Sabadell with LLORENTE & CUENCA

INFLUENCER MARKETING

#StoriesAndBeers: How to Get Influencers' Attention for a Corporate Brand Event—Backus Ab InBev with LLORENTE & CUENCA

INTEGRATED MARKETING

Technology & Life Campaign—
Intel with Burson-Marsteller

MARKETING TO CONSUMER (NEW PRODUCT)

Proudly Mexican—Tequila
Patron with JeffreyGroup

MARKETING TO CONSUMER (EXISTING PRODUCT)

The Art of Flying—KLM
with JeffreyGroup

MEDIA RELATIONS

Cómo Reforzar el Posicionamiento
de una Institución Educativa
como Referente de Creatividad
y Lidera—TOULOUSE LAUTREC
with AXONMARKETING &
COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLIC AFFAIRS/GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

United Against Cybercrime—
Microsoft with Burson-Marsteller

PUBLIC EDUCATION

The First Time Has No Age—Pfizer
with Ketchum/Little George

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Blitz em Celebriedades—DETRAN
SP with FSB Comunicação

SPECIAL EVENT/SPONSORSHIP

Fashion Week Mexico at Tren
Suburbano—Ferrocarriles
Suburbanos with Zimat Consultores

ASSOCIATIONS

Initiative Fuerza Mexico—
Business Coordinating Council
(CCE) with Zimat Consultores

CONSUMER PRODUCTS/SERVICES

Adoptafest - The Biggest Adoption
Event in Mexico—Mars Petcare
México with Porter Novelli México

FINANCIAL & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Raising Interest: A Bank's Journey
toward Increased Visibility and
Trust—Scotiabank with JeffreyGroup

FOOD & BEVERAGE

Book or Toy—Arcos Dorados with
Porter Novelli, Tribal, Alurralde
Jasper y Asoc., Creaciones, Power
Influencer, Marketgate, Llorente
y Cuenca, HRC Consultores

HEALTHCARE

Test of Courage—Pfizer with
Ketchum/Little George

INDUSTRIAL/MANUFACTURING

Un Futuro Eficiente y Sustentable—
Generadoras de Chile with
Extend Comunicaciones

MINING/EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

PAE'S 20th Anniversary Campaign—
Pan American Energy

MEDIA, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Fasttest Release - Need for Speed—
Electronic Arts with Weber Shandwick

NOT FOR PROFIT

Força na Peruca: Informação Que
Empodera e Gera Transformação
Social—Fundação Laço Rosa with
Approach Comunicação Integrada

PUBLIC SECTOR/GOVERNMENT

Cidade Olímpica—Prefeitura
da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro
with FSB Comunicação

TECHNOLOGY

Sherlock Brings Quizlet to
Brazil—Quizlet with Sherlock
Communications

TRAVEL & LEISURE

Posicionando a Uruguay Frente a
Sus Públicos Estratégicos de Países
no Fronterizos—MINISTERIO DE
TURISMO DE URUGUAY with AXON
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



The SABRE Awards Africa

The winners received their trophies during an awards ceremony in Gaborone, Botswana, on May 10. The gala dinner was part of the African Public Relations Association's annual conference.

PLATINUM SABRE AWARD FOR BEST IN SHOW

Life Uncensored—Pfizer with Ogilvy

THE DIAMOND SABRE AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE C-SUITE

THE SABRE AWARD FOR SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN BRAND-BUILDING

Don't Just Think; Do—Lipton with Red Media Africa

THE SABRE AWARD FOR SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Superior Achievement in Reputation Management—Instinctif Partners—Bryte Insurance Company Ltd with Instinctif Partners

THE SABRE AWARD FOR SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Brands in Motion—WE Communications

THE SABRE AWARD FOR SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

Reputation Research to Take the IoDSA's Reputation to the Next Level—Institute of Directors Southern Africa with Reputation Matters

GOLD SABRE AWARDS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS GEOGRAPHIC CATEGORIES

NORTHERN AFRICA

Social Engagement inwi with PR Media

WESTERN AFRICA

Jameson Connects—Jameson Irish Whiskey with Brands we Love Agency

EASTERN AFRICA

THE RED CARD CAMPAIGN—THE NATIONAL INTEGRITY ALLIANCE with IN HOUSE WORK BY CHAPTER ONE AND TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

CENTRAL AFRICA

ONE MILLION NDAMBA—ICON FOR GUINNESS CAMEROON SA with ICONProd Burson-Marsteller

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Rouge New Era Sessions—Rouge with Instinctif Partners

PRACTICE AREA CATEGORIES

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING

MasterCard's MasterPass QR - Kenya Launch. A Hands-On Approach to Technology—MasterCard SSA with FleishmanHillard South Africa

CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

Siemens AirDrop—Siemens South Africa with Atmosphere Communications together with the King James Group Companies (King James the Second, King James Digital and King James Digital Media)

CORPORATE IMAGE

Rouge New Era Sessions—Rouge with Instinctif Partners

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

JSE Investment Challenge 2017—The Johannesburg Stock Exchange with Hill+Knowlton Strategies South Africa

CRISIS/ISSUES MANAGEMENT

Boko Haram Media War: An Encounter with the Spymaster—Yushau A. Shuaib, Author with Image Merchants Promotion Limited

DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

Life Uncensored—Pfizer with Ogilvy

FINANCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Sage Budget Speech 2017—Sage (Africa & Middle East region) with Idea Engineers

INTEGRATED MARKETING

LUX #WeAreMore—Unilever with Edelman South Africa

MARKETING TO CONSUMERS (NEW PRODUCT)

PAUL South Africa: Celebrating Five Generations of French Art de Vivre—PAUL South Africa with FleishmanHillard South Africa

MARKETING TO CONSUMERS (EXISTING PRODUCT)

AXE Find Your Magic—Unilever with Edelman South Africa

MEDIA RELATIONS

Innovation Prize for Africa 2017 - African Innovation Foundation with Djembe Communications—African Innovation Foundation with Djembe Communications

PUBLIC AFFAIRS/GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

THE RED CARD CAMPAIGN—THE NATIONAL INTEGRITY ALLIANCE with IN HOUSE WORK BY CHAPTER ONE AND TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Prison Decongestion: Tackling the Plight of Awaiting Trial Inmates (ATI)—Nigerian Prison Service with Image Merchants Promotion Limited

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

KFC Black Fried Day—KFC with Ogilvy

SPECIAL EVENT/SPONSORSHIP

Doggy Day with Guinness World Records & dotsure.co.za—dotsure.co.za with Clockwork Media

ASSOCIATIONS

Reputation Research to Take the IoDSA's Reputation to the Next Level—Institute of Directors Southern Africa with Reputation Matters

CONSUMER PRODUCTS/SERVICES

Nimue 12 Week Challenge #NoMakeUpBride—Nimue with Ogilvy

FASHION AND BEAUTY

Nyoya Ki Pro Na Gillette (Shave Like A Pro Using Gillette)—Hill+Knowlton Strategies Kenya

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

SABRE Award Entry From Instinctif Partners—Bryte Insurance Company Ltd with Instinctif Partners

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

There is More Behind The Star-Heineken with Red Media Africa

HEALTHCARE

Life Uncensored—Pfizer with Ogilvy

MEDIA, ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Cartoon Network Introduces Africa's Very Own Powerpuff Girl—Turner's Cartoon Network Africa with Burson-Marsteller Africa

NOT FOR PROFIT/CHARITIES

HEART TOUR—ICONPROD BURSON-MARTELLER

PUBLIC SECTOR/GOVERNMENT

Free Trade Zone Regulatory Issue—Nigerdock with CMC Connect Burson-Marsteller

TECHNOLOGY

Emotion Tracking & Driver Behaviour Research—Shell South Africa with Edelman South Africa

TRAVEL AND LEISURE

Create Leads—Akwa Immobilier with PR Media



The Influence 100



AARON SHERINIAN

Director Global Communications
Aga Khan Development Network



ANDREW PIRIE

General Manager Corporate Relations
Spark New Zealand



BRIAN LOTT

Chief Communications Officer
Mubadala



ADRIENNE LOFTON

Senior Vice President, Global Brand Management
Under Armour



ANDY PHAROAH

Vice President, Strategic Affairs and Corporate Initiatives
Mars



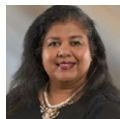
CHRIS MONTEIRO

Chief Communications Officer
KPMG



ALINE SANTOS

EVP Global Marketing & Global Head of Diversity & Inclusion
Unilever



ANN MUKHERJEE

Global CMO
SC Johnson



CHRISTINE GRAEFF

Director General Communications
European Central Bank



ANDERS BYLUND

Head of Group Communications
Interogo Holdings (IKEA)



ANTHONY PALMER

President, Global Brands and Innovation
Kimberly-Clark



CHRISTOF EHRHART

Executive Vice President Corporate Communications & Responsibility
Deutsche Post DHL Group



ANDREAS GALL

Chief Innovation Officer
Red Bull Media House



BEATRICE DAUTRESME

Executive Vice-President Corporate Communications & External Affairs
L'Oreal



CLAIRE DIVER

Group Communications Director
BAE Systems



ANDREW PARKER

Group Executive, Government, Industry and International Affairs
Qantas



BEATRIZ PEREZ

SVP & Chief Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability Officer
Coca-Cola



COREY DUBROWA

VP Global Communications and Public Affairs
Google



DAN BARTLETT

CCO and SVP Corporate Communications
Walmart



DAN TARMAN

EVP Corporate Affairs
Ebay



D'ARCY RUDNAY

CCO
Comcast



DAVE SAMSON

General Manager Public Affairs
Chevron



DAVID PALOMBI

Senior Vice President & Chief Communications Officer
CVS Health



DEBORAH YEH

SVP Marketing and Brand
Sephora



DEVRY BOUGHNER VORWERK

Corporate VP, Global Corporate Affairs
Cargill



DON NATHAN

Senior Vice President and Chief Communications Officer
UnitedHealth Group



DUSTEE TUCKER JENKINS

Global Head of Communications and PR
Spotify



ED WALSH

SVP Global Head of Integrated Communications & Events
Phillips



EUGENIO SIMIONI

Group Corporate Communication & Public Affairs Director
Nestlé



FRANK X. SHAW

Corporate Vice President, Communications
Microsoft



FRANZ PAASCHE

SVP, Corporate Affairs
PayPal



GEOFF MORRELL

Group Head of Communications & External Affairs
BP



ISABEL-ISABEL DE PAOLI

Chief Strategy Officer
Merck KGaA



JAKE SIEWERT

Global Head of Corporate Communications
Goldman Sachs



JAN RUNAU

Chief Corporate Communications Officer
adidas



JANE LAWRIE

Group Communications Director
Tesco



JAY CARNEY

SVP Corporate Affairs
Amazon



JENNIFER KUPERMAN

Head of International Corporate Affairs
Alibaba Group



JERILAN GREENE

Global Chief Communications Officer
Yum! Brands



JILL HAZELBAKER

SVP, Communications and Public Policy
Uber



JON BANNER

Executive Vice President Communications
PepsiCo



JONATHAN ADASHEK

Alliance Global VP Communications
Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance



JOY TAN

President of Global Media and Communications
Huawei



KAISA LIPPONEN

Director of Corporate Communications and Brand Marketing
Neste



KAREN KAHN

Chief Communications Officer
HP



KATE JAMES

Chief Corporate Affairs & Global Marketing Officer
Pearson



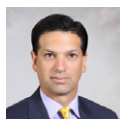
KC KAVANAGH

Global Chief Communications Officer
Bacardi



KELLY BENNETT

Chief Marketing Officer
Netflix

**KELLY MCGINNIS**SVP & Chief Communications Officer
Levi Strauss**MARY LYNN CARVER**CCO
General Mills**NIGEL POWELL**EVP, Chief Communications Officer
Nike**KEN HONG**Senior Director Global Communications
LG Electronics**MICHAEL MAND**CCO
CAA**OLGA PODOINITSYNA**Global Head of Communications and Marketing
VTB Capital**KIM RUBEY**Head of Social Impact and Philanthropy
AirBnB**MICHAEL MULLEN**SVP of Corporate & Government Affairs
Kraft Heinz**OLIVER ROLL**CCO
Cisco**KRISTINA DUNCAN**Vice President, Global Marketing Communications
Mattel**MICHAEL PREUSS**Head of Communications and Public Affairs
Bayer**PAUL COHEN**SVP CCO
Visa**LAURENT GLEPIN**Group Executive Director of Communications
Carrefour**MICHAEL SNEED**Worldwide Vice President, Global Corporate Affairs & Chief Communication Officer
Johnson & Johnson**PAULO HENRIQUE SOARES**Director, Corporate Communications
IBRAM**MARC MATHIEU**CMO, USA
Samsung**MICHELLE RUSSO**EVP, Global Communications
Discovery**PHIL THOMSON**President, Global Affairs
GSK**MARC PRITCHARD**Global Brand Building Officer
P&G**MIKE O'NEILL**EVP Corporate Affairs & Communications
American Express Company**PIERRE GOAD**Group MD and Group Head of Communications
HSBC**MARGIT WENNMACHERS**Partner
Andresen Horowitz**NASSER AL NAFISEE**VP, Corporate Affairs
Saudi Aramco**PRADIPTA BAGCHI**Chief Communications Officer
Tata Sons**MARK TRUBY**Vice President, Global Communications
Ford**NICK FOX**Partner & Director of External Relations
Virgin**PRAGNYA RAM**Group Executive President, Corporate Communications & CSR
Aditya Birla Group**MARTIN VON ARRONET**SVP Corporate Communications
Electrolux**NICK RAGONE**SVP Chief Marketing & Communications Officer
Ascension Health**RACHEL WHETSTONE**VP Communications
Facebook



RAJA RAJAMANNAR
CMO & CCO and President,
Healthcare
MasterCard



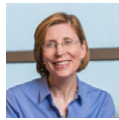
SUJIT PATIL
VP & Head of Corporate
Brand & Communications
Godrej Industries



WRENELLE STANDER
SVP, Public Affairs
Sasol



RAY DAY
Chief Communications
Officer
IBM



SUZANNE MCCARRON
VP Public Affairs
ExxonMobil



ZENIA MUCHA
CCO, EVP Corporate Comms
Disney



ROBERT GIBBS
Chief Communications
Officer & EVP of Corporate
Relations
McDonald's



SY LAU
Chairman
Tencent



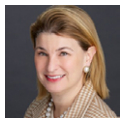
TIM ELLIS
EVP Chief Marketing Officer
Activision Blizzard



SABIA SCHWARZER
Global Head of
Communications and
Responsibility
Allianz



TOM COLLAMORE
SVP, Communications and
Strategy and Counselor
US Chamber of Commerce



SALLY SUSMAN
EVP, Corporate Affairs
Pfizer



TONY CERVONE
SVP Global Communications
GM



**SHANNON STUBO
BRAYTON**
CMO
LinkedIn



TONY CUDMORE
President, Corporate Affairs
BHP Billiton



STEPHEN DOHERTY
Group Head of Corporate
Relations
Barclays



TOROD NEPTUNE
VP of Global
Communications
Lenovo



STEVE DOWLING
VP of Communications
Apple



TRICIA PRIMROSE
Chief Global
Communications and Public
Affairs Officer
Marriott



STEVE JOHN
Partner, Global Director of
Communications
McKinsey



VALERIE TAN
VP Public Relations,
Social Media and Internal
Communications
Emirates



STEVE THOMAS
Head of Group Branding and
Communications
AIA

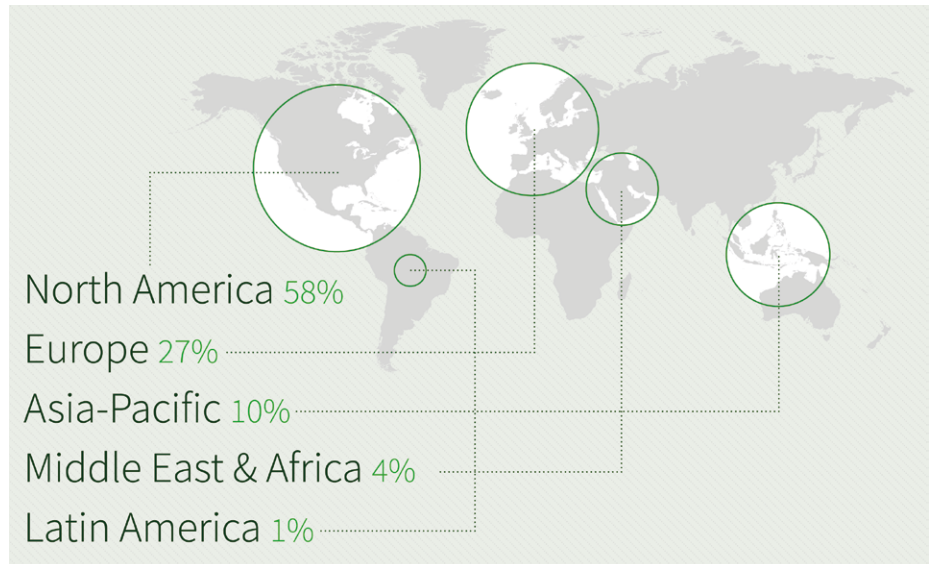
The Influence 100 Insights

Demographics & Background

Who are the 100?

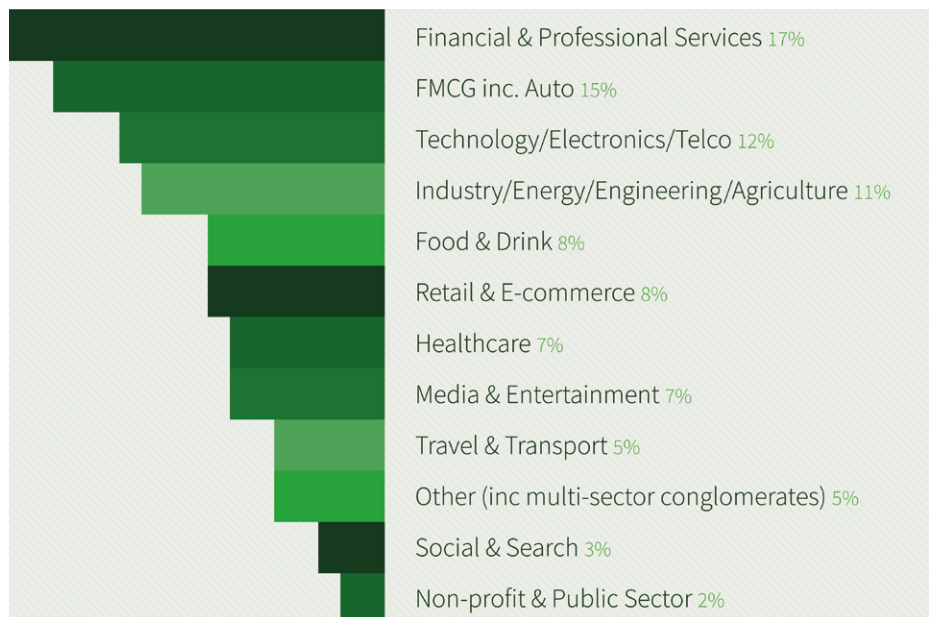
Geography

There are 24 new entrants in this year's Influence 100, due to factors including job changes (several of last year's influencers have left their roles) and the rise of various executives, companies, industries and regions. Unsurprisingly, the influence of North America has continued to rise, with 58 influencers from this region (up from 56 last year). Meanwhile, 31% come from EMEA, 10% from Asia-Pacific and only 1% from Latin America this year.



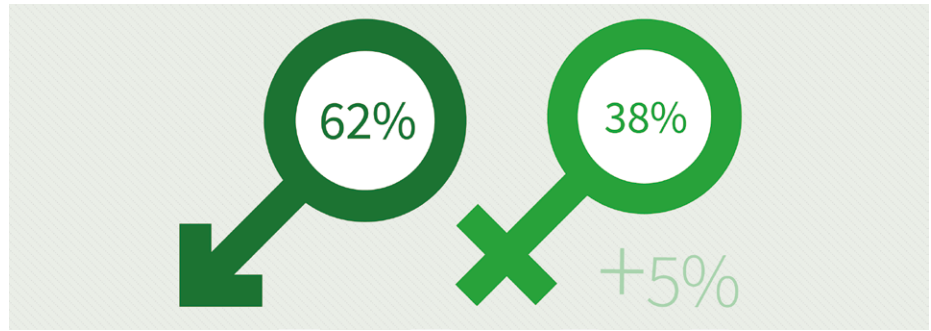
Sector

With practically every company now a technology company to a greater or lesser extent, breaking down the Influence 100 by sector has become increasingly complex. So this year we've refreshed all our categories to focus on what the organisations our influencers work for actually do or sell, not how they do it or whether their audience is consumer or B2B. So Amazon is a retailer, Uber is a transport firm, and Paypal is a financial services company. We've introduced new categories to split out mainly consumer-facing brands, including putting FMCG and automotive together, separating out food and drink, and media and entertainment, and adding a new 'social and search' category rather than lumping Google, Facebook and LinkedIn in with technology. Meanwhile, the technology category has gone old-school: traditional hardware and software companies, plus electronics and telecoms.



Gender

The number of women on the list is again 38%, up from 33% in 2015 but still a long way from gender balance at the top of the global CCO/CMO cohort. The women who join the ranks of the Influence 100 this year are: Deborah Yeh, SVP marketing and brand at Sephora; Dustee Tucker Jenkins, Spotify's global head of communications and PR; Yum! Brands global chief communications officer Jerilan Greene; Jill Hazelbaker, Uber's SVP, communications and public policy; Kaisa Lipponen, director of corporate communications and brand Marketing at Neste; Bacardi's global chief communications officer KC Kavanagh; Mattel vice president, global marketing communications Kristina Duncan; Michelle Russo, EVP global communications at Discovery; Facebook's VP communications Rachel Whetstone and Valerie Tan, Emirates' VP public relations, social media and internal communications.



Tenure

Our Influence 100 communicators and marketers have worked for their current company for an average of 9.3 years, around the same as last year's average tenure of 9 years. This was despite several high-profile job changes for long-standing employees, such as Ray Day moving to the CCO role at IBM after 19 years at Ford. Two of our influencers – L'Oreal's EVP corporate communications & external affairs Beatrice Dautresme, and Saudi Aramco VP corporate affairs Nasser Al Nafisee – have been with their respective companies for an astonishing 47 years each. Other long-serving influencers include P&G chief brand officer Marc Pritchard (37 years) and Michael Sneed, J&J's worldwide VP, global corporate affairs & chief communication officer (35 years). There's a fair split between long-stayers and fresh players in the listing: 13% of the cohort have been with their employer for 20 years or more, and the same proportion have been with their current company for less than two years.

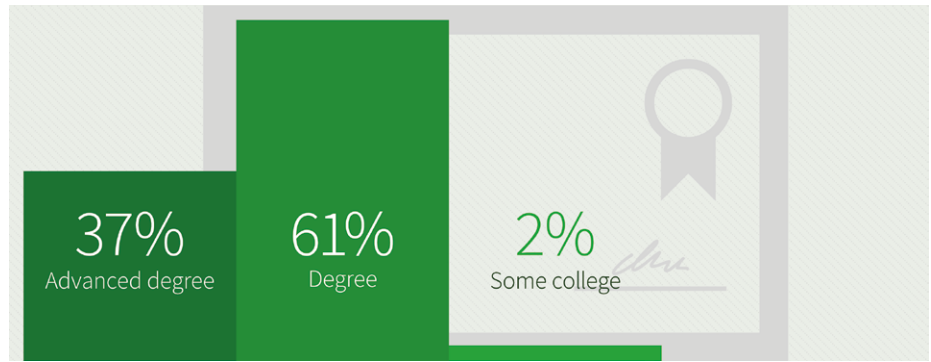


The Early Days

Nearly all our Influence 100 are educated to at least first degree level, although a small number have proved that it's still possible to get to the top without a college or university education. Of this year's cohort, 61% are educated to first degree level, and 37% also have an advanced degree (down from last year when 51% said they had an advanced degree).

In terms of the most popular subjects for study, there was an unsurprisingly clear bias towards communications, journalism, English and literature. There were also multiple responses for management and business, economics, political science and politics, and history. Drama, psychology, law and sociology were more niche subjects for those who end up at the top of the communications and marketing tree.

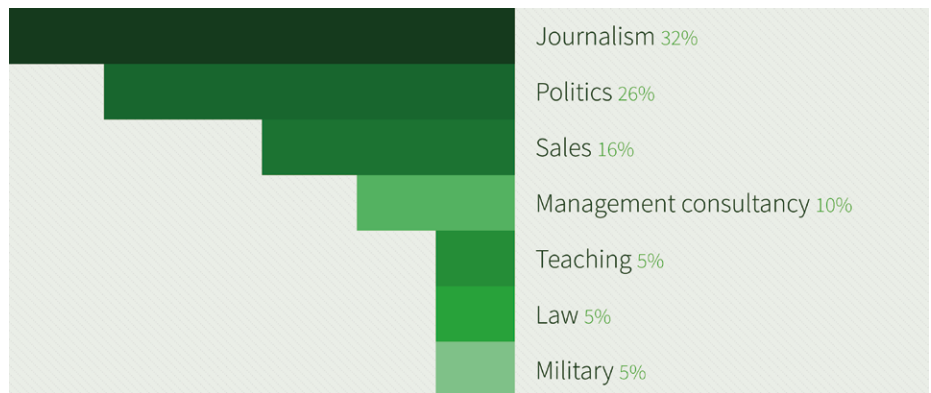
As last year, most respondents (59%) said PR was their first career — a notable contrast to 2015 when almost the same number of the respondents said PR was not their first career. Predictably, journalism and politics were the most common previous careers. There were, however, some more unexpected responses, including a stint in the military, teaching and law. Nearly 65% of the respondents have spent time in agencies during their career; among those, most (41%) spent between five and ten years working agency-side.



Education



Was communications your first career?



If not, what was your first career?

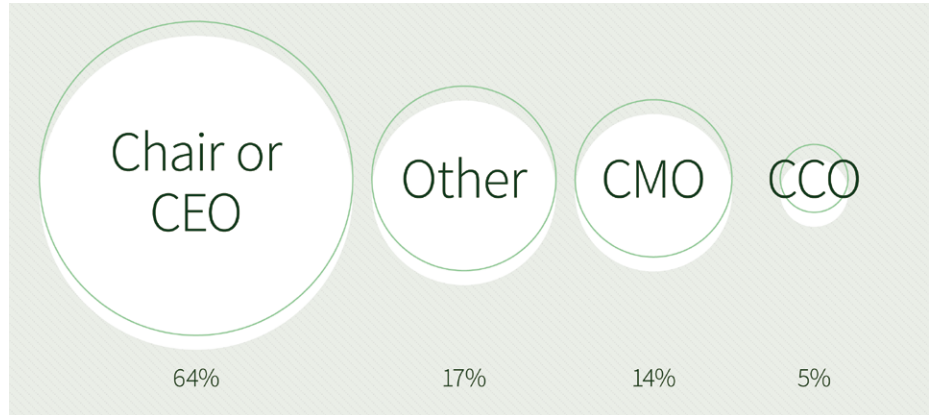


Have you worked at an agency? If so, for how long?

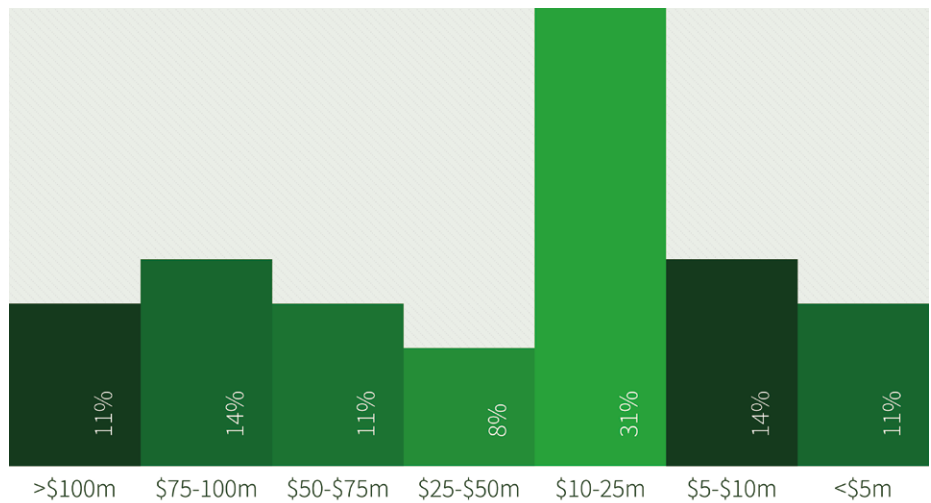
Organisations & Budgets

Who do you report to?

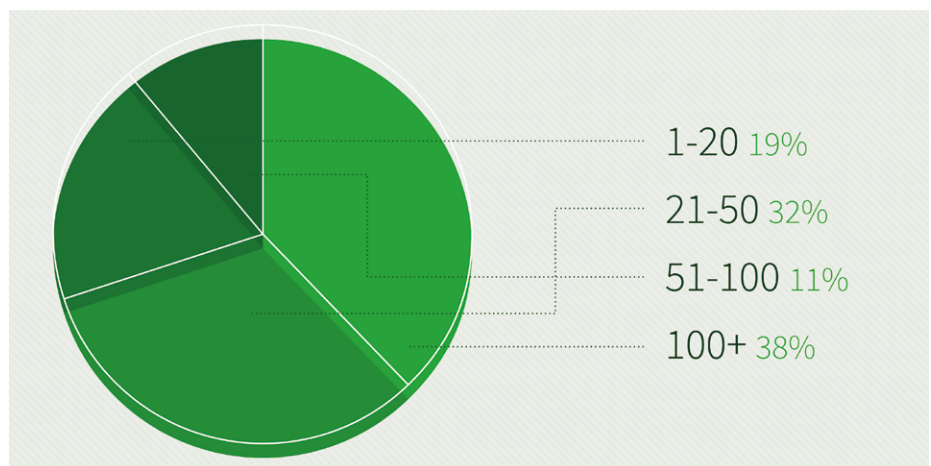
There's a slight dip in the number of respondents reporting into the chief executive or chair this year: 64%, down from 66% in 2017, but up from 60% in 2015. Oversight by the chief marketing officer stayed steady at 14%, with the remaining 22% reporting into various functions including the chief operations officer, HR, legal and heads of sales.



Who do you report to?



What is the overall PR budget at your organization?



Team size

On which areas do you expect to spend most next year?

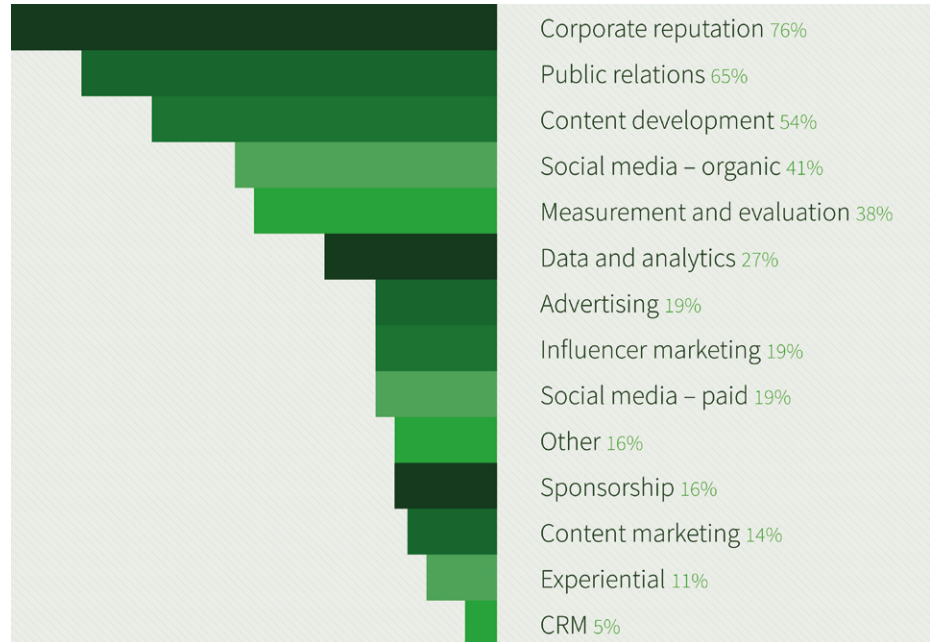
There's no question that PR budgets have shrunk among our influencers this year, after a temporary spike to 19% last year, the number of executives who oversee PR budgets greater than \$100m has continued its freefall. From 50% of our respondents managing budgets of this size in 2014, it's now down to 11%. Those who peg their budget between \$75m and \$100m dropped to 14% from 19% last year, but that's still up from 10% in 2016 and 2015.

Those handling a budget between \$50m and \$75m dropped to 11%, down from 13% last year and 28% in 2016. But most respondents – 56% – now manage a PR budget of less than \$25m, a dramatically higher proportion than last year, when less than 30% were at the lower end of the budget spectrum.

The majority of respondents said budgets had stayed flat on the previous year; where there had been budget increases, these were almost all limited to 5% or less. Some disclosed they had seen budget cuts of 10%, 20% and even 30% this year.

The number who manage teams of more than 100 people dropped from 47% to 38% this year, and the majority now manage teams of 50 or less. There was huge variety in the extent of team flux: while most reported their teams had stayed the same size or gone up and down by 5% or less, there were also respondents whose team had been slashed in half or worse, and also those whose teams had doubled in size.

PR budgets include a wider range of activities than ever. The areas that have swallowed up most spend this year and are anticipated to be major areas of spend next year include reputation management, traditional public relations, content development, employee engagement, and organic social media.



On which areas do you expect to spend most next year?

Agencies

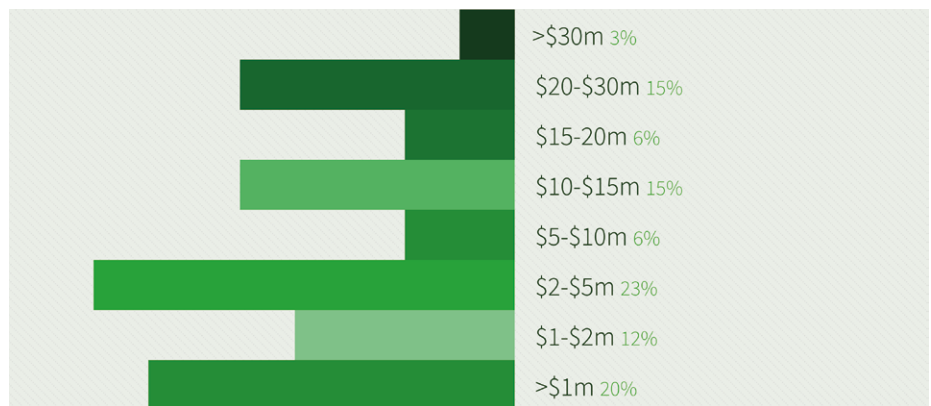
The Influence of our 100 this year again ranges further than public relations in terms of being primary decision makers for hiring agencies beyond PR firms, although to a lesser extent than in 2017. This year, 64% of respondents were the primary decision-maker for digital/social agencies (down significantly from 79% last year) and 28% said the same of advertising agencies, although this was also down sharply from 47% in 2017.

Agency spend appears to be down, with just 3% spending more than \$30m on their PR agency partners, compared to 15% last year (but more in line with 4% in 2016). More than a third (36%) of respondents spend between \$10m and \$30m on PR agencies. At the lower end, the number of respondents spending less than \$1m was back up to 20% this year, as in 2016, compared to 14% last year.

After last year's surge in respondents who said they use one global agency of record to 13%, this year it's back down to 5%, more in line with 2016's figure of 6.5%. The number who said they have a global AOR, but also work with other firms rose slightly to 35%. Selecting firms on a project basis is still on the rise, from 36% last year to 38%.



For which of the following hiring decisions are you the primary decision maker?



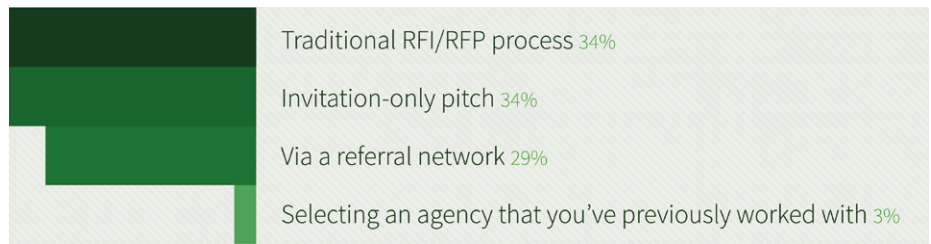
How much does your organization spend on PR agencies?

How do you hire a PR agency?

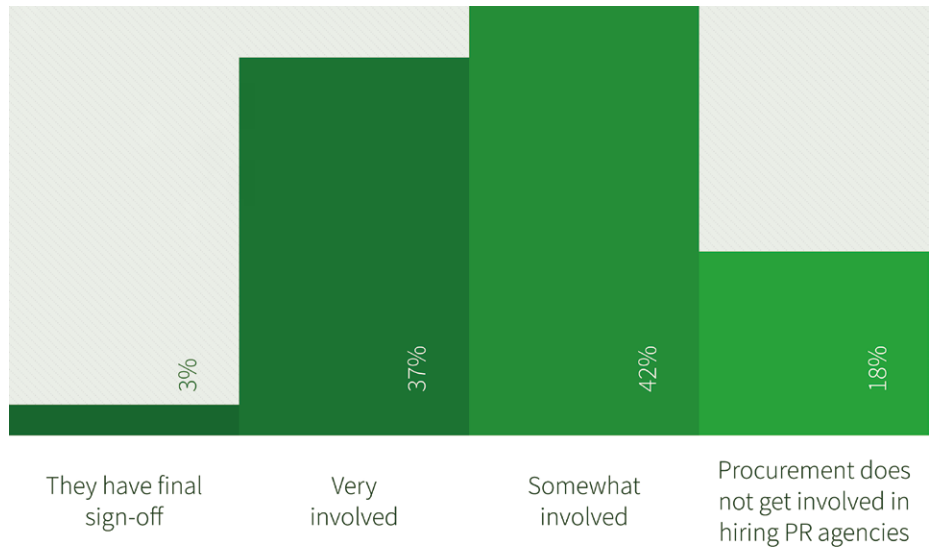
There's been a big drop in the number of influencers preferring to hire an agency via an invitation-only pitch, down from 63% last year and 55% in 2016 to 34%. A similar number prefer to run a traditional RFI/RFP process, up from 27% last year. The number of respondents who prefer to hire an agency they have previously worked with is stable at just 3% - though hugely down from 17% in 2016. Those opting to use a referral network is up dramatically from 7% to 29%.

There's much talk about procurement's increasing involvement in the pitch process, so for the first time this year we asked our in-house influencers what role the procurement function in their organisation played in the hiring of PR agencies. A significant number – 79% – confirmed that procurement were somewhat or very involved, and while 18% said procurement does not get at all involved, 3% said the function has the final sign off on agency hire.

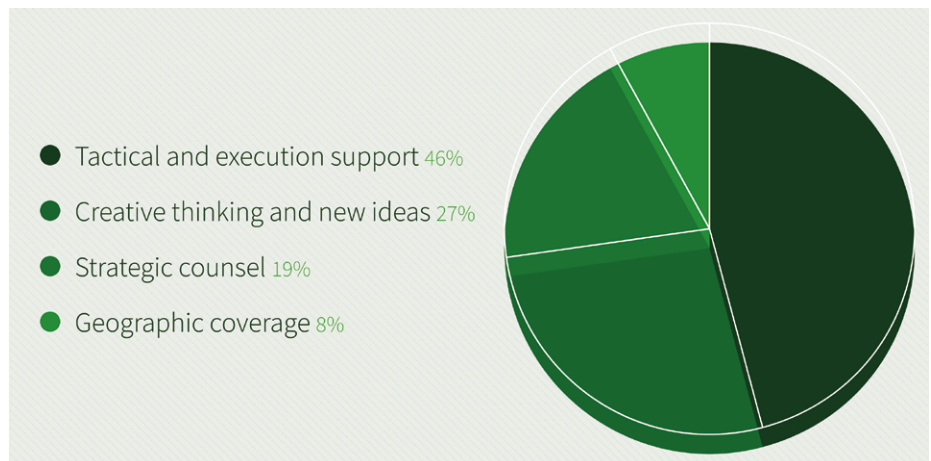
There has been a further shift in the perceived value that agencies bring to their clients this year: despite all the agency investment in creatives, it's more about execution as far as clients are concerned. Creative thinking and new ideas was seen as the greatest benefit of working with an agency by 27% of respondents, down from 40% last year. Strategic counsel and direction was also down even further to 19%, compared to 27% last year and 40% in 2016, while tactical support and execution continues to rise as a perceived benefit, up to 46%, from 27% last year and 17% in 2016.



How do you hire a PR agency?



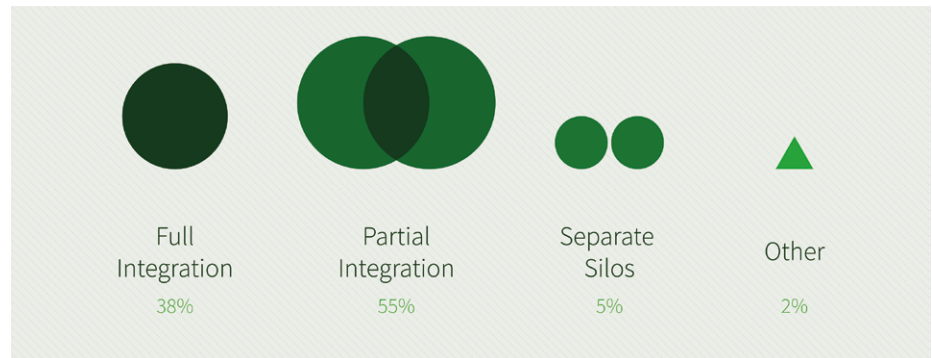
How involved is your company's procurement function in the hiring of your PR agencies?



Which do you consider the greatest benefit of working with a PR agency?

To what extent are the different marketing and communications functions in your business integrated?

With integration the buzzword of the year, we added another set of questions in our influencer survey around the extent to which marketing and communications functions in their business are now integrated, and their expectations of their PR agencies in terms of offering an integrated service. Most – 55% – said there was partial integration of marketing and comms disciplines within their organisations, and 38% said there was full integrations. Only 5% said they still operated completely separate silos. It's no surprise, then, that PR agencies are required to mirror this integration: over 57% said they now required full integration from their agencies. At the same time, more than 62% of clients are still expecting their PR agencies to be specialists in that discipline.



Future Challenges, Diversity & Inspiration

How does your CEO evaluate PR/communications?

We asked our Influence 100 how their CEO evaluates PR and communications, and reputation benchmarking came out even more far ahead of the other options: over 80% compared with 63% last year. While sales and lead generation garnered zero responses in 2017, this year it was cited as one of the ways the C-suite measures the success of comms by a solid 17% of respondents. Tactical measurement of PR, including impressions, reach and social engagement, was also, unsurprisingly, used by 52% of our influencers' CEOs. Of the 14% who said they used other means, the responses varied widely from "overall improvement in brand rankings and specific return on agreed campaign objectives" to the rather less robust "gut feel" and "anecdotal evaluation".



For what reasons does your team use data and analytics?

Looking at the ways in which our respondents and their teams use data and analytics, many more this year said they use data to allocate resource and spend: 43%, compared with 30% in 2017. Data and analytics are used by 55% of the Influence 100 for research purposes, and 50% to then tweak campaigns in real time. The strongest responses, however, were for data and analytics being used to generate insights that inform campaign planning (81%), and that measure the business impact of comms strategy and activity (also 81%).



CCO and CMOs: The Future

When we asked our respondents about their predictions for the future of the CCO and CMO roles within businesses, the responses were thoughtful, and largely aligned. Many were convinced that there will be more integration and either a blurring of the two roles or that the CCO role would become more powerful:

Challenges and opportunities

This year, we asked the Influence 100 for the first time to sum up their greatest challenges, opportunities and threats over the past year, and what they anticipated they would be in the year ahead. These ranged from broad-brush themes of geopolitics and political instability, to company-specific issues such as a public listing. Among the most oft-cited challenges were finding talent (and maintaining employee morale), measurement, and shrinking budgets. There were also concerns about handling high-profile reputational issues such as sexual harassment cases.

The challenges of successfully navigating social media, from fake news and negativity to crises that start and spread online, was mentioned frequently, as was the pace of change in today's business, although the rapid growth of the middle class in Asia is seen as a great opportunity.

Using data well is a preoccupying topic as both a challenge and an opportunity. As one respondent said: "Opportunity: Using data better for insights/activity planning, alerts and monitoring, as well as campaign reporting. More and better tools available than before. Challenge: Cost of meaningful data mining and getting actionable insights."

"Further integration of the roles as this is the reality of our world."

"Continued merging of responsibilities, which will present some friction."

"The CCO role will continue to gain prominence as companies feel the impact of reputation challenges. I do think marketing and communications will continue to blend together."

"Closer integration, overlap, and perhaps eventually merge."

"The gravitational pull drawing them together will only increase. One ecosystem."

"Increasingly intertwined, and more opportunities to have a seat on the board."

"As communications, and earned media, gain more respect for the value they bring to brand building, CCOs will carve out a more significant and influential role within the two disciplines, and we will see more CCOs take overall ownership of integrated functions as CMCO."

"They will increasingly work together in a tighter, more integrated fashion. There is no choice but to do so; our constituencies overlap to such an extent that it is imperative."

"CCOs will increasingly have a seat on executive committees/boards in view of the importance of their advisory role on matters of reputation and company and CEO positioning in an increasingly fractured world. However, CMOs and CCOs will need to increasingly collaborate as the divide between earned, owned and paid channels continue to blur."

The impact of artificial intelligence

For the first time this year, we asked our Influence 100 how they think artificial intelligence and machine learning will impact on the marketing and communications industry in the short, medium and long term. Almost everyone who responded to the survey had a view, but there was little consensus – answers ranged from “AI will affect everything we do” to “there will be little impact in the short- to medium-term”, showing how uncertain the implications and impact of this particular development still are:

“Big impact in the medium and long term as AI is employed to help advance stakeholder engagement, both internal and external.”

“They will make the industry think and change the way data is garnered and analysed. In the long term they will become a robust partner for insights generation, measurement, predictions and will help communicators take better decisions.”

“Targeted advertising on social media platforms will take budget away from some PR functions.”

“Ultimately better campaigns – creation and delivery of targeted messages. In the medium term: more accurate and affordable PR technologies.”

“These technologies are transforming communications, marketing and stakeholder engagement across every industry.”

“Longer-term it could have a tremendously beneficial effect in terms of data analysis, evaluation and targeted, personalised campaigns.”

“Main impact in the medium term, particularly if AI can generate intelligent content.”

“Medium term it will help to optimize allocation of resources, long term it will create moral challenges as machines will start to have opinions.”

“Major medium to long term impact as algorithms will increasingly be used to segment and target audiences in real time. Already having an impact on news coverage, as bots now generate 5% of Bloomberg’s coverage output.”

“Hopefully they will help creating more impactful and targeted marketing in more effective industry. AI will probably demand completely new capabilities and create new professions in the industry in the long term. There will be competition over qualified professionals.”

Diversity

Diversity in all its facets continues to be big theme for the communications and marketing sector, and so this year we broadened our questioning around this subject, both in terms of what CCOs require of their PR agencies, and how committed they think the industry is to diversity. The number of CCOs who agree their PR agencies must have an ethnically diverse team was down overall to 68%, but the number who agreed strongly was up from 12% to 25%. A further 28% were neutral, up from 19% last year, leaving only a handful of respondents who disagreed with this statement.

However, there is much less conviction when it comes to whether our respondents think the communications industry is committed to recruiting, retaining and promoting people of color: 29% agreed and a further 8% strongly agreed, but 50% were neutral, 11% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed.

When it comes to gender, 79% of CCOs agree their PR agencies must have a gender-balanced account team, including 30% who agreed strongly. No respondents disagreed with this statement. Just under 53% of our influencers agree the industry is committed to recruiting, retaining and promoting women; a further 29% strongly agree and 16% are neutral, while 3% disagree with this statement.

There's a less confident response to the questions of whether the industry is committed to recruiting, retaining and promoting LGBTQ people: 45% agreed or strongly agreed it was, but the same number were neutral and 11% disagreed with this statement.

There was the broadest spread of opinion about whether the industry is committed to recruiting, retaining and promoting people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds: just 37% agree or strongly agree that it is, and 26% disagree or strongly disagree.

68%

of CCOs say their PR agencies must have an ethnically-diverse account team

79%

of CCOs say their PR agencies must have a gender-balanced account team

World Leaders & Communicators

Best and worst communicators among world leaders:

Former US president Barack Obama (“elegant and persuasive”) was back on the nominees for the best communicator among world leaders this year, along with Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau (“winning hearts and minds”) and French president Emmanuel Macron. Pope Francis was again on the list: the only spiritual leader mentioned this year. Interestingly, German chancellor Angela Merkel was mooted as one of the worst communicators this year, having been on the list of the best among world leaders last year. British prime minister Theresa May, grappling with Brexit, was mentioned several times on the worst list.

And Donald Trump gained repeated mentions as both the best and worst communicator, the only person to make both lists, with one respondent qualifying his nomination on the best list with “best in the sense of most impactful (but ethically questionable)”. Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, who both made the worst communicators list last year, weren’t mentioned at all this year, despite regularly making the headlines.



Most influential marketing and communications professionals

The nominees for most influential professional again featured business leaders as well as marketing and communications heads. The list was also once again dominated by men, with Sheryl Sandberg the only female spokesperson mentioned. IBM's retired chief brand officer Jon Iwata was listed several times in glowing terms, along with former WPP head Sir Martin Sorrell and Richard Edelman. Among others nominated were Unilever's chief marketing and communications officer Keith Weed, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, and Apple's vice president of marketing communications Tor Myhren.



Which company (other than your own) manages its reputation most effectively?

Asked to identify companies that managed brand communications and corporate reputation most effectively, the list of nominees showed great continuity from past years, reinforcing the lasting effects of a well-managed reputation. Among the returning names were Unilever, Starbucks, Apple, Tata Group, Netflix, Microsoft and Google. New this year were Ford, Siemens, Samsung, PepsiCo (perhaps surprisingly given the furore over the Kendall Jenner ad earlier this year), Airbnb, USAA, BASF, Danaher, ITC, Wipro, Salesforce and Coca-Cola.



Which public relations agency do you most admire/respect?

For the sixth year in a row, Edelman is the most frequently cited public relations agency when respondents were asked which firm they most admired. Other consultancies with repeat mentions include Weber Shandwick and Brunswick, with Ruder Finn mentioned more than once for its work in China.



The Crossover Stars

The Crossover Stars are the Holmes Report's annual 'Hall of Fame' for those communicators whose career trajectory has extended beyond communications, marketing and sales into a broader core business function within their organizations. Our seven Crossover Stars for 2018 have titles that include managing director, chief operations officer, chief executive officer, president and vice-chair.



CHRIS MAROLENG

Chief Operations Officer
South African Broadcasting Corporation
(SABC)

Chris Maroleng was made chief operations officer of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) in January this year, joining from leading African telecoms company MTN Group, where he was executive for group corporate affairs. He has an interesting job on his hands in his first COO role: he took over at the embattled state broadcaster from Hlaudi Motsoeneng, who was fired in June 2017 after it was found that he brought the company into disrepute. An internal disciplinary committee found that Motsoeneng had lied about his qualifications, had purged the SABC of staff, and promoted people and raised salaries without following the correct procedures.

Maroleng was a researcher at the Institute for Security Studies from 2002 to 2008. He then led the team which started eNews Africa in 2009 and built up the Africa division. He was a presenter and editor at eNCA Africa for six years and in 2016, he also became a non-executive director at Good Governance Africa.

In his presenting role, Maroleng gained a certain amount of social media fame in 2010 after being involved in a heated on-air discussion with former AWB secretary general André Visagie, which led to Maroleng uttering the now-famous line: "Don't touch me on my studio."



JUAN MANUEL CENDOYA

Vice chairman of the board of directors
Banco Santander

In December of 2016, Juan Manuel Cendoya—longtime head of corporate communications for Banco Santander—was named vice chairman of the board of directors for Santander Spain, an unusual promotion for a public relations executive.

"Our clients know us to be a trustworthy, strong and solid brand, and this a reputation we aim to keep," according to Cendoya, who led corporate communications and marketing for Santander, one of the few financial services companies that can look back at the global crisis of recent years with any satisfaction, having diversified into emerging economies such as Brazil and via acquisition into established markets such as the US and the UK.

The bank operated under more than 20 separate names in 2004, but the emphasis since then on building the Santander brand has paid off. Cendoya has played a major role in that, leading the group's internal

and external communications, corporate marketing, corporate social responsibility, institutional relations, economic research and public policy and serving as a member of the bank's global executive committee.



PETE MARINO

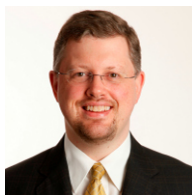
President of Tenth and Blake/Chief Public Affairs and Communications Officer
MillerCoors

Having conquered the agency business — building one of the most creative midsize firms in the US before selling it to an ad agency — Marino has spent the past few years making the client side of the business look easy. Now he's added business oversight to his hugely accomplished career: as of September 1 last year, he took on operational leadership for MillerCoors' craft and import division, Tenth and Blake.

Marino succeeded the retiring Scott Whitley as president of Tenth and Blake, and is charged with growing the company's regional craft portfolio — which includes Hop Valley, Revolver, Saint Archer and Terrapin — as well as its prestige import beers, Peroni, Pilsner Urquell and Grolsch. He also oversees the company's craft beer hospitality, which includes the Blue Moon RiNo Brewery in Denver, the Leinie Lodge in Chippewa Falls, Wisc., and the numerous tasting rooms from regional craft brewers.

He continues to oversee communications, a position he has held since 2014, and is responsible for promoting MillerCoors business strategy and commercial interests with a wide variety of internal and external audiences, including employees, media, distributors, multicultural organizations, community groups, and local, state and federal governments.

Before joining MillerCoors in 2012, Marino led Dig Communications, which he sold to Minneapolis-based ad agency Olson in 2011, becoming president of public relations before moving in-house.



STEPHEN FORSHAW

Managing Director of Corporate Affairs
& Managing Director, Australia & New Zealand
Temasek

A political communicator in his native Australia, Stephen Forshaw moved into senior public relations and public affairs roles at Singapore Airlines and Microsoft before becoming MD of public affairs at Singapore-owned investment firm Temasek in 2011. In 2013, Forshaw added operational oversight for Australia and New Zealand to his remit, making him one of the few communications leaders to take on business leadership duties.

A high-profile advocate of the importance of communications to an organisation meeting its goals, Forshaw's work has often featured an adept ability with social media, evidence of a mindset that is constantly questioning the development of public relations in today's evolving media landscape. Forshaw has also spoken at length about the need to question one's organization, rather than becoming "housetrained."



SIMON SPROULE

Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer;
President, Aston Martin Partnerships
Aston Martin Lagonda

Seasoned automotive industry comms man Simon Sproule has been Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer for Aston Martin Lagonda since November 2014. His responsibilities include global marketing and communications, brand communications, corporate social responsibility and internal communications. In 2018, he was also appointed President of Aston Martin Partnerships, a new division set up to manage non-automotive revenue. Sproule reports to Dr Andrew Palmer, President & Chief Executive Officer of Aston Martin Lagonda.

Prior to Aston Martin, Sproule was VP marketing and communications for Tesla Motors. His first position was with Ford Motor Company in the UK, relocating to global operations in Michigan and from 2000, leading communications in North America for Jaguar, Aston Martin and Land Rover. In 2003 Simon joined Nissan North America as VP Communications and a year later moved to Japan to take up the global role.

Can you share a moment in your career that you saw evidence of the direct impact of communications on business performance?

At Aston Martin we are now three years into our seven-year turnaround and growth plan; we call it the 'Second Century Plan'. At the core of the business turnaround is our financial restructuring and the product cycle plan which in turn has been supported by a very proactive communications strategy. We achieved our financial turnaround milestone after three years including many performance indicators a year or more ahead of the plan projections. Communications has been integral to the success of the company's turnaround at this mid-point in the business plan period.

What are the communications industry's biggest challenges and opportunities?

Biggest challenge is the level of trust from consumers in the news and information they are sourcing and being served: 15 years ago we all celebrated the rise of citizen journalism enabled in particular by social media networks, but now we have to question the source and credibility of the information and news we consume. The opportunity is most compelling for media companies that invest in well researched, sourced and balanced news coverage. All organizations, be they private or public, should be doing everything possible to support great journalism. I hope we can see public trust restored in media brands, something the communications industry should strongly advocate for.

How do you handle the unexpected?

By the very nature of the communications business the unexpected should be our default setting. What differentiates a world class communications organization is how you manage the highs and lows of the news cycle and maintain trust with your stakeholders and the consistency of your narrative. I'm not a pessimist by nature, but at the same time I have dealt with some

challenging and often bizarre communication situations over the years. As unpleasant as a crisis can be, the reflexes of a well-organized professional communications team will kick-in and work their way through it.

How do you relax?

With my family...the most powerful way to get perspective on any work situation.

Can you name a book/movie/TV show/podcast/play that teaches a valuable lesson about communications?

A British political sitcom from the 1980's: "Yes, Prime Minister". I try to watch a few episodes every year...still relevant and still very funny. On the darker side, I recently re-read "1984" by George Orwell.

If I wasn't working in my current job, I would be...

A pilot. I always want the window seat on any flight I am on.

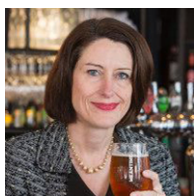


SIMON PEARCE

Special Advisor to the Chairman
Executive Affairs Authority Of Abu Dhabi

Entrusted with building and protecting Abu Dhabi's reputation, Pearce has a big budget and an even bigger remit. He is considered one of the UAE's most influential officials and is particularly close to Khaldoun Al-Mubarak, for whom he helped "smooth the communication of the Manchester City Football Club takeover," according to the Wall Street Journal.

Since taking on the position in 2006, Pearce has overseen a significant revamp of the Gulf Kingdom's communications strategy, and also plays an important role in key assets such as the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix and media initiative 2454. Pearce came to the Middle East role after a varied life in the agency world, including a lengthy stint at Burson-Marsteller, encompassing positions on four continents and – in his last job at the firm – as CEO of Australia.



SUE CLARK

Managing Director, Europe
SABMiller

In 2012, Clark became that rarity in the PR world: a communications head who moved into the C-suite to become managing director of SABMiller in Europe. A poised performer who once drew the attention of the national media when she decided to remain at work well after going into labour, she had previously headed the brewing giant's global corporate affairs function for nine years, after amassing significant corporate communications experience at Railtrack and Scottish Power.

Clark sits on SABMiller's executive committee, overseeing all of its public relations, public affairs and corporate responsibility initiatives. Clark is highly regarded for her understanding of reputation and in 2006 she embarked on an ambitious project to define the factors that drive SABMiller's reputation in its key markets, followed by creating a specific job function focused on the company's reputation.

RISING STARS

The Holmes Report, once again, recognizes the rising stars who are well-positioned to be tomorrow's most influential chief communications officers.

Our industry is, of course, full of many bright stars who are likely to join the ranks of the Influence 100 in the future. This year, however, these professionals stood out for a variety of notable accomplishments that have been recognized by their peers and beyond.



Ben Hallam

Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts
Hong Kong



Chad West

Revolut
UK



Erin Atan

Jardine Matheson
Hong Kong

Jessica Baxmann

SAP
Germany



Jill Meiburg

Deutsche Post DHL
Group
Germany



Kristen Moss

Reebok
US



Linda Mills

Boeing
US



Lucy Yurek

HSBC
UK

Ophira Bhatia

Mondelez
India



Virginia Ferguson

Yum! Brands
US

THE
INFLUENCE
100
2018
sponsored by
Lippe • Taylor

#CreativeIndex18

The Global Creative Index

Weber Shandwick And P&G Retain Top Spots On 2018 Global Creative Index

Fearless Girl named top campaign, as Weber Shandwick retains top honours in Holmes Report's annual ranking of creative excellence in PR, which also features the top firms on a weighted and regional basis.

Weber Shandwick has retained top spot in the 2018 edition of the Global Creative Index, marking the third time in four years that the Interpublic PR firm has ranked first in the Holmes Report's annual benchmark of creativity in the public relations world.

The seventh edition of the Global Creative Index analyses entries and winners from more than 25 PR, digital and marketing awards programmes from around the world over a 12-month period, ending with the 2018 Global SABRE Awards. The formula takes into account the expansion of 'public relations' work across multiple categories at advertising-oriented shows such as the Cannes Lions, with the methodology favouring agencies designated for 'idea-creation'.

As usual, Weber Shandwick's performance was powered by a range of work from across its global network, led by the #toocoolforplastics campaign that saw Iceland become the first UK supermarket to remove plastic packaging. In addition, Weber picked up points for campaigns on behalf of numerous clients from across the globe, including ActionAid, FEVE, GSK, Honeywell, Mattell, McDonald's, MSD and Royal Caribbean.

Burson Cohn & Wolfe was a new entrant at second spot, thanks to the combined efforts of the newly merged agency, which included such award-winning campaigns as 'Check Your Balls' for Ung Cancer and 'Back to Work' for Medela India. In particular, BCW scored highly across Asia and EMEA.

BCW narrowly pipped Ogilvy, which dropped to third spot after ranking second last year. Remarkably, Ogilvy was involved in the top two campaigns — 'Fearless Girl' for State Street Global Advisors,

which continued to score highly in 2018 award shows, and 'Life Uncensored' for Pfizer.

Edelman dropped to fourth after ranking third last year, while Ketchum held firm at fifth. FleishmanHillard jumps two spots to sixth, while MSL — unsurprisingly — drops out of the top 10 following its decision to suspend award entries for a 12 month period. Dentsu, McCann and India's Adfactors all make their debut in the top 10.

Top 10 Overall 2018				
2018 Rank	2017 Rank	Agency	Points	
1	1	Weber Shandwick	142	
2	-	Burson Cohn & Wolfe	90	
3	2	Ogilvy	89	
4	3	Edelman	82	
5	5	Ketchum	73	
6	8	Fleishman Hillard	58	
7	7	H+K Strategies	56	
8	14	Dentsu	49	
9	15	McCann	31	
10	16	Adfactors PR	30	

Once again, the top of the overall agency table is dominated by global PR networks, thanks to their volume of awards.

However, an alternative measure of agency creativity comes from weighting agency scores according to their staff size. Accordingly, the Holmes Report has again used a points per head calculation to identify which are, 'pound for pound', the most creative PR agencies in the world.

Top 15 Weighted 2018				
2018 Rank	2017 Rank	Agency	Country	Weighted Score
1	-	CampaignLab	Australia	1110
2	1	Tin Man	UK	591
3	3	Unity	UK	333
4	-	Nucleus	Norway	321
5	-	AKA Asia	Singapore	290
6	-	Atmosphere Communications	South Africa	275
7	-	Red Agency	Australia	267
8	5	Hope&Glory	UK	266
9	12	Olson Engage	USA	200
10	-	Echo Myanmar	Myanmar	183
11	9	JeffreyGroup	USA	150
12	-	Achtung!	Germany	139
13	-	M Booth	USA	118
14	-	W	UK	109
15	-	Milton	Finland	96

In 2018, this title is taken by Australian boutique CampaignLab, which counts just eight full time staffers. CampaignLab prevailed over some illustrious competition, notably UK firms Tin Man and Unity, which ranked first and third, respectively, last year.

Unity's third-place finish means it has ranked in the top three for six of the past seven years, including a first place spot on four occasions. Tin Man, just four-years-old, continues its award winning streak at UK and EMEA award shows.

Norway's Nucleus and Asia-Pacific Consumer Consultancy of the Year AKA Asia round out the top 5. The weighted table also reflects considerable geographic diversity beyond the US and UK — there are agencies from Singapore (AKA) South Africa (Atmosphere), Australia (Red Agency), Myanmar (Echo), Germany (Achtung!) and Finland (Miltton).

To better rank agencies against their peers, however, for the first time the weighted table is segmented along regional lines, producing top five rankings for North America, EMEA and Asia-Pacific, as follows.

Weighted North America 2018			
2018 Rank	Company	HQ	Points
1	Olson Engage	Chicago	200
2	JeffreyGroup	Miami	150
3	M Booth	New York	118
4	Marina Maher Communications	New York	71
4	LDWW	Dallas	71

Weighted EMEA 2018			
2018 Rank	Company	HQ	Points
1	Tin Man	London	591
2	Unity	London	333
3	Nucleus	Oslo	321
4	Atmosphere Communications	Cape Town	275
5	Hope&Glory	London	266

Weighted Asia-Pacific 2018			
2018 Rank	Company	HQ	Points
1	CampaignLab	Sydney	1110
2	AKA Asia	Singapore	290
3	Red Agency	Sydney	267
4	Echo Myanmar	Yangon	183
5	Adfactors PR	Mumbai	50

'Fearless Girl' tops Campaign Ranking

'Fearless Girl', the iconic effort by State Street Global Advisors, emerged as the most-awarded PR program of the past 12 months according to the Holmes Report's 2018 Global Creative Index. The famous statue was created by McCann New York for State Street Global Advisors (SSGA) to promote female leadership

The Index analysed entries and winners from more than 25 PR award programmes from around the world, over a 12-month period, using the 2018 Global SABRE Awards as a cut-off point. Scores were weighted according to a Holmes Report formula that placed particular emphasis on Best of Show winners, while also taking into account the expansion of 'public relations' work across multiple categories at advertising-oriented shows such as the Cannes Lions.

In second spot was 'Life Uncensored' by Ogilvy South Africa, which aimed to provide a more human approach to medical conditions such as erectile dysfunction, contraception

and menopause. Third place was taken by the Red Agency's Palau Pledge campaign, a successful effort to help protect the island nation's environment from ecological disaster.

#Bloodnormal, by feminine care brand Libresse and Ketchum, came in at fourth, ahead of Iceland's #toocoolforplastics, which recently took top spot at the 2018 Global SABRE Awards. Vicks' brave 'Touch of Care' initiative, explored at PProvoke18, ranked sixth.

The results, which rank the top 8 PR campaigns as determined by award shows, reflect how brand 'purpose' has become a key ingredient in award-winning work, with many of the campaigns drawing on broader social issues, including a particular focus on themes of gender equality and environmental sustainability.

Top 8 Campaigns 2018				
Rank	Points	Campaign	Agency	Client
1	19	Fearless Girl	McCann/Ogilvy	State Street Global Advisors
2	17	Life Uncensored	Ogilvy	Pfizer
3	16	Palau Pledge	Host/Havas and Red Agency	The Palau Legacy Project
4	15	#bloodnormal	Ketchum	Libresse
5	13	#toocoolforplastics	Weber Shandwick	Iceland
6	13	Vicks 'Touch of Care' that Moved Millions	20:20 MSL	P&G Vicks
7	12	Don't Tell Martti	Miltton	Crisis Management Initiative
8	12	Aflac "Outducks" a Reputational Deficit	FleishmanHillard, Ken Willis Inc., Carol Cone On Purpose and Marina Maher Communications	Aflac

P&G retains top spot in Company Ranking

P&G retains top spot in the Global Creative Index's ranking of companies according to the performance of their campaigns in the various award shows that are tracked around the world. The FMCG giant prevails over Pfizer at the top of the table, with Unilever dropping from second to fourth.

P&G's haul was led by the Vicks 'Touch of Care' campaign, and also included award-winning efforts such as 'The Talk', along with work for such brands as SK-II, Mr Clean and Pantene.

Top Companies 2018			
2018 Rank	2017 Rank	Company	Points
1	1	Procter & Gamble	62
2		Pfizer	45
3		State Street Global Advisors	38
4	2	Unilever	31
5		Vodafone	27
6	7	Microsoft	26
7		Pepsico	24
8	9	Coca-Cola	20
9		Merck & Company	18
10		Adobe	16
10	4	McDonald's	16

WPP claims first place in first holding group table

For the first time, the Global Creative Index also ranks holding groups based on their agencies' creative performance. WPP comes out on top, thanks to the efforts of Ogilvy, BCW and H+K Strategies. Interpublic ranks second, led by Weber Shandwick, Golin, Current Marketing and DeVries Global, while Omnicom, DJE and Dentsu round out the top five.

The Global Creative Index analyses entries and winners from more than 25 PR award programmes from around the world, over a 12 month period, using the 2018 Global SABRE Awards as a cut-off point. Scores were weighted according to a Holmes Report formula that placed particular emphasis on Best of Show winners.

Top 5 Holding Groups 2018			
2018 Rank	Company	HQ	Points
1	WPP	UK	325
2	Interpublic	USA	292
3	Omnicom	USA	221
4	DJE Holdings	USA	101
5	Dentsu	Japan	57



The Innovators

The Holmes Report's Innovator 25 is already established as an important barometer of marketing and communications innovation. Since launching in 2013, it has identified 25 individuals each year in North America, EMEA and, more recently Asia-Pacific, who have — in some capacity — elevated and evolved engagement and influence. This year, we'll again take a truly global view of innovation and will have separate lists of 25 innovators for each region: North America, EMEA and Asia-Pacific.

We look to recognize those who have taken risks to disrupt outdated business practices; blended masterful creativity with stunning impact; taken social purpose to new heights; or made real progress in changing behavior and outcomes. These are just a few achievements that we would consider innovative.



25
#innovator25


The Innovator 25 - Americas

Our sixth annual Innovator 25 Americas includes innovators made the cut because they're making meaningful, and necessary, changes to how we think of influence during this tumultuous times.




Adam Wall
EVP, Digital Operations & Clients Services North America
Weber Shandwick
New York

“Technology is a critical enabler but not necessarily a prerequisite for innovation to occur. Vision and leadership, on the other hand, are inextricably linked to innovation.”




Andy Boothe
Head of Data Science
W2O Group
Austin, Texas

“Anything that takes a ‘new to you’ idea and acts on it to create positive change is innovation”




Andy Pray
Founder
Praytell
Brooklyn

“Big budget or small budget, earning one hit or a hundred – it just has to move audiences internally and externally in new, refreshing and ultimately engaging ways.”




Antonio Lucio
Global Chief Marketing Officer
Facebook
San Francisco




Brad MacAfee
CEO
Porter Novelli
New York

“Make diversity and inclusion an embedded way of life and philosophy in your organization and you will drive innovation.”




Bryan Specht
President
Olson Engage / ICF
Chicago

“Innovation is a willingness to challenge convention in a way that delivers impact. Impact is the difference between innovation and imagination.”




Chris Boehlke
Co-founder/Principal
Bospar
San Francisco

“I still consider Virgin Airlines to be the all-time innovator in PR and marketing. Every single behavior of product, service and communication is synchronized to ‘ooze’ their brand.”




Cheryl Overton
President
Egami Group
New York

“The roller coaster and uncertainty IS the process. Be willing to lose some control.”




Colin Kaepernick and Nike
Football player/activist and sports retailer



Crystal W. Harrell
Senior Communications Manager
Procter & Gamble/ North America
Cincinnati

“When you are able to embrace, embody, and embolden a culture through authentic storytelling, it leads to transformational innovation.”



Dan Cohen
Senior Director Public Relations & Social Media
Beam Suntory
Chicago

“Old school media relations as we know it may be evolving as newsrooms keep diminishing, but old fashioned storytelling and relationship building is still what sets PR apart from the other marketing functions.”



Eduardo Maruri

CEO & CCO
Maruri Grey
Guayaquil, Ecuador



Fred Haberman

CEO & Co-Founder
Haberman — Modern
Storytellers for Pioneers
Minneapolis

“The innovative moment revolves around realizing that the best learning is experiential learning.”



Joydeep Dey

Chief Strategy Officer
Marina Maher
Communications
New York

“Think, feel, imagine the world through the eyes of your target audience. Feel what they feel, experience what they do. Empathy deepens understanding, understanding fuels imagination”



Leslie Campisi

Chief Marketing Officer
Anthemis
New York

“Whether their engagement originates as an expression of the company's values — like Seventh Generation or Burton supporting employees attending the Women's March last January — or through the, shall we say, nudging of watch groups like Sleeping Giants, brands are (finally!) realizing that they can't just ignore politics, which has huge implications for the communications landscape”



Marc Levy

Partner/Director Strategic &
Creative Planning
Ketchum
New York

“We must establish a culture that punishes mediocre success and rewards heroic failures.”



Meg Garlinghouse

Head of Social Impact
LinkedIn
San Francisco Bay Area

“Hire outside your industry to bring a fresh perspective to your team.”



Nancy Mahon

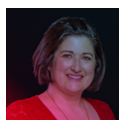
Senior Vice President,
Global Corporate
Citizenship and
Sustainability
Estée Lauder
New York

“Innovation for me is figuring out how to bring more voices to the table in more ways than traditionally espoused.”



The Parkland Survivors

Activists
Parkland, Florida



Patrice Molnar

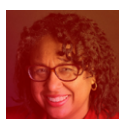
Director of Corporate
Communications
American Greetings
Cleveland, Ohio

“As advocates for our company and brands we represent, we have the responsibility to bring our creativity and best thinking to every project.”



Ricardo Marques

Group VP Marketing Core &
Value Brands
Anheuser-Busch InBev
New York, NY



Rochelle L. Ford

Dean
Elon University School of
Communications
Elon, NC

“At its best, news reporting provides a voice for marginalized communities, while also holding people in power accountable.”



Ruth Gaviria

Chief Marketing Officer
Entercom Communications
New York

“I think about the problem from the point of view of a completely different and unrelated industry to get myself out of my own box.”



Safiya U. Noble

Assistant Professor
University of Southern
California
Los Angeles

“I think people are compelled when they see social progress, rather than when they are distracted with campaigns that generate mindless consumption.”



Wendy Lund

CEO
GCI Health
New York

“We are the most flexible discipline because we have to see around corners.”



25
#innovator25

The Innovator 25 - EMEA

The first Innovator 25 was launched in EMEA in 2014 and is now a critical barometer of innovation in the region.



Abey Mokgwatsane
Managing executive of brand
Vodacom
Johannesburg

“Always start with the idea”



Akanksha Goel
Founder
Socialize
Dubai

“Our industry is changing every day. To continue staying in the lead we need to be able to change our tyres, while we’re racing”



Alex Brock
Head of digital
Syneos Health
Communications Europe
London

“Innovation is not a quick fix, or even a project you can scope and deliver then move on. It's about a fundamental set of behaviours and culture”



Alex Pearmain
Co-founder
OneFifty and Rogue Ponies
London

“New isn't necessarily innovative, but better always involves innovation”



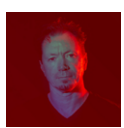
Ali Gee
Deputy CEO & senior partner
FleishmanHillard Fishburn
London

“The most important thing this industry needs to do is figure out how to fund innovation. The whole industry needs innovation. Top to bottom”



Amelia Torode
Founder
The Fawnbrake Collective
London

“Innovation isn't comfortable, it isn't always neat and it doesn't always work on schedule. Try to create a culture and structure that not only allows for this, but also elevates and celebrates it”



Anders Hallen
Head of innovation
Edelman Deportivo
Stockholm/London

“True innovation is messy and doesn't follow pretty lines in Excel, which can be super annoying at times, but yet very rewarding. It's very much like having a teenager at home”



Annick Boyen
VP sustainable business, communications and external affairs, EU
Unilever
Brussels

“What advice would I give to the PR industry around embracing innovation? To quote my favourite Elvis song: a little less conversation, a little more action”

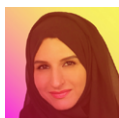


Bodour Al Qasimi
CEO, Kalimat
Chair, Sharjah Development and Investment Authority
UAE



David Kyne
Founder and CEO
Kyne
Dublin

“Innovation isn't a nice to have, it's a must do to survive. And if you want to do more than survive. If you want to thrive and grow, you must be a leader of new ideas and continue to drive innovation”



Hala Badri

Senior advisor to CEO and group communications
ADNOC
Abu Dhabi

“Innovation is being able to tell the same story in a manner that it has never been told before. It’s finding new ways to capture the hearts and minds of your customers through the right tools, technology or a simple gesture that turns a customer into a fan”



Hugh Baillie

President, X Practice
Weber Shandwick
London

“What advice would I give to the PR industry around embracing innovation? Run at it instead of running away from it”



Jessica Baxmann

Director, executive communication for SAP's chief innovation officer
SAP
Walldorf, Germany

“If you want to make the cut, if you want to stick out from the crowd, you have to be bold enough to try new formats, be a little edgy and tap into unknown waters”



Jim Hawker

Co-founder
Threepipe
London

“What advice would I give to the PR industry around embracing innovation? Be open minded. Find clients willing to take a risk. Test some new ways of working”



Johanna Prestele

Campaigns communications manager
Siemens
Munich

“Innovation needs to be constant, never standing still. Innovation is the heartbeat of success”



Lorenzo Petracco

Head of Digital Innovation Group, Southern Europe
BCW
Milan

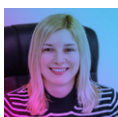
“Start by building the pre-conditions, the culture, the processes for innovation. Don’t start by assigning a job title or hiring the latest guru”



Lubomir Alamanov

Managing partner
SiteMedia Consultancy
Sofia

“Never be afraid to try something new, and never stop dreaming about the stars”



Natalia Bucelnikova

Managing partner
Buman Media/Future Communicators
Moscow

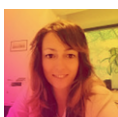
“Every day there are new, exciting things, and all of them are opportunities for innovation”



Nim Haas

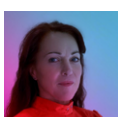
Chief marketing officer
Global Processing Services
London

“Embracing innovation means fully embracing new technology, new platforms, new channels. Stop outsourcing and build your internal capabilities with people who have a real passion for these”



Paula Fratila

Regional recruitment marketing manager EU
Genpact
Frankfurt



Rachel O'Sullivan

Managing director
Four Engage
London

“I love what I do, innovating to create better and more effective marketing, enabling brands and businesses to get closer to high value audiences”



Richard Walker

Managing director
Iceland Foods Group
Deeside, UK

“You can’t help clients innovate really effectively without being in the boardroom and without relating your work to business strategy”



Sabine Hückmann

CEO
Ketchum
Düsseldorf

“I consider every organisation that has overcome purely channel-based strategies, that is willing to place its bets on data-driven and target-based approaches, as innovative”



Sarah Gower

Managing editor Western Europe, global newsrooms
adidas
London



Timilehin Bello

CEO
Media Panache
Lagos

“Think wildly, feel free to make your thoughts insane. Break the chain. Don’t follow the same way”



The Innovator 25 - Asia-Pacific

Our third Innovator 25 class in Asia-Pacific provides a valuable glimpse of our industry's future, shining a spotlight on those individuals who are reshaping influence and engagement in an era of dramatic marketing and communications disruption.



Akira Suzuki
Creative Director
Dentsu
Tokyo

"People get accustomed to stimulation and it is difficult to obtain new and better results with outdated ideas and practices"



Aldo Liguori
Global Director of Corporate PR
Fast Retailing
Tokyo



Bianca Ghose
Chief Storyteller
Wipro
New Delhi/Bangalore

"Innovation happens when you give yourself the permission to experiment, to make change, to try something new"



Charles Yap
Senior Director,
Communications
ONYX Hospitality Group
Bangkok

"Brainstorming with people from different backgrounds and perspectives opens doors and often paves the way for something that I could not have come up with alone"



Cheryl Goh
Group VP of Marketing
Grab
Singapore

"Being comfortable in taking calculated risks is what drives innovation"



David Norris
Head of Internal
Communications, Asia
Manulife
Hong Kong

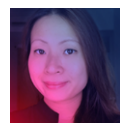
"Hire more young people into meaningful roles. They're frighteningly good"



Glory Cheung
Chief Brand Officer
Huawei
Shenzhen



Ian McKee
Founder & CEO
Vuulr
Singapore



Joanna Wong
Head of Business Marketing,
APAC
Spotify
Singapore

"A public relations practitioner not only needs to keep up with what is happening around them, but to be open and creative"



Joe Peng
Managing Director, Head of
Digital Innovation Group,
APAC
Burson Cohn & Wolfe
Hong Kong

"Go against traditional structures and strategies that upset clients and consumers in the past"



Jon Chin
Partner and Regional Client
Director, APAC
Ketchum
Singapore

"I would define innovation as having grit with passion"



Karun Budhraj
VP, Corporate Marketing &
Communications,
Asia Pacific
Amadeus
Bangkok

"I like to recruit and hire individuals who are diametrically opposite to me"



Lena Goh

Director, Public Affairs
Temasek International
Singapore

“I admire the B2B folks most especially those with an obscure or no touchpoint with users. That calls for ingenious creativity to touch people”



Lifeng Liu

Chairman and CEO
Ipsos China
Beijing



Mei Ling Yeow

MD, Southeast Asia
Text100
Kuala Lumpur

“Perhaps it’s because PR has always been about mitigating risk and not taking it. I think that’s a mistake”



Papri Dev

Regional MD - Client
Strategy & Operations, Asia
Zeno Group
Singapore

“Embrace diversity in thinking — hire from outside the PR industry”



Rachael Bylykbashi

Director, Corporate Affairs
Roche Products Australia
Sydney

“Industries like pharma and healthcare are the best breeding ground for truly creative, innovative and commercially-relevant talent”



Rebecca Kuo

Senior Public Affairs
Director, APAC
AB Inbev
Shanghai

“An innovative idea is always crafted from culture, tension and in-depth consumer insight. Spend time to listen and observe more”



Richa Goswami

Global Head, Content,
Creative Excellence & Digital
Platforms
Johnson & Johnson
Singapore

“Innovate or become irrelevant. The choice is yours to make as the consumer has already made theirs.”



Rini Hasbi

Consumer Marketing —
ANZ/Southeast Asia
Intel
Singapore



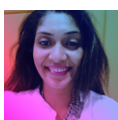
Rita Marini

Senior Director, SAP
Hybris Marketing, APJ &
Greater China
SAP
Singapore



Rohini Iyer

Founder
Raindrop Media
Mumbai



Suchitra Viswanathan

Regional Lead — Digital
Marketing & Social Media
HP
Singapore



Tyler Kim

Managing Director, North
Asia / Chair of Operations
APAC
Weber Shandwick
Seoul

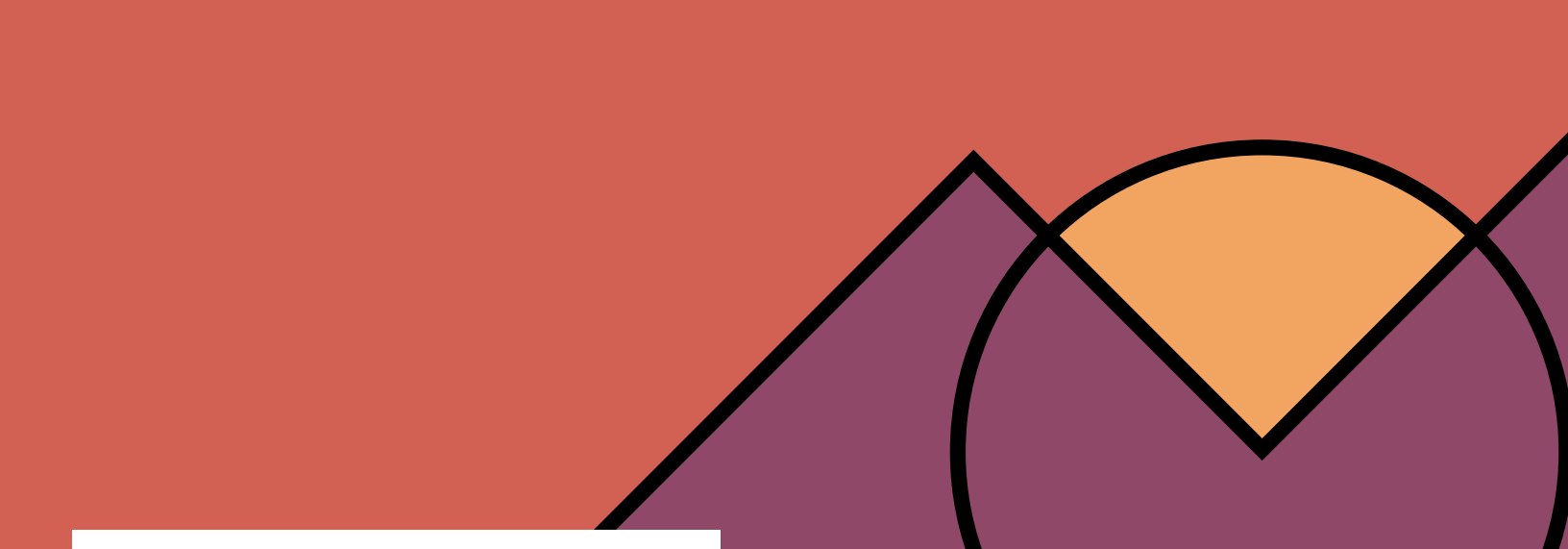
“Approach issues/problems with not a PR mindset but with a business analyst mindset”



Vuki Vujasinovic

CEO
Sling & Stone
Sydney & LA

“The hard part is walking the walk. For us that means making the difficult decisions to say no to the wrong opportunities, so we can retain our focus, passion, and be able to say yes to the right ones”



Global Top 250 PR Firms

Global PR agency ranking: Revenue numbers for many agencies include subsidiaries—including research, advertising, and specialist PR firms—many of which operate under separate brands but nevertheless report into the listed PR agency. For firms that submitted numbers in pounds sterling, euros or other non-USD currencies, conversions were made using exchange rates as of 12/31/2017. In some cases, where last year's submitted numbers were used for comparison purposes, growth numbers may be lower because of exchange rate fluctuations than they would have been in constant currency terms. Accordingly, we also include a constant currency growth metric. Aside from well-known agencies for which we have estimated fee income, the Rankings are totally dependent on submitted fee income; many agencies, often well-known, choose not to submit their numbers.

2018	2017	Agency	HQ	Fee Income 2017 (\$)	Fee Income 2016 (\$)	Staff	Growth (USD)	Growth (Constant Currency)
1	1	Edelman ¹	USA	893,591,000	874,968,000	5940	2.10%	2.10%
2	2	Weber Shandwick ²	USA	805,000,000	825,000,000		-2.40%	-2.40%
3	3	FleishmanHillard ³	USA	570,000,000	570,000,000		0.00%	0.00%
4	4	Ketchum ⁴	USA	550,000,000	562,000,000		-2.10%	-2.10%
5	5	Burson-Marsteller ⁵	USA	463,000,000	480,000,000	3133	-3.50%	-3.50%
6	6	MSL ⁶	France	460,000,000	460,000,000	3022	0.00%	0.00%
7	7	Hill+Knowlton Strategies ⁷	USA	400,000,000	395,000,000		1.30%	1.30%
8	8	Ogilvy ⁸	USA	354,000,000	361,000,000		-1.90%	-1.90%
9	9	BlueFocus ⁹	China	321,849,607	268,675,634		19.80%	12.30%
10	12	Cohn & Wolfe ¹⁰	USA	246,000,000	224,000,000		9.80%	9.80%
11	10	Golin ¹¹	USA	240,000,000	245,000,000		-2.00%	-2.00%
11	11	Brunswick	UK	240,000,000	240,000,000		0.00%	0.00%
13	15	MC Group ¹²	Germany	221,261,986	185,205,300	1108	19.50%	4.50%
14	13	Havas PR ¹³	France	215,000,000	220,000,000		-2.30%	-2.30%
15	14	FTI Consulting	USA	192,488,000	191,184,000	599	0.70%	0.70%
16	22	Vector Inc.	Japan	146,000,000	106,000,000	650	37.70%	37.70%
17	16	W2O Group ¹⁴	USA	144,300,000	122,715,000	651	17.60%	17.60%
18	18	APCO Worldwide	USA	128,236,300	120,622,100	682	6.30%	6.30%
19	19	Sunny Side Up Inc	Japan	123,924,592	116,500,000	321	6.40%	6.40%
20	17	Porter Novelli	USA	120,000,000	122,000,000		-1.60%	-1.60%
20		Teneo Holdings ¹⁵	UK	120,000,000		700		
22	21	Finsbury	USA	115,000,000	108,000,000	238	6.50%	6.50%
23	23	WE Communications ¹⁶	USA	110,400,000	101,784,000	665	8.50%	8.50%
24	24	Syneos Health ¹⁷	USA	85,000,000	90,000,000	370	-5.60%	-5.60%
25	26	Finn Partners ¹⁸	USA	81,875,948	76,706,000	558	6.70%	6.70%
26	25	Avenir Global ¹⁹	Canada	79,300,000	78,000,000	441	1.70%	1.70%
27	30	Text 100 ²⁰	USA	68,249,080	65,964,887	605	3.50%	3.50%
28	28	Ruder Finn, Inc.	USA	68,000,000	67,400,000	580	0.90%	0.90%
29	39	fischerAppelt	Germany	65,880,000	51,555,000	448	27.80%	11.80%
30	34	Hopscotch ²¹	France	65,160,000	57,960,000	533	12.40%	-1.60%
31	32	Zeno Group	USA	64,610,784	59,080,694	438	9.40%	9.40%
32	27	FSB Comunicacoes	Brazil	64,494,218	76,338,478	639	-15.50%	-12.70%
33	36	ICR	USA	63,000,000	55,663,450	175	13.20%	13.20%
33	37	Allison+Partners	USA	63,000,000	55,000,000	344	14.50%	14.50%
35	38	Marina Maher Communications	USA	62,500,000	52,000,000	165	20.20%	20.20%
36	35	Lewis	UK	62,370,000	56,580,000	370	10.20%	0.40%
37	31	PMK*BNC	USA	58,000,000	63,000,000	312	-7.90%	-7.90%
37	33	MWWPR	USA	58,000,000	58,000,000	190	0.00%	0.00%
39	48	Freud Communications	UK	55,350,000	46,021,680	250	20.30%	9.60%
40	29	Grayling	UK	54,675,000	66,297,000		-17.50%	-24.90%
41	42	Hering Schuppener	Germany	52,974,000	47,460,000	187	11.6%	-2.3%
42	43	DKC Public Relations	USA	52,800,000	47,000,000	230	12.30%	12.30%
43	47	Instinctif Partners	UK	52,516,350	42,208,680	428	24.40%	13.40%
44	52	GCI Health	USA	48,000,000	38,800,000	155	23.70%	23.70%
45	41	Newgate Communications	UK	47,622,237	38,028,834	188	25.20%	14.10%
46	59	H&H Group ²²	Sweden	46,170,120	33,740,300	300	36.80%	25.40%

2018	2017	Agency	HQ	Fee Income 2017 (\$)	Fee Income 2016 (\$)	Staff	Growth (USD)	Growth (Constant Currency)
47	45	Kreab	UK/Sweden	45,442,800	38,413,200	400	18.30%	3.50%
48	44	Dentsu Public Relations Inc.	Japan	45,000,000	44,600,000	270	0.90%	0.90%
49	57	Llorente & Cuenca	Spain	43,573,200	35,484,750	513	22.80%	7.40%
50		SKD Knickerbocker	USA	43,000,000	36,000,000	115	19.40%	19.40%
51	51	Four Communications Group	UK	42,941,367	39,258,145	273	9.40%	-0.30%
52	63	Prosek Partners	USA	41,680,345	31,488,000	144	32.40%	32.40%
53	49	PRAP Japan, Inc.	Japan	41,500,000	41,000,000	293	1.20%	1.20%
54	56	Portland Communications	UK	40,500,000	35,670,000	210	13.50%	3.40%
55	46	Padilla	USA	40,078,469	42,444,913	193	-5.60%	-5.60%
56	53	DeVries Global	USA	40,000,000	37,000,000	235	8.10%	8.10%
57	55	Kyodo Public Relations	Japan	39,063,336	37,723,173	240	3.60%	3.60%
58	50	Grupo Inpress	Brazil	34,650,602	39,856,031	504	-13.10%	-10.20%
59	65	M Booth	USA	33,935,533	28,844,191	169	17.70%	17.70%
60	69	Oliver Schrott Kommunikation	Germany	33,907,200	26,365,500	241	28.60%	12.50%
61	61	Hotwire	UK	33,294,505	31,702,340	220	5.00%	5.00%
62	58	Global Strategy Group	USA	33,000,000	34,000,000	98	-2.90%	-2.90%
62	62	The Outcast Agency	USA	33,000,000	31,500,000		4.80%	4.80%
64	64	Racepoint Global	USA	31,528,319	33,951,938	148	-7.10%	-7.10%
65	70	Carmichael Lynch Relate	USA	30,300,000	25,500,000		18.80%	18.80%
66		Citizen Relations	Canada	30,057,261	26,934,105	250	11.60%	3.20%
67	67	Citigate Dewe Rogerson	UK	29,970,000	27,183,000		10.30%	0.50%
68	60	Prain Global	Korea	29,756,562	32,853,248	207	-9.40%	-9.40%
69	68	5W Public Relations	USA	29,239,498	27,002,754	148	8.30%	8.30%
70	73	Adfactors PR	India	28,290,000	24,300,000	600	16.40%	16.40%
71	66	Coyne PR	USA	28,000,000	27,300,000	139	2.60%	2.60%
72	80	Farner Consulting	Switzerland	27,396,180	23,215,500		18.00%	3.30%
73	74	G&S Business Communications	USA	27,275,329	24,228,411	146	12.60%	12.60%
74	72	Fahlgren Mortine	USA	26,975,583	24,440,092	186	10.40%	10.40%
75	71	SEC Spa ²³	Italy	26,622,331	22,793,508	188	16.80%	16.80%
76	75	Olson Engage	USA	26,400,000	24,000,000	140	10.00%	10.00%
77	94	CYTS-LINKAGE	China	26,356,159	18,123,494	330	45.40%	45.40%
78		Health Unlimited ²⁴	US	25,890,471	15,164,000	121	70.70%	70.70%
79	93	Serviceplan PR Group	Germany	25,476,000	18,186,000	151	40.10%	22.60%
80	78	French/West/Vaughan ²⁵	USA	25,241,802	23,371,021	103	8.00%	8.00%
81	76	MHP Communications	UK	24,526,793	21,018,732	161	16.70%	6.30%
82	112	Interel ²⁶	Belgium	24,130,487	13,816,638	197	74.60%	74.60%
83	87	Spectrum	USA	24,000,000	20,000,000	98	20.00%	20.00%
84	116	Rud Pedersen	Sweden	23,546,000	13,965,000	113	68.60%	68.60%
85	84	Jackson Spalding	USA	23,434,937	21,006,046	150	11.60%	11.60%
86	92	ATREVIA	Spain	23,424,000	18,669,000	334	25.50%	9.80%
87	82	Strategic Public Relations Group	Hong Kong	23,400,000	22,300,000	266	4.90%	4.90%
88	77	Hunter Public Relations	USA	22,500,000	23,500,000	116	-4.30%	-4.30%
89	88	Kivvit	USA	22,313,223	19,867,869	62	12.30%	12.30%
90	81	Taylor	USA	22,200,000	22,900,000	105	-3.10%	-3.10%
91	83	Sopexa	France	21,112,800	22,149,750	207	-4.70%	-16.60%
92	103	achtung!	Germany	21,090,000	15,666,000	158	34.60%	17.80%

2018	2017	Agency	HQ	Fee Income 2017 (\$)	Fee Income 2016 (\$)	Staff	Growth (USD)	Growth (Constant Currency)
93	86	Geelmuyden.Kiese Group	Norway	21,040,320	20,160,000	155	4.40%	4.40%
94	85	Peppercomm	USA	20,938,353	20,427,321	96	2.50%	2.50%
95	98	Barabino & Partners	Italy	20,580,000	16,905,000	104	21.70%	6.50%
96	95	M&C Saatchi Sport & Entertainment	UK	20,464,032	17,466,000	154	17.20%	6.80%
97	91	Exposure	UK	20,250,000	18,750,033	168	8.00%	-1.60%
98	97	Havas Formula	USA	20,001,606	17,030,177	101	17.40%	17.40%
99	102	Faktor 3	Germany	19,680,000	16,065,000	202	22.50%	7.20%
100	56	Mikhailov & Partners	Russia	19,587,121	0	124		
101	118	Hanover ²⁷	UK	19,440,000	13,788,300	130	41.00%	28.50%
102	89	Shift Communications Inc.	USA	19,345,627	19,621,186	98	-1.40%	-1.40%
103	99	PR One	South Korea	19,185,774	16,800,000	150	14.20%	14.20%
104	142	Catalyst	USA	19,004,395	18,979,944	74	0.10%	0.10%
105	96	LaunchSquad	USA	19,001,464	17,409,000	116	9.10%	9.10%
106	79	Iris Culture	UK	18,900,000	0	97		
107	110	Brands2Life	UK	18,676,463	14,387,925	117	29.80%	18.30%
108	90	Levick Strategic Communications	USA	18,500,000	19,000,000	70	-2.60%	-2.60%
109	101	The Red Consultancy	UK	18,495,000	16,359,000	140	13.10%	3.00%
110	104	PAN Communications	USA	17,738,000	15,605,837	78	13.70%	13.70%
111	130	Crosby	USA	17,287,799	12,243,385	81	41.20%	41.20%
112	114	Highwire	USA	17,019,031	14,032,125	81	21.30%	21.30%
113	109	ICF Mostra	Belgium	16,800,000	14,592,900	141	15.10%	0.70%
114	100	Mitchell	USA	16,700,000	17,600,000	66	-5.10%	-5.10%
115	119	InkHouse	USA	16,400,000	15,000,000	100	9.30%	9.30%
116	106	Imre	USA	16,340,000	15,100,000	93	8.20%	8.20%
117	113	Proof ²⁸	Canada	15,965,466	14,076,868	92	13.40%	4.90%
118	111	Haberlein & Mauerer	Germany	15,960,000	14,385,000	166	10.90%	-2.90%
119	107	TRACCS	Saudi Arabia	15,000,000	15,050,000	218	-0.30%	-0.30%
120	250	Akima Media	Germany	14,976,200	4,356,430	82	243.80%	243.80%
121	117	Lansons	UK	14,964,422	13,887,551	96	7.80%	-1.80%
122	122	Maitland	UK	14,850,000	13,451,280	53	10.40%	0.60%
123	134	Pegasus	UK	14,617,140	11,767,410	116	24.20%	13.20%
124	129	Bite Communications	USA	14,000,000	13,000,000		7.70%	7.70%
125	136	M&C Saatchi PR	UK	13,901,304	11,386,035	118	22.10%	11.20%
126	108	Spark	USA	13,500,000	14,021,737	55	-3.70%	-3.70%
126	120	Kaplow	USA	13,500,000	13,700,000		-1.50%	-1.50%
128	158	Praytell	USA	13,400,000	9,211,710	82	45.50%	45.50%
129	121	Sloane & Company	USA	13,000,000	13,500,000	19	-3.70%	-3.70%
130	161	Nebo	USA	12,861,889	8,500,000		51.30%	51.30%
131	131	Current Marketing	USA	12,861,000	12,012,000	56	7.10%	7.10%
132	125	Exponent PR	USA	12,800,000	12,100,000	55	5.80%	5.80%
133	137	The Hoffman Agency	USA	12,722,000	11,340,000	140	12.20%	12.20%
134	144	Wellcom	France	12,600,000	10,500,000	98	20.00%	5.00%
135	126	TogoRun	USA	12,500,000	12,500,000	65	0.00%	0.00%
136	138	A&B One	Germany	12,480,000	11,235,000	70	11.10%	-2.80%
137	145	Bateman Group	USA	12,447,340	10,482,117	60	18.70%	18.70%
138	142	F&H Porter Novelli	Germany	12,360,000	10,710,000	63	15.40%	1.00%

2018	2017	Agency	HQ	Fee Income 2017 (\$)	Fee Income 2016 (\$)	Staff	Growth (USD)	Growth (Constant Currency)
139	143	Action Global Communications	Cyprus	12,277,198	10,700,000	305	14.70%	14.70%
140	126	RF Binder	USA	12,100,000	12,396,837	55	-2.40%	-2.40%
141	133	Merritt Group, Inc.	USA	12,000,000	11,805,900	54	1.60%	1.60%
141		DNA Communications	USA	12,000,000	8,600,000	70	39.50%	39.50%
143	157	rbb Communications	USA	11,919,171	9,241,425	59	29.00%	29.00%
144		Tonic Life Communications	USA	11,800,000	12,000,000	55	-1.70%	-1.70%
145	146	Lift World	Portugal	11,792,275	10,354,761	85	13.90%	-0.40%
146	159	Powerscourt	UK	11,788,200	8,856,000	32	33.10%	21.30%
147	124	Makovsky	USA	11,696,000	13,141,000	50	-11.00%	-11.00%
148	139	Davies	USA	11,416,316	11,083,799	34	3.00%	3.00%
149	135	Max Borges Agency	USA	11,250,000	11,500,000	65	-2.20%	-2.20%
150	205	Day One Agency	USA	11,147,061	6,038,323	45	84.60%	84.60%
151	153	KPR & Associates	South Korea	11,138,544	9,916,073	105	12.30%	12.30%
152	163	Veritas	Canada	11,040,000	8,362,000	72	32.00%	22.10%
153	126	ROI Communication	USA	11,000,000	12,500,000	75	-12.00%	-12.00%
154	148	Method Communications	USA	10,886,975	10,141,885	59	7.30%	7.30%
155	140	Rasky Partners	USA	10,476,319	11,043,237	37	-5.10%	-5.10%
156	149	TVC Group	UK	10,354,576	10,087,638	51	2.60%	-6.50%
157	186	Enzaim Health	Republic of Korea	10,264,000	7,000,000	60	46.60%	46.60%
158	150	SenateSHJ	New Zealand	10,058,000	10,359,740	52	-2.90%	-2.90%
159	179	Marco de Comunicacion	Spain	10,000,602	7,911,914	98	26.40%	10.60%
160	141	Kwittken	USA	10,000,000	11,000,000	57	-9.10%	-9.10%
160	152	DCI	USA	10,000,000	10,023,512	60	-0.20%	-0.20%
160	186	GoodIdea Media	China	10,000,000	8,000,000	90	25.00%	25.00%
163	166	LVT Group	Netherlands	9,913,200	8,169,000	80	21.40%	6.20%
164	170	C+C	USA	9,902,839	8,032,784	66	23.30%	23.30%
165		Murphy O'Brien	USA	9,887,638	9,271,966	58	6.60%	6.60%
166		Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock	USA	9,840,073	8,306,314	34	18.50%	18.50%
167	184	W ²⁹	UK	9,702,252	7,170,900	101	35.30%	23.30%
168	156	Bliss Integrated Communications	USA	9,600,000	9,284,000	48	3.40%	3.40%
168	167	First House	Norway	9,600,000	7,699,650	29	24.70%	9.10%
168	207	Kyne	Ireland	9,600,000	5,900,761	43	62.70%	62.70%
171	209	Headland Consultancy	UK	9,569,466	5,792,868	55	65.20%	50.50%
172	177	AMI Communications	Czech Republic	9,538,405	7,610,175	100	25.30%	9.70%
173	176	Jeschenko MedienAgentur	Germany	9,468,000	7,612,500	48	24.40%	8.80%
174	235	NJF ³⁰	USA	9,279,419	4,816,600	51	92.70%	92.70%
175	175	JPA Health Communications	USA	9,182,471	7,703,679	41	19.20%	19.20%
176	196	Saxum	USA	9,150,941	6,460,846	51	41.60%	41.60%
177	193	Narva	Sweden	9,096,000	6,501,000	41	39.90%	28.30%
178	164	HSE Cake	UK	9,045,000	8,241,000	65	9.80%	0.00%
179	165	Gregory FCA	USA	9,000,000	8,200,000	70	9.80%	9.80%
180		Grupo CDI - Comunicacao e Marketing	Brazil	8,655,000	8,370,000	182	3.40%	6.90%
181	182	JeffreyGroup	USA	8,426,524	7,213,840	120	16.80%	16.80%
182	174	Frank	UK	8,393,427	7,876,476	49	6.60%	-2.90%
183		Citypress	UK	8,363,724	7,257,542	87	15.20%	5.00%

2018	2017	Agency	HQ	Fee Income 2017 (\$)	Fee Income 2016 (\$)	Staff	Growth (USD)	Growth (Constant Currency)
184	168	360PR+	USA	8,300,000	8,026,000	45	3.40%	3.40%
184	224	Herd MSL	Australia	8,300,000	5,800,000	60	43.10%	43.10%
186	183	Lou Hammond Group	USA	8,152,410	7,210,839	40	13.10%	13.10%
187	181	Greentarget	USA	8,134,581	7,447,000	32	9.20%	9.20%
188		MP&F Public Relations	USA	8,123,629	7,845,354	65	3.50%	3.50%
189	173	McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations	USA	8,100,000	7,845,354	62	3.20%	3.20%
190	169	Walker Sands	USA	8,018,798	6,917,494	79	15.90%	7.90%
191	192	komm.passion	Germany	7,920,000	6,615,000	60	19.70%	4.80%
192		Nyhus Communications	USA	7,817,373	5,169,419	16	51.20%	51.20%
193	172	Approach	Brazil	7,800,000	7,878,020	146	-1.00%	-1.00%
193	185	Rumeur Publique	France	7,800,000	7,100,100	48	9.90%	-3.90%
193	190	Thomas Marko & Associes	France	7,800,000	6,825,000	36	14.30%	0.00%
196	191	Fink & Fuchs	Germany	7,682,400	6,741,000	77	14.00%	-0.30%
197	213	Hope&Glory	UK	7,677,173	5,710,719	64	34.40%	22.50%
198	180	Lambert, Edwards & Associates	USA	7,610,000	7,005,000	47	8.60%	8.60%
199	212	Moore Communications Group	USA	7,319,325	6,384,634	37	14.60%	14.60%
200	231	Harvard	UK	7,307,820	4,981,591	55	46.70%	33.70%
201	195	Cicero Group	UK	7,290,000	6,531,028	43	11.60%	1.70%
202	230	RMA Comunicacao	Brazil	7,201,811	5,412,325	122	33.10%	33.10%
203	199	EMG	The Netherlands	7,200,000	6,300,000	47	14.30%	0.00%
204		Whiteboard Advisors	USA	7,100,000	6,200,000	21	14.50%	14.50%
204	203	Another Company	Mexico	7,100,000	6,100,000	91	16.40%	16.40%
206	194	LDWW	USA	7,033,275	6,656,000	20	5.70%	5.70%
207	197	Mischief	UK	7,020,000	6,424,290	70	9.30%	-0.40%
208		Infinite Global	USA	6,987,646	5,846,052	37	19.50%	19.50%
209	155	Nelson Bostock Unlimited	UK	6,750,000	5,781,000		16.80%	6.40%
210		90TEN	UK	6,710,517	4,349,493	42		
211	221	Evercom	Spain	6,674,760	5,224,932	64	27.70%	11.80%
212	189	Octopus Group	UK	6,480,000	6,888,000	57	-5.90%	-14.30%
213	215	Eulogy!	UK	6,330,783	5,467,921	48	15.80%	5.50%
214	208	Diplomat Group	Sweden	6,300,000	5,800,000	43	8.60%	8.60%
215	275	Vested	USA	6,171,277	3,560,000	22	73.40%	73.40%
216	202	Djembe Communications	UAE	6,000,000	6,200,000	47	-3.20%	-3.20%
216	198	Kirchhoff Consult	Germany	6,000,000	6,150,000	60	-2.40%	-2.40%
216	123	Mazarine Asia Pacific	Hong Kong	6,000,000	5,000,000	61	20.00%	20.00%
216	218	Trigger Oslo	Norway	6,000,000	5,250,000	45	14.30%	0.00%
220	240	Meropa Communications	South Africa	5,920,000	4,690,000	86	26.20%	10.40%
221	268	Aspectus	UK	5,855,000	0	35		
222	257	PLMR	UK	5,851,348	3,931,873	37	48.80%	35.60%
223	258	Comunicacion Corporativa Ketchum	Costa Rica	5,846,993	4,104,351	71	42.50%	42.50%
224	220	Seven Hills	UK	5,813,455	5,216,011	47	11.50%	1.50%
225	211	Tunheim	USA	5,742,000	5,757,017	29	-0.30%	-0.30%
226		Partner of Promotion Sp. zo.o.	Poland	5,666,600	4,689,600	61	20.80%	0.00%
227	234	CP/compartner	Germany	5,652,000	4,840,500	63	16.80%	2.20%
228	232	MCG Medical Consulting Group	Germany	5,640,000	4,924,500	34	14.50%	0.20%

2018	2017	Agency	HQ	Fee Income 2017 (\$)	Fee Income 2016 (\$)	Staff	Growth (USD)	Growth (Constant Currency)
229	238	CooperKatz & Company, Inc.	USA	5,564,550	4,748,633	29	17.20%	17.20%
230		Pro-Vision Communications	Russia	5,556,913	0	61		
231	251	Red Lorry Yellow Lorry	UK	5,400,000	4,305,000	24	25.40%	14.30%
231	214	Konnect Public Relations	USA	5,400,000	5,700,000	36	-5.30%	-5.30%
233	246	Tact Intelligence-conseil	Canada	5,340,000	3,900,000	54	36.90%	36.90%
234	223	Dukas Linden Public Relations	USA	5,300,000	5,148,601	21	2.90%	2.90%
235	217	Singer Associates	USA	5,201,357	5,364,538	16	-3.00%	-3.00%
236	256	Kaltwasser Kommunikation	Germany	5,196,000	4,179,000	37	24.30%	8.80%
237	222	MullenLowe salt	UK	5,160,937	5,157,588	41	0.10%	-8.80%
238	237	The Academy ³¹	UK	5,153,198	4,406,662	35	16.90%	6.50%
239	210	Kiterocket	USA	5,060,000	5,500,000	36	-8.00%	-8.00%
240	251	SHAN	France	5,040,000	4,305,000	30	17.10%	2.40%
241	239	Talk PR	UK	5,030,100	4,714,236	45	6.70%	-2.80%
242	241	Hawkins International Public Relations	USA	5,007,837	4,566,288	34	9.70%	9.70%
243	228	BOCA Communications	USA	5,000,000	5,000,000	35	0.00%	0.00%
243	254	Avian Media Pvt Ltd	India	5,000,000	4,270,000	153	17.10%	17.10%
245		Clockwork Media	South Africa	4,959,000	3,362,000	98	47.50%	47.50%
246	245	Havas Just ³²	UK	4,860,000	4,428,000	30	9.80%	0.00%
247	261	Cap, et Cime PR	France	4,857,941	4,052,428	19	19.90%	4.90%
248	247	Bhava Communications	USA	4,800,000	4,400,000	27	9.10%	9.10%
249		URBAN Grupo de Comunicacion	Argentina	4,785,000	4,355,000	96	9.90%	9.90%
250	271	Whyte Corporate Affairs	Belgium	4,770,000	3,669,750	28	30.00%	13.70%

¹ Includes fee income from Assembly, StrategyOne, Deportivo and other subsidiary firms

² Includes fee income from Powell Tate, Creation and other subsidiary firms

³ Includes fee income for several subsidiary firms, such as Vox, BlueCurrent and Fishburn

⁴ Includes fee income for AccessEmanate, Daggerwing and other subsidiary firms

⁵ Includes fee income from PS+B and other subsidiary firms. Cohn & Wolfe merged with Burson-Marsteller to become Burson Cohn & Wolfe but still retains separate financial reporting until 2019

⁶ Includes fee income for all network firms, including Kekst, CNC, JKL, Winner, PBJs, Qorvis

⁷ Includes fee income from Group SJR, Public Strategies Innc and other subsidiary firms

⁸ Includes fee income from Oglivy Healthworld and other subsidiary firms

⁹ Includes fee income from Citizen Relations, We Are Social and other subsidiary firms

¹⁰ Cohn & Wolfe merged with Burson-Marsteller to become Burson Cohn & Wolfe but still retains separate financial reporting until 2019

¹¹ Includes fee income from Virgo Health, Fuse, Canvas Blue, Magic group and other subsidiary firms

¹² p/k/a Media Consulta

¹³ Includes fee income from Abernathy MacGregor, Red Agency, Havas Formula and other network PR firms

¹⁴ Includes fee income from WCG, Twist and other subsidiary firms. 2017 acquisitions include Pure, Marketeching and Sentient

¹⁵ 2017 acquisitions include Fitzroy, Ryan, Cabinet DN and Credo

¹⁶ 2017 acquisitions included Red Bridge and Watatawa

¹⁷ Includes fee income from Chandler Chicco, Biosector 2, Chamberlain and Allidura

¹⁸ 2017 acquisitions include ABI and Ying

¹⁹ Formerly known as Res Publica, includes National PR, Shift, Madano and Axon

²⁰ Includes UK merger with Lexis

²¹ Includes fee income from heaven, Sagarmatha, Human to Human, Upro and other subsidiary firms

²² Includes fee income from Hallvarsson & Halvarsson, Springtime, Jung and other subsidiary firms

²³ Includes fee income from Cambre, Newington and other subsidiary firms

²⁴ Includes Cooney Waters, Red Door and other healthcare agencies under the Unlimited Group

²⁵ Includes acquisition of Fetching Communications

²⁶ Includes acquisition of AMG

²⁷ Includes 2017 acquisition of Bell Pottinger

²⁸ The agency pka Environics Communication

²⁹ 2017 acquisitions included Glue PR and Facets PR

³⁰ Merged in 2017 with MMGY

³¹ Fee income reflects merger of UK firms Shine Communications and The Academy

³² The firm p/k/a as Just Health, before its acquisition by Havas

For entries in this color, The Holmes Report has estimated revenue. In many cases, the parent companies of these firms have elected not to provide revenue numbers for individual firms in response to Sarbanes-Oxley financial regulations.



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