

# PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

February 23, 2009

prnewsonline.com

Issue 8 Vol. 65

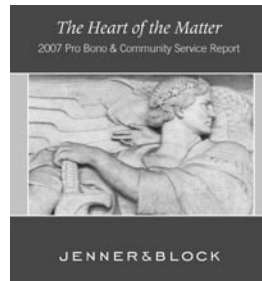
## 2009 Legal PR Awards

*PR News'* Legal PR Awards honor the most outstanding PR, crisis and litigation communications efforts among corporations, agencies and law firms—we present here the winners and honorable mentions in this year's competition. All finalists will be honored alongside our CSR Awards winners at a Feb. 26 luncheon at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

### ANNUAL REPORT

Winner: **Jenner & Block LLP**

Campaign: **2007 Highlights and The Heart of the Matter—2007 Pro Bono and Community Service Report**



A leader in pro bono service and national litigation, **Jenner & Block** wanted to make its two annual reports, *Highlights* and *Heart of the Matter*, complementary companion pieces that would reinforce the firm's commitment to high-caliber client service, while targeting a readership comprised of *Fortune* 500 counsel, law student recruits, potential hires and employees. Other objectives

were documenting and supporting the firm's business development, legal recruiting activities and strategic alliances with bar associations and interest groups.

### LEVERAGING CONTENT IN-HOUSE

The firm's marketing department was tasked with assembling the content and creating the layout for both publications. The bulk

of the editorial for both reports had been previously edited; the content, which had been partner-approved, was culled from

the firm's Web site.

To help things run in a smooth and fluid fashion, the team, comprised of the firm's marketing department, fashioned an organizational process by which that content, including photography, from the Web site was catalogued and edited into an acceptable format and then prepared for layout.

Although the marketing department consulted with an

outside designer on an internal pages template, cover design and print production, the majority of the layout was done in-house.

### HIGH-PROFILE DISSEMINATION

To highlight Jenner & Block's leadership in the community, the team opted for high-profile distribution channels for both *Highlights* and *Heart of the Matter*. Whether it was displaying the reports at the InsideCounsel SuperConference, a two-day conference that attracts hundreds of attendees, or sending it to the firm's 1,300-plus alumni and top law schools, the publications helped position Jenner & Block as a thought leader in the profession.

### CLIENT NEWSLETTER

Winner: **GodwinGroup and Butler Snow**

Campaign: **Best Client Newsletter 2008**

As a Jackson, Mississippi-based law firm specializing in the pharmaceutical and medical device industries, **Butler Snow** provided clients with high-value counseling, a strategic billing structure and proven results, but its work was largely unknown beyond its community of current clients. An added challenge: The firm's small size created the misconception that it couldn't

keep up in the fast-paced locations of its target audiences.

To elevate the visibility of its good work and, in turn, enhance its client retention strategy, Butler Snow partnered with **GodwinGroup** executives and set out to create a communications vehicle that would communicate the firm's leadership in the pharmaceutical and medical device industries.

### AN INJECTION OF CULTURE BEGETS VISIBILITY

That communications vehicle turned out to be a recurring client newsletter, dubbed "ProTe Solutio (Solutions for You)," which showcased Butler Snow's unique culture and structure. The newsletter's context and design educated the firm's existing pharmaceutical, medical device and healthcare clients in various areas of healthcare business and litigation law, but it also reinforced the depth of the lawyers' expertise.

Though originally intended for

existing clients, the team realized the newsletter would also have to compete for recognition at the highest level of in-house corporate counsel, and it had to do so amid a deluge of information that continuously arrived at the likes of Merck, Wyeth and Johnson & Johnson. To create a compelling publication, then, the executives developed a design that expressed credibility and expertise at the highest level.

### HIGH QUALITY = HIGH PRAISE FROM CLIENTS

The strategy of communicating

Page 2 ►



**Editor,** Courtney M. Barnes  
212.621.4986, cbarnes@accessintel.com

**Media Group Editor,** Iris Dorbian,  
212.621.4670, idorbian@accessintel.com

**Managing Editor,** Greer Jonas 212.621.4876,  
gjonas@accessintel.com

**Editorial Director,** Steve Goldstein 212.621.4890,  
sgoldstein@accessintel.com

**Director of Marketing Communications,**  
Amy Jefferies 301.354.1699, ajjefferies@accessintel.com

**Editorial Assistant,** Shaïla Mentore 212.621.4878,  
smentore@accessintel.com

**Art Director,** George E. Bourous

**VP/Group Publisher,** Diane Schwartz  
212.621.4964, dschwartz@accessintel.com

**Division President,** Heather Farley

**President & CEO,** Don Pazour

**PR News ADVISORY BOARD**

**Paul A. Argenti** - Tuck School of Business

**Ned Barnett** - Barnett Marketing Communications

**Neal Cohen** - APCO

**Carol Cone** - Cone Inc

**Peter Debreceny** - Allstate

**Chris Hammond** - Wells Fargo

**Mike Herman** - Epley Associates

**Mike Paul** - MGP & Associates PR

**Deborah Radman** - CKPR

**Brenda C. Siler** - Independent Sector

**Helene Solomon** - Solomon McCown & Co.

**Mark Weiner** - CEO, North America, PRIME Research

**Mary Wong** - Office Depot

**PR News BOARD OF CONTRIBUTORS**

**Dave Armon** - PR Newswire

**Andy Gilman** - CommCore Consulting

**Bruce Jeffries-Fox** - Jeffries-Fox Associates

**Angela Jeffrey** - VMS

**Richard Laermer** - RLM Public Relations

**Richard Levick** - Levick Strategic Comms

**Ian Lipner** - Lewis PR/YoungPRpros

**Katie Paine** - KDPaine & Partners

**Rodger Roeser** - Justice & Young

**Lou Thompson** - Kalorama Partners

**Reid Walker** - Lenovo

**Tom Martin** - College of Charleston

**Group Subscriptions - Diane Schwartz,**  
212.621.4964, dschwartz@accessintel.com

**Additional Copies & Article Reprints -**  
**Contact Dani Rose at**  
800-290-5460 x.139;  
prnews@theygsgroup.com



Published weekly by Access Intelligence, LLC  
4 Choke Cherry Road, Rockville, MD 20850  
Phone: 888.707.5814 • Fax: 301.309.3847  
e-mail: clientservices@accessintel.com

New York Editorial Office:  
110 William St., 11th Floor, New York, NY 10038  
Phone: 212.621.4875 • Fax: 212.621.4879

**Subscription/Renewal Coupon**

I want to subscribe to PR News for \$747 a year and receive 48 issues plus full access to the online Article Archives.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I want to renew my \$747 subscription to PR News. My account number is: \_\_\_\_\_

Charge my Card No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Exp. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed (Payable to Access Intelligence, LLC)  
In MD add 5% tax—outside U.S. add \$66 postage/proc.  
Fax to 301.309.3847.

**For subscribers only:** full access to PR News article archives at www.prnewsonline.com

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

**Winner: MassMedia Corporate Communications**  
**Campaign: McDonald Carano Wilson LLP**  
**Supports Fernley Flood Relief**

When 1,500 people in Fernley, Nevada, were evacuated after the Truckee River Canal was breached, causing massive flooding that damaged more than 800 homes, the law firm of McDonald Carano Wilson sprang into action. Neoma Saulnier, director of marketing for the firm, which has always made community support a top concern, oversaw a four-day initiative that raised \$50,000 to benefit the City of Fernley as well as the American Red Cross' Fernley flood relief efforts.

**RUBBING ELBOWS WITH VIPS**

Because of the very high media visibility of the Fernley flood relief, MassMedia, which worked with McDonald Carano Wilson on the initiative, pitched all local print and broadcast outlets. It also set up a press

conference for photo, video and interview opportunities that featured a check presentation by the firm's managing partner John Frankovich, interspersed with speeches from Nevada Governor Jim Gibbons and the city of Fernley's Mayor Todd Cutler.

**SAYING THANKS**

In less than five days, MassMedia positioned McDonald Carano Wilson as a generous contributor to the Fernley flood relief effort with every major news outlet in northern Nevada. In addition to securing positive press coverage of both the press conference and the firm's role in the flood relief, Mass Media also designed and coordinated media buys for a Fernley flood recognition ad that was published in the vicinity's most strategic business and lifestyle publica-

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Company: **Duane Morris**  
Campaign:  
**Duane Morris**  
**Community**  
**Relations Initiative:**  
**Alumni Web site**

The Duane Morris law firm wanted to strengthen its attorney alumni network by creating a space where both the firm and its alumni can reestablish contact with former colleagues and share information: The result was the Duane Morris Alumni Web site. Launched in February 2008, the site has been a highly effective conduit for alumni to stay in touch, send new contact information and provide feedback.

tions. Partners and attorneys at the firm also noted that they had received numerous cards, phone calls and e-mails from clients and potential clients thanking them for their donations to the relief effort.



The law firm of McDonald Carano Wilson makes their check presentation of \$50,000 to the Fernley flood relief effort. The flood damaged more than 800 homes in the Nevada city.

**CLIENT NEWSLETTER** ▶ Page 1

Butler Snow's leadership in the pharmaceutical and medical sectors through a high-level client newsletter resonated with the target audience. Clients such as Merck expressed their appreciation

for such a high-quality, tangible publication.

To further affirm its success, the now-monthly publication also won an award of excellence from the **Southern Public Relations Federation.**

**CRISIS MANAGEMENT/CRISIS RESPONSE**

**Winner: MWW Group and Boscov's**

**Campaign: Boscov's Beats the Odds and Stores Return to Founding Family**

Just as its executives initiated several operational improvements in early 2008, the credit crisis hit hard, subsequently forcing the family-owned independent retailer **Boscov's Department Stores** to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Aug. 2, 2008. The decision was made in an attempt to reduce debt, strengthen the balance sheet and normalize vendor relations.

At the same time, though, the company needed to position itself as a viable and necessary business to mul-

multiple stakeholders, including potential buyers, lenders and customers. Plus, the owners wanted to keep the business in the family, thus requiring them to reverse the financial tailspin. To meet these goals, they tapped **MWW Group**.

**SMOOTH OPERATOR**

Leading up to filing day, the team of executives created a cascade of audience-specific messaging to help keep key stakeholders engaged and supportive during the Chapter 11 process. Strategies to keep operations

running smoothly included:

- Counseling Boscov's management to provide regular updates to co-workers to keep vendor- and customer-facing employees informed;
- Developing scripts, talking points and FAQs documents that anticipated audiences' main questions and concerns;
- Developing a schedule of talking points for those managers who were responsible for communicating news of store closings, layoffs and restructurings; and,
- Conducting a town hall meeting at the company's headquarters on filing day, which was hosted by the CEO, whose remarks moved employees to pledge to do whatever they could to protect the company's future.

**ALL IN THE FAMILY**

What easily could have been a catastrophic crisis for Boscov's reputation—and its future—ended up remaining under control thanks to the team's stalwart communications efforts. Since filing in August 2008, only one private equity firm expressed sincere interest in buying the company but, because it couldn't promise to keep the stores open, this outcome was deemed unacceptable to the Boscov family.

In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, the company's leaders rallied to raise almost enough money to buy the company. Then, the state of Pennsylvania and two of the cities in which Boscov's operates unexpectedly stepped in with a bridge loan to make the purchase possible—all in time for the holiday season.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Company: **Media & Communications Strategies, LLC and Gleason Group**

Campaign: **Saving American Manufacturing Campaign**

In 2007, the Gleason Group—one of the nation's largest hand truck manufacturers, faced being forced to go out of business because the Department of Commerce granted an incredibly low tariff to an international competitor. To convince the Department of Commerce to reverse its preliminary decision and reinstate the original higher international tariff, Gleason Group turned to Media & Communications Strategies LLC, whose executives built on burgeoning local interest to eventually secure national media and political attention. Ultimately, not only was the original international tariff of 26.49% reinstated; it skyrocketed to a staggering 383.6%, which prevented overseas companies from undermining Gleason Group's position in the hand truck manufacturing industry.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Company: **FD and Tropicana Entertainment**

Campaign: **"All In": A Communications Campaign to Support the Chapter 11 Restructuring of Tropicana Entertainment LLC**

In April 2008, FD was enlisted by Tropicana Entertainment to drive internal and external communications surrounding the company's multibillion dollar Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing, and to provide ongoing communications counsel following the announcement. The team identified Tropicana general managers as the key communications conduits to major audiences, and in turn equipped them with a toolkit for communicating all messaging around the filing and restructuring. That approach, as well as efforts to monitor media coverage, provide messaging counsel and create a restructuring section within the corporate Web site, effectively prepared the company for its transition and garnered positive media coverage.

**PRNews**  
**webinars**

**Digital PR Webinar:**  
**Building Community & Reputation Online With Social Media Tools**  
March 24, 2009

Managing your organization's reputation online is part of every communicator's job now – but how do you choose where to spend your time and resources? Join PR News for a must-attend Webinar that will shed light on the new social media platforms that can improve your communications initiatives for your organization.

**Speakers:** Idil Cakim  
VP, Interactive Media  
GolinHarris

Curtis Houglund  
Founder of Attention PR

Diane Thieke  
Executive Director of PR Communications  
Dow Jones

Johna Burke  
Vice President  
Burrelles Luce

**Partner:**  **BurrellesLuce**  
Work intelligently.

15373

Register Today at [www.prnwsonline.com](http://www.prnwsonline.com)

**LITIGATION COMMUNICATIONS**

Winner: **FD**

Campaign: **290% Greater Than Expected: A Campaign to Maximize Returns to Enron's Creditors**

**Enron** executives may have been responsible for engineering one of the largest acts of corporate fraud in U.S. history but, six years after its 2001 fall from grace, the company's new board of directors (part of the post-bankruptcy creation of the Enron Creditors Recovery Corp. [ECRC]) was still engaged in a multi-billion dollar lawsuit against **Citigroup** for allegedly assisting in the scandal.

The lawsuit was initiated in 2004 in an attempt to hold Citigroup accountable to Enron creditors, but by 2007, the com-

pany had continued to avoid settlement, in turn holding up creditors' access to billions of dollars and draining the resources Enron execs needed to direct to the organization's recovery. To reverse the issue's waning visibility in the media and to pressure Citigroup to finally settle the litigation in terms favorable to Enron and its creditors, the company teamed up with **FD** to form an unprecedented intersection of legal and corporate communications. Among the strategies implemented to achieve their goals:

- **Appealing to a broader audience:** FD execs with legal degrees analyzed thousands of pages of legal documents and subsequently produced succinct, easy-to-digest summaries of the litigation's key points. This made the issue more accessible to diverse stakeholders, from media and the public to Enron creditors and policy makers.
- **Gathering intelligence:** The team surveyed key thought leaders to ascertain insights into Citigroup's perceived reputation, as well as their engagement with the Enron-Citigroup issue. These findings helped shape key messages and drive decisions about which challenges to use to effectively reach these target audiences.
- **Redesigning corporate Web site:** FD's Web design team

developed a new site to present relevant facts, media coverage and legal documents in an accessible format.

- **Engaging in aggressive media outreach:** The team divided target media based on subject matter and then media trained Enron chairman John Ray, who became the voice of the campaign in multiple news outlets.

Ultimately, the team's approach of increasing awareness around this ongoing litigation to reach a settlement surpassed expectations—by a whopping 290%. On March 26, 2008, Citigroup settled with ECRC for a record \$1.66 billion, which allowed Enron to return 52 cents on the dollar to creditors—an amount that drastically exceeded the original plan of 17 cents on the dollar.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Company: **Spada and Cohen Milstein**

Campaign: **Cohen Milstein's Air Passenger Victory - Breaking the Mould**

In February 2008, on behalf of class action law firm Cohen Milstein, Spada initiated an international media outreach campaign to communicate the ground-breaking \$200 million settlement involving Virgin Atlantic, British Airways and 5.6 million U.K. air passengers. Ingratiating target audiences with the "U.S. class action culture," as well as attacking the lack of understanding within business and consumer markets regarding their rights to seek justice against corporate wrongdoers, the team ultimately helped Cohen Milstein—new to the European market—become synonymous with collective redress in London and Europe.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Company: **AMERIGROUP Corporation**

Campaign: **AMERIGROUP Corporation Illinois Litigation**

When a former employee filed a suit against AMERIGROUP Corporation, alleging that it refused to provide healthcare coverage to late-term pregnant women, the company faced a profound reputational risk. To defend and build its reputation, the company's executives developed a compelling counter-narrative that included crucial facts and context that were missing in the allegations. Thanks to the communications plan, AMERIGROUP executives managed to minimize coverage of the settlement and ensure that the federal government in no way reduced or restricted the company's ability to do business.

**PR News CONFERENCES** **MEDIA RELATIONS**  
**NEXT PRACTICES FORUM**  
 Social Media | Measurement | Media Training | Crisis Management

**March 10, 2009 • The National Press Club, DC**



Join PR News for the Media Relations Forum that will provide you with all the tactics and strategies you need to boost the performance of your media relations efforts.

Questions: Contact Conference Coordinator Saun Sayamongkhun at [ssayamongkhun@accessintel.com](mailto:ssayamongkhun@accessintel.com).  
 Sponsorship Opportunities: Contact VP & Publisher Diane Schwartz at [dschwartz@accessintel.com](mailto:dschwartz@accessintel.com).

Sponsored By: **CISION** **MAKOVSKY COMPANY** **THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLITICAL MANAGEMENT**

15173 *A One-Day Gathering of Thought Leaders and Forward-Looking Communicators to Brainstorm Next Practices in Online and Offline Media Relations*



**LEGAL PR BLOG**

Winner: **Marler Clark LLP PS and Lexblog**

Campaign: **Bill Marler's Marlerblog**  
(www.marlerblog.com)

For the past 15 years, **Marler Clark** has carved a niche as one of the top law firms specializing in representing victims of every major food illness outbreak. Seeking a platform that would enable him to communicate important information about food illness litigation while building the Marler Clark brand, attorney Bill Marler opted to create an eponymous blog (www.marlerblog.com). After considerable research, Marler enlisted

the services of Kevin O'Keefe, founder of LexBlog, to help him build and design the blog.

**COMPELLING CONTENT PIQUES INTEREST**

To attract a flow of visitors, Marler sought to create compelling content. Among the blog's highlights are Marler's breaking news on food safety legislation, which further reinforced him as an authority. He also uses the blog to call for better regulations,

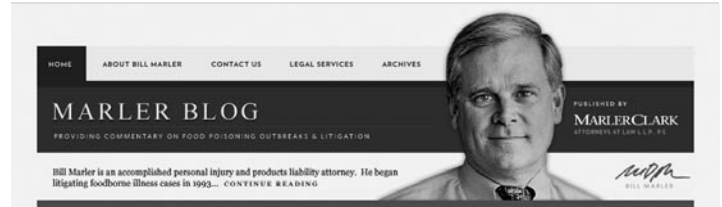
recalls and improvements in the food supply. Plus, the blog's look is regularly updated; it's also easy to navigate. Readers can smoothly move to one of the other Marler Clark blogs or Web sites.

**A BLOG-BASED MARKETING STRATEGY**

Marlerblog is quoted in other important blogs on law and food safety, including the Wall Street Journal blog, Food Safety News and Food Snark—this

is a key component of Marler Clark's marketing strategy. For his efforts in alerting the public about food safety, Bill Marler was dubbed the "Avenging Angel of the Chowpocalypse" by the Haphazard Gourmet Girls.

Readership averages 500-600 visits per day, increasing to as many as 4,000 during the peak of an outbreak crisis; 20% of readers are repeats, with many making more than 100 visits over the year.



**MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS**

Winner: **Halleland Lewis Nilan & Johnson, Kohnstamm Communications and Foote & Co.**

Campaign: **The Lawyer Job Interview Translator**

Recruiting new talent in today's business climate is no easy feat, especially when you are going after members of Generation Y to fill positions in a traditionally stiff corporate profession such as law.

To completely turn the usual approach of recruiting this demographic on its head, executives at Halleland Lewis Nilan & Johnson, a Minneapolis-based law firm, teamed up with agency partners Kohnstamm Communications and Foote & Co. to attract the most qualified, best-fit Gen Y-ers, whose talent could then be cultivated to become top-tier professionals.

The approach: "The Translator," a recruitment-focused online microsite featuring a talking head interviewer, who lampoons the jargon-heavy law firm messages by translating them into blunt statements that convey key points through humor.

**PREPARING FOR LIFT-OFF**

The microsite, www.thelawyertranslator.com, was set to launch at the end of July 2008, and it aimed to cut through the inflation-heavy legal realm to address aspects of sustainable legal services that weren't solely related to money. The plan for reaching the team's target audience: Make "The Translator" a viable viral marketing vehicle via the following tactics:

- Search engine optimization;
- Issuing a news release upon the site's launch that tied into the larger trend of firms offering larger salaries to retain the Gen Y legal talent rather than addressing the other workplace issues important to this demographic;
- Pitching national media trades and relevant industry blogs;

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Company: **Marler Clark LLP**  
 Campaign: **Marler Clark Outbreak Audio News Releases**

Marler Clark attorneys have a long history of representing victims of every major food borne illness in the U.S., but increased competition required them to enhance their branding as leaders in the space. To do so, they incorporated audio news releases into their marketing strategy, targeting consumers in affected outbreak areas and establishing the Marler Clark Web site as a resource for food borne illnesses. The audio news release strategy enabled Marler Clark to provide consumer information very cost-effectively, reach more than 11 million radio listeners in areas affected by various outbreaks.

- Creating incentives for all firm members to forward the microsite link to their contacts;
- Loading flash drives with information about "The Translator" and giving them to potential recruits; and,
- Teaming up with career counselors at law schools to pass the link onto their students.

Then, the team implemented phase two, which included updates to the translator site that included more information surrounding the firm's authentic culture and its differentiated views on leadership, diversity and the use of technology—all

issues that are especially important to members of Gen Y.

**MISSION ACCOMPLISHED**

While the number of recruits brought in as a direct result of "The Translator" is still being calculated, the campaign's initial success can be measured by the overwhelming interest expressed by employees and law school counselors, as well as by the heavy traffic that the microsite experienced. Specially, the recruitment committee reported that most on-campus interviewees mentioned "The Translator" and its positive impact on their feelings about the firm.

**MEDIA COVERAGE**

**Winner: Porter Novelli and King & Spalding LLP**  
**Campaign: King & Spalding's PR Program—2008**

Wanting to position its law firm as a forward-thinking source on a variety of topics relevant to its practice, such as corporate finance and government relations, **King & Spalding** enlisted its agency, **Porter Novelli**, to increase its media profile within the legal community.

King & Spalding professionals also wanted to boost its share of voice and buzz in the marketplace while surpassing the coverage generated by rival firms.

**A GLOBAL UNDERTAKING**

Because King & Spalding has offices around the country (including New York, Atlanta,

Washington, D.C., and Houston) and in London, Porter Novelli created a global team that would be responsible for overseeing and driving media relations.

Also, to set the firm apart from its competitors, the agency focused on achieving coverage through a proactive and reactive media program. Additional tactics employed by the agency included:

- Setting up media briefings between the firm's attorneys and influential reporters;
- Having the lawyers write bylined or op-ed articles on timely issues and/or trends;

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Company: **MWW Group**

Campaign: **MWW Group Secures National Media Spotlight for Ohio-Based Law Firm Baker Hostetler LLP**

MWW Group was hired by the Midwest law firm Baker Hostetler to elevate its presence in top-tier national media outlets. Positioning the attorneys as go-to experts in areas such as white collar crime and bankruptcy, while leveraging its preexisting relationships with broadcast programs, MWW garnered extensive media coverage for Baker Hostetler.

- Identifying trends and developments to pitch stories for a variety of media; and,
- Using rapid response to position the firm as commentators to relevant breaking news.

**MEDIAPALOOZA**

From Jan. 1, 2008, to Nov. 1, 2008, Porter Novelli secured 446

media placements for King & Spalding. Not only did this number boost the firm's share of voice in the marketplace, it also surpassed its rivals in terms of coverage. Among the media outlets that gave the firm coverage were Associated Press, Bloomberg, CNET, *Crain's New York*, Dow Jones, *The Hill*, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Company: **Furia Rubel Communications**

Campaign: **Feldman Shepherd Death of Diane Glynn Media Coverage**

Seeking justice in a case that involved the 2005 death of a single mother by a drunken driver who did not have charges filed against him due to nepotism, the lawyer that handled the civil suit turned to his firm's agency, Furia Rubel Communications, for help. Launching a media outreach effort to put pressure on the state to reopen the case, the agency secured coverage in a number of outlets that included TV's *Inside Edition*. Following the airing, the motorist responsible for the woman's death was charged with criminal and vehicular homicide.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Company: **Shughart Thomson & Kilroy PC**

Campaign: **Think Like a Report: How we made our firm the "go-to" law firm for media in our market**

When Heather McMichael, the PR coordinator of Shughart, Thomson & Kilroy, joined the firm in 2007, her mission was to make it the go-to law firm for media outlets in its six key markets. Working with the marketing director, she wanted the attorneys to get to know the media while establishing the firm as a valuable resource for stories on myriad issues. The result: 309 media placements at the end of Q3 '08 as opposed to 290 for the entire year of 2007 and 60 for 2006.

**IN-HOUSE PR PROFESSIONAL**

**Winner: Russell Thomas, Director of Media and PR, Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice**

Since joining Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice in September 2007 as the firm's director of media and public relations, Russell Thomas proved his immeasurable value in the face of one of the firm's toughest years. Within his first few months on the job, the firm entered

into merger talks, dealt with the onset of a severe economic downturn and faced necessary layoffs. Through all that, Russell managed to navigate all media relations efforts to get Womble Carlyle's reputation through the challenges intact, and then some.

**GO-TO GUY**

Russell's successes within the firm all came without the benefit of having a full staff at his disposal. Rather, he had to leverage his own skills, as well as those of his ad-hoc virtual team, to boost productivity without a wealth of resources. Regardless, his efforts have almost single-handedly increased the firm's profile, not to mention have led to the following additional accomplishments:

- Leveraging earned PR and media relations efforts into an estimated ad equivalency value of \$500,000 in 2008;
- Increasing news-related stories involving Womble Carlyle by 20% over the same period in 2007;
- Distributing 68+ press releases in 2008, a 60% increase over the previous year; and,
- Getting the firm's messages

Page 7 ►

**MEDIA RELATIONS DURING LITIGATION OR CRISIS**

Winner: **Ron Sachs Communications Inc.**

Campaign: **Alia Faraj-Johnson, Alan Crotzer Claims Bill**

When Alan Crotzer was released from a Florida prison after 24 years of wrongful incarceration (he had been exonerated thanks to DNA evidence), a claims bill that would provide him restitution for the years lost had been stuck in limbo in the state legislature.

Realizing that the bill would not move forward without strong outreach and public support, Crotzer's attorney, Mike Olenick, forged a partnership with Alia Faraj-Johnson, vice president of the Tallahassee-based **Ron Sachs Communications**.

**KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**

Also in stalemate at the Florida legislature was another bill relevant to the case that offered compensation to anyone wrongfully convicted. Because the then largely Republican-dominated legislature did not historically embrace such bills, Faraj-Johnson knew she was waging an uphill battle.

Adhering to the tried and true tenet that knowledge is power, Faraj-Johnson studied the political layout by attending committee meetings, assessing reaction from the media and targeting key staff directors and lawmakers who could effectively move the bill forward.

**RIGHTING A WRONG**

Making this case her agency's most important pro-bono client, Faraj-Johnson strategized that the most effective way to generate support for the claims bill specific to Crotzer was to put a human face on a miscarriage of justice. (Because the general compensation bill for the wrongfully convicted was not being well received in the legislature, Faraj-Johnson decided to focus her initial efforts on the Crotzer bill.)

Introducing Crotzer to the Capitol press corps, various legislative committees and lawmakers, Faraj-Johnson gave Crotzer the

opportunity to tell his story in his own words, punctuated by heartfelt emotion and personal insights.

This tactic worked, allowing Crotzer's supporters to spotlight his case, while further depoliticizing the measure. By making the very sympathetic Crotzer the story, efforts toward a claims bill victory gained the momentum needed for passage. Noting all the things Crotzer missed out on while incarcerated, Faraj-Johnson creating a touching and moving message.

**IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING ODDS**

Even when the odds were inexorably stacked against her, Faraj-Johnson was unrelentingly persistent on behalf of her client. For instance, with only a few weeks remaining in the 2007 legislative session, the claims bill looked doomed—but Faraj-Johnson kept Crotzer in the media spotlight. And the story was so powerful it could not be ignored. Olenick and his legal team embraced the communications strategy and were able to use it to secure support from public officials.

**EXACTING JUSTICE**

While the House and Senate considered the bill in the 2008 ses-

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Company: **FD**

Campaign: **290% Greater Than Expected: A Campaign to Maximize Returns to Enron's Creditors**

In August 2007, Enron's Board of directors engaged FD to build a significant communications campaign that would highlight its multi-billion dollar lawsuit against Citigroup. As a result of leveraging both new and traditional media outreach, Citigroup settled with Enron for \$1.66 billion.

sion, Crotzer, further reinforcing and promoting the importance of the story, watched from the gallery. The Florida House passed the bill (which granted Crotzer \$1.25 million and a state-paid college education) unanimously and publicly apologized to Crotzer from the floor. The story ran in every major Florida media outlet, with the Senate following suit later that week.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Company: **AMERIGROUP Corporation**

Campaign: **AMERIGROUP Corporation Illinois Litigation**

Slapped with a \$334 million judgment in which AMERIGROUP Corporation had been accused of denying healthcare coverage to late-term pregnant women, the company wanted to defend its reputation to the media and public. Casting doubt on the suit's allegations, the company made its case known with top-tier media outlets, such as the *Wall Street Journal* and Fox Business Channel.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Company: **Media & Communications Strategies, LLC**

Campaign: **Saving American Manufacturing Campaign**

In 2007, The Gleason Group, a top hand truck manufacturer, was being forced to go out of business because the Department of Commerce had granted a low tariff to an international competitor. To urge the department to reverse its decision, Gleason enlisted the services of Media & Communications Strategies, which devised a plan that would target both media and lawmakers. As a result, Gleason stayed in business and 600 workers kept their jobs.

**IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONAL** ▶ Page 6

to audiences via new media platform by writing for its network of 16 blogs and using social networking sites as client development tools.

**PRO BONO EFFORTS**

In addition to his professional responsibilities, Russell finds time to provide pro bono media relations services

to both the Council on Legal Education Opportunity and the Washington Metropolitan Area Corporate Counsel Association. As if all these commitments aren't enough to keep him busy, Russell also serves on two

Womble Carlyle Committees—the Diversity Committee and the Economic Stability and Solutions Committee—as well as acting as a board member of the Washington Chapter of Law Firm Media Professionals association.

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Winner: Hellerman Baretz Communications and Cornerstone Research**

**Campaign: Creating a PR Cornerstone: Leveraging a Survey and Academia to Own a Market**

It's a widely held belief that corporate America's archenemy is none other than plaintiffs' lawyers, as the latter group is often accused of filing alleged "blackmail suits" (also known as securities class-action cases) the moment a public company's stock price falls significantly. This action is based on the claim that a fall in stock value can be directly attributed to corporate malfeasance. While this can be true (**Enron**, anyone?), decreased stock prices are far more often the result of a complex combination of economic factors that are not tied to the actions of a company or its executives.

To replace the widespread fallacy with a facts-based reality, **Cornerstone Research**, a provider of economic analysis surrounding class-action cases, initiated communications outreach that they hoped would find these plaintiffs guilty of bogus litigation.

**CROSS-EXAMINATION**

With the help of **Hellerman Baretz Communications**, Cornerstone execs identified three objectives that the campaign would address:

- Establish Cornerstone as the preeminent leader of securi-

ties class-action analysis;

- Align Cornerstone and **Stanford Law School** as the go-to sources for media covering securities class-action issues; and,
- Generate buzz through media coverage.

The partnership with Stanford Law School, and specifically with world-renowned law professor and former **SEC** commissioner Joseph Grundfest, was the proverbial cornerstone of the campaign, as the combined intellect from professionals within both organizations helped generate reports detailing securities class-action case filings and settlements. With this high-level research and analysis in its arsenal, the team chose to create a press release that targeted Cornerstone's key audiences: lawyers, public company executives and business media.

Leveraging Professor Grundfest's authority, the team developed a press release that would be both insightful and accessible to each target audience. It would present complex economic information in an easy-to-digest way, while at the same time underscore the key elements of the issue at hand.

**REACHING A VERDICT**

The communications strategy ultimately was driven by the need to reach thought leaders, influencers and decision makers in the securities class-action field by targeting the highest-level business publications for coverage of the reports. Thanks to the final press release's compelling design, accessible messaging and authoritative tone, the campaign was a resounding success. An overwhelming 95% of Cornerstone's 2008 media mentions were related to the report, thus making it a branding tool that more than earned its positive verdict.

**PR-LEGAL COUNSEL TEAM**

**Winner: Vanguard Media Group and Holland & Hart**

Last summer, as the law firm of **Holland & Hart** underwent a major transition via a corporate merger, its PR agency, **Vanguard Media Group**, was faced with a cumbersome challenge: How to sustain the momentum of the firm's media coverage during this change.

**SOUNDING THE MEDIA TRUMPET**

To increase media awareness of the newly restructured firm of Holland & Hart (formerly known as the Nevada-based Hale Lane), Vanguard Media Group implemented and executed a communications initiative that included the following key components:

- Identify key audiences and target publications;
- Create leading market position among law firms in terms of positive media coverage and impressions;
- Market training for attorneys, speaking opportunities, event planning, continuing education classes, mixers and socials; and,
- Leverage opportunities to partner with other professional services firms and with local media to create the most bang for their buck.

**VIVA LAS VEGAS**

Vanguard Media Group's efforts translated into plentiful cover-



Staffers of the Vanguard Media Group assemble to receive an award for their services, which helped Holland & Hart sustain media coverage during a merger.

age for Holland & Hart in a number of media outlets, which included *The Nevada Business Journal*, *Las Vegas Business Press* and *The Las Vegas Review Journal*. Also, when Holland

& Hart merged with Hale Lane, the larger firm was not known for retaining PR firms. But as a result of the agency's work, its contract with Holland & Hart has been extended.