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## REPUTATION

### APCO Report: Pharmaceutical Industry Shows Reputation Can Be Complex Calculation

You had to love the photo of a baseball catcher falling, heels over head, which **CNBC** ran on its site accompanying a story about pharma brand **Valeant** (*PRN*, Mar 28), whose stock fell 5%+ May 12. The decline was based on media reports that Valeant welched on a promise to Congress to lower prices on drugs. In February the embattled company told lawmakers it would cut as much as 30% off prices for two critical drugs. The Canadian company was on the Hill explaining the

huge price increases it and a few other pharma brands had enacted.

Sure, you had to love the photo, except if you're Valeant, a Valeant shareholder (the stock is trading in the 20s today, down from \$260 over the summer) or a member of the pharmaceutical industry.

Like **Turing Pharmaceuticals'** enfant terrible Martin Shkreli (*PRN*, Oct 12, 2015), who made headlines last year

*Continued on page 8*

## IMAGE PATROL

BY KATIE PAINE, CEO, PAINE PUBLISHING

### Lessons in Crisis Delusion—UK PM Cameron and UC Davis' Katehi

It's a toss-up. Who was suffering more from delusional thinking last month: UK Prime Minister David Cameron or UC Davis Chancellor Linda Katehi? You'll have to judge for yourself.

#### DAVID CAMERON

First to Prime Minister Cameron. We didn't need the Panama Papers to tell the rich and powerful that, in this day and age, if you have something to hide, chances are good it won't be hidden for long. You might as well put it out there and get on with things.

When 11 million documents from the supposedly private files of Panamanian law firm **Mossack Fonseca** were leaked

to the **International Consortium of Investigative Journalists**, the collective blood pressure of many of the world's richest and most powerful people must have skyrocketed.

Within hours of the Panama Papers leak, it was revealed that UK Prime Minister Cameron, who has a long history of railing against individual and corporate tax evaders, was himself touched by the offshore tax shelter scandal. And there's nothing like a whiff of hypocrisy to get the media frothing at its collective mouth.



*Continued on page 4,5*



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# How an Online Brand Used Video to Gain Public's Trust



At its core, successfully marketing a product or service is about fostering a positive relationship with the consumer. In developing this relationship, a brand needs to actively dedicate itself to building trust. Why? Trust in a brand is what breaks through the thousands of messages directed at consumers each day. This dedication should be evident in a brand's communications and in the development of its product.

In the digital world, there is no better way to reach an audience and build that trust than through the use of compelling video content. Americans aged 18 and older spend more than 11 hours each day (two-thirds of an adult's waking hours) watching television, perusing the Internet on a computer, laptop or smart device, and listening to the radio, according to Nielsen's Total Audience Report. There is a vast opportunity to reach consumers where they're spending the majority of their time, with smart, engaging digital content.

To market any product or service, you must first place yourself in the shoes of the consumer. When deciding whether or not to use a particular product or service, a consumer may ask:

- ▶ How do I know that the ingredients are organic?
  - ▶ Why should "triple-distilled" be important to me?
  - ▶ How can I trust that my information will be treated with privacy?
- Or they might be more analytical and ask:
- ▶ Can I trust a company that pays less in taxes in this country than my household does?
  - ▶ Is it ethical to fill up at a station run by that company?

Regardless of the consumer's level of critique, the same rules apply for strengthening their relationship with a brand.

### FIND THE PAIN POINT

Identifying the most prevalent question about your brand that has the greatest influence on a consumer's brand loyalty is the pain point that needs to be addressed first and foremost. This recognition should include departments across the company for evidence and case study support, both anecdotal and with the support of thorough research.

Talk to your customer support team to determine the questions that weigh most heavily on

your customers' minds. Talk to your public relations and marketing teams to determine the external influences that are—or may soon be—creating those uncertainties. Often, simply pressure gauging the media climate can preempt consumer fears and appease them proactively and transparently. Executive leadership should be consulted regarding development of the company's future and, in the case of a publicly traded company, for stockholder interest.

Through your research, you may even find that questions often arise that you've never imagined. Find what they are, be as open and expansive in your efforts to identify solutions as you can and then address the problems in your execution. Being honest isn't always easy, but it is key to the future success of your company.

### CREATE COMPELLING CONTENT

Google creative director Ben Jones has assessed that consumers have the ability to filter and tune out messages that don't apply to them or hold meaning. Jones also says, however, it's never been easier to immerse a brand in pieces of content that hold importance to consumers.

Consider the hours spent binge-watching TV shows; people aren't necessarily craving their information faster, they simply want to filter it to include only what interests them. In the digital age, this provides marketers with the opportunity to do a deep dive into a subject matter consumers care about, embracing all aspects of the topic and creating immersive content with which people want to engage.

At the start of the content-creation process, it's imperative to clearly lay out your company's goals and messaging and diligently follow their direction. This will serve as a steadfast guide for your team (creative, production, content, etc). If your company is well established and heavily marketed, you'll likely already have brand guidelines to follow. While flexibility can be applied to certain elements (a trust-building, behind-the-scenes video shouldn't look like an advertisement), video content should still fit within the tone and feel of your brand.

Understanding that your first piece of content is unlikely to be the miracle cure to gain the support of all brand doubters overnight, directly linking those behind the scenes at the company with your customers via their screens will spur a growing

trust. Also, not all content is meant to go viral. While you might feel that your video should be shared by millions on **Facebook** and become the next trending topic on **BuzzFeed**, this most likely will not be the case. But, if the content is compelling, it can engage influencers, grab the attention of traditional media and spread rapidly on social media.

## THE BEST APPROACH FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

Online poker site **PokerStars** has dealt more than 142 billion hands since it was launched in 2001. When it took a good, hard look at its brand, most stress points concerned its site's legitimacy and the consumer's trust in the brand.

Overall, the faceless nature of online business can be an issue in a world that stresses technology, but it is also one that can be easily addressed through the use of strong video content. When developing content, PokerStars knew it had to make its experts the faces of the company. It realized that, though PokerStars was a leader in industry promoter scores, most players had not had the opportunity to meet someone from the company in person. This is a problem that many e-commerce businesses must address.

Consumers asked:

- ▶ Will my money be safe on a poker site?
- ▶ Can I trust the shuffle of an online deck of cards?
- ▶ How do I know I'll be protected at the tables?

These were questions PokerStars knew needed to be answered compellingly—not just in a FAQ buried on a website.

It answered the questions with *Inside PokerStars*, an online

video series highlighting the brand's internal practices. It gives consumers access to the inner workings of PokerStars, demonstrating brand transparency and responsibility through the eyes of employees. Each five-minute video gives the company an opportunity to answer a different question; videos have focused on fund protection (featuring the brand's treasurer), game integrity (featuring the director of IT operations) and brand mission (featuring the head of corporate communications). Shared on social and posted to PokerStars' website, these videos are the brand's way of introducing customers to its inner workings.

## DISTRIBUTION

The channels of distribution for your finished product can be as integral to the trust-building process as its creation. Before distributing, understand the demographics of your customers and where they look for information about your company. Thinking in terms of the three main media buckets can be most effective: earned, paid and social.

Remember that successful marketing occurs when a consumer's relationship with a brand thrives due to a certain level of earned trust. As the aforementioned Ben Jones has written, consumers crave information and are ready to binge-watch on a moment's notice. The key is creating content that truly connects to your consumer and builds trust. Audiences will receive and understand your messages, even amid the clutter and noise. ■

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## 4 TIPS FOR CREATING MEANINGFUL VIDEO CONTENT

**1.** Focus on appropriately addressing the topic, especially if budget allows for a fuller video series. For instance, if a video is focused on answering customer emails in an engaging way, ensure the host is a reliable industry figure—or at least has the credentials needed to command trust—and can humanize the connection to the brand.

**2.** Animation can be a useful tool in emphasizing key facts and figures. Keep in mind, though, that using a cartoon to explain the merits of live customer support, for example, might not be effective. Consider context.

**3.** By keeping key terms used on your site general, you can make your video easier to find for the casual web browser. For this reason, it is impor-

tant to work with your SEO team to identify the strongest search terms in the industry.

**4.** Keep the length of your video fairly short, but at the same time, don't limit yourself to a 30-second cut. An engaging video of two to three minutes isn't overwhelming, especially for those interested in your brand (your target audience).

**PR**News

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# Coming Clean Can Be Best Crisis Policy

Had Cameron come clean at that point, media attention might well have shifted to juicier targets, like Russian President Vladimir Putin. But Cameron, who as a former PR guy should have known better, spent days dodging questions and hedging his answers. Eventually the information spigot from his office opened, but it was agonizingly slow. Information was released drip by drip.

And if there's anything more irresistible to the media than hypocrisy, it's a politician who clearly has something to hide.

It took a week before sanity (or a smarter PR advisor than Cameron must have been) convinced him to be forthcoming and release all his tax returns, at which point the media frenzy began to fade.

Sadly Cameron's credibility as a crusader against tax evasion may have faded as well.

## UC DAVIS

Back in 2011, when UC Davis was beginning to explore social media in earnest, I remember having a conversation

with a senior manager about goals for the program. The gist of the manager's answer was, "I want one of our videos to become viral."

I replied as I always do, "You become what you measure," and encouraged UC Davis to implement regular metrics on its **YouTube** channel.

That manager's wish was granted just a few weeks later, when in November 2011 a student captured on video a campus police officer pepper-spraying a group of peaceful student protestors. The video went up on YouTube and has been seen by 2.4 million people to date (and counting). It's also spawned hundreds of parodies.

Fast-forward to April 2016 when enterprising reporters, reviewing newly public documents, discovered the true costs of that episode. Back in 2012 it was reported that each pepper-sprayed student was to receive \$30,000 under a \$1 million settlement. The police officer also settled (\$38,000). With legal fees the total bill was estimated at \$2 million. But recently the media learned the university then spent \$175,000

## David Cameron

Criteria	Grade	Comments	Advice
<b>Extent of coverage</b>	<b>F</b>	Cameron's ordeal was self-inflicted due to his initial obfuscation of the truth. As a result, he dominated the news cycle for nearly a week.	When under fire from the media, the goal should be to get it over with as soon as possible. Chances are excellent that if you come clean and don't give the media anything to investigate, they'll move on to someone else.
<b>Effectiveness of spokespeople</b>	<b>F</b>	As a former PR pro, Cameron should have known better than to prevaricate and hide behind "privacy" concerns. The fact that he had come out swinging against tax evaders earlier made it an even juicier story for the media.	The CEO or highest-ranking person always is going to be the one that the media most wants to talk to, but depending on what he/she said in the past, he/she may not be the best solution. Assume that when the media pack is out for blood, anything you (or your CEO) has said can and will be held against you.
<b>Communication of key messages</b>	<b>B</b>	Messaging is one area where Cameron may have won a battle. As hypocritical as it appeared, he took advantage of the opportunity to reinforce his opposition to tax evaders.	It's always tempting to throw out key messages while every microphone, camera lens and reporter's notebook is hanging on every word you utter. Still, the message must be relevant to the issue at hand.
<b>Management of negative messages</b>	<b>F</b>	Cameron prolonged his agony by initial denials and bad explanations. While he didn't do anything illegal, the "hypocrisy" message was perpetuated.	Hypocrisy is the equivalent of nuclear waste in today's media environment because it is so easy to track down early contradictory statements. If your key message today contradicts something you said in years past, acknowledge it and hope the media will move on.
<b>Impact on stakeholders</b>	<b>D</b>	While Cameron isn't up for reelection just yet, his ideas, and desire to keep Britain in the EU will be voted on next month. There is no doubt that the scandal tarnished his reputation at a time when he needed it most.	No matter how crazy a crisis gets, keep your eyes on the end goal. Taking major blows today so you can survive and fight another day always is the best policy.
<b>OVERALL SCORE</b>	<b>D-</b>	For a PR guy, he should have known better.	Just because the CEO thinks he/she is an expert on communications doesn't mean he/she is in the current circumstances. What the CEO said in the past may come back to haunt him/her.



in an attempt to get the incident expunged from the Internet.

Almost anyone over the age of 5 should, by now, realize that what gets posted to the Internet never really goes away, no matter how hard you try or how much you pay consultants. (Just now it took me all of three seconds to find the video in question.)

The notion that the chancellor of the university somehow thought that consultants could wave their magic wands and play Mr. Clean to UC Davis' 2011 embarrassment is the

most magical thinking of all.

Is it any surprise that the media and PR professionals greeted these revelations with scorn and renewed calls for Katehi to resign?

Incidentally, the pepper spray incident is far from Katehi's sole controversy. Just a few weeks ago, Katehi was put on investigatory administrative leave. ■

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## UC Davis

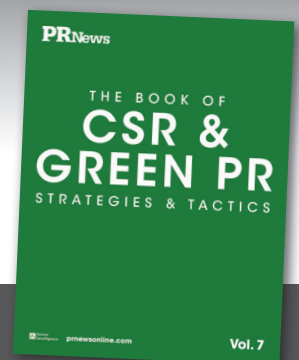
Criteria	Grade	Comments	Advice
<b>Extent of coverage</b>	<b>D</b>	Given the visibility of the initial video, it wasn't surprising to see the extensive reach of the story.	Assume that most of the people who covered an initial crisis will be interested in whatever the next chapter is.
<b>Effectiveness of spokespeople</b>	<b>D</b>	The chancellor wasn't a very effective spokesperson the first time. Now, given that she was the one who authorized funds for the "reputation repair," she was not the ideal face for this issue. She couldn't help but sound defensive.	When your top spokesperson has a target on his/her back, find another "source" that the media can have faith in.
<b>Communication of key messages</b>	<b>A</b>	Good news. Chancellor Katehi must have learned something from her consultants because she stayed on message throughout.	When the media microphones are in your face, get out your messages. The media might not care, but at least the messages will be heard.
<b>Management of negative messages</b>	<b>F</b>	Given that the story was about trying to fix the last crisis, it's not unusual that all the bad news of 2011 was replayed constantly in the current coverage.	As we see time and time again, whatever crisis or scandal happened in your past is bound to be picked up and replayed in the current one.
<b>Impact on stakeholders</b>	<b>F</b>	Students probably know better than anyone that trying to make something "disappear" from the Internet is futile, so they'll never think that hiring a PR consultant is a good idea. In terms of potential students, seeing the pepper spray video may well influence a few qualified candidates to look elsewhere.	The best way to minimize impact on stakeholders is to make the crisis go away as quickly as possible.
<b>OVERALL SCORE</b>	<b>C</b>	UC Davis took a bad situation and tried to fix it but instead made it worse by trying to manipulate the Internet. It would have been better served by spending money on improving relationships with students and faculty on campus. Both students and faculty clearly want to see Katehi gone.	In an era where authenticity is valued more than civility and everyone is a journalist, if you work for a public institution, the safest bet is to assume that whatever you do and say eventually will be discovered and plastered on the front page of the local paper. Make good choices.

## CSR & GREEN PR GUIDEBOOK

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# How a Resort Used Old-Fashioned Networking to Gain National Exposure



Whether you're a seasoned PR pro or just entering the market, one thing's for certain: "Your network is your net worth."

As PR pros, we know that a large part of our job is to consistently garner coverage for our brand in the media. Whether through traditional or digital mediums, television, radio, print, online or increasingly social engagement, the placements we secure are the measurement of our success. More often than not much of our work is done on a limited budget.

We can craft the perfect pitch to the editor of the top paper we pulled from a list on **Cision**. Or we can have a great product to talk about and the hottest celebrity endorsement. Still, we can miss out on getting coverage for that top hit. Media members are inundated with pitches. There's no guarantee yours will be chosen.

## THE GOAL AND CHALLENGES

Let's say one of your goals is to gain national exposure for your brand. With a small budget and countless other brands vying for attention, how can yours break through?

This was the issue facing Mexico-based **Palace Resorts**, a chain of luxury, all-inclusive properties that had taken the biggest step in its 30-year history by breaking into the Caribbean market. The launch of Moon Palace Jamaica Grande in Ocho Rios was the brand's first resort outside of Mexico.

While Palace Resorts has a strong reputation in the Mexico market, it was less known among Jamaica travelers. How could it engage a new demographic of travelers and gain exposure for its Jamaica endeavor?

Research showed moms are the primary decision maker when it comes to travel. The goal became exposing the new resort on a nationally syndicated morning program with a heavy stay-at-home moms following. Oh, and to do all this on a minimal budget. Unless you're working with plenty of marketing dollars, which, let's face it, is rare for public relations, this goal represented an uphill climb.

It was decided to use relationships, some new, others established, in creative ways to accomplish the brand's goal. To begin the project, Palace Resorts turned to good, old-fashioned networking. Eventually the brand landed national placement on *The Wendy Williams Show*, one of the most popular talk shows on daytime TV, averaging 2 million viewers. (We'll provide details on how this was done below.)

Working with the show's producers, Palace Resorts was given space on Wendy's Wheel, where viewers call in for a chance to win a trip or other prizes. Palace Resorts was featured in 20 segments during a month-long promotion. In addition, the promotion was held during sweeps, the ratings period when networks heavily promote their shows in hopes of gaining higher ratings.

In addition to the television exposure, the brand garnered significant social media integration throughout the entirety of the promotion, including posts on Wendy Williams' **Twit-**

**ter** account.

Palace Resorts promised to provide hotel accommodations for the wheel winners and guests, as well as airfare. Here was the second challenge, though. The potential for 20 winners and 20 guests meant 40 plane tickets. At an average of \$500 per ticket, the brand was looking at an investment of at least \$20,000. Our budget was unable to handle this cost.

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

To overcome this financial challenge, Palace Resorts again tapped into its relationships.

The brand reached out to the **Jamaica Tourist Board** (JTB), which had been a supportive and enthusiastic partner since the brand entered the Jamaica market. After several discussions with the JTB's communications team, it became Palace Resorts' official partner for the Williams show giveaway promotion. The show's producers agreed to integrate JTB's branding. In return, JTB handled the airfare, allowing Palace Resorts the opportunity to successfully execute the month-long promotion with just accommodations costs.

The result of Palace Resorts' strategic and long-fostered relationship with the JTB was critical in gaining inclusion on a nationally syndicated morning program. In the process, the brand nurtured its existing relationship and created synergies between itself, the Jamaica Tourist Board and *The Wendy Williams Show*.

How did Palace Resorts build these relationships? It was easier and more low-tech than you might think.

"Location, location, location" applies to real estate but also to PR. Palace Resorts' PR base in New York City gives the brand the competitive edge of being in a media center. Each day in NYC offers the opportunity to make the next connection. You must be willing to invest the effort, however.

As the brand's PR director, I build connections by attending every relevant industry event I can possibly cram into my schedule. From mixers and panels to conferences and seminars, every opportunity for networking is a chance to create a relationship.

The Wendy Williams connection was forged during an event in NY that invited publicists to meet with talent bookers of national television shows. Attendees had the opportunity to listen to a panel on how they book talent for their respective programs, what they look for when booking talent, and the best way to pitch them.

Palace Resorts, a hotel brand, is not considered talent. So you're probably wondering how the connection was made.

Following the event, I made my way to the talent booker for *The Wendy Williams Show*. I introduced myself and asked her if the show was open to doing trip giveaways. While she didn't handle that aspect of the show, she was kind enough to put me in touch with the promotions producer. After a few emails,

a conference call and a coffee meeting, we were on our way.

As luck would have it, sweeps were just around the corner, and the show wanted to do something big to generate large viewership numbers. Who wouldn't love a free trip to the Caribbean when it's freezing in most of the Northeast? It was a match made in PR heaven.

## RESULTS

- ▶ Palace Resorts received 20 placements on *The Wendy Williams Show*, during sweeps, January 28 to February 24, with complete social media integration, including Twitter, **Instagram & Facebook**.
- ▶ Prior to the promotion, Palace Resorts received numerous on-air promos & teasers leading up to sweeps, alerting viewers to watch for a chance to win.
- ▶ The brand received coverage in blogs and other sites that feature giveaways and/or cover Wendy Williams.
- ▶ The brand reached an audience of 2 million TV viewers daily, 10 million weekly and 40 million each month.
- ▶ Palace Resorts received more than 3,500 new followers across its social media channels (women 35-44 being the leading demographic), more than 600 Twitter interactions and 450,000 organic views on its Facebook pages. The Wendy Williams Facebook reached 323,592 people. Twitter received 419,561 impressions and 8,782 engagements.
- ▶ The brand received \$4 million in ad value and \$12 million in PR value in exchange for the cost of 80 nights of accommodation.
- ▶ After the 20 episodes aired, the JTB and the Williams show agreed the segments were a success due to their audience appeal and the project's execution.
- ▶ The Jamaica promotion received in excess of 40,000 entries and 109,300 visits on Palace Resorts' site. The success translated into an invitation from the Wendy show to return for another sweeps promotion last month. Here we took over the wheel fully [see photo], branding each panel with a different Palace Resorts property. For Wendy's "Maycation," the show is expecting "even more entries," says Suzanne Bass, co-executive producer, *The Wendy Williams Show*.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

**Nurture and strengthen your relationships; these are the keys to success.** The Williams promotion would not have come to fruition had we not been cultivating our relationship for months with the JTB. Ultimately the opportunity would have not been presented had we not built those relationships with the producers and made it clear we wanted to help them. When you make it a priority to help others accomplish their goals, you set yourself up for future collaborations. Brands will want to work with you because they know you want to help them succeed.

**Utilize your resources and take advantage of what's going on around you.** I can't stress this enough. Join professional networks, participate in local events, invest time in your professional development, take courses and attend con-



WHEEL OF... Palace Resorts struck brand exposure gold when its first foray with *The Wendy Williams Show* got it invited back. This time the entire wheel had Palace Resorts signage.

ferences. In this case, it took being persistent in making the contact following the panel, getting the contact to listen, and capitalizing on its needs (offering trips to a warm destination during winter sweeps). The result was two brands joining to create major buzz.

**Be quick and responsive.** Once we had the producer's interest, we had to turn over legal contracts, collateral materials, video footage, logos and images, and we had to hustle. Don't pitch a national TV show if you lack the materials needed, such as high-resolution video, at your disposal. Ensuring you have these materials beforehand will allow you to move quickly and efficiently when you land that spot.

**Deliver results for the brand and your partners.** Make sure you have the proper team to execute once the promotion goes live. Once the trips were given away, the brand needed to ensure its team could seamlessly work with the JTB to get these trips booked quickly. You don't want angry winners complaining about a lack of response, speed of booking or a bad experience when redeeming their prize. That makes the show look bad, and is a surefire way to ensure you are not invited to return. "[Palace Resorts] was easy to work with, able to make a quick turnaround, understands our needs, and provides a fabulous product," Bass adds.

**Show the value of your work.** Your executive team will be thankful that you did due diligence in getting the brand exposure and that in the process, you saved thousands of dollars while garnering a lot of publicity. Merchandising your efforts demonstrates a consideration for the company's investment, and an ability to leverage your relationships so that you can work within a budget. Priceless.

## CONCLUSION

Palace Resorts used old-fashioned networking to build a relationship with producers for a national TV show and garnered \$12,000,000 in public relations value. They did this by leveraging existing partner relationships and harnessing local industry resources. Palace Resorts' newest endeavor, Moon Palace Jamaica Grande, received national broadcast exposure among a key demographic with minimal monetary investment. ■

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for increasing the price of an AIDS drug more than 5000%, Valeant has helped put a negative spotlight on pharma. That Valeant's price rises weren't in Shkreli's league or that plenty of pharma brands were lumped in with them was immaterial. As Gil Bashe, managing partner, health, **Finn Partners** wrote in these pages regarding pharma's grilling on Capitol Hill, "The congressional paintbrush of alleged greed spares no one" (*PRN*, Dec 14, 2015).

The declining stature of the pharma sector is the subject of a new report from **APCO Worldwide**, *State of the Biopharmaceutical Industry*. Made available first to *PR News*, the study examines reputation based on "the extent to which the industry meets the expectations of its stakeholders," says Chrystine Zacherau, APCO's senior director, health care research. Some 1500 health care stakeholders in 4 groups were polled: opinion leaders; policy leaders; providers; and payers. The sector's reputation score fell "significantly" with all 4, providers the most.

That the study found "an overall decline" in reputation is little surprise. More interesting is the study's ranking of pharma's pain points: pricing is at the bottom of the list, surprisingly.

The top weakness is pharma's external focus, or "how the industry acts with its stakeholders." This includes how it functions as an advocate and partner for patients, patient groups and healthcare providers. Next is ethical engagement with regulators and its responsiveness to government. Last is responsible marketing (pricing transparency and controlling costs). To get well, pharma should attack these weaknesses, APCO says.

On the upside, there is much admiration for pharma's innovation, concern for safety and high-quality products. Those perceptions are "fairly fixed," the study says. Yet they are "softening" in the current climate as "good will among certain stakeholders is drying up," Zacherau adds.

In sum, it's not so much what pharma does, but how it engages.

Here's hoping the sector will take its medicine. ■

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JPMorgan Chase  
chief Jamie Dimon



**1. Bean There, Done That:** We reported late last year that members of **Chipotle's** brass mentioned during an investor conference that they were upset with the piecemeal way the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) was reporting to the public about the brand's cases of E. coli (*PRN*, Dec 14 & 21, 2015). Apparently the burrito maker also put its complaint in writing. The CDC's behavior "only acts to create public panic," Chipotle attorney **Corky Messner** wrote in a Dec 21, 2015, letter to the CDC, *Food Safety News* reported May 6. Messner also accused the CDC of using inaccurate information in its reports and not following its own procedures. At the time, it seemed counterproductive to us for Chipotle to publicly tick off the regulatory agency that held the brand's fate in its hands. In addition to investigating Chipotle, CDC was responsible for declaring the outbreak over, as it did in February. Anyhow, the CDC wasn't about to let Chipotle get the last word. In a meticulously argued, six-page letter that's denser than a Chipotle burrito, CDC's **Dr. Jeremy Sobel**, associate director for epidemiological sciences, Division of Foodborne, Waterborne and Environmental Diseases, **National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases** (does that fit on his business card?), refutes Messner's arguments point by point and includes numerous citations. In short (which CDC's April 15 letter is not) CDC says it acted correctly and that there was "an ongoing threat." – On the other hand, props to Chipotle for working hard to make things right. It's assembling a food safety dream team, including former **Food and Drug Administration** official **David Acheson**, who'd been a critic of Chipotle's early

response to the E. coli outbreak. It also confirmed to *Reuters* it's retained **David Theno**, a food safety heavy who's credited with helping **Jack in the Box** bounce back following its E. coli bout in 1993.

**2. Dimon in the Rough:** Speaking of senior execs saying questionable things, **JPMorgan Chase & Co.** boss **Jamie Dimon's** short fuse is well known in the banking world, yet his calling the president/CEO of the **Independent Community Bankers Association** "a jerk" during a May 11 *CNBC* interview made headlines. The alleged jerk, **Cameron Fine**, had penned a response to Dimon's April *Wall St Journal* op-ed suggesting large and small banks should cooperate. While the media furor subsided after 24 hours, such behavior sometimes sticks to a highly visible CEO's reputation.

**3. Track and Filth:** With its Aug 9 opening approaching, things are getting interesting for the Rio Olympics. Forget sports, the next three months look to be a battle of communicators. Some say Rio isn't safe due to the Zika virus, sewage in Guanabara Bay (where some sailing events will be held) and violence. The country's leaders insist Rio is safe and visitors will find it charming. Adding to pro-Rio communicators' jobs is the country's awful recession and a corruption scandal that's threatening to bring down the country's president.

**4. Happy Birthday:** To **ColorComm**, the nation's largest group for women of color in communications, which celebrated its 5th anniversary May 12 in D.C. **Ogilvy** global chair **Chris Graves** and **APCO** managing director **Lisa Osborne Ross** spoke. ■



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