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EVENTS

PRSA Conference Mixes Traditional Ethics With Technology, the Dark Web and Brand Storytelling

(Boston) The opening moments of **PRSA's** International Conference Sunday seemed to encapsulate the mix of old and new that is PR, marketing, communications and PRSA.

A bit after noon ET, a traditional touch, a fife and drum corps, brought the audience to its feet with tunes, including the Star-Spangled Banner. While the group was traditional it was comprised of young boys, none out of their teens. There also was a surge of youth in the audience; **PRSSA** stu-

dent members and faculty were well represented at the conference. More than that, PRSA outgoing chair Jane Dvorak noted that for the first time, it was using scanners to track attendance at breakout sessions.

Indeed technology vendors dominated the exhibit floor, with systems designed to help PR pros track social media as well as traditional media mentions seeming to proliferate. And behind the scenes an interview with incoming PRSA

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MEASUREMENT

BY ALLYSON HUGLEY, PRESIDENT, MEASUREMENT AND ANALYTICS, WEBER SHANDWICK

PR Needs to Transform Its Mindset on Data to Focus on Growth and Analysis

[Editor's Note: Measurement continues to be something of an albatross for PR. Too many PR pros still consider measurement to be an afterthought. Others see it as an aspiration or a tool used to prove the ROI of PR.]

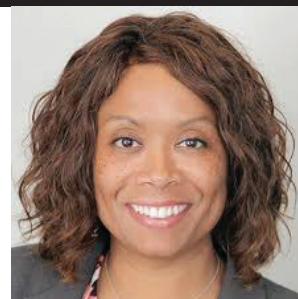
With the **International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communications' (AMEC)** Measurement Month just completed, we asked **Weber Shandwick's** president of measurement and analytics Allyson Hugley to reflect on the state of PR measurement as well as how PR pros can change the mindset about the importance of measurement and using data to glean business insights as opposed to proving the worth of the PR function. In addition we asked her

about the best methods to report data insights to the C-suite and the continuing use of AVEs.]

PR continues to play analytics catch-up with other communications disciplines. While there are leaders making significant strides in this area, PR as a whole has been slower to innovate, particularly in the data and data science space.

The industry continues to discuss data evolution conceptually—as a thought-leadership topic—rather than pushing aggressively for a real, industry-wide data transformation.

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HOW I GOT HERE

BY SHARI REICHENBERG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
STRATEGY & PLANNING, OGILVY USA

More Than Ever, Technology Precedes the Creative Idea



[Editor's Note: We ask PR and marketing leaders to tell us about their influences, the best advice they've received and trends. This week we speak with Shari Reichenberg, executive director, strategy and planning, Ogilvy USA.]

We all know that marketing is based on great audience insights. Today, there is limitless data available and tons of things to know. The best advice I've received is to not lose sight of the core, underlying truth that really matters, the one that will drive the entire direction and all executions of a campaign. Remind yourself of the key question or problem early and often. It will keep you from getting lost in all of the peripheral noise.

The brilliant, ambitious, funny, kind and real women around me who are putting their all into doing it all are who inspire me. When I feel like it's impossible to keep all the balls in the air successfully, I look at them trying to do it. I feel motivated and energized to keep at it.

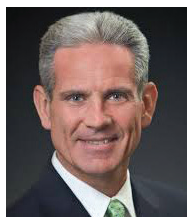
Emerging capabilities like augmented reality or new social formats like Instagram Story polls are increasingly critical in driving the creative idea itself. Historically, we only worked the other way around: Nail the idea and then do the channel planning. Today, what we're capable of doing from a technology standpoint is absolutely critical to understand in order to create the idea in the first place.

Up to a certain point, after which it becomes creepy, consumers are comfortable with the so-called digital breadcrumbs they leave around the internet being used for ad targeting purposes. If you've indicated that you're planning to go golfing this weekend and we can serve you an ad on Thursday for new golf shoes to be delivered Friday, you're more likely than not to find the ad-targeting relevant and useful. ■

PRSA NEWS

PR Pro or Communicator? New PRSA Chair Blasts Nomenclature Debate

While just 13% of **PRSA** members have "PR" in their job titles, the name PRSA lives on, officials confirmed for us Sunday.



Anthony D'Angelo,
Director,
Communications
Management
Program and
Professor of
Practice, PR, S.I.
Newhouse School,
2018 PRSA
Chairman

As is known, PR pros more often than not have "communications," "public affairs," "external relations" or some other words in their title. That prompted PRSA to consider amending the wording in its bylaws to include the phrase "people who practice PR or communications."

A recent media report had the organization debating changing its name, dropping the PR from PRSA. In

interviews Sunday, PRSA's chief communicator Laura Kane and its incoming chairman Anthony D'Angelo scotched that version of the story.

"The intention behind the amendment was to be inclusive...we don't want to disqualify anybody," D'Angelo told us. The trend away from the use of "PR" is apparent. "The last time I had 'PR' in my corporate job title was in 1993," he says. His academic title at the **S.I. Newhouse School** includes the words "PR" as well as "communications."

"This is a personal opinion," D'Angelo says, "But I can't think of a CEO who gives a wit about this discussion...[so] this is the wrong discussion" to be having.

"I want to apply the body of [PR] knowledge, these skills and media to effect strategic outcomes.... I almost don't care what you call it." ■

How a Cat Litter Used Emotion to Change Its Underdog Brand Status



World's Best Cat Litter, a **Kent Pet Group** brand, is a premium, natural litter that lets consumers use less and get more, thanks to the concentrated power of corn. While the line of litters had grown to lead the natural-litter category since its launch in the late 1990s, in 2015 the brand sought to break through to a mass category audience and raise awareness among cat owners across the nation.

In addition to further increasing sales and awareness, World's Best Cat Litter looked to generate word of mouth and create a story that ensured its consumers were willing to choose its product based on overall performance, rather than price per pound. With more and more shoppers looking for total-value solutions, the brand needed to make a big splash and prove its value beyond price.

CHALLENGES

With a handful of category kings of the jungle and dozens of litters all promising the same thing—odor control, easy cleanup, etc.—and often promising it at a lower cost, World's Best Cat Litter had to rise above the noise in the feature and functionality war and capture audience attention with less budget and more disruption. It needed a memorable story that would message the emotional benefits of these features, rather than just promising great performance.

The brand needed to validate its price point, while also becoming part of the conversation among cat owners. And it needed to get noticed in-store, where many packaged-goods consumers still make their final decision. To do so, it needed to create a disruptive campaign and efficient media buy.

STRATEGY

To grab consumer attention in the crowded pet-product marketplace, World's Best Cat Litter knew it needed to create an emotional story that resonated with its cat-loving audience. The brand sought to create emotional branding that linked performance to the positive cat-owner relationship-boosting benefits of picking the right litter.

Through internal and secondary research, World's Best Cat Litter learned that consumers are willing to spend more

for quality products. While the research showed the most important pain points of litter purchasers are odor control, easy cleanup and performance, the brand needed to wrap these drivers into a total-value story surrounding its long-lasting performance.

To tie together the superior performance of the litter with consumers' love for their cats, the brand messaged the overarching emotional value of using the product: the ability to think about one's cat, not the litter box.

TACTICS: IS THAT A CAT ON YOUR HEAD?

Knowing that disruptive imagery was needed to demonstrate this idea, visuals literally put cats on people's heads. The placement and color of the cats' fur made it appear as though they were part of the person's hair, adding to the unexpected element of the campaign.

The cat heads were paired with a unifying concentrated power message that used multiple executions to message how this product is capable of allowing people to use less litter while delivering the benefits most important to purchasers (e.g. "Big Odor Control. Tiny Package," etc.)

The campaign launched in 2015 with an "It's Just Litter Until..." headline to educate consumers about why litter choice matters (e.g. It's Just Litter Until Buying More Is Always On Your Mind).

PROCESS

The brand utilized multiple teams to launch and execute the campaign with the following high-level processes:

Conduct the Research to Guide: World's Best Cat Litter utilized primary and secondary research to narrow its focus and understand the psychographics/buying behaviors of the audience most likely to drive awareness and growth of the brand.

Create the Campaign to Disrupt: The brand took research insights to craft messaging and visuals that would appeal

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Questions? Contact Jessica Placencia at jessica@accessintel.com.

PR Needs to Create a Growth Mindset for Data

PR analytics discussions are shifting increasingly from Big Data to machine learning and AI, which is encouraging. But this shift makes salient the technical talent gap, which is a significant risk, particularly as it relates to future-proofing the industry.

Unless this skills imbalance is addressed *en masse*, the gap between conceptual understanding of the potential of analytics and the technical ability to realize that potential will only widen.

THE NEED FOR BETTER DATA ACCESS

Another challenge is the nature and quality of the data used – evaluate core aspects of PR. Earned media measures increasingly are disconnected from the realities of a media environment where audiences are more apt to consume news in their social feed than on a publisher's news site.

The industry as a whole must push for broader availability and adoption of earned content-level and audience-behavioral data.

ADAPTING A BUILD MINDSET FOR DATA

For so long, measurement has been considered a performance tool—a way to prove PR success or failure—but really measurement and analytics are best used as planning tools to improve the work of communicators.

A mindset shift is required: less reporting and more consulting and opportunity identification. We should be actively using data and applying it to future work versus reporting on past activities.

Across the industry, we have to do a better job of communicating and then demonstrating the value of what I call a build mindset specific to data. Data is a critical ingredient for growth, but PR tends to not treat it as such.

Data builds relationships. It can also build business: agency to brand and brand to customer. Overcoming resistance to measurement and data means focusing on how to build more with data, rather than merely reporting it.

HOW TO BUILD DATA INTO YOUR EFFORTS

We are finding increasingly that data is less valuable to our clients, particularly those in the C-suite, when presented as part of a program recap deliverable or scheduled reporting call.

We are working to infuse data and analytics into all of our client discussions, particularly those at the most senior levels. We are leveraging data and insights on an ongoing basis to inform the work and to build and reinforce relationships with clients.

When measurement and analytics are integrated into the work and are part of an organizational habit of bringing forward new thinking and opportunities to our senior clients, they see value in it. When measurement and analytics are disconnected from the core work, reported as a stand-alone research exercise and backward looking, it is less valuable.

DASHBOARDS

In terms of dashboards, the best are, of course, clear and simple. Avoid building in too many elements, colors and chart types. While there have been many advances in data visualization, more sophisticated designs can be less clear to end users. Sometimes the best representations of data are the simple, standard pie and bar charts. They may not be sexy, but are clear and less taxing on audiences to interpret. Interpreting a dashboard should not require a stats degree.

Research shows that color accounts for 60% of acceptance or rejection of an object; select color schemes wisely.

Make sure to incorporate contextual elements. Incorporate trend charts to show performance over time. Consider factoring in performance versus competitors and performance against goal data or indicators with clear and concise language outlining key learnings and implications.

QUALITATIVE MEASUREMENT

How to mix qualitative and quantitative metrics in a brand's measurement effort is something I'm asked about often. We adhere to industry best practices when advising our clients on media measurement, which includes incorporating both quantitative and qualitative metrics.

However, because content analysis still largely is a manual process with significant resource implications, we know that incorporation of qualitative metrics is not possible for every assignment. Incorporating measurement and analytics into marketing plans from the onset helps in that regard; it's easier to plan for the resource investment in advance than at the end of a campaign.

THE BARCELONA PRINCIPLES

While I realize there are a lot of brands that continue to use AVEs, we advise our clients against using them. To help educate them and support our position, we reference materials that leading industry organizations have developed, such as The Barcelona Principles.

When working with clients that have used AVEs historically, we advise and work with them to phase out AVEs and incorporate valid metrics, often drawing on education and best-practice materials such as AMEC's Integrated Evaluation Framework (IEF).

Unfortunately, until a similarly cost-effective measure tied to currency is developed, the complete eradication of AVEs will be difficult.

THE NEED TO BREAK WITH CONVENTION

In the measurement and analytics space, the PR industry needs to be bolder and more open to breaking with convention and experimenting with new types of data and data partners. Wearables and biometric data, as well as clickstream data, have the potential to dramatically change how and what

we can measure. We must experiment more with these types of data sources and understand how best to apply them to public relations work—both as part of our program evaluation and our data storytelling. To achieve new insights and create more value through analytics, we must more aggressively pursue new and better inputs. ■

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Takeaways

Shift your mindset about data: Use it less to report about past activities and more to assess and analyze current efforts.

2. Integrating measurement into your organizational habits will lead to new ideas and opportunities.

3. Dashboards can be extensive but avoid making them inaccessible to those without a degree in statistics.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

BY DAN DUNN, DIRECTOR, GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS, FLASH GLOBAL

7 Tactics for Crafting Internal Communications for a Global Audience

Internal communications sometimes gets relegated to the back burner when planning for large corporate announcements. That's unfortunate, because employees should be told first when a significant change will touch their lives. Everyone wants employees to be the company's advocates and to drive productivity. One of the steps to make this happen is clear, concise communications.

Here's how to edit internal communications for a global audience.

ADDRESS THE EMPLOYEE'S POINT OF VIEW

As with all good business communications, internal announcements should answer the basic questions of who, what, when, where and how.

Evaluate the communication from the employee's perspective. Does it explain exactly how this announcement impacts her job? Does it answer the old WIIFM (What's In It For Me)? Do you tell the employee whom to contact for more information, or when more details will become available?

For example, if you're announcing 350 stores will close (what) on Dec. 1 (when), be ready to specify which locations (where) will shutter and whether affected employees (who) will be offered jobs at other stores.

Next, make sure your internal message aligns with any external communications. There should be no inconsistencies

between the two.

Once, while working for a financial services software company, we distributed an internal email with details about an impending release of a data feed; the launch had been delayed two weeks, which somehow had already been communicated to customers but not to internal staff. The internal memo was forwarded to some customers, which created mass confusion due to the conflicting dates.

Last, consider time references should you be writing for a global audience. Say your company is headquartered in Tokyo but most of your employees are located in London and Chicago. Any reference to local time in Tokyo should be followed by Greenwich Mean Time and Central Standard (or Daylight) Time in parentheses.

GET TO THE POINT

Good writing is good writing, whether in a news release, a novel or internal communications. Forget long sentences that ramble. You've got about four seconds to grab the reader's attention once they open the message.

For instance, instead of leading with an indirect jab at the president's handling of recovery efforts in Puerto Rico, go directly into what your company representatives stationed

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there have done to put corporate social responsibility into action. Make that part of your corporate narrative and align it with your brand's values.

Since the announcement likely will go out by email or be read on a mobile device, make sure the subject line, headline and first two sentences are concise, specific and direct. Remember, keep the message brief and then link to additional details, such as FAQs posted on the company intranet or any external communications online.

If you need readers to take action, say so in the first two paragraphs—and provide a deadline to frame the right sense of urgency. “As soon as possible” won’t cut it; be specific.

MAKE LANGUAGE PRECISE

Especially for a global company, it's vital to eliminate country-centric slang or idiomatic expressions, and to spell out acronyms. It's easy to forget some readers may be new to the organization and others might be less familiar with the nuances of the English language. Someone in the Far East is not going to understand what “fixin’ to” means, as in, “We’re fixin’ to introduce the data feed on Dec. 26.”

Good design enhances readability, so pay attention to the basics:

- ▶ Keep fonts and type sizes consistent. This isn't the time for multi-colored Comic Sans.
- ▶ Use bullet points to help readers scan for key points.
- ▶ If using subheads, the type size should be two points larger than what's used in the body copy.
- ▶ Don't use all caps; there's no need to yell.
- ▶ Use boldface and italics for emphasis, but don't overdo it. Too much reduces readability and effectiveness. Underline should be avoided, since it implies readers will find a hyperlink.
- ▶ Avoid emoticons, emojis and gifs. While common in the realm of social media and personal email, these are not appropriate for business communications and may not be understood across multiple cultures and countries.

USE GRAPHICS WISELY

In many ways you need to treat your internal audience similar to any other target. Don't forget to incorporate images and graphics into internal messages. Infographics can drive home important messages in a reader-friendly way, while organizational charts can quickly convey a new corporate structure.

If graphics use color to convey meaning, proceed with caution. 8% of men are color-blind, with red-green color deficiency being the most common. That means some of your audience may not be able to distinguish certain colors when used against certain backgrounds.

When discussing promotions, new hires and other announcements where specific people are mentioned, try to include headshots of those individuals. This helps establish the person and builds recognition among employees.

CONSIDER THE AUDIENCE

Remember, not all internal announcements need to go out to the entire company. After all, too many in-house communications reduces the impact of important news when it arrives.

Consider which teams, regions and countries need to know the information contained in your message. Whom will it benefit most? Do they need these details immediately, while others can view the information later on the company intranet or in a newsletter?

For instance, workers on the warehouse floor most likely would not need to know the details of a new customer billing process. The better practice is to communicate that message to the teams that need to know, such as account management, finance, accounting, etc.

Keep in mind, too, that internal communications can become external with any employee's tweet, Facebook message or forwarded email. Therefore, scrub all internal content with an eye for the reactions of an external audience.

ENSURE SUPPORT MATERIALS ARE ACCESSIBLE

Finally, before you hit send, double-check that all support materials are working and accessible. Limit attachments to two and be wary of file sizes.

Avoid large attachments such as **PowerPoint** presentations or PDFs that can be difficult to transmit or may overwhelm email account storage limits. Store large files on shared drives, file-sharing services such as **Dropbox** or **SharePoint**, or on the company intranet for download later.

I learned the hard way what happens when you send a 30 MB PDF attachment of the company newsletter to more than 500 employees—the servers shut down completely for more than a day. Also be sure to verify that all links are working in multiple browsers, including **Explorer**, **Firefox**, **Chrome** and others popular across your global network.

NEVER FORGET THE OBVIOUS

After you've taken all these steps to make sure your communication will be effective, it's terrible to commit the all-too-frequent error of failing to proofread your memo. After you proof it have another set of eyes look at it, too.

In addition, using some sort of spell-check program is a must, but a backup should be someone gifted at catching things spell-checkers miss, such as misuse of there, their and they're, or its and it's. ■

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Takeaways

1. Remember the employee's point of view when crafting internal communications.
2. Use graphs and charts and write concisely.
3. Make sure internal and external communications align.

to the top drivers of litter purchasers, but also disrupt in a crowded space. This included working with multiple teams to jointly craft messaging and visuals.

Identify the Media Buy to Reach Our Buyer: World's Best Cat Litter looked for the most focused and efficient means of reaching likely buyers where they live, work and play. The buy focused on creating a pointy stick that would maximize ROI and reach different sub-segments of premium cat litter purchasers (i.e. older and younger buyers, etc.) The campaign focused on maximizing exposure and engagement.

ADDITIONAL TACTICS

With a limited budget, the brand needed to create an efficient media buy and focus on geographic areas with the most efficient conversion. After establishing the campaign's creative focus, messaging and imagery, the brand set out to launch the campaign across print, digital and social media, as well as through in-store and outdoor advertising.

The brand targeted digital and experiential buys in key metro areas that attracted the type of cat owner buying premium pet products. This included a 30-second "cat head" commercial on **Hulu**, focused on adults 25-54 watching comedy and dramas; placing radio spots; and running regional print ads in major audience-appropriate magazines.

Out-of-home ads on LCD screens in commuter hotspots (major airports and public transportation hubs) helped the brand reach millions of in-city and pass-through commuters during "dwell time."

5 Steps to Create Sticky Emotional Messages

In today's marketplace, no brand—especially an underdog brand—can afford to be boring. An effective tactic is to move away from feature-based messaging toward brand storytelling.

1. Keep it simple.

Can your story be explained in a matter of seconds? If not, try again.

2. Know your target:

Focus the message on what really matters to your audience. Get in your customer's shoes.

3. Provide help.

Customers don't care what your product can do; they care about what it can do for them. List your brand's benefits not its features.

4. Reposition your competition.

Trying your brand for the first time is a leap of faith for the consumer. Create value by stating your #1 market differentiator.

5. Get emotional.

Great brands become great because their customers have become emotionally attached. Consumers buy brands, not products. Tie your product with its emotional impact on a consumer and you'll create a positive association that will last for years.

Other out-of-home efforts included experiential manifestations of the campaign at cat-loving events such as CatCon Los Angeles in June 2016.

In addition to these geo-focused efforts, ads were placed in national publications targeted at pet owners, such as *Best Friends Magazine*, *Animal Wellness* and *Modern Cat*, and ran highly targeted social media ads.

Ultimately, the emotional aspect of the campaign is what struck consumers and put the brand top of mind among cat lovers. The brand used its marketing and advertising to reinforce the lifestyle impact of using its litter.

MEASUREMENT TACTICS

World's Best Cat Litter measured the impact of its campaign through brand awareness surveys, sales numbers, website traffic, digital ad performance and increases in its social following and email list. The campaign was adjusted in real-time using A/B testing to identify ads most likely to drive action.

LESSONS LEARNED

Research during the campaign showed the continued importance of in-store merchandising in driving litter purchase.

This led to the conclusion that—like many brands—World's Best Cat Litter would need to continue working with retailers to get the placement and point-of-sale that helps win the last three feet. While the campaign had a focused in-store element, there was a realization that you can never put too much emphasis on retail efforts.

RESULTS

Based on a national brand awareness surveys conducted in early 2016 and 2017, awareness is up 5.5%. Meanwhile, sales increased 18.3% from 2015 to 2016, and an estimated 7% from 2016 to 2017 (by pounds of litter sold).

In terms of digital, the brand's email database grew 7% from 2015 to 2016 and the brand saw a 67% leap in blog subscribers from 2015 to 2016. The Facebook fan base grew nearly 11% from 2015 to 2016. Website traffic also rose, especially in geographic target zones, including a 25.8% rise in D.C. traffic from Q2 to Q3 of 2015. Most recently, blog traffic increased 18% year over year from 2016 to 2017.

In 2017 demand for the product has resulted in the company building a new factory. ■

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Takeaways

1. Simplify your brand story so it can be understood and repeated in seconds.
2. Trade feature and functionality messaging for emotional resonance.
3. Focus your spend on the audience most likely to try, buy and evangelize.
4. Engage the audience with disruptive creative that directly supports your unique message and its #1 reason to buy.

chair Anthony D'Angelo reveals that the organization has decided to boost its technology with a multi-year plan, he tells PR News. One of the payoffs of the update for members, he says, is that they'll be able to network on social easier and they'll have better access to "searchability services."

D'Angelo's goals for his PRSA tenure include fostering professional development. "We're a learning organization," he says. Yet the type of learning is important. To be effective communicators, he says, PRSA members must commit to "continuous learning" and be current with the latest technologies. But tools change at "warp speed...so more important," D'Angelo adds, "is having a strategic mindset" so PRSA members can "manage strategic change."

Another "absolutely critical" element for D'Angelo is for PRSA to continue its commitment to ethics. "If you breach that [ethical] trust [with media] your career is toast," he says, adding, "With the ground shifting beneath our feet...it's good to have touchstones that say fairness, truth and accuracy... remain important."

After the young fife and drum corps departed, a traditional Irish fiddler and banjo player took over before the entrepreneurial filmmaker and storyteller Morgan Spurlock took the stage.

During an utterly entertaining 90-minute presentation, Spurlock highlighted his work in corporate storytelling and emphasized the point, made in these pages often, that brands need to throttle back on selling when they tell stories on platforms such as social video and podcasts. Sounding like a modern PR pro, Spurlock said, "I want to sell an idea, not a product." A short Spurlock film, with funding from Paul Allen, took a comedic view of healthcare and offered a PR lesson: "If you can make someone laugh, you can make someone listen."

In a breakout session, IBM's social and influencer communications lead, Brandi Boatner, was discussing dark social, which is data on the net that's not tracked, such as texts and emails. What can communicators do to counter this? "Become Google Analytics-certified" is one way, she said. ■



1. Good PR? Has **Carolina Panthers'** star **Cam Newton** mended his ways? Newton, who seemed to diss female sportswriter **Jourdan Rodrigue** for knowing a bit about football October 4 and lost **Dannon** as a sponsor in the process, apologized the next day. On October 8 he sported a feminist pin in the brim of his fedora as he arrived at Ford Field in Detroit for that day's game. Post-game Newton explained his comment to Rodrigue was meant as a compliment. "It was a lesson learned for me this whole week," Newton said, via ESPN.com. "My sarcasm trying to give somebody kind of a compliment turned in ways I never would have even imagined." Newton's locker room meltdown after Super Bowl 50 brought him to our pages (PRN, Feb. 15, 2016). – At our press time **ESPN** said it had suspended anchor **Jemele Hill** two weeks for "a second violation of our social media guidelines." Hill's transgression: tweeting that **Dallas Cowboys'** owner **Jerry Jones** created a "problem" for his players, "specifically the black ones," when he said any player who "disrespects the flag" during the national anthem will not play. Hill made headlines weeks ago for tweeting that **President Trump** is "a white supremacist." She eventually apologized for that tweet.

2. Growth and Financial: Association and nonprofit communicator **David James Group** acquired **Blue Water Communications**, which serves museum, architecture, performing arts and destination clients. Blue Water will continue to do business under its current brand name. – Tech PR and marketing specialist **Karbo Communications** of San Francisco said today it would open an office in Redwood City. – A trio of

PR veterans has founded **The Cannabis Story Lab**, dedicated to providing PR services to the legal cannabis market, which is expected to exceed \$24 billion by 2025. The founders are: **Celeste Miranda**, **John Sidline** and **Karen Blondell**. – Luxury and lifestyle travel PR specialist **The Brandman Agency** last week raised the curtain on a new website and a rebrand.

3. People: **Marriott International** named **Andy Kauffman** SVP for global marketing optimization, effective January 1, 2018. – Congrats to *PR News* fave **Brandi Boatner** (picture 3, p. 1) on her promotion to social and influencer communications lead, global markets, at **IBM**. – Kudos also to *PR News* friend **Kevin Dando**, named chief marketing officer at **Kanopy**, the on-demand video streaming service that offers films to students and library patrons. Previously Dando was with **PBS**, most recently as senior director of social media strategy and digital communications. – Online roommate-matching service **Silvernest** named **Barbara O'Connor** chief marketing officer. O'Connor spent more than a decade at **Yahoo!** as well as time at **Apple**. – **WE Communications** relocated EVP **Bill Schultz** to its NY office from the Pacific Northwest to bolster its presence. – The restaurateur **Anne Le Zibblatt** joined **Andrew Freeman & Company** as a partner. – Search firm **PR Talent** tapped **Kathleen DesRosiers** to lead its 8th office, in Minneapolis-St. Paul. She started her career at **FleishmanHillard** and later joined **Burson-Marsteller**. – **Marisa Lichtenstein** joined digital communications agency **Lumentus** as senior director, client relationships. Lichtenstein was VP at **Image Media**. ■



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