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PREDICTIONS

BY KATIE PAINE, CEO, PAINE PUBLISHING

A Look at PR Metrics That'll Fade in '18, and Which Will Dominate

It's hard to look too far ahead given the world's enormous uncertainties. Who knows when the next climate disaster will hit? If the government will shut down or whether nuclear war looms? As Yogi Berra said, "It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future." Yet PR pros thrive on chaos and crisis. You'll be in your element regardless. Here are ideas that might help you prepare.

1. Your next crisis is only a hashtag away: Whether driven by your CEO's wayward tweet, a stupid deal half a world away or one of the #metoo- or #timesup-style issues surging or as yet unborn, every major brand and company is at risk of public shaming. Crisis communications plans, if not in place already, will need to be updated monthly.

2. A bigger announcement will eclipse yours: Whether it's a "bombogenesis," an actual bomb or a political bombshell, something will no doubt screw up your best laid announcement plans. Beyond the U.S. presidential election, the Olympics, the World Cup and the Mueller investigation, you have to contend with major climate events. Add in that the social media environment is being manipulated to be divisive, and it will be very hard to get a word in edgewise. As a result, smaller, targeted events with those who actually care about your brand or your issues will be far more effective than blockbuster publicity stunts.

3. Social as we know it is doomed: Social media has been hot for brands for years, which means there's enough

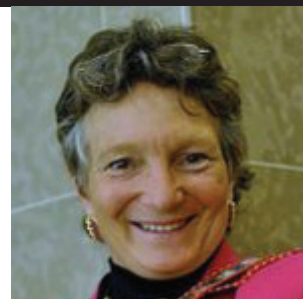
data to feed into the marketing mix models of many of these companies; they're learning ROI is hard to find.

Added to the growing skepticism among senior leadership about the business impact of all this is the steady drumbeat of news about Russian bots and fake news manipulating social platforms. Support for more investment in social is bound to weaken.

Even social media stalwarts like my colleagues at the **Society of New Communications Research** are supportive of legislation to rein in fake spewing from **YouTube** and **Twitter**. There's no doubt some on Capitol Hill will continue to focus on Russia's social media use during the 2016 U.S. election. All this points to lower usage of the most popular platforms.

4. Customer service will dominate social media: As we said earlier, brands are realizing much of the billions spent on content marketing is failing to deliver the expected return. New research shows rather than engagement boosting sales, sales boost engagement. [<https://hbr.org/2017/03/whats-the-value-of-a-like>]

The majority of engagement is post-sale, and there's far more value in establishing and growing relationships with existing customers. This is why more organizations are integrating social media into customer service to provide a consistent customer experience. They're finding a bigger payoff in being responsive to the customers they have than in shelling out more dollars to yell louder at anyone who passes by.



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CONSUMER HABITS

Obituaries, Trump and Game of Thrones Dominated Wikipedia Searches in 2017

There are several ways to interpret the list of most-searched English-language articles on **Wikipedia** for 2017, which the search site released last week.

On one hand, 2017 was like other years. For example, in 2016 deaths also was the top-searched article as visitors looked for information about those who'd passed.

It's also certainly predictable that a world leader such as **President Donald Trump** would be high on the list, although searches for his name declined precipitously over time. (By the way, first lady **Melania Trump** came in at #37.) And the royalty is irrelevant today, right? Not according to **Queen Elizabeth II's** ranking on this year's Wikipedia list. (Her husband, the **Duke of Edinburgh**, came in at #44 with 10 million searches.)

Yet notice the amount of television and movie entries on the list of top searches as well as those beyond the top 10, such as the film *It* (#12), #15 **Gal Gadot** (star of *Wonder Woman*),

the film *Logan* (#16), the TV series *Riverdale* (#18) and the entry "2017 in film" (#19, with 13 million hits). An interpretation could be that English-language Wikipedia users sought escape from reality with TV series like **Game of Thrones** (GOT) and films.

Another view could be that in one case it wasn't escapism as much as a necessity for knowledge. With the plethora of characters and plot lines in GOT, Wikipedia was a must-visit to understand the series.

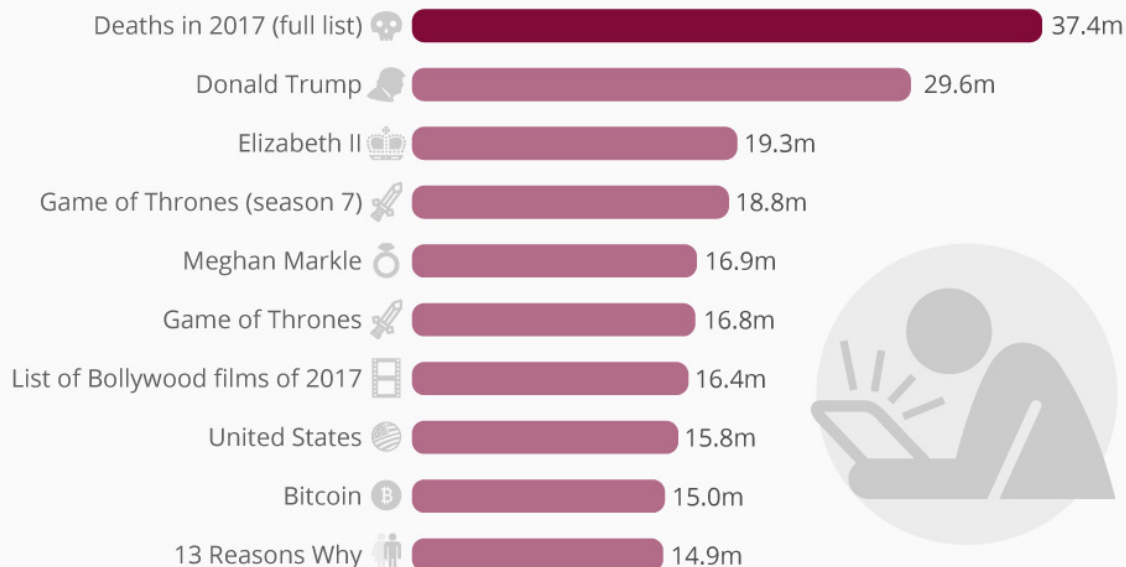
Note that adding the searches for GOT with GOT (Season 7) eclipse President Trump.

Also note the appearance of **Meghan Markle**, who came to global prominence relatively late in 2017.

Number 10's *13 Reasons Why* was an intriguing drama about teen suicide that ran on **Netflix**. No matter what one thought of the series as a work of drama, it grabbed the attention of multiple demographics, including teens, their concerned parents and educators. ■

The Most Popular Wikipedia Articles

Most visited English language pages on Wikipedia in 2017



Source: Wikipedia Top 50 Report (January 2018), Statista chart.

Not So Fast: Blockchain and AI Will Lag in 2018

5. Reach and impressions will be replaced: Impressions now are the most discredited metric since Ad Value Equivalent. No one believes the inflated numbers provided as “unique reach” since often they’re larger than the planet’s population. Most smart marketers are ignoring “reach” numbers and focusing on actual engagement. But 2018 will bring giant leaps forward in the quest for accurate reach metrics.

Serious efforts are occurring to tie actual readers to pieces of content and ultimately to actions. Whether the **EU** and its privacy concerns will allow **Cision** to succeed with its ID program remains debatable. In the meantime **Google** and other browser companies are working hard on attribution models that tie actual readers to specific content and then trace their journey to purchases, if that’s the goal.

SO MUCH FOR THE PERSONAL TOUCH

6. Most of your engagement won’t be with people: Russians aren’t alone in using bots. Publishers, clickbait sites and anyone with 30 seconds to spare spent much of 2017 creating bots to automate everything from generating copy to responding to customer complaints. So, when you show off surging engagement numbers, make sure to explain you have no idea with what type of entity you are actually engaging.

7. Value will be the main metric: By now you’re probably thinking that if impressions are rubbish, reach isn’t real and AVEs are anathema, what’s left? How can an accountable communicator prove her worth? Demonstrate value, which requires a thorough understanding of how your organization makes money.

In 2017 communicators at major B2Cs, B2Bs, nonprofits and even government agencies deployed metrics and dashboards tying communications activities to business value. Judging from calls I’ve received this month, that trend will continue. As organizations adopt unified PESO models for communications strategies, counting clips, hits and likes makes less and less sense. Look instead for an emphasis on custom indexes and communications-focused goal conversions. They’ll be 2018’s metrics. All will have revenue in

their equations, i.e., cost per conversion or engagement.

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK?

8. You’ll hear a lot about blockchain, but it’s unlikely to change your world. Doubtless 2018 will be the year blockchain becomes a household word. Already it’s increased **Kodak**’s flailing stock price by some 200%. And, while **Edelman**’s Phil Gomes make a great argument for how blockchain will rock our world, I’m less enthusiastic. No offense, but if PR pros are unable to explain to their bosses why AVE is inaccurate and flawed, how will they make a case for implementing blockchain to improve attribution modeling or the accuracy of measurement? My guess is fast-moving consumer goods companies and a few of the large agencies may make it work for them, but it won’t go much beyond that for another year.

9. AI will help large firms predict outcomes, but... To get accurate results from AI you need reams of data. The majority of companies and products, especially B2Bs, are not that widely discussed in social media. Far more challenging is that most organizations lack “customer intelligence” departments housing the years and years of data needed to feed into an AI model. So, AI will be another oft-used term that won’t touch us much in 2018, unless you’re doing PR for an AI company, in which case you’ll be very, very busy.

10. Measurement customers will have fewer choices: Just when you thought there were no more companies left to acquire, Cision announced it acquired **PRIME Research** and **CEDROM-SNi Inc** (*PRN*, January 9, 2018). The PRIME acquisition leaves customers interested in human-aided measurement and analysis with just a handful of choices. This at a time when more clients are realizing computers do a lousy job of assessing sentiment and messages and that without human review, their data is worthless. No doubt this is one of the reasons Cision made the deal. Regardless, a market with fewer choices rarely bodes well for customers. ■

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Consumer Engagement with B2B Brands in '17 Down Slightly vs '16, IMG Models Tops List

In our review last week of most-engaged B2C brands for 2017 (PRN, January 9, 2017), we saw a tremendous surge of consumer engagement, or actions, with video. Consumer actions, also known as comments, likes, shares and retweets jumped 40% for brands' social content. This generated 1.3 billion actions for B2Cs. There also was a 38% jump in video content posted. Engagement with brands' non-video content was more modest.

As you might expect, engagement with B2B brands' social posts was similar, although consumer engagement with video and non-video content was far more even.

In all the B2B category generated 66 million actions for 2017, down 0.4% year over year across **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **Instagram**.

Despite a 10% drop in content posted, B2Bs were efficient, growing 38% in consumer actions per post, says Shareablee's Ron Lee.

On the video side, though, B2B brands increased video content posts, which led to a 9% growth in consumer engagement with it when compared to 2016's figures.

IMG MODELS TOPS THE LIST

IMG Models Worldwide, the well-known modeling agency and social media powerhouse, took the top spot with 21 million actions (down 22%). It also also generated the highest video actions at 6 million total video actions, which accounted for more than 50% of the category's total video actions.

Along with topping the category in overall and video actions, IMG Models Worldwide also was the engagement leader on Instagram within the category, Lee notes. Despite a huge drop in engagement and a 51% drop in content posted compared to 2016, IMG saw 60% growth in actions per post, which helped maintain its dominance within the category.



















AMAZON WEB'S 2 CHANNELS

Amazon Web Services joins the Top 15 for the first time this year, Lee notes. It garnered 2.2 million consumer engagements with its content despite being present on Facebook

and Twitter only.

It also boasted the highest growth in content posted year over year, up about 600%.

Most of Amazon Web Services' engagement came from its Facebook page, although its Twitter feed gained a respectable amount of engagement, Lee says. ■

Shareablee						SOCIAL SCORECARD	
TOP B2B BRANDS – 2017							
Based on Total Actions (likes, comments and shares) Data provided exclusively to PR News by Shareablee.						Sources:   	
Rank	Brand		Total Actions	Total Content	Actions per Content	Total Audience	
1		IMG Models Worldwide	20,552,493	4,288	4,793	1,504,283	
2		Pantone	6,482,340	864	7,503	1,708,609	
3		Sotheby's	5,616,083	6,337	886	1,049,179	
4		Amazon Web Services	2,179,592	12,860	169	1,571,274	
5		Lockheed Martin	1,881,249	2,014	934	938,242	
6		Informatica	1,615,501	2,227	725	288,392	
7		Lennar	1,613,215	2,723	592	1,489,445	
8		Pulte Homes	1,506,991	279	5,401	147,533	
9		FedEx	1,375,246	839	1,639	2,349,370	
10		Realtor.com	1,092,223	12,068	91	762,535	
11		IBM	1,027,842	1,626	632	1,441,698	
12		Hootsuite	937,191	10,630	88	8,828,011	
13		UPS	907,595	1,012	897	1,948,612	
14		Ericsson	883,150	1,740	508	657,853	
15		Caterpillar Inc.	761,323	1,194	638	1,556,028	

PRNews/LexisNexis Survey: Few Brands Have Formal Structures for Social Listening

It's a new year and you've resolved to measure more of your communications efforts than you did in 2017. Excellent. Before you get too far into it, though, it's wise to huddle with senior leaders and agree on what should be measured. A new **LexisNexis/PR News** survey shows the metrics communicators focus on to indicate social media success aren't quite the same ones senior leaders deem most important.

In addition, 2018 might be a good time for brands and organizations to resolve to formalize their social listening procedures and what happens should a trend or issue be spotted via social listening.

While social listening has become a priority for many companies—as it's acknowledged to help stave off crises, or at least give brands early warning of potential issues—more than one-third (36%) of those surveyed report their organizations lack a formal process for social listening and responding to customer service complaints or comments.

BENCHMARKING TOPS SOCIAL USES

The survey found that nearly half (48%) of all organizations use social media monitoring primarily to benchmark share of voice and engagement—only 16% said customer service was the main focus of social listening. And just 7% deemed crisis management the main goal of social listening.

Of the 36% of organizations that said they have no formal social listening process, a lack of resources was tabbed as the main culprit (51%).

Designed to gauge attitudes and practices regarding social media platforms, the LexisNexis/PR News survey queried more than 250 PR pros and brand communicators during the fourth quarter of 2017.

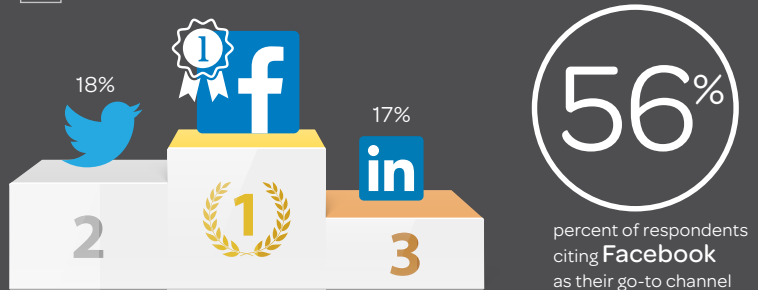
"Social media is such an essential asset in to-

Continued on page 6

6 Social Insights Impacting PR Today

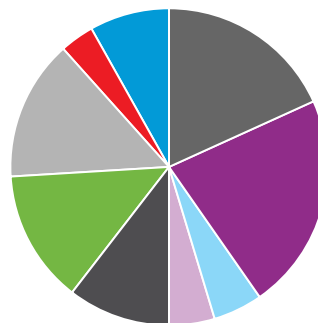
In a recent survey done in conjunction with PR News, we asked about social media platforms, top trends, and potential developments for PR pros. We wanted to spotlight the insights that matter most and here's what we found.

1 Who reigns supreme as the mostly widely used social media platform?



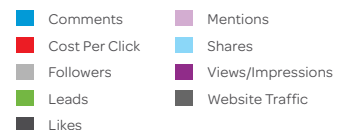
2 What's the top metric for measuring social media?

views/impressions



When asked about social media metrics, the professionals surveyed indicated **views/impressions** are the top metrics for measuring social media success

Website traffic driven from posts, shares and comments were also top contenders.



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day's communication toolkit that we wanted to dig in to [see] how the industry's experts are utilizing its potential," Leela Hauser, **LexisNexis'** global marketing director of media intelligence, says.

When asked which communications trends will define 2018, influencer marketing topped the list at 24%. The need for better measurement, at 22%, was a close second.

"It's not surprising that influencer marketing tops the results for important trends in 2018," Hauser says. "It's proven to be a meaningful method of communication, and one that hopefully becomes even more mutually beneficial as the practice evolves." The lack of use of social for customer service and crisis management or at least crisis spotting, though, is surprising.

On the other hand, a lack of preparation for crisis is in line with earlier studies. Another PR News survey, from March 28, 2016, showed nearly half (48%) of 350 communicators surveyed said their organizations lack a crisis communication playbook. Responding to another question, just 50% said their organizations were "adequately prepared to manage crises effectively."

LACK OF AGREEMENT WITH THE C-SUITE

In terms of which metrics were most important to PR pros compared to those deemed critical to senior leaders, there was a slight disconnect. The survey says communicators consider views and impressions as the most important metric (27%), followed by shares (17%) and website traffic from social media referrals (14%).

When communicators were asked about which metrics were most important to senior leaders, website traffic came in a close second to views and impressions, while leads and followers tied for third, with each registering 14%.

PLATFORMS OF CHOICE

The survey also polled which social media channels were most important to communicators professionally—and which they personally use the most.

Facebook still reigns as the most important social media channel for communications pros, both personally (48%) and professionally (56%).

While **Twitter** came in second on both counts, the survey found that **LinkedIn** has become a strategically important channel for brands and clients.

LinkedIn began as a platform for job seekers and recruiters, but only 7% of respondents indicated that LinkedIn was the platform they spend the most time on personally. Yet, 17% of respondents deemed LinkedIn the most important channel for their brand.

Another discrepancy concerns **Instagram**. While only 5% called it the most important platform for their brand and client work, 17% said they spend the most time on it after business hours.

Media fragmentation was another focus of the survey. When asked which channels they turn to daily for news, traditional media outlets came in first (16%), but just barely—14% said their news comes from email newsletters, and 13% turn to social.



[lexisnexis.com/social-analytics](https://www.lexisnexis.com/social-analytics)

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The findings seem in line with studies from **Pew Research Center**. In August 2017, Pew found 67% of Americans get at least some of their news on social media. It also found for the first time in its history that more than half (55%) of Americans ages 50 or older get news on social media. That was a 10% jump over the 2016 Pew survey. ■

CONTACT: alyssa.vorhees@lexisnexis.com

Early Adopters Are Bullish on Artificial Intelligence's Transformative Powers

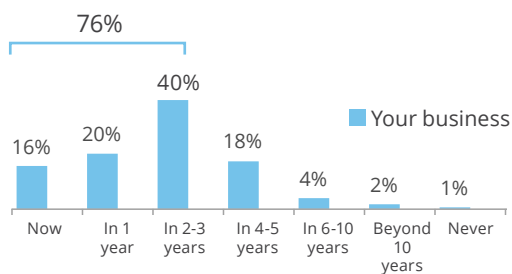
There are few topics in PR and communications that have generated more buzz than AI; of course, there's plenty of hype and false claims, too. **Deloitte** decided to try to separate the steak from the sizzle by gauging the attitudes of 250 members of what it called "cognitive-aware" leaders. These executive are mostly C-suiters from companies of at least 500 employees that are early adopters of AI and cognitive technologies such as machine learning, deep learning neural networks, natural language processing, rule engines and robotic process automation.

Deloitte learned the leaders are bullish on AI and expect it has or will transform their companies and industries quickly (see chart below). And there are hurdles (see bottom chart). In terms of machines replacing humans, that's not happened much, the survey says, and responders aren't sure it will in the next few years.

As we said, the first table shows 76% feel AI/cognitive technologies will "substantially" transform their companies fast.

The table (second, right column) shows the vast majority of companies are using AI to

Cognitive advantage: Executives expect cognitive technologies to transform their companies...



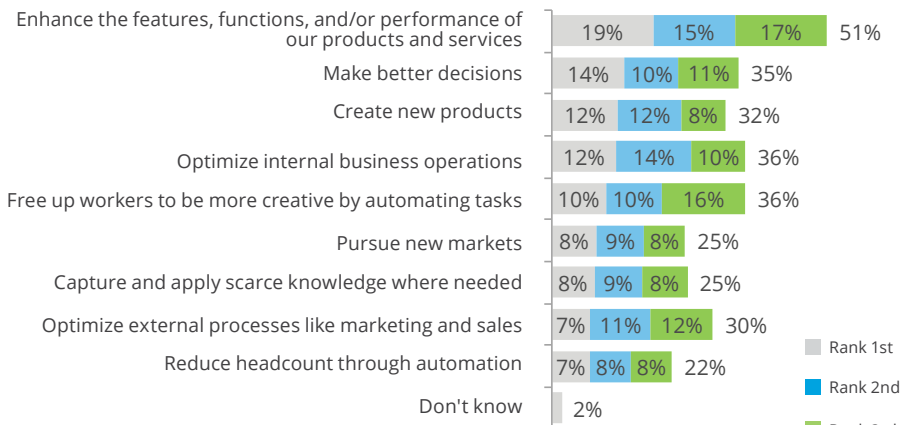
May not add to 100% due to rounding

speed up large tasks and statistical machine learning, which can augment the speed and scale of analytical models. It's believed AI will be most helpful to PR pros in these areas.

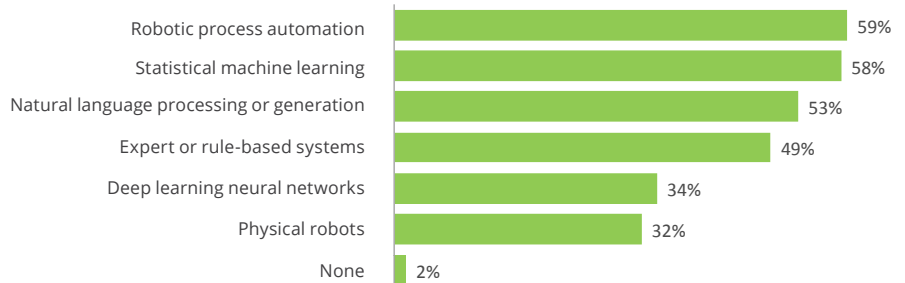
Enhancing products and services was the top priority for the survey responders (see top table, right column).

In terms of where AI investments were made the leader (64%) was IT work, then product development/ R&D (44%), and customer service (40%). And 83% said their companies already achieved either moderate (53%) or substantial (30%) benefits from AI. Just 9% say AI is over-hyped. ■

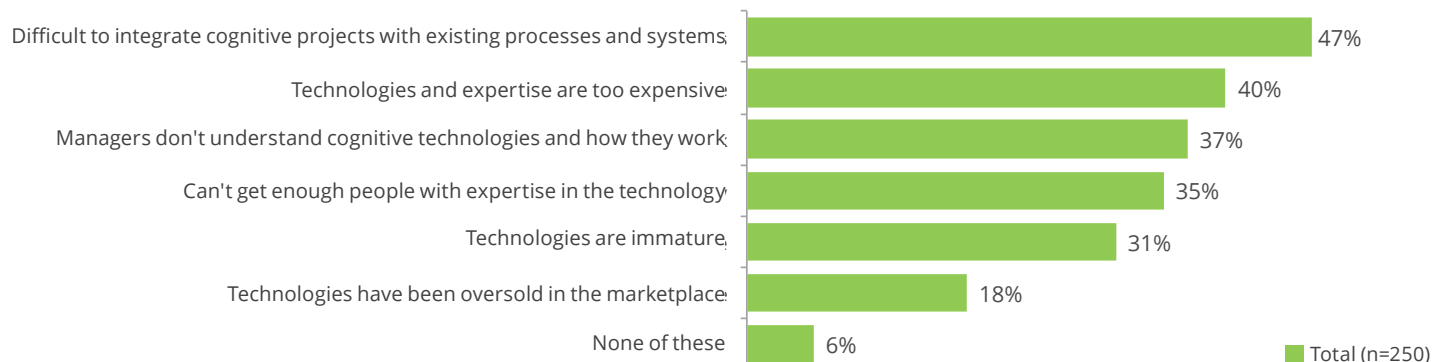
AI: Primary benefits to companies



What types of AI are companies deploying today?



What are the top challenges with cognitive technology?



Source: Deloitte State of Cognitive Survey



President Trump

1. Signs of the Times: We reported in November 2016 President-elect **Donald Trump** was not a media fan. As you know, that turned out to be an understatement. As such, the President, in a Jan. 2 tweet, mocked journalists

by announcing he'd be awarding prizes to The Most Dishonest & Corrupt Media Awards Of The Year the following week. That 'ceremony' has slipped to this week, Jan. 17. Not to be upstaged, **Syracuse University's** prestigious **S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications'** 12th annual Mirror Awards will include a special category for *Best Story on Fake News*. The **Committee to Protect Journalists** (CPJ) took a slightly different angle, responding to the president's honors show with its Press Oppressors Awards Jan. 8. Awards included *Most Thin-skinned* (Turkish leader **Recep Tayyip Erdogan** walked away with that one, he also took *Most Outrageous Use of Terror Laws Against the Press*); and *Tightest Grip on Media* (China's president **Xi Jinping**). President Trump received the award *Overall Achievement in Undermining Global Press Freedom* for blasting domestic media and failing to raise the issue of press freedom with leaders of repressive states. CPJ notes the number of imprisoned journalists globally (262) is at a record high. Another sign of the times, the Mirror Awards also will have another special category: *Best Story on Sexual Misconduct in the Media Industry*.

2. Fake News: Glad to see **The Arthur W. Page Society** promoting research "that will contribute to the scholarly and public understanding of fake news. In addition, the Center is awarding grants on "general topics of ethical communication." – France is getting ready to see if it can legislate away fake news. Similar to the German law we told you about recently, the French regulation will look for fake news posted during election coverage. The law is set to be unveiled later this

year. Again, similar to Germany, press freedom advocates are wary that the law will inhibit free speech. (Kremlin-backed broadcaster **RT** also has blasted the proposed law.) – In a related story Democrats from the **Senate Foreign Relations Committee** released a 200-page report detailing Russian interference in elections in the U.S. and 19 European nations. The Jan. 11 report mentions cyberattacks, disinformation, clandestine social media operations, financing of political groups, corruption and assassination attempts in Ukraine and Georgia. Among the prescriptions are increased transparency from social media platforms.

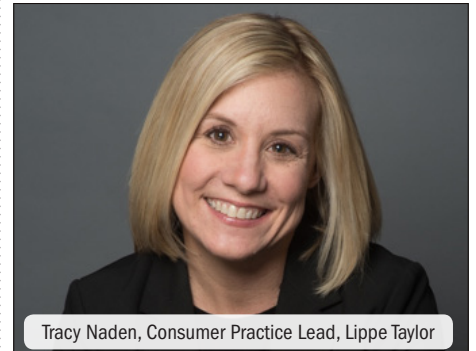
3. M&A and Growth: Vested acquired **Templars Communications** of the U.K., its first acquisition. Financial terms were not disclosed. **Kitty Parry**, CEO/founder of Templars, will join Vested UK as a senior advisor. **Arnold Hill & Co.** advised Templars. – Strategic advisory firm **Vianovo** is forming a philanthropy & causes consulting practice. – 17-year-old indie **GLOBALHealthPR** welcomed Johannesburg-based **F/NE** to its international network. – **Evoke Group** added **Tonic Life Communications** and **nitrogen health** to its collection of health marketing firms. – London-based **Cognito** opened its Hong Kong office. **Dan Bradley** will lead it.



Mark Zuckerberg, CEO, Facebook

4. Platform Prater: As we reported last year, **Mark Zuckerberg** was testing tactics to reduce branded posts on **Facebook** newsfeeds. His Jan. 11 announcement was the first concrete manifestation of those tests. While it's early to offer prescriptives, it seems brands will need to ensure posts tell authentic stories that lead to engage-

ment. In addition, based on what Facebook has said thus far, it seems videos, employee-generated content and user-generated content might become even more vital going forward.



Tracy Naden, Consumer Practice Lead, Lippe Taylor

5. People: **Ruder Finn** promoted Asia chairman **Jean-Michel Dumont** to head of international strategy and greater China MD **Elan Shou** to regional director of Asia. – Congrats to PR News friend **Jennifer Ball**, named head of marketing at **PromaxBDA**, a new position. She'll report to **Steve Kazanjian**, president/CEO. Ball comes from **Univision**, where she was EVP of marketing and content partnerships. Prior to that she was a VP at **A&E**. – Healthcare solutions firm **AmeriHealth Caritas** named **Cora Lee Klena** SVP and CCO (see middle photo, page 1). She'll report to **Mark Bullock**, SVP and chief administrative and compliance officer. Prior to AmeriHealth, she ran **Chubb's** marketing, communications and re-branding for the North American market. – **Lippe Taylor** signed **Tracy Naden** to fill the new role of consumer practice leader. Naden was at **Weber Shandwick** as an EVP. – Communications firm **kglobal** appointed **Noam Gelfond** as director of business development and head of west coast operations. He recently served at **Ketchum**. – **Lauren Bernat** (see last photo page 1) was named VP, advertising at **rbb Communications** and will lead account services for **OutOfTheBlue**. – At our deadline **Osborn Barr** promoted **Nicole Phillips** to SVP of account management, insights and data; **Adnan Sabic** to chief creative officer; and **Neil Caskey** to EVP, client strategy. – **Prosper Group** added **Chevon Hicks** to its roster of strategic advisors. ■

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- Brand Storytelling Strategies That Will Help Journalists Get the Sensational Clicks They Need
- Interactive Clinic: How to Manage an Escalating Crisis in Real Time
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