

Can Your Agency Afford Inaction? – A Virtual Executive Roundtable

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CAN YOUR AGENCY AFFORD INACTION?

PEMBERTON **COMMUNICATIONS WEEK™** **COMMPRO**
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A VIRTUAL EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE, NOVEMBER 19, 2021, 12 PM ET [REGISTER](#)

Revenue expansion, organic growth ... We all say we achieve it to some level, but does your agency make it a priority? Have you ever calculated the Cost of Inaction and impact to your P&L?

CommPRO in partnership with **Pemberton** are bringing together

agency leaders for a virtual discussion on the significance of organic growth and creating more personnel-assets than personnel-liabilities, significantly growing accounts, and your business.

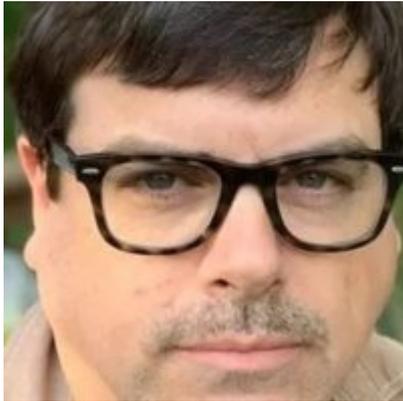
Our special guest host is Bill Nielsen, Chairman of the Advisory Board at the Arthur W. Page Center for Integrity in Public Relations, and a true “PR Master,” as well as **J. Mark Riggs**, CEO & Founder, Pemberton, who will facilitate a conversation about the extraordinary opportunities for the business of the agency and the philosophies that have generated millions of dollars for agencies, worldwide. It’s time for the agency industry to realize its true value, mitigate attrition and empower staff to generate revenue from existing clients. You’ll hear from industry leaders at Golin, Finn Partners, IPG DXTRA, RacePoint Global, rbb, Peppercomm, Evins| PR+, Lambert & Co., PRecise Communications, Mission + Cause, and others...

Please join us for a rich discussion long overdue..

Our executive roundtable guests:

- **Christine Barney**, APR, CEO & Managing Partner, rbb Communications
- **Steve Cody**, Founder/CEO, Peppercomm
- **Fred Cook**, Chairman Emeritus of Golin and Director of the Annenberg Center for Public Relations at University of Southern California
- **Alexis Davis Smith**, President and CEO, PRecise Communications, Co-Founder, The Change Agencies
- **Matthew Evins**, Chairman & Co-Founder, Evins | PR+
- **Peter Finn**, Founding Partner, Finn Partners
- **Brad MacAfee**, Founder & CEO, Mission + Cause
- **Michelle Olson**, APR, Managing Partner, Lambert & Co.
- **Andy Polansky**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at IPG DXTRA
- **Larry Weber**, Chairman & CEO, Racepoint Global

WATCH ON-DEMAND VIDEO



Host

J. Mark Riggs, CEO & Founder, Pemberton which is a consultancy collaborating with professional services firms to expand revenue, lead account management maturation and develop change management strategies resulting in measurable *Sustained, Strategic Growth*.



Special Guest

Bill Nielsen, a public relations and corporate communications authority, is currently a consultant to management of for-profit and not-for-profit organizations.

He retired as corporate vice president of Johnson & Johnson (J&J) in December 2004, after serving 17 years with the

company, where he was the chief public relations and corporate communications officer. He joined J&J in 1988, following 18 years as a public relations agency consultant with Carl Byoir & Associates and Hill and Knowlton. In addition to executive roles in agency management, he specialized in corporate communications and crisis management in such industries as consumer finance, insurance, defense, biotech, and airlines.

Nielsen was elected to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Board of Trustees in January 2011. He also serves as Chairman of the Board of Advisors to the Arthur W. Page Center for Integrity in Public Communications at Penn State University.

Nielsen served two terms as president of the Arthur W. Page Society and was inducted into that organization's Hall of Fame in September 2003. He served on its board of trustees for 17 years and continues as chair of the Society's Honors Committee. He also chaired the boards of The Seminar and the Institute for Public Relations and continues as an emeritus director. He is a member of The Wisemen and the Public Relations Society of America.

In addition to his consulting work, Nielsen is a frequent guest lecturer at public relations and corporate communications graduate programs at universities across the country. He was inducted into the PRWeek Hall of Fame in December 2014, and was honored by The Plank Center with its Milestones in Mentoring Legacy award in 2017.

Following graduation from Oregon State University, Nielsen served in the U.S. Air Force as a public information officer in Washington, D.C., and Japan. He and his wife, Doris, reside in Maryland, where they are both active in community affairs.

Guests



Christine Barney, APR, CEO & Managing Partner, rbb Communications

Christine M. Barney is CEO and managing partner of rbb Communications. rbb is a triple threat repeatedly recognized as champions in the field of PR, Digital/Marketing and Creative Services. In 2020 alone, rbb was among Top Five Global Creative Agencies of the Year, the PProvoke US Small Agency of the Year, named to the Forbes Top PR Firms and took home campaign honors in every competition entered. rbb is a certified women-owned business with a diverse team across a broad spectrum of crafts including healthcare, consumer services/products, luxury lifestyle, B2B/professional services, real estate and travel.

Barney is the author of “The Breakout Brand™ Strategy: An Evolutionary Approach to Creating Customer Passion” and her firm, headquartered in Miami, with a presence in Los Angeles and New York is known as the Champion of Breakout Brands™.

Barney’s innovative management style and “employee-driven workplace” philosophy makes the firm a repeated winner in “best place to work” rankings. She is active in her home state having served as founding chair of the South Florida Business Council, past chair of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, a board member of the Orange Bowl Committee, board member of the Beacon Council, member of the International Women’s Forum, Leadership Florida, 2020 Florida Influencers Series and the Florida 500.

She is a member of The Page Society and is accredited by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) where she received the 2016 Bill Adams PRSA Lifetime Achievement Award. She is a married mother of three and new grandmother.



Steve Cody, Founder/CEO, Peppercomm

I'm a comedian, climber and dog lover, but not necessarily in that order.

I am also the founder and CEO of Peppercomm, a fully-integrated strategic communications firm headquartered in NYC, with offices located in San Francisco and London. In that role I'm responsible for everything from implementing strategy and counseling clients to leading business development and bringing new products and services to market. In short, I do everything but clean windows.

My biggest passion is helping others. I derive immense satisfaction from mentoring students, guest lecturing at the universities who are brave enough to invite me to speak, and helping fellow mid-life marketing communications professionals who have lost their way in life. There may be hope for us yet.

I am the current chairman of the Institute for Public Relations, a longtime member of the Arthur W. Page Society, a member of the advisory councils of the College of Charleston and the University of Florida, and was named one of Northeastern University's 100 most successful alumni. I have also co-authored *"What's keeping your customers up at*

night?" which was published by McGraw-Hill in 2003 and has put thousands of readers to sleep over the years.

I'm proud to say that I've used my love of stand-up comedy to raise more than \$100,000 for countless charities. I'm just as proud to see Chris and Catharine, my two children, grow up to become successful professionals. I'm confident the family tradition will continue with my grandson, Adrian Joseph "A.J." Cody. May he outperform us all.

A sense of humor means:

A person has the resiliency to deal with the realities of the modern world while maintaining his energy, drive, enthusiasm and smile. Life's far too short. Loosen up.



Fred Cook, Chairman Emeritus of Golin and Director of the Annenberg Center for Public Relations at University of Southern California

Fred Cook has worked at Golin for over 30 years. He started as an account supervisor in the Los Angeles office and moved to Chicago 15 years ago to become Golin's third CEO. Fred credits the company culture for his long tenure with the firm.

During his time with Golin, Cook has had the privilege to work with a variety of high-profile CEOs, including Herb Kelleher, Jeff Bezos and Steve Jobs. He has also managed a wide scope of crises for his clients, including airline crashes, product recalls, and sexual harassment.

Fred is proud of the firm's accomplishments, but he is even

more excited about the future. The world is experiencing profound changes in demographics, globalization, multiculturalism and technology which are impacting the way people communicate with each other. To stay ahead of their changes, five years ago, Golin completely redesigned the agency by adopting a proprietary business model called g4, to deliver deeper insights, bigger ideas and broader engagement to their clients. Since that time, Golin has been named 'Agency of the Year' more than a dozen times.

In 2014, Cook published "Improvise – Unconventional Career Advice from an Unlikely CEO," which shares the wisdom he gained as a cabin boy on a Norwegian tanker, doorman at a 5-star hotel and chauffeur for drunks. In 2015, after speaking on college campuses around the world, Fred accepted an additional position with the University of Southern California as the Director of the USC Center for Public Relations at the Annenberg School whose mission is to shape the future of public relations and those who will lead it – through research, education and thought leadership.



**Alexis Davis Smith,
President and CEO, PRecise
Communications, Co-Founder,
The Change Agencies**

Building on nearly 30 years of experience and reputation as a trusted communications strategist, Alexis Davis Smith is a leader in Atlanta's public relations industry and a national voice for multicultural marketing. She is responsible for creating breakthrough and strategic communications programs for major consumer brands.

Alexis has provided public relations counsel for leading global companies such as Coca-Cola, Toyota and Pfizer. For Coca-Cola, she has directed nearly 100 PR programs including the launch of the innovative Coca-Cola Fridge Pack and the award-winning Coca-Cola Pay It Forward program. Her work with the world's No. 1 automaker, Toyota, has enhanced its brand reputation among multicultural audiences via media relations, experiential marketing, community and philanthropic activities and strategic partnerships.

Alexis maximizes her influence and position to help make a difference in the community. As a result of her recommendations, Cracker Barrel Old Country Store established a scholarship for history students at Spelman College, which continues to assist deserving young people today. In addition, Toyota has donated \$20,000 to the National Trust for Historic Preservation to help save endangered sites representing important moments and icons in Black history.

Prior to establishing PRecise Communications in 2000, Alexis was an account supervisor at Ketchum, a top 10 global public relations firm, where she traveled the world supporting several key consumer accounts. In 1998, she co-founded the agency's African American Markets Group, the first-ever in-house ethnic marketing team created by an international PR agency. Her work since that time has established her as a nationally recognized multicultural communications expert.

That expertise earned her the position of one of the six co-founders of The Change Agencies (TCA). TCA is the PR industry's first national collective of firms to offer inclusive communications services to represent, engage and connect with African American, Asian American, Latinx and LGBTQ communities. The group was launched in the summer of 2019 with the objective of changing how marketing communications professionals reach diverse audiences.

Alexis has received a number of industry awards including a

Silver Anvil, “the Oscar of PR” from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and seven Phoenix Awards from PRSA of Georgia. She is immediate past president of the Black Public Relations Society of Atlanta and a board of director for HOPE Atlanta. The Atlanta Business League has recognized Alexis as one of Atlanta’s leading female entrepreneurs and a top 100 black women of influence. She served on its board for two terms. She is also on the executive committee for PRSA’s Counselors Academy section.

Alexis considers herself an advocate for multicultural consumers, helping companies recognize and tap into the viability and business opportunities ethnic groups offer. Her opinion has been featured in the popular industry trades, *PR Week* and *O’Dwyers* as well as *Vanity Fair*. She has also appeared on a number of PR and entrepreneurship-focused podcasts. Black Enterprise profiled her professional journey in a 2017 online article. In addition, she has served as a speaker at various local and industry events including the 2015 Insurers Public Relations Council Fall Meeting, 2015 Public Relations Society of America International Conference, 2013 Black Public Relations Society National Conference and 2018 PRSA Counselors Academy Spring Conference.

A Philadelphia, Penn. native and proud graduate of Florida A&M University, Alexis has a passion for women and giving back to the next generation of public relations professionals and entrepreneurs.



Matthew Evins, Chairman & Co-Founder, Evins | PR+

Mathew Evins is the Chairman and Founder of Evins Communications, which has received consistent acclaim for its integrated branding, marketing, and communications programs for legacy, luxury and prestige brands. In addition to the firm's specialist expertise in travel and hospitality, Evins Communications encompasses four group practices: Digital Content & Integration; Food, Spirits & Wine; Lifestyle and Travel & Hospitality.

Since its inception in 1987, Evins Communications has been consistently recognized for its brand strategies, business insights and creative programming, having made a consequential contribution to the development and growth of numerous icon and innovator brands and businesses, including American Express Centurion and Platinum, Bergdorf Goodman, Cakebread Cellars, Colgin Cellars, Departures Magazine, Exclusive Resorts, Hotels & Resorts of Halekulani, Inspirato, Jet Linx Aviation, Leica Camera, LVMH Watch & Jewelry, Maker's Mark Bourbon, Marquis Jet, Neiman Marcus, Park Hyatt, Preferred Hotels & Resorts, Rosewood Hotel & Resorts, The Knickerbocker Hotel, The Lanesborough, Uniworld River Cruises, Valentino, Vera Wang, Vitamin Water and Wheels Up, amongst many others.

Prior to founding Evins Communications, Mr. Evins previously served as CEO of Pain Therapeutics Corporation, as CEO of Cardiff Consultants, a business and financial strategic consultancy and as a Vice President of Vector Petroleum Corporation. While an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania, from which he received a B.A. degree, Mr. Evins

created and co-published "The Talisman Report," which became the world's leading investment advisory newsletter for the three years of its publication. While attending the University of Pennsylvania, and for more than six years beforehand, Mr. Evins served on the staff of Cornell Medical Center, initially as a Surgical Research Associate in the Cardiovascular Research Laboratory and, subsequently, as Associate Director of the Rogosin Organ Retrieval & Preservation Laboratory.

Mr. Evins is one of the most respected authorities and thought leaders in luxury and luxury hospitality, has lectured at the Cornell Hotel School and NYU's Graduate School of Business, and has authored numerous articles on luxury and luxury hospitality for such publications as Elite Traveler and HOTELS Magazine. Mr. Evins currently serves on the boards of The International Luxury Hotel Association, Luxury Travel Exchange International, ULTRA Luxury Exchange and the International Hotel Investment Forum. He is also a cofounding board member, Secretary, Treasurer and a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Global Virus Network, a non-profit 501(c)(3) coalition comprised of 57 Centers of Excellence in 33 countries worldwide, working collaboratively to prepare for, defend against and provide an integrated first research response to, existing, emerging and unidentified viruses that pose a clear and present threat to public health, such as COVID-19.



Peter Finn, Founding Partner, Finn Partners

Peter Finn plays the central role in the creation and ongoing initiatives of Finn Partners and the development of the practices and offices that now make up the global agency. Over the years his contributions as Founding Managing Partner have included the recruitment of key executives, and the orchestration of domestic and global acquisitions of agencies specializing in technology, health, consumer marketing, tourism, education, professional and financial services, branding, public affairs and social and digital practices. He's developed a powerful team, acquiring top notch agencies and integrating them into the firm, building what began as a small agency in 2011 into one of the top independent agencies in the world.

Under Peter's direction, Finn Partners was selected by the prestigious Holmes Report as "Best New Agency" in 2012 and later was "Midsize Agency of the Year" by PR News and Holmes Report, and was named Health Agency of the Year by the Holmes Report in 2018 and was named one of the top Health agencies in the world in 2020. Finn continues to grow rapidly and is currently ranked by the O'Dwyer's report as the 4th largest US based independent PR firm. Through Finn's efforts, the firm has more than quadrupled in size over the past eight years and now has 20 offices around the world with almost 800 employees internationally.

Prior to launching Finn Partners, Peter was Co-CEO of Ruder Finn, Inc., He first joined Ruder Finn in 1976 and played a key role since the 1980s in turning the firm into one of the largest independently owned public relations firms in the world.

Peter is co-founder, with his wife Sarah, and Chairman of the Catskill Mountain Foundation, one of the largest arts

organizations in the upstate New York, where he continues to work with many public officials at the local, state and federal level, impacting the region's economic development. He is the recipient of the 2017 Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts award.

Peter has a B.A. from Brown University and an M.A. from Columbia University.



Brad MacAfee, Founder & CEO, Mission + Cause

Brad is the strategist and pioneer of people-first transformation. He builds profitable, socially-responsible brands to maximize positive impact on the world. At MAC Talent, he is committed to immersing himself in the client perspective for each search.

As the former CEO of Porter Novelli, Brad has a long history of hiring and retaining the best people in the industry. His passion is attracting, growing and retaining talent, and has been involved in the hiring of hundreds of executives in both agency and corporate environments. Brad has received a long list of awards for which he credits the talented practitioners who always seem to surround him. From PR Week Best Purpose Agency to PR News Best CSR Agency, from PR Week Best Place to Work to CR Magazine CEO of the Year, Brad is no stranger to accolades and recognition for his bold and transparent approach.

Driving purpose and growth, Brad looks for talent that

delivers greatness through empathy, imagination and engagement. They are the qualities that drive him personally and make him a trustworthy partner.

An early champion of diversity and inclusion, Brad embeds diversity principles and practices into all leadership, talent, business and philanthropic initiatives to foster creativity and inclusivity. It's a founding tenet of Mission + Cause, and one that he credits with broadening his worldview and critical thought foundation.□

Brad holds numerous board roles, including Board President of the Global Impact Relations Network, Executive Committee Member & Former President of the Board of Trustees of the University of Georgia Grady College, Board of Trust Member of the LAGRANT Foundation and additional roles with Junior Achievement of Georgia, PR Council, Center for the Visually Impaired, and Jack & Jill Late Stage Cancer Foundation.□

Brad grew up in the suburbs of Chicago and relocated to Atlanta after graduating from Indiana University. He and his wife, Nicole, and their two daughters share their time between Atlanta and New York City.



**Michelle Olson, APR,
Managing Partner, Lambert &
Co.**

Michelle Olson, APR, is the managing director and head of the Phoenix office for Lambert, a Michigan-based public relations firm with offices in three states. The nationally-recognized firm works with clients ranging from global brands to emerging

leaders in a variety of industries including automotive and mobility, consumer, education, financial and business, food and beverage and healthcare and biotech. With more than 30 years in public relations and integrated marketing, Michelle has served clients across the U.S. and internationally, and has significant experience in corporate communications and issues management across industries. She is a notable business leader and entrepreneur, having founded and led her own company prior to its acquisition in 2014.

Michelle's work for clients involved in the U.S. opioid crisis has drawn attention from top tier media across the country and has received recognition from industry trade associations. She routinely integrates content marketing, social media, brand journalism and other online initiatives into public relations strategies, reaching audiences efficiently and quickly to impact change. She currently leads non-traditional communications strategy for two distinct projects for Bell – its bid to win a Future Vertical Lift contract from the U.S. Army and its entry into the future of mobility through a VTOL air taxi and an Autonomous Pod Transport (APT).

In 2018 Michelle was named one of Arizona's Most Influential Women in Business by *BizAZ* Magazine and her firm ranked #3 largest PR firm in Arizona by the *Phoenix Business Journal*. She is a past chair of Arizona Forward, a 50-year old statewide advocacy organization convening dialogue on sustainability and quality of life issues. Michelle is a member of the Urban Land Institute (and a founding board member of its Women in Leadership subset), Experience Scottsdale, the Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce and Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce. She has served as a judge for the prestigious Environmental Excellence Awards, the ATHENA Awards (recognizing outstanding women leaders) and the IMPACT Awards (recognizing Arizona's most impactful companies).

Nationally, Michelle was recently elected to be chair-elect of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), a 21,000-

member trade organization for which she has served as a leader at the chapter and regional levels as well. She was honored with the PERCY Award for her career achievements in Arizona in 2003 and previously chaired Counselors Academy, PRSA's national section for agency owners and leaders. She currently serves as an advisor to the organization's 10,000-member student body, PRSSA, mentoring its national committee and assisting at its governing assembly and leadership rally.

Michelle launched her career in Minneapolis but has made her mark in Arizona for 27 years, building relationships with business leaders, government staff and officials, influencers and media throughout the state. She is an avid mentor to students and young people interested in public relations as a career choice and a frequent guest lecturer at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication.



Andy Polansky, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at IPG DXTRA

Andy Polansky is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of IPG DXTRA, a collective of 27 of Interpublic Group's (IPG) specialty marketing firms across a variety of areas, including public relations, sports and entertainment marketing, experiential, brand consulting, digital marketing and healthcare communications. Global brands within the group include Weber Shandwick, Golin, Octagon, Jack Morton, Current Global, DeVries Global,

Rogers & Cowan PMK, and FutureBrand.

Andy also serves as Executive Chairman of Weber Shandwick, after serving as its CEO from 2012-2019. A leader in the public relations and marketing services industries, Andy has delivered

outstanding results for hundreds of companies around the globe. Under his direction as Weber Shandwick CEO, the agency was named to the prestigious Ad Age Agency A-List several times

and was named to Ad Age's Best Places to Work list in 2019. Weber Shandwick was also PR Week's Global Agency of the Year four years in a row (2015-2018) and PProvoke Media's (formerly the Holmes Report) Global Agency of the Year in 2014, 2015 and 2017. In addition, PProvoke Media recognized Weber Shandwick as its Agency of the Decade.

Andy sits on the Board of Directors for The Ad Council, which uses the power of communications to tackle the most pressing issues facing the country. He has served on a number of other Boards as well, including for the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) Health Group, one of the nation's largest nonprofit independent provider of home health, hospice, and community-based care.

Andy has a passion for engaging with students and young professionals as they plan their careers. He has lectured at colleges and universities across the country and currently serves on the University of Florida Public Relations Department Advisory Council and as an adviser to Syracuse University's Newhouse PR Practitioners Group.

In December 2019, Andy was inducted into the PR Week Hall of Fame. He also was honored with the John W. Hill Award, which recognizes professional achievement in public relations, from the New York Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. In addition, he received the Alexander Hamilton Award from the Institute for Public Relations (IPR), the

organization's highest award for lifetime achievement.

Andy received The Holmes Report's Individual Achievement Award in 2016 and has been a fixture on PR Week's Power List for many years. He also has been named PR Week's Global Professional of the Year (Agency) and has received the prestigious Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations' Milestones in Mentoring Award in recognition of his people-centric leadership.

Andy started his career as a journalist, working as a municipal reporter for the Bucks County Courier Times in Levittown, PA, a business and feature writer for the Princeton Packet in Princeton, NJ, and a sportswriter at The Trentonian in Trenton, NJ. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) and sits on the TCNJ Foundation Board of Directors.



**Larry Weber, Chairman & CEO,
Racepoint Global**

Larry is a globally known expert on public relations and marketing services, founder of several successful public relations and interactive marketing agencies and author of six forward-thinking marketing books. Recognized as a thought leader on the convergence of technology, the Web, and communications, Larry has helped both enterprise and emerging companies become powerhouse brands; his client experience

includes ARM, AT&T, Boston Scientific, Coca-Cola, General Electric, General Motors, IBM, John Deere, Kaiser Permanente, Microsoft, PTC, Panasonic, the Pittsburgh Steelers, SAP, and Verizon Wireless.

Larry has nearly 40 years of experience as CEO of both mid- and large-scale companies. He is co-founder and chairman of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Innovation and Technology Exchange (MITX), the largest interactive advocacy organization in the world. Additionally, he sits on the Board of Directors for Pegasystems, Inc. (PEGA) in Cambridge, Mass. and Macromill Group (TYO:3730) in Japan. In January 2019, Larry released his latest book, *Authentic Marketing: How to Capture Hearts and Minds Through the Power of Purpose*, published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. *Authentic Marketing* discusses the need for all companies to have a corporate purpose in order to capture the hearts and minds of today's audiences.