

# **Executive Roundtable: Reframing Account Management for Organic Growth**

**On-Demand Video**

# Reframing Account Management for Organic Growth: Unlearning and the Advent of New Thinking



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## Event Overview

[CommPRO](#) in partnership with [TPC Growth](#) recently brought together agency leaders for a virtual breakfast discussion on the future of organic growth and the importance of the approach. What works, and what doesn't in 2020? The trends? The opportunities? The strategies? This discussion includes approaches for the current pandemic environment, as well as what our post-Covid world could look like.

## Discussion Topics

- Transforming the Industry Paradigm: The Great Unlearning
- We are in business too: A Ground-up Mindset Shift
- The Excuses we use vs. The New Thinking
- The Approach: A Simple Equation
- Five Cardinal Sins of Client Relationships: Required Redemption for Organic Growth

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## Hosts



**J. Mark Riggs, CEO, [TPC Growth](#)**

Mark is the founder and CEO of [TPC Growth](#) which is management consultancy that exists to be the go-to resource for marketing/communications agencies to discover and reveal pathways to organic growth while changing the mindset of an RFP-obsessed industry.

Before starting TPC Growth, Mark spent 20 years in the agency world working for IPG's Mullen Lowe, an Ad Age A-List Agency, Taylor, the Holmes Report's Consumer Agency of the Decade, MWWPR and French/West/Vaughan, the Southeast's largest independent agency where on multiple occasions he grew small accounts into multi-million-dollar accounts.



**Britt Carter, President, [TPC Growth](#)**

Britt Carter is an executive-level public relations and crisis counselor with more than 20 years of experience in brand-building, reputation management, and crisis communications. Britt's clients over the years include Fortune 500 companies, major health systems, and many public and private colleges and universities. Prior to TPC Growth, Britt was Sr. Partner and General Manager for Fleishman-Hillard's North Carolina Offices.

## Guests



**Barbara Bates, CEO, [Hotwire Global](#)**

Barbara started her career as an on-air journalist, then transitioned into the Benjamin Group – a leader in tech communications at the time. Soon after, she joined forces with her two best friends, who had been working with Regis McKenna, to create Eastwick – the first independent, fully tech-focused agency in Silicon Valley.

Barbara has guided clients to new levels of visibility and success. Her ability to understand market direction and product potential helps companies' move toward their vision and live out their purpose. Her leadership of Hotwire (and formerly Eastwick) has helped create hundreds of millions of dollars in value for top technology companies by directing their messaging and positioning, as well as building their brand profiles. Under Barbara's leadership, clients have included Facebook, BMC, Seagate, Dell Software, HP, Adobe and Fujitsu, to name a few.

After 25 years of building her own agency, Eastwick, into one of the most preeminent technology-focused communications firms in the country, Barbara's agency was acquired by Hotwire in late September 2016. She served just eight months as the CEO of North America, before being appointed to the role of Global CEO – responsible for driving the strategic direction of the business for all Hotwire offices around the world. She now leads a staff of nearly 300 people globally in 12 offices and 16 countries on a relentless mission to be the best agency clients and employees will ever work with.



**Ted Birkhan, President, [Hot Paper Lantern](#)**

Ted Birkhahn is co-founder and president of Hot Paper Lantern (HPL), a NYC-based integrated communications firm that helps aspiring brands create greater relevance. At HPL, Ted is in charge of business development and works closely with some of the firm's largest integrated accounts, where he leverages nearly 25 years of experience helping brands communicate strategically with their most coveted audiences.

Giving back to the profession and global community is also a big part of Ted's life. He is a proud board member of several leading organizations – including College of Charleston's Department of Communication Advisory Council, Hands Up for Haiti, Shames JCC on the Hudson and Youth About Business.

Interested in learning more? Reach out to Ted at [tedb@hotpaperlantern.com](mailto:tedb@hotpaperlantern.com).



**Jennifer Cohan,**  
**President, Edelman New York**

Jennifer Cohan is president of Edelman New York, the firm's largest office with over 900 employees. In her role, Jennifer advises clients, develops new products and leads a group of professionals who evolve, promote and protect many of the world's most progressive companies and brands.

A passionate advocate for insight-driven big ideas, Jennifer creates measurable programs for clients in the food, personal care, financial services, consumer health, retail, apparel, household, technology and automotive sectors. She is the chief author of brandshare, Edelman's study of consumers' evolving relationship with expectation of brands.

Jennifer joined Edelman in 2013 after serving as managing director of Golin New York and deputy managing director of Cohn & Wolfe London, where she led client engagements in Europe and Asia. Her work has been recognized for efficacy and innovation by PRWeek, The Holmes Report, AdAge Campaign and Marketing.

Jennifer serves on the board of One-to-World, a nonprofit

educational organization that provides cultural immersion for New York City-based international students.



**Linda Descano, CFA,<sup>®</sup>**  
**Executive Vice President,**  
**Red Havas**

Linda is an executive vice president of Red Havas in New York. Linda specializes in providing strategic counsel on corporate communications, executive visibility, issues and crisis management, and Merged Media communications strategies to global corporations and organizations. Prior to joining Red Havas in 2015, Linda was managing director and global head of content marketing and social media at Citi; other roles during her tenure at Citi included president and CEO of Women & Co., the award-winning financial lifestyle community for women, and director and portfolio manager of the Citi Social Awareness Investment program. A PR News PR Professional of the Year and one of Campaign U.S. Digital's 40 over 40 honorees, Linda brings a unique blend of storytelling experience and investment acumen, complemented by work in B2B, B2C and B2B2C, giving her an uncanny ability to help clients create authentic conversations and campaigns.



**Renée Edelman, Senior Vice**  
**President, Global Human**  
**Resources, Edelman**

Renée Edelman serves as Alumni Relations lead for Edelman, a global communications firm, to build a strong network for the firm's alumni globally. She also helps recruit young people to Edelman and worked for nearly a year on the firm's Diversity & Inclusion team.

Renée previously was a senior media strategist in Edelman's U.S. Technology practice. She brings more than 25 years of experience in building market share and thought leadership on behalf of technology and digital media clients. She has handled multinationals and growth companies, such as eBay, Flex, EMC and RSA, The Security Division of EMC, Veritas Software, UPS, Gartner Group, Adobe, Oracle and Fujitsu America.

She helped found PR21, which became Zeno Group, Daniel J. Edelman Holdings' second public relations brand, in early 1998, and represented digital media and software companies, including Time Inc. New Media and CNNfn.com. She led work for Oracle between 2001 and 2003.

Before joining Edelman, she spent five years as a journalist, working at the New York *Daily News*; *The Home News*, New Brunswick, N.J.; and *Women's Wear Daily*. She earned a B.A. in English from Yale University. She graduated with an M.S.J. from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. Renée serves on the board of directors of the Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM).



**Amy Falk, President, [Falk PR](#)**

A versatile, result-driven, B2B/B2C integrated marketing and communications strategist trusted with driving awareness, perception change, and mass media coverage, while building brand allegiance through creative and integrated marketing strategies. A fierce advocate for brands/clients and a passionate storyteller developing content for various platforms to advance brand awareness and drive user engagement utilizing a calculative approach to quantitative and qualitative brand analysis, identifying 'the gap' and launching comprehensive 360° brand building that raises awareness, shapes perceptions, and creates demand by translating strategy statement into ideas and actions. Ability to expand communications planning influence beyond Context Strategies and communications plans into orchestrated marketing tactics that deliver on stated goals using agreed to marketing and communications strategies.

Successful in positioning companies for growth, new product launches, brand management, customer base and market share expansion, and product line growth in competitive domestic and international markets, recognizing and integrating the needs (solutions and products) of customers with the company's capabilities and business objectives. Strong subject matter expertise and project management skills with a history of delivering complex, multi-phased projects on-time, in line with budget expectations, and aligned to marketing strategy.



**Sandra Fathi, President,**  
**Affect**

An ardent entrepreneur, Sandra Fathi has spent the last 20 years helping technology, healthcare and professional services

companies achieve their goals. As President and Founder of Affect, a public relations, marketing and social media agency, Sandra has successfully led the company with consistent growth since the agency's inception in 2002.

Sandra started her career as a reporter for a division of Ziff Davis and IDG Tech Network. She went on to work at a number of leading technology firms and one of the top global PR agencies. Her clients have included Apple, EDS, Ericsson, Nokia and Microsoft, as well as innovative start-ups.

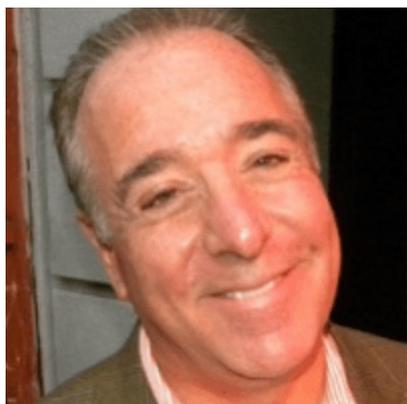
Sandra is also active in the communications industry and professional community. She has been a board member of the PR Council and has served as Chair of PRSA's Tri-State District, President of PRSA-NY and President of the PRSA Technology Section. She is a sought-after speaker for conferences and events and her expert commentary has appeared in business and industry outlets such as CNN, Forbes, Entrepreneur, Inc., Huffington Post and U.S. News & World Report. Adding to her accolades, Sandra has been recognized as one of PRNews' Top Women in PR, a PRNews PR Professional of the Year finalist, and a Bulldog PR Agency Professional of the Year.



**Neil Foote, President, Foote Communications & President, National Black Public Relations Society**

Neil Foote is a veteran journalist, educator, author and media executive. He draws from his experience at the Miami Herald, Washington Post, Belo Corporation and Tom Joyner's Reach Media where he helped launch BlackAmericaWeb.com. He founder and CEO of Foote Communications, a media consulting firm. He teaches digital and social media for journalists, media management,

media entrepreneurship and business journalism at the University of North Texas' Frank W. & Sue Mayborn School of Journalism. He is director of the Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Conference. The native of Brooklyn, N.Y. also is president of the board for the National Black Public Relations Society, a steering committee member of the Commission on Public Relations Education and serves on various other boards.



**Peter Himler, Founding  
Principal, Flatiron  
Communications, LLC**

Peter Himler is founding principal of Flatiron Communications LLC, a NYC-based PR and digital media consultancy that helps emerging and established organizations capitalize on the latest communications technology and strategies. Flatiron offers its clients digital media engagement, communications training, crisis management, social media programming, influencer and content marketing, and event activation strategy.

Prior to forming Flatiron, with its first client The New York Times, Himler played senior leadership roles in the media practices of Edelman, Burson-Marsteller, Cohn & Wolfe, and Hill and Knowlton. He started his career in the New York entertainment PR firm Zarem Inc. His clients range from digital start-ups to large corporations.

In addition to running Flatiron, Himler has written for Forbes on the intersection of media, technology and marketing, a topic on which he's spoken at The Web Summit and Collision conferences. He also founded and edits the Medium publication "Adventures in Consumer Technology" with its 48,000 followers

and frequently resides on Twitter, LinkedIn and WhatsApp.

Himler serves as president of the Publicity Club of New York, is active with the New York Tech Meetup, and heads the Marketing Advisory Council for Tufts University from which he holds a B.A. in Political Science and French. He and his wife Barbara reside in New York City and are parents to three exceptional sons.



**Evan Kraus, President & Managing Director of Operations, [APCO Worldwide](#)**

Evan Kraus is president, managing director of operations and managing director, Washington, D.C., at APCO Worldwide.

Mr. Kraus has served as a senior strategic counselor for many of the world's largest businesses – helping them optimize their Web presence; tell a better corporate story; “push” their messages out to target audiences; shape online issue debates; identify, attract and mobilize supporters and endorsers; conduct outreach to bloggers and other new media channels; and analyze the online environment to form strategy.

Mr. Kraus is an expert in the emerging fields of media convergence – the blending of online and offline content into a highly integrated, dynamic and fast-moving news flow – and is a leader in movement marketing. He founded APCO's globally integrated Digital practice. In partnership with the Huffington Post and APCO's in-house opinion research arm, APCO Insight, he pioneered a new proprietary approach to engaging social influencers called SocialEQ.

Mr. Kraus has been recognized by PR News' as Digital

Communicator of the Year, is a contributor to the Huffington Post and is frequently asked to speak and write on the latest trends in online communication to groups like the Conference Board, the Public Affairs Council, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the International Public Relations Association (IPRA), Bulldog Media, the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) and the Council of Public Relations Firms.

Prior to joining APCO in 1996, Mr. Kraus worked as a consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton. He holds his Bachelor of Science in aerospace engineering from the School of Engineering and Applied Science at the University of Virginia.



## **Grace Leong, CEO & Partner, Hunter**

Grace Leong is a passionate advocate for the modern practice of integrated marketing communications. Recently named a “Champion of PR” by PRWeek magazine, Grace elevates the role of PR in the marketing mix among Hunter’s best in class clients in consumer products and services by infusing programs with new technologies, resources and solutions that drive business results.

In a career spanning 30 more than years, Grace has conceived and led of dozens award winning communications programs and initiatives for Fortune 100 consumer products companies including 3M, Johnson & Johnson, Church & Dwight and Pompeian. Classically educated and credentialed as both a public relations professional and marketer, Grace embraces her role as the female lead of a diverse communications consultancy

which is driven by creativity, exceptional client service and a dedication to achieving measurable business results.

Inspired by a foundation in earned media, Grace has driven the evolution of HUNTER into new services, new territories, and new industries through her ability to recognize the sweet spot between her client's evolving communications needs and staff's talents, and funneling investment into their development, while delivering best in class results for the clients that partner with Hunter.

Not a fan of the spotlight herself, Grace believes doing great work every day sets the best leadership example, and is most often found in the "brainstorm room" driving the next big idea or and at the IMC table contributing best-in-class PR strategy. Her skills as a communications expert come in handy at home as well, as the mother of four young adults who enjoying challenging their parents with their own academic and athletic objectives.

An accredited member of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the Arthur W. Page Society, Grace has served the public relations and marketing industry in numerous leadership positions. In 2016, she was awarded the PRSA-NY John W. Hill Award for lifetime achievement in public relations. Grace earned a BA from the University of Delaware and an MBA from Rutgers University. She was named the Delaware's outstanding alumni in 2013 and inducted in to the University's Alumni Hall of Fame in 2016 for lifetime professional achievement and service to the Blue Hen Community.



**Richard S. Levick, Esq.,  
Chairman & CEO, LEVICK**

Television news contributor on crisis and public affairs communications; columnist for multiple publications including *Forbes*; book author; pioneer of litigation communications; globally recognized crisis communications keynote speaker; professor at the Fordham University School of Law.

Under his leadership, LEVICK has set new standards in global communications and brand protection for corporations, countries, and major institutions. Mr. Levick is one of the communications industry's most important spokespersons and thought leaders.

A powerful advocate for the strategic initiatives that companies must pursue in today's perilous environment, he regularly addresses corporate boards as well as industry and government leaders around the world, providing guidance on their most complex communications and reputation management challenges. He is featured in, and authors, countless articles, and is a frequent guest on prime time national and international television programs.

Mr. Levick is a much-sought after keynote and graduation speaker and is a columnist for the top business blogs including *Forbes*.

Mr. Levick has co-authored five books including, *The Communicators: Leadership in the Age of Crisis*; *Stop the Presses*; *The Crisis and Litigation PR Desk Reference*; *365*

*Marketing Meditations; and Lessons for Absent Children.*



**Maggie O'Neill, Senior Partner & Chief Client Officer, Peppercomm**

As Chief Client Officer, I provide agency-wide communications and brand experience support to the agency's expanding portfolio of clients. From Fortune 500 companies to start-up technology brands, I specialize in crafting compelling brand stories that reach target audiences at critical points in their path to engagement. I have worked with brands such as MINI, Whirlpool, Sharp, Darden Restaurants, Tyco and Capital One.

I am also the founder of Peppercomm's experiential division and have brought brands such as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Saint Gobain and GE to life through events and sponsorships. Prior to joining the agency, I worked in the entertainment field, supporting movie festivals, premieres, indie filmmakers and personal celebrity publicity.



**Kass Sells, Global Chief Operating Officer and President of International, WE Communications**

As WE Communications' Global Chief Operating Officer and President of International, Kass Sells oversees the agency's

EMEA and APAC regions, the global development of WE's Integrated Services and Insights & Analytics efforts, along with Global Marketing, PLUS and WE company partners. In short, Sells brings together the teams and the resources necessary to deliver great campaigns across the entire media ecosystem, building enduring brand equity and business impact. A member of WE's Global Leadership Team, Sells is an agency operator who drives impressive growth across the agency and increases collaboration across international markets.

Throughout his 25+ year agency career, Sells has focused on three things: clients, people, and delivering work that changes perceptions. At TBWA Chiat/Day he created national campaigns for the nation's largest savings bank. As SVP/Director of Business Development at DDB, he led multiple client's integrated campaigns with a mix of advertising, PR and media. At FCB, where he led the agency's Seattle and West Coast operations, he grew his advertising, digital, direct and CRM skills, leading the team that built HP's largest B2B loyalty marketing program. Before joining WE in 2015, he grew Wunderman's Seattle office into one of the agency's largest and most successful. He then brought numerous cross-functional WPP agencies together on Team Microsoft to create and land campaigns in more than 40 countries. Along the way, he led the rollout of McDonald's premium coffee, the global launch of Microsoft Surface and Xbox One, and T-Mobile's first customer loyalty program. In his time at WE, Sells has overseen teams driving integrated communications and marketing work with Volvo, Ste. Michelle Wine Estates, McDonald's, iRobot, Honeywell and driven a return to growth in North America during his three years as NA president.

Throughout his career, he's overseen teams that have won Cannes Lions, Effies, ADDYs, Webby, DMA and PR Awards.

Sells serves on the board of The LAGRANT Foundation, helping to bring greater diversity to the PR, Advertising and Marketing industry. And as a member of the WAC 101 Club, he

raises money to support amateur athletics in the Pacific Northwest.



**Scott Sobel, SVP, Litigation  
and Crisis Communications,  
kglobal**

Scott Sobel listens to kglobal clients, understands their businesses, and applies ability and imagination to devising strategic plans to meet their goals. He is both an award-winning public relations practitioner and a prize-winning former investigative broadcast journalist at the major market and network levels; beginning his career at The Miami Herald, then working in broadcast markets in Jacksonville, Tampa, Denver, New York City and filing his last TV story in Boston. He brings both backgrounds to bear while counseling clients, along with a passion to exceed client expectations.

He has advised an eclectic list of clients, including: law firms and law schools, universities, charities, manufacturers of aviation and pet food products, associations, healthcare businesses, hospitals, financial businesses, and entertainers. Scott manages the most sensitive public relations and media relations challenges for clients, many of whom are involved in litigation or government investigations. Simply put, he gets high-profile clients in the news and keeps them out of the news based on his intimate understanding of journalism practices and a working knowledge of the law and government.

Prior to joining kglobal, Scott began his public relations career as a regional director for Tele-communications, Inc. and AT&T Broadband, where he handled public relations, media and government relations assignments, and also led national

media training teams. Scott's background features the management of his own Washington, DC-based, public relations agency, Media & Communications Strategies. Before that, he led dozens of practitioners in three countries for GlobalLearningSystems and was a senior vice president and litigation and crisis team leader for Levick Strategic Communications.



**Davia Temin, President & CEO, Temin and Company**

As President and CEO of Temin and Company – a boutique management consultancy that helps corporations and organizations create, enhance and save their reputations and coaches board directors and C-Suite executives – Davia Temin works with some of the most talented and impactful leaders in the world, helping them to refine and strengthen their vision, voice and market position in times of crisis and opportunity.

Temin and Company specializes in crisis, reputation, and culture management, and corporate governance for global companies, professional services firms, foundations, colleges and universities, and governments. Davia serves as a spokesman during crises, strategist, and leadership and communications coach at the board, CEO and executive committee levels.

Temin and Company works with clients to create brand-distinguishing thought leadership and best practices in governance and corporate leadership, as well as to promote women's leadership, provide socially responsible marketing,

media and social media strategy and execution, and create cultures supportive of gender equity.

Davia is a frequent speaker around the world on crisis, reputation, and culture management, leadership, corporate governance, women's leadership, resilience and what boards and leaders need to know about media, social media and artificial intelligence. A nationally recognized writer, commentator and expert in her fields, she has appeared on *CBS*, *CNN*, *NBC*, *Bloomberg*, *PBS*, *ABC*, and in *The Wall Street Journal*, and numerous other publications and networks around the world.

Prior to founding the firm 21 years ago with the backing of GE, Davia headed Corporate Marketing for GE Capital, Schroders, Scudder, Citi Investment Bank and Columbia Business School. An Honors graduate of Swarthmore College, she serves on their Board. For nine years she served as First Vice Chair of the Board of Girl Scouts of the USA and Chair of their National Fund Development Committee – originating their \$1 billion campaign for girls, the largest fundraising campaign for girls in the world. She is Chair the of Board of Video Volunteers, an India-based investigative media nonprofit, and sits on the Boards or Advisory Boards of ProPublica, The Knight-Bagehot Fellowship, Committee for Economic Development, Harvard Women's Leadership Board, WomenCorporateDirectors (WCD), Girl Scouts of Greater New York, WCD New York Leadership Council, and Predmore Holdings. She is a member of Columbia's Women Creating Change Leadership Council, and also serves as an advisor to AI startups Chinook.ai and Springboard.ai.



## Ronn Torossian, Chairman & Founder, 5W Public Relations

Ronn Torossian is the founder and CEO of 5W Public Relations, one of the largest independently-owned PR firms in the United States. With over 20 years of experience crafting and executing powerful narratives, Torossian is one of America's most prolific and well-respected Public Relations professionals.

Since founding 5WPR in 2003, he has led the company's growth, overseeing more than 175 professionals in the company's headquarters in the iconic Helmsley Building in Manhattan. With clients spanning corporate, technology, consumer and crisis, in addition to digital marketing and public affairs capabilities, 5WPR is regularly recognized as an industry leader and has been named "PR Agency of the Year" by the American Business Awards on multiple occasions.

Throughout his career, Torossian has worked with some of the world's most visible companies, brands and organizations. His strategic, resourceful approach has been recognized with numerous awards including being named the Stevie American Business Awards 2020 Entrepreneur of the Year, the American Business Awards PR Executive of the Year, twice over, an Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year semi-finalist, Metropolitan Magazine's Most Influential New Yorker, and a 2020 Top Crisis Communications Professional by Business Insider.



## 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.