

PRWeek

Portraits of power

► Unlike other industries, there is no generally accepted definition for what constitutes power in PR. Some individuals are powerful because of the profile of their company or clients. Others yield great influence in media or political circles. And there are those who are powerful because they have mentored leaders who carry on their philosophy. As communicators continue to assert a larger profile in companies and campaigns, *PRWeek's* editorial team looks across a range of criteria and individuals to devise this ranking of 25 industry leaders who wield power in ways that are critical for the profession's growth and development.

Defining qualities

- Financial stewardship
- Thought leadership
- External visibility
- Innovation
- Affiliations
- Professional tree (mentoring)
- Media influence
- Political influence
- Client/company profile
- Public service

MARK PENN

Worldwide CEO, Burson-Marsteller

As the man who identified the "soccer mom" while President Clinton's pollster, Mark Penn has long been at the right hand of significant national power and hard-data insight into key political and socioeconomic trends. Now a chief adviser to presidential candidate Sen.



Hillary Clinton (D-NY) – not to mention CEO of Burson – his influence on political messaging is greater than ever. His book, *Microtrends*, identifies marketable seg-

ments of society uncovered by the kind of polling done by Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, which Penn cofounded. So clearly perceived is his power, that Penn faces questions about the propriety of serving Clinton and Burson. Penn says he has recused himself from Burson work that conflicts with his Clinton efforts, but reportedly retains personal oversight of Microsoft.



RICHARD EDELMAN

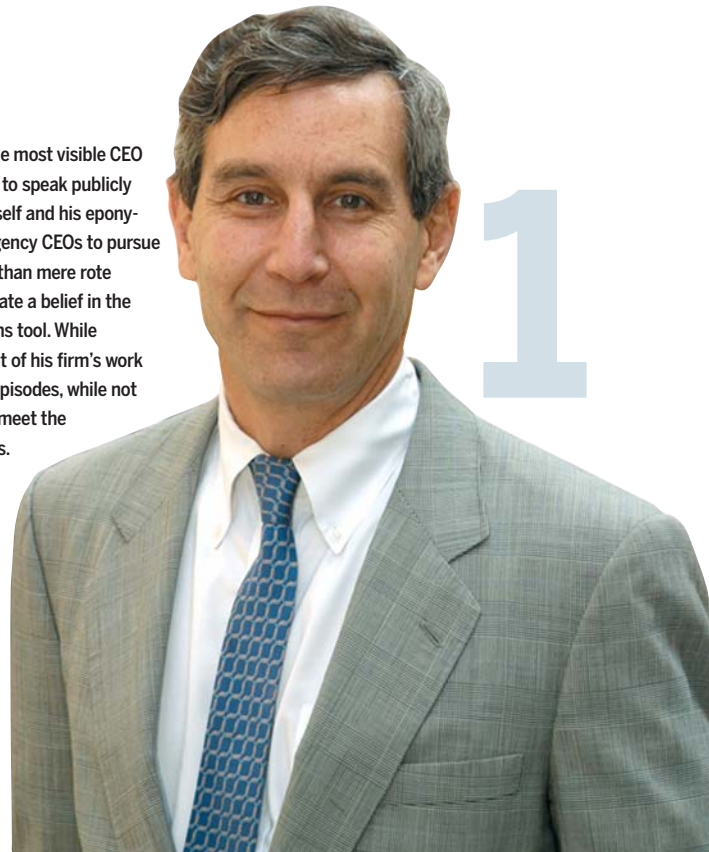
CEO, Edelman

Richard Edelman has gone to great lengths to become the most visible CEO of any PR agency in the world. Making a concerted effort to speak publicly about issues facing the industry, he has established himself and his eponymous firm as thought leaders. By being one of the few agency CEOs to pursue blogging with dedication and honest enthusiasm, rather than mere rote recitation of marketing phrases, he has helped demonstrate a belief in the transformative power of the Internet as a communications tool. While Edelman has run into controversies – primarily as a result of his firm's work with high-profile client Wal-Mart – his reaction to these episodes, while not satisfying to everyone across the political spectrum, did meet the mark for openness not always employed by PR executives. Edelman's stewardship of his agency, the largest independent firm in the industry, is itself enough to establish him as one of the most influential people in PR. Last year, the company boasted a global revenue of \$337 million, a more than 25% increase from the previous year. Having had the foresight to remain independent throughout the frenzy of holding-company acquisitions, Edelman's continued success may provide a blueprint for others to follow.



CHARLOTTE OTTO
Global external relations officer, Procter & Gamble

Charlotte Otto's power is probably greater than any other corporate communications executive for the simple fact that she oversees PR for 22 billion-dollar brands. She is a thought leader who helped give every PR pro the ammunition needed to walk into the C-suite and say, "PR is as effective as advertising, and I can prove it." She was the driving force behind P&G's landmark research effort that showed that not only could PR's effectiveness be measured, but also that within the marketing mix it was equally, if not more, effective than advertising. Otto is also very visible in Cincinnati, home to P&G's corporate headquarters. She serves on the Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority and the Cincinnati Center City Development Corp. Otto has also held past posts at more than a dozen other local organizations.



1

LESLIE DACH

EVP of corporate affairs and government relations, Wal-Mart

When Leslie Dach left Edelman to join Wal-Mart in 2006, he parlayed a post as a premier agency public affairs guru into a role as one of the US' highest-profile in-house communicators. Since he arrived, Wal-Mart has improved its employee health plan, offered cheap prescription drugs, and instituted one of corporate America's strongest environmental programs to reduce waste and promote sustainability. That program has become a model for the rest of big industry, and it's Dach who is in control, which speaks to the power he has to influence the rest of corporate America. While he remains a controversial and closely watched figure, if he succeeds in making Wal-Mart universally palatable, he will cement his reputation as a man who can accomplish anything.



JON IWATA

SVP of communications, IBM

The traditional lament of corporate communicators is that it can be challenging to play a meaningful role in the management of the company. But IBM's Jon Iwata, who reports to CEO Sam Palmisano, has posed a leadership model for navigating the corporate terrain by taking on responsibilities not traditionally doled out to a PR team. As a result, he has positioned both himself and his group firmly at the center of the action. One of the entry points for communications leadership was Iwata's taking control of the corporate intranet, which had languished in the IT function previously. The intranet was the forerunner to what is seen as one of the most sophisticated blogging programs of any corporation, also under Iwata's purview, and the IBM "innovation jams," which bring together employees, clients, and other stakeholders around the world in an interactive forum to assess what is next for the company. Iwata has been slowly taking a more public role recently, where normally he prefers a lower profile. There are many keen to hear what he has to say.



SUPPORTING POWER PLAYERS

Jonathan Carson, CEO, Nielsen BuzzMetrics. A visible figure in the online-monitoring world, Carson proves the importance that Internet buzz has on brand reputation.

Kathy Cripps, president, Council of PR Firms. Cripps is driving the Council's move toward a deeper relationship with marketing executives, a critical shift of direction at a changing time for the industry.

Bill Heyman, president and CEO, Heyman Associates. In an industry where talent is everything, Heyman helps connect some of the most senior pros to jobs, making him an indispensable asset to all involved in executive searches.

Jim Nail, CMO, Cymfony. Nail's visibility extends outside of PR, partly because of his varied background in market research, brand advertising, and direct marketing, but also his aggressive push to get new ideas out there – via his blog, white papers, or speaking at industry conferences.

Shoba Purushothaman, CEO, The NewsMarket. Having the foresight to start an Internet distribution model for broadcast-quality video years ago, she has since developed that idea to build a successful business attracting not just high-level clients, but respected journalists, too.

Peter Wengryn, CEO, VMS. As VMS sheds its "video-tape-company" image, Wengryn is ambitious in his plans for a company that can serve the ad and PR industries equally.

HARRIS DIAMOND

CEO, Weber Shandwick Worldwide
CEO of Constituency Management Group

A long-time agency leader, former political consultant, and corporate ear-whisperer, Harris Diamond expertly straddles the line between business and PR. Being the CEO of arguably the business' biggest PR firm isn't easy. But as the Interpublic Group has been weathering turbulence in the past few years, its CMG division, headed by Diamond, has been a constant bright spot. Weber Shandwick, along with fellow IPG firms GolinHarris, DeVries, and MWW Group, provides a steady positive counterpoint to the ups and downs of the holding company's more unstable properties. WS remains a PR juggernaut, and Diamond's talents will surely be in ever greater demand at higher levels in the holding-company structure. Sarbanes-Oxley prevents him from touting WS as "the world's largest PR firm," but its leadership is assumed. Diamond's drive has been at the forefront of establishing it.



KEN COHEN

VP for public affairs, ExxonMobil

A major point of contention for consumers during the past year and a half has been the rising price of gas and the negative effect that it's had on their wallets. And it's Ken Cohen's responsibility to explain to consumers and the media that despite the company's repeated record-setting quarters of \$10 billion in earnings, it's not the gas companies that set the prices. Cohen and his team got CEO Rex Tillerson on NBC's *Today*, the first energy company CEO to appear on the show to discuss the rising gas prices. Educating the public on how the energy industry works is a top priority for Cohen and his 400 staffers worldwide. The crux of this effort, he told *PRWeek* back in February 2006, was face-to-face discussions with policymakers, citizen groups, and members of the media to go over "Exxon's basic communication tool," called the Energy Outlook presentation. Cohen is also responsible for handling government relations, PR, and corporate communications. In addition, he helped guide the company's entry into the realm of new media; Cohen led ExxonMobil's first briefing with bloggers to explain its position on climate change. While it's a strategy that other companies have certainly taken, Cohen's use of such a tactic speaks to his dedication to demystifying ExxonMobil and relating to consumers on another level.



For more information about Edelman
visit www.edelman.com

GERSHON KEKST

Founder and president, Kekst and Company

You won't see him attending PR industry functions, yet everyone knows his name. Kekst & Co., which he founded more than 35 years ago, is the premier name in the rarefied field of high-level corporate communications. The firms that cater to this niche – corporate crises, financial communications, M&As, bankruptcies, and other pressing issues – are quite competitive because their number is small, and they often go after the same clients. By and large, all are capable. But Kekst stands out for its longevity, exclusivity, and constancy of performance. It consistently ranks at or near the top for M&A volume and value in North America. Gershon himself has earned his influence through the firm he created and for his reputation of being at the end of the phone of many a CEO at the crossroads of crisis or opportunity. Like many other agency founders, he may not be as hands-on with client work today, but his firm still performs at the highest level, proving that his power still percolates throughout all of US business.



MARGERY KRAUS

Founder, president, and CEO, APCO Worldwide

Leading more than 500 staff in offices in all the major world capitals, Margery Kraus has effectively identified and capitalized on the trend toward "business diplomacy," in which corporations seek to protect their commercial interests globally by currying favor with governments, media, NGOs, and other influencers. Bucking the trend of other PR firms that have been swallowed by larger entities, Kraus led a management buyout of the firm in 2004 from Grey Global Group that put APCO back in private hands. The results have been good, with revenue doubling since the buyout and new-client wins in 2006 including CVS, Kraft, and United Airlines. APCO is something of a family affair. Kraus' daughter Mara Hedgecoth serves as VP and marketing director, while son Evan is SVP and director of the APCO Online practice. Kraus also takes pride in her success in a traditionally male-dominated industry and town, and has been widely recognized for her business-building prowess.



STEVE HARRIS

VP of global communications, GM

Steve Harris came back to General Motors in 2006 to help the company turn things around. Like the other two-thirds of Detroit's Big Three, GM has seen some hard times over the past few years, including being surpassed by Toyota as the world's top automaker. Part of Harris' plan has been his steadfast belief and efforts in knocking down the walls between PR, advertising, and all of the other marketing disciplines to create a more holistic marketing approach, which is what's needed to attract today's automotive consumer. The general media and auto trades have taken their shots at the company, but Harris has stood his ground and has been very transparent with the state of the company. Harris has also been a driving force behind GM's new-media efforts and looks to incorporate it into all of the department's planning. Harris is constantly pushing for the best way to communicate to various audiences.

