

Advertising Business Linked to Deaths and Greenwashing

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

✓ Fact Checked

July 20, 2022

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Advertising agencies wield great power over public opinion, and prosecutors are increasingly starting to look at PR firms' roles in cases where corporations are accused of serious malfeasance or fraud
- › Hundreds of climate-related court cases are now looking at the role advertising firms played in greenwashing
- › We're seeing a similar trend happening in the drug industry, where ad agencies are starting to be held to account for the "legal lies" they spin on behalf of their clients. In February 2021, McKinsey & Company, a management consultancy firm, paid \$573 million to settle a case in which they were accused of complicity by giving marketing advice to manufacturers of opiates, which have killed more than half a million people
- › May 6, 2021, Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey sued Publicis Health, accusing the company of "collecting more than \$50 million in exchange for marketing schemes to get doctors to prescribe Purdue's opioids to more patients, in higher doses, for longer periods of time." Publicis tried to have the case dismissed, but failed
- › Aside from hiring big advertising companies to push their wares, drug companies keep the truth from being known through the use of fact checkers

Advertising agencies wield great power over public opinion, and prosecutors are increasingly starting to look at PR firms' role in cases where corporations are accused of serious malfeasance or fraud. For example, CampaignAsia.com recently reported that:¹

“Hundreds of new greenwashing-related court cases have increased the pressure on PR and advertising agencies, as prosecutors begin to widen their net in terms of who should bear responsibility for the controversial practice ...

Since May 2021, 369 climate-related lawsuits against agencies have been concluded, with 218 of those (58%) ruling against the PR and advertising firms ... Over the past five years the number of lawsuits relating to the role of PR and advertising in climate change has doubled. The cases are mainly US-based, but span 39 countries in total.”

Smoke and Mirrors

The data reported by CampaignAsia come from the report,² “Smoke and Mirrors: The Legal Risks of Fossil Fuel Advertising,” published in May 2022 by a climate-change activist organization called Clean Creatives.

The report names WPP, IPG, Dentsu, Publicis and Omnicom — four holding companies that in turn run dozens of individual PR agencies — as being particularly vulnerable to greenwashing lawsuits, as they all work to improve the public image of fossil fuel clients “while they continue to pollute the earth.”

According to Clean Creatives director Duncan Meisel, PR companies take “significant reputational, business and legal risks when they work with fossil fuel companies to spread climate disinformation,” as their work not only hurts the planet but could also land them in court. Meisel also warns that ad agencies may be duped themselves by clients who withhold damaging information, and that such naiveté could end up being costly.

The ESG Scam

Investing in “green” companies has skyrocketed in recent years, but many of these companies aren’t what they claim to be. According to climate change think tank InfluenceMap, a majority of “green” equity funds fall short.

Of the 723 funds marketed using Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) claims, more than half failed to meet the Paris Accord rules on carbon emissions and clean energy, and “more than 70% of the funds with broader ESG goals are also misaligned with global climate targets,” Time magazine reported.³

InfluenceMap noted that BlackRock Inc. — the world’s largest investment firm, which has vowed to make sustainability a core investment strategy — still invests in fossil fuels. The same goes for other major investment companies.

State Street Corporation, for example, which is the third largest, owns a portion of Marathon Petroleum and Philips 66 which, according to InfluenceMap, are “two of the world’s most egregious fossil fuel lobbying companies preventing policy-based climate action.”⁴

Similarly, a May 2021 report⁵ by the Economist concluded some of the largest ESG funds in the world are “stuffed full of polluters and sin stocks.” According to a 2019 report by the Wall Street Journal,⁶ “Eight of the 10 biggest U.S. sustainable funds are invested in oil-and-gas companies, which are regularly slammed by environmental activists.”

Aside from oil and gas, other top ESG investments include tobacco companies and casino operators,⁷ neither of which is particularly well-known for high ethical standards. In a March 2021 USA Today op-ed, former chief information officer of sustainable investing for BlackRock, Tariq Fancy, said the quiet part out loud:⁸

“In truth, sustainable investing boils down to little more than marketing hype, PR spin and disingenuous promises from the investment community.”

McKinsey & Company Fined for Consulting That Led to Deaths

We’re also seeing a similar trend happening in the drug industry, where ad agencies are starting to be held to account for the “legal lies”⁹ they spin on behalf of their clients.

For example, in February 2021, McKinsey & Company, a management consultancy firm, paid \$573 million to settle a case in which they were accused of complicity by giving

marketing advice to manufacturers of opiates — including the maker of Oxycontin, Purdue Pharma — which have killed more than half a million people.¹⁰ CampaignAsia writes:¹¹

“Lauren Papenhausen, a partner at White & Case, said the McKinsey settlement is ‘particularly noteworthy in that it signals a willingness on the part of the government to pursue not only manufacturers, but also those who provide them professional services.

While one might view the settlement as unique to the particular context of opioids, it raises the question of whether governmental concern over particular marketing strategies is a sign of enforcement efforts to come.”

A late June 2022 article by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health also highlighted obtained litigation documents¹² showing McKinsey’s role in the opioid epidemic:¹³

“They show how McKinsey advised opioid makers Purdue Pharma, Endo Pharmaceuticals, Johnson & Johnson and Mallinckrodt to help them increase sales, despite the growing public outcry over the opioid epidemic ...

Materials include scopes of work, proposals, and invoices; presentations prepared for internal discussion and for clients (including Purdue Pharma and Endo Pharmaceuticals); spreadsheets outlining project staffing; and emails responding to news about increased restrictions on opioids.

The collection also houses letters from regulatory agencies, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, in response to new drug applications from opioid manufacturers; preparation materials for regulatory advisory committee meetings; opioid-related transition documents for state and federal agencies; and other internal files.

‘These documents now form a unique and invaluable public resource to help us comprehend the magnitude of harm done to the millions of Americans affected

by the opioid crisis,' said Jeremy Greene, MD, PhD, MA, William H. Welch Professor of Medicine and the History of Medicine in the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

'More generally, they shine a bright light on the murkier intersections of science, industry, and financial interest that continue to characterize the U.S. health care system' ...

'Researchers can leverage these litigation documents to see patterns of industry behavior that could be regulated to protect public health,' said Dorie Apollonio, PhD, MPP, a professor of clinical pharmacy in the UCSF School of Pharmacy. 'This will be critical to identifying reforms that can protect against future epidemics like this.'

McKinsey Played Both Cop and Robber

We recently discovered that the situation is even more corrupt than previously thought. A U.S. House investigation^{14,15,16} into McKinsey, based on materials obtained through the discovery process of various lawsuits, also revealed McKinsey was advising the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on the safety of opioids, while at the same time advising drug companies on how to maximize sales.

In one instance, McKinsey wrote scripts for Purdue to use in its meeting with the FDA to discuss the safety of OxyContin in pediatric populations. In another, Jeff Smith, a senior McKinsey consultant, worked on a risk evaluation and mitigation strategy (REMS) for OxyContin while simultaneously advising the FDA about the drug's safety.¹⁷

As noted by investigative journalist Paul Thacker,¹⁸ "Just think about that for a moment – for years McKinsey played both cop and robber." As reported by The New York Times, April 13, 2022:¹⁹

"Since 2010, at least 22 McKinsey consultants have worked for both Purdue and the FDA, some at the same time, according to the committee's 53-page report ...

The firm provided no evidence to the committee that it had disclosed the potential conflicts of interest as required under federal contracting rules — an ‘apparent violation,’ the report said. McKinsey also allowed employees advising Purdue to help shape materials that were intended for government officials and agencies ...

‘Today’s report shows that at the same time the FDA. was relying on McKinsey’s advice to ensure drug safety and protect American lives, the firm was also being paid by the very companies fueling the deadly opioid epidemic to help them avoid tougher regulation of these dangerous drugs,’ Representative Carolyn Maloney, the New York Democrat who chairs the committee, said in a statement ...

A bipartisan group of lawmakers last month introduced legislation²⁰ aimed at preventing conflicts of interest in federal contracting, citing McKinsey’s experience with Purdue and the FDA.”

McKinsey Engaged in Direct Sales

Now, we’ve also come to find that McKinsey²¹ did direct sales for its Big Pharma clients, using in-house sales reps. They actually employed entire sales teams that sold clients’ drugs directly to doctors. This revelation came out of the repository²² of opioid litigation documents set up by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Emails²³ show Publicis offers a similar service where Publicis sales staff sell clients’ products to pharmacies. As reported by The New York Times:²⁴

“The Times found that the firm played a far deeper and broader role in advising clients involved in the opioid crisis than was publicly disclosed ... While the firm held remarkable sway at Purdue, it also advised the largest manufacturer of generic opioids, Mallinckrodt. It worked with Endo on marketing Opana and helped it grow into a leading generics manufacturer.

It advised Johnson & Johnson, whose subsidiary Tasmanian Alkaloids was the largest supplier of the raw materials extracted from poppies used to make many top-selling opioids. Then, as the full brunt of the epidemic became apparent, it counseled government agencies on how to address the fallout ...

Drawing on reams of data and proprietary tools, McKinsey vetted deals and advised on corporate strategy. It developed tactics for dealing with regulators and helped secure approval for new products.

The firm helped clients adopt more aggressive sales strategies, which, on at least two occasions, led companies to shift resources to more potent products.

It profiled and targeted physicians, in some instances trying to influence prescribing habits in ways that federal officials later warned heightened the risk of overdose. And when opioid prescriptions began to decrease during a government crackdown, the records show, McKinsey devised new approaches to drive sales.”

Publicis to Face Charges Over Role in Opioid Crisis

Another advertising company that is in hot water over its role in the opioid crisis is Publicis Health, which crafted many of Purdue’s Oxycontin marketing materials.

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey [sued Publicis Health](#) May 6, 2021, accusing the company of “collecting more than \$50 million in exchange for marketing schemes to get doctors to prescribe Purdue’s opioids to more patients, in higher doses, for longer periods of time.”²⁵ Publicis tried to have the case dismissed, but failed.²⁶

The Truth About Fact Checkers

Aside from hiring big advertising companies to push their dangerous wares, how else are drug companies keeping the truth from coming out? Enter fact checkers. Over the past two years, it’s become quite clear that so-called “fact checkers” are anything but.

While they claim to combat misinformation, they're the ones spreading most of it, and they do it on behalf of the drug industry and the advertising companies that run cover for them.

There are countless examples of conflicts of interest running amuck in fact checking organizations. To list just a few examples:

- Publicis funded the creation of and is partnered with NewsGuard,²⁷ an online “credibility rater”²⁸ to “provide its clients with more responsible, trustworthy advertising platforms.” It’s not far-fetched to assume Publicis might influence NewsGuard’s ratings of drug industry competitors, such as alternative health sites.

NewsGuard’s health-related service, HealthGuard, is also partnered with the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) — a dark money-funded progressive cancel-culture leader²⁹ with extensive ties to government and global think tanks that has labeled people questioning the COVID-19 injection as “threats to national security.”

- As a Google partner,^{30,31} Publicis also has the ability to bury undesirable views that might hurt its clientele.
- Pfizer (a Publicis client³²) also funds Facebook’s fact checking operation,³³ which is why you can’t say anything negative about the COVID jabs on Facebook.
- Pfizer also has significant conflicts of interest with Reuters, which has joined in the fact checking enterprise.³⁴ Reuters chairman (and former CEO) James Smith is both a top investor and board member of Pfizer,³⁵ raising suspicions he might have a vested interest in keeping Pfizer’s media record clear of incriminating details.
- Another fact checking organization called [FactCheck.org](https://factcheck.org) is funded, in part, by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which holds nearly \$2 billion in Johnson & Johnson stock. What’s more, its CEO, Richard Besser, is a former (2009) director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which appears to view the protecting of Big Pharma interests as a full-time job.

The Ultimate Goal of This Network

This [network of players is also intricately tied to the World Economic Forum](#) (WEF), which is using pandemic fears to usher the world into a “Great Reset.” Publicis is a WEF partner,³⁶ as is Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, Google, BlackRock, State Street and a slew of other investment firms — and oil companies.³⁷

Many fact checking organizations belong to the International Fact-Checking Network,³⁸ which is financed by George Soros (through his Open Society Foundation and the National Endowment for Democracy), Google and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation³⁹ — all of whom are part of the WEF’s technocratic cabal that is pushing for a Great Reset.

“ The claim that we must quit using fossil fuels and ‘go green’ to save the planet is a ruse to get people to accept a radically lowered quality of life and greater restrictions on freedom.”

This sort of brings us back to where we started, with the greenwashing of polluters. The entire “green” agenda serves that larger “Reset” goal, and the fact that we’re now seeing so much greenwashing going on in the “green” investment sphere is just more proof that the whole thing is a scam. The claim that we must quit using fossil fuels and “go green” to save the planet is a ruse to get people to accept a radically lowered quality of life and greater restrictions on freedom.

Big Pharma fits into this larger scheme because the WEF needs a justification for the introduction of biomonitoring and biosecurity in the form of a digital vaccine passport. The COVID pandemic was a manufactured crisis that “necessitated” global vaccination, and a way to confirm vaccination.

Vaccination tracking was the chosen foundation for what will become a much larger and more invasive monitor and control system involving your finances as well. With vaccine passports being largely rejected, plan B is to introduce digital identity, which is more or less the same thing, just more complete from the start.

So, the reason these players — from fund managers to PR companies, drug companies, legacy media, social media platforms, search engines and fact checking organizations — are all protecting each other is because they're all cogs in the same machine. They work together to achieve an ultimate goal, which is to put the world population under a system of global technocratic control.