

**The Holmes Report's 2007 Agencies of the Year**

Crisis Agency of the Year

**Sitrick & Company**

Sitrick & Company is still the go-to firm on the west coast for executives or celebrities whose reputations are in crisis. Clients in 2006 ranged from Hewlett-Packard chairman Patricia Dunn, who faced charges of identity theft after detectives looking into board leaks employed underhanded and possibly illegal means to spy on directors and reporters, to actor Wesley Snipes, who found himself in trouble with IRS over alleged tax fraud, to Greg Reyes of Brocade, the first executive to be charged as a result of the options backdating scandal. The firm also represented two of the most prominent companies suing hedge funds for illegal stock manipulation, half a dozen bankruptcies (a specialty of the firm since its inception), and Sitrick has earned the gratitude of clients and (sometimes grudging) respect of reporters by approaching public relations challenges in much the same way a lawyer approaches a trial: the firm does its due diligence, researches the client and the issue, develops a strategy and then presents its case to the target audience the way a lawyer presents his or her case to a judge or jury. That means providing as much concrete evidence as possible to support the client's argument to convince the "jury" (in this case, either the media or a client's key constituents). It's an approach well-suited to Sitrick's areas of expertise, which typically find the firm working with corporations or individuals who are "on trial" in the court of public opinion.