

Hello everyone and welcome.
Please feel free to forward this
newsletter to friends and colleagues.

Always keep in mind that everything you're exposed to in media is just someone else's interpretation of issues and events, so always view it with an open mind. Skillful communication with media and during presentations can make all the difference in how your messages are reported and received. It's a complicated mix of delivery and interpretation and a skill few truly master, but something anyone can learn or improve upon.

Here is a list of issues covered in this newsletter . . . enjoy

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MERCK WITHDRAWS VIOXX _____

Merck is in a real tough spot given the current and future lawsuits it faces over Vioxx. If you have been following this case it is easy to see how important it is to balance the needs of the court of law, with the court of public opinion.

Merck wants to show empathy for the concerns of people who have been taking Vioxx. However, the expression of too much concern, will, in the eyes of legal counsel, be perceived as the admission of a real problem.

Merck announced a voluntary worldwide withdrawal of its Vioxx arthritis and acute-pain medication amid mounting safety questions, and slashed its earnings guidance for the year. Unfortunately, the voluntary announcement was too late to stave off stock price declines.

Vioxx accounted for \$2.5 billion in sales for Merck. The stock plummeted 27% upon the announcement from \$33 to \$12.07 per share that stripped the company of \$25 billion in market capitalization.

Rivals like Pfizer stand to gain considerably from the Merck loss.

Merck was spending more than \$100 million a year in direct to consumer advertising. Only a month before withdrawing Vioxx they sent out a press release stating that, " Merck stands behind the efficacy, overall safety and cardiovascular safety of Vioxx". They seem to imply that the allegations made by the scientific community were nothing to be concerned about.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, see:

Online Press Release from Merck

<http://www.vioxx.com/rofecoxib/vioxx/consumer/index.jsp>

USA Today . . .

http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2004-10-12-vioxx-cover_x.htm

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MEDIA TRAINING BOOTCAMP ____ advertisement

How to confidently handle and leverage even the toughest media interviews.

On October 28, 2004 I'm involved in a telephone conference produced by PR University and hosted by the InfoComGroup. I'll be part of a panel providing advice important to anyone having to deal with media.

After participating in this 90-minute audio conference, you'll come away with a set of solid techniques, interview dos and don'ts, and renewed confidence to help you get maximum results from every media encounter.

The conference will be held on Thursday, October 28, 2004 at 10:00 am Pacific Time/1:00 pm Eastern.

Click here for more information . . .

<http://www.infocomgroup.net/mediatrain/index.html>

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CHINA – CIA – MEDIA ____

I recently returned from a whirlwind trip around the world - literally. I flew to Asia via the Pacific and returned by way of the Atlantic, so I circled the globe - all within seven days. My first stop was in China for two days and then India for a third day of coaching. My client is in the Information Technology sector and I coached the company's leaders in Beijing and Mumbai (Bombay) - both very progressive cities.

China is booming. Capitalism has taken firm hold and with it a desire for a more open press. I read the English language 'China Daily' each morning, and was heartened to read stories critical of government officials. One front-page report however documented the plight of a regional official who was sentenced to death for corruption. I don't care how worldly you are, or well traveled, surprise is warranted here. I know what you're thinking (we could use a little of that kind of deterrent here), but it is a horrific

consequence and puts into perspective the differences in our cultures. I too can think of a few corrupt officials here in the West deserving of harsh penalties, but instead of paying the ultimate price maybe they should be forced to room with Martha Stewart for the next five months. To her credit, Martha as of late was successful in coming across in a warmer, more sympathetic fashion. Unfortunately she had to take the hard route, one that cost her dearly and much more than necessary.

PR Week Magazine recently reported the Chinese government is media-training its spokespeople. If you're interested in an overview of China and their Media views click the link below to see what the CIA have to say . . . interesting stuff.

Central Intelligence Agency – Center for the Study of Intelligence
<http://www.cia.gov/csi/monograph/425050797/1.htm>

PR WEEK - U.S. Agencies helping China media train spokespeople
http://www.prweek.com/news/news_story_free.cfm?ID=218850&site=3

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REPORT ON CANADIAN NEWS MEDIA _____

According to a comprehensive report issued by CMRC (Canadian Media Research Consortium) - when Canadians were asked what the most important factor regarding 'trust' in the news was, 33% reported it was accuracy, 32% said impartiality and 15% said credibility.

37% feel news is 'often' not fair or balanced
42% 'sometimes' not fair or balanced and
18% 'seldom or never' balanced

When asked if they thought news organizations were independent or influenced by powerful organizations, both Canadians and Americans were remarkably similar. 19% of Canadians and 23% of Americans thought news organizations were 'mostly independent,' while a whopping 76% of Canadians and 70% of Americans thought news organizations were often influenced by powerful organizations.

The CMRC put together a detailed report regarding news organizations and how they are perceived in North America. If you'd like to see the complete document please click the link below.

<http://www.cmrccrm.ca/english/reportcard2004/media.html>

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RATHERGATE – DAN RATHER & GEORGE W BUSH _____

Rathergate has already slipped below everyone's radar, but before it disappears completely it's important to note that the story was first delivered through a BLOG. This seemingly inconsequential bit of

information is important because it lends great credibility to the world of online news dissemination.

Mainstream media were scooped and the Bloggerati are now being billed as the “news behind the news.” It wasn’t as if mainstream media didn’t have access to the same information, because they did. Politics and the news go hand in hand. In today’s news climate it is absolutely impossible to hide, bury or deflect news. Everyone everywhere now has access to the public’s ear - the access is immediate and inexpensive too.

Dan Rather, George W. Bush and 60 Minutes are heavyweights in the news industry, and when you can turn stories from and about these icons upside down it signals radical change for everyone.

More info from MediaPost . . .

http://www.mediapost.com/dtIs_dsp_Spin.cfm?fnl=040923

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KERRY FAILS TO STICK TO SCRIPT _____

Resistance to change keeps us from moving forward. There is much to be said for discipline and consistency, but in a roller coaster world, being able to adapt and change our way of thinking and communicating is critically important.

Sometimes a simple answer is the best answer. John Kerry has a reputation for being verbose and confusing. Kerry spent twenty years of his career in the U.S. Senate. As you can imagine, nothing is simple or easy on the Senate floor and Kerry’s style is a strong testament to the complexity politicians face there every day.

President Bush can be accused of slinging malapropisms, but at least we usually know what he means. Conversely Kerry can deviate from the question so radically it’s a challenge to even remember the question, let alone figure out his answer. Kerry has to change his way of thinking if he wants to connect with a majority of Americans and win votes in the few days left in the race.

Being verbose, or wordy can mistakenly lead people to believe you’re being evasive. It also leaves you open to having your words parsed or your message taken out of context. It’s like waving a red cape in front of a bull for journalists, or your detractors. Don’t give anyone ammunition.

The Wall Street Journal reports that at a town hall meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, retired engineer Bob Kirkpatrick praised John Kerry for protesting the Vietnam War and asked his views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Kerry responded by saying that Republican attacks on his Vietnam-era behavior were “really...an attack on the American people.” He then blamed President Bush for attacking American workers who “settle for jobs of \$9,000 or less” and are victims of overseas outsourcing. Kerry’s

answer then segued into weaker workplace safety rules, which were like "attacks" on environmental rules that were leading to "more pollutants."

"Now, with respect to the Mideast and Mideast policy," Kerry finally wound up, saying mainly he would do more than the Bush administration to continue Clinton-era peace negotiations.

"I sensed it was an issue he wanted to avoid," Kirkpatrick said afterwards, and he left the town hall meeting unsure how he would vote.

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HOWARD DEAN REGRETS LACK OF COACHING _____

Howard Dean, failed Democratic candidate for president, admitted that he wished he had better debate preparation and more media training. He was campaigning for the coveted presidential title until February of this year when he dropped out of the running. Why did he give up so early? This is what he said regarding his failed candidacy, "I will take all the blame. I oversaw those decisions and I accepted them and I approved them." The former Vermont governor stated, " my staff were spread too thin, and did poorly handling the press."

It's hard to get out of the gate if you can't effectively manage the media.

Here's the whole story . . . From USA Today . . .
<http://www.jeffansell.com/nv/B1USATodayOct04.htm>

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JEFF'S CALENDAR UPDATE - advertisement

ART OF WOW --- FOR WOMEN ONLY _____

WOW stands for "Wisdom, Opportunity & Wealth" and is a leadership and communications conference for professional women.

Art of WOW helps women executives project stronger leadership and confidence, especially when they have to speak under fire. The conference is a great way to support female leadership skills in your organization!

The next Art of WOW Conferences are:

November 22-23, 2004 in Toronto

February 15-16, 2005 in Toronto

If you're interested in more information or in attending future conferences please contact Jan at Jan@Usheroff.com or call 1.800.844.2206.

We look forward to hearing from you.

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DEALING WITH AN ANGRY PUBLIC – HARVARD LAW _____

The next Dealing With An Angry Public Harvard Law School conference is slated for November 18 & 19, 2004 & May 5-6, 2005. The conference in Cambridge Massachusetts provides strategies for resolving conflicts and disputes with dissatisfied customers, potential litigants and concerned interest groups.

As a faculty member of the Public Disputes Program, part of my agenda explores how to get messages out effectively when dealing with the media and interest groups in controversial situations. Hope to see you there . . .

Click here for more info . . .

<http://www.jeffansell.com/dealing-with-an-angry-public.html>

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CANADIAN PRODUCE MARKETING ASSOCIATION _____

May 13, 2005 I'm guest speaker at the convention of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association in Toronto. In keynotes I deliver around the world, my topics address;

Media Strategies for Angry Publics - Media response techniques to convince skeptical audiences

Simple Strategies to be a Compelling Communicator - Powerful ways to think on your feet and emotionally connect with audiences

Why Should We Trust You? - Word and body language strategies to express your goodwill

To book me to deliver a keynote, please contact Kelly MacDonald of Speakers Spotlight at Kelly@Speakers.ca

END OF CALENDAR UPDATE

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GET CONNECTED _____

The following article, written by my associate Shoana Martin for an IABC (International Association of Business Communicators) publication, reminds us of the importance of one-on-one human relations that too easily get pushed aside in our electronic bustle. Communication is the cornerstone of good leadership.

By Shoana Martin . . .

It seems as though we all crave it. Connection.

In a world of hallway conversations and one word emails, we have abandoned the eloquence of words, especially those that move, drive, motivate, and help us communicate with feeling.

Years of formal education lead to a knowledgeable professional, but not necessarily one who knows how to touch and inspire others.

Many senior executives employ their intellect and education to reach new heights - yet to ascend to the next level leaders need to emotionally connect with people, whether one-on-one or many at once. A leader's responsibility is to communicate vision and to drive their team to create and achieve goals. It is the leader who helps others "feel" the gains emotionally.

For many audiences, proof of a connection with people is seen in the space between a person's words – either in the 'pace' of the delivery, and/or the use of word economy.

Statistics report that people gain only 7% of the impression of us verbally – by the words we use. So why do we rely so heavily on words? Without the vocal intonation, which accounts for 38% of impact, the words alone cannot create a feeling like the use of vocal inflection can. Running the numbers, that leaves the vast majority, 55% depending on the visual - how we look, and carry ourselves.

And when the words are forgotten, a 'feeling' should still remain. In a very real sense, the words may fill people's ears, but the feeling you create is what makes you memorable as a communicator, able to generate impact, emotion and a lasting impression, every time you open your mouth.

Breathe – Breathing will help you ward off the fight or flight syndrome. Breathe from your stomach, rather than your chest. The formula is simple; breathe in, belly out, breathe out, belly in.

Pace your delivery – When we feel nervous, we speak fast. This response is genetically installed in all of us. Remember to breathe, and only deliver one thought, at one time.

Pause – People fear silence, when really, it's your best accessory. Pausing can help you be more convincing and persuasive, plus allow you to command a greater attention.

The reality is many conversations, professional and personal, have emotional subtext – the subtle, hidden meaning that lies a layer beneath what is said. Words are merely the tip of the iceberg. It is what lies beneath the words that count.

Click here for the IABC website . . .
<http://www.iabc.com/>

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GOOD VERSUS EVIL _____

The tried and true “news formula” of good versus evil provides an easy, compelling model to tell stories. Just read the bible.

Can organizations dealing with angry publics succeed in delivering messages, and convince doubting publics? Partly – but it depends on how one defines success. If the objective in communicating with an angry public is to win the war, so to speak, the answer is likely no. If however, at the end of the day the organization demonstrates that it is accountable, has integrity and is determined “to do the right thing” (subjective in itself), that might be considered a victory.

Angry public stories in the media are generally created by Louie-B.-Mayer-type editors and producers who conduct a daily casting call for the news. Reporters are encouraged to seek out a predictable cast of characters in their stories, characters sure to include the hero, villain and incompetent witness and/or expert, preferably dressed in a white lab coat for TV audiences.

Considering the casting call, organizations are best advised to cast their own role, keeping in mind they have already likely been pegged as the bad guy.

To avoid being pigeonholed by the tone and texture of media questions in an angry public situation, be mindful of what I call ‘The Value Compass’, a tool that identifies an organization’s inherent values. ‘The Value Compass’ identifies descriptors an organization would use to reflect how it wants to be seen, especially by doubting publics. Presumably, words like “sincere”, “honest”, “empathetic”, “trustworthy” and “credible” come to mind.

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That's it for this addition of News & Views.
I hope you found it informative and valuable.

I'm Jeff Ansell,

Be well

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DON'T FORGET TO PRINT THIS NEWSLETTER.
Read it on the train or at home.

Check into my site for updates between Newsletters.
<http://www.jeffansell.com/>

I'm always interested in your comments and viewpoints.

_____ Forward News & Views to a friend or colleague_____

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