

Jeff Ansell – Communications Management Strategies

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to my "News & Views" April 2001 Newsletter, and another electronic round in the exciting world of Media, PR and Public Speaking.

I have a number of touch points to share that will hopefully stimulate and inform.

First up . .

Prestigious PRWEEK Magazine interviewed me recently regarding "IBM and the Holocaust," a new book by Edwin Black. The book claims that tabulating machines and punch cards designed and serviced by IBM during the 1930s and 1940s were created with full knowledge that the Nazis would use them to identify, locate, and transfer and exterminate millions of innocent people.

As quoted in the PRWEEK article, "Carol Makovich, VP of IBM's worldwide media relations, refused to comment on the book's accusations and a subsequent federal lawsuit, except to say the company takes the allegations seriously."

She refused to comment. I don't get it? IBM sent out a press release regarding the incident, but refused to offer an explanation when asked? Is this good PR?

Click here for the full PRWEEK story.
<http://www.jeffansell.com/newsansell.htm#prweek>

Click here for My Top 7 Media Tips
<http://www.jeffansell.com/tipsmediaansell.htm>

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I'm currently in the middle of an extended tour of a major North American hotel chain. It is a crisis tour of sorts that has so far taken me to places like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas, Chicago, New York, Boston, Kansas City, Acapulco and Bermuda. My mandate is to train hundreds of hotel representatives, from Regional Vice Presidents to Front Office Managers, on how to communicate effectively in a crisis. For this assignment, I've created crisis scenarios that focus on what to do and say in the event of a fire or earthquake. So far, I've had the opportunity to meet and work with a number of great folks as part of this training assignment. In fact, we did something a little different as part of our assignment in Mexico. Participants mostly spoke Spanish, so the training was conducted by way of an interpreter. I would ask a question in English and then a translator repeated it in Spanish. Trainees listening on headsets then answered in Spanish, while the interpreter put it into English for me, by way of my headset. Despite my initial concern about how well the program would unfold, we had a wonderful day, with participants making strong use of our media techniques --- in Spanish!

Throughout the tour so far, it is incredible to be able to build momentum as we move from simulated catastrophe to catastrophe. I'm learning a lot and am compiling a tremendous amount of information for future reference.

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In times of crisis, companies relying on their reputation to save the day better have goodwill equity in their media relation's bank account. You see, when our news is good, we make deposits

to our goodwill bank account. When our news is bad, we make withdrawals – and we never want to pull on a negative balance.

If you have RealAudio click the link directly below for a quick one minute synopsis regarding how media paraphrases the facts and pulls a color message to the forefront. In a 60 second video clip I explain why it's so important for you to give them the right information.

<http://jeffansell.com/realaudio/colormessage02.ram>

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Interested in how one of North America's largest software retailers dealt with an Angry Public? Click the link below to see what happened when online databases that contained credit card information were hacked and how the president of the company quickly sent out email messages to 3.3 million customers in an effort to avert attempts of fraud. It's an excellent case study with a message for everyone.

<http://www.zdnet.com/smallbusiness/stories/general/0,5821,2685116,00.html>

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As unmanageable as it is, the Internet which certainly may very well be the most powerful medium in history opened up a wonderful world of opportunities and learning for people.

According to a PR Week / Burson-Marsteller CEO survey, a full 35% of Chief Executive's report that their company's Web site is the most helpful outlet in a crisis, and 49% said it makes it easier to manage a company's reputation. Interestingly, 39% also said that an Internet Chat room is the scariest outlet for rumors and falsehoods – almost matching the 41% who said that traditional media was their greatest concern.

Jason Vines, Ford VP of Communications said, "You can't control messages anymore." Ford used its Web site extensively to help manage the Bridgestone / Firestone recall. Vines went on to say, "You have to be a transparent company. If you aren't, bad stuff gets out, and it goes out in milliseconds."

The survey also revealed that more than two thirds of CEO's believe company reputation to be the most valuable asset that a company can have, even more important than earnings. 54% see good PR as being an important tool regarding stock prices.

Not to leave out the traditional, head-in-the-sand CEO, 20% still choose to rely on advertising as their main outlet in a crisis. This same 20% also happen to be more paranoid regarding traditional media and less informed when it comes to understanding how helpful the Internet can be when it's leveraged properly.

There it is folks. Figure it out for yourself. These numbers support what I've maintained for years, if you can capably manage information from the onset, you have a better chance of placing your company in a positive position during times of crisis.

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I must confess . . . I have a love hate relationship and I know I'm not alone . . .

The Internet . . . it drives me crazy. If it isn't a barrage of email, it's a constant onslaught of viruses. Some days I half wish the whole chaotic mess would crash and burn so we could go back to the good old days of Corona and whiteout.

Unfortunately you can't dam the ocean so you better get onboard. A growing number of people have figured out how to leverage the Internet in the name of advocacy. If you're looking to rally support for your cause, the Internet is the place to be. You can publish newsletters, swap information in Newsgroups and throw up a Web site in the blink of an electron. The medium is so powerful that many large corporations constantly monitor it in order to find out what people are saying about them. Companies are popping up everyday to help defend corporate honor.

The Internet is so large and unmanageable that it would be ludicrous to tackle it without expert technical support and PR skills. Advocacy groups have a world podium that grows larger every day. They're constantly on the prowl and have a growing army of supporters looking for chinks in the corporate armor. Consider the words of Mark Twain a century ago --- "A lie can travel halfway around the world, while the truth is still putting on its shoes." And Mark Twain said that before TV or the Internet! Is it any wonder that executives are terrified to speak to the media?

The reality is spokespeople do not have to be apprehensive as long as they're properly trained and adequately prepared.

If you doubt the popularity of professional Web monitoring companies take a few minutes and browse the sites below. You'll soon get the drift.

- <http://www.Cyberalert.com/>
- <http://www.Cyberclipping.com/>
- <http://www.Ewatch.com/>
- <http://www.Factiva.com/>
- <http://www.Newsedge.com/flash.asp>
- <http://www.Webclipping.com/>
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Advocacy groups are most adept at using the Internet to further their public policy agendas. Environmental activists in particular, make significant use of the Net to rally support.

In the most recent edition of Formulator, a magazine for the chemical manufacturing industry, Jacqui d'Eon and I talk about managing an environmental reputation. Jacqui is a former public affairs executive at Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati.

- <http://jeffansell.com/formulator01-2001.htm>
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A new public relations newsletter called PR Canada is online and worth checking out. According to stats featured in its newsletter, 59% of PR Canada readers are executives or managers and 41% of their readers work for PR agencies. Editor Kathee Muzzin recently spoke to me about my background and philosophy regarding the media. You can read her article here <http://www.fastmpr.com/anseltxt.htm>

- PR Canada homepage
- <http://www.prcanada.ca/>
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Regrettably, Voter.com, a political website that broke all previous records for one-day traffic, recently shut down. Carl Bernstein, famed Watergate reporter, was the Executive Vice President

and Executive Editor. Now that the site has fizzled into the Ethernet he told me he's going to turn his attention to a book he's writing on Hillary Rodham Clinton. Carl and I worked together last year in Washington. You can read more here.

<http://www.jeffansell.com/newsansell.htm#carl>

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Tales from the campaign trail.

The Presidential election provided a number of public relations lessons for anyone paying attention. Tactics Magazine pulled together a long list of interesting highlights.

A couple of them were profoundly insightful and worth sharing.

"Get a message and stick to it.

George W. Bush repeated, "I trust people more than government" a million times. Al Gore said a million things. George Bush won.

Involve PR at the top.

Karen Hughes and Mark MacKinnon (check spelling please), Bush's communications director and media advisor respectively, are role models for communications advisors. They put themselves in the middle of it all and directed it from there."

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Speaking in Public is one of the scariest events for most people. If you share this feeling take a few minutes and browse my Quantum Tips page. I offer up 7 Top Tips to help you relax and get your message across succinctly and effectively. In the current issue I expand upon how important it is to have meaningful eye contact with your audience. Learn how to do it and why it's so important.

Click here Top 7 Quantum Tips

<http://www.jeffansell.com/quantumtipsansell.htm>

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Those of you interested in honing your Public Speaking skills should consider enrolling in one of our Quantum Speak Seminars. I recently hosted a seminar at my downtown training center February 14 and have others scheduled for April 9th and May 17th. The Quantum Speak seminars are one- day programs geared for busy professionals who need to quickly bring themselves up to speed regarding Public Speaking. Working with small groups, I train folks to project confidence and master not only their words, but also their voice and body language. One intense day of training and you'll be better able to deliver any message to any audience knowing that you are being heard, whether in boardroom meetings or presentations. Email me here or click this link to learn more about the one-day seminar.

<http://www.jeffansell.com/conference02142000.htm>

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__._ == One last thing before I close folks == __._

More and more companies are engaging in online training and teleconferencing programs these days, welcoming the efficiencies they offer.

My sense is that online programs and refreshers could help clients rehearse the concepts we learn and practice during live sessions. My question to you is, would customized subscriber-based online programs for individuals and groups be of value to you and your colleagues?

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That's it for this edition of News & Views

Thanks again for taking time with me here.

Until next time,

I'm Jeff Ansell . . . be well

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