

Hello everyone and welcome to my September 2001 Newsletter.
Please feel free to forward this newsletter to friends and colleagues.

My heartfelt sympathy and prayers go to all who have been personally affected by the tragic events of September 11.

In the communications profession, major tragedies demand increased responsibilities. It is at such emotional times that communication can reduce fears and begin the healing process.

During times of crisis, people look for leadership and New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani stepped up to the plate and then some. Beginning with the first attack, the mayor quickly became the city's most public face. Mayor Giuliani raced to the World Trade Center to help fire and police efforts. When the first tower collapsed, he urged rescue workers and reporters to follow him out of harm's way.

As the crisis unfolded, Mayor Giuliani appeared regularly on national television, providing the leadership and the communications needed at such a critical and trying time.

At a news conference on day one, the mayor could barely contain his emotions while he praised city rescue workers and spoke of the hundreds of missing firefighters and police lost on the scene. His humanity touched everyone, regardless of his or her politics.

On another note, and with personal feelings respectfully recognized, it is also important from a business perspective to observe carefully what is happening in media. At this emotional time it may be difficult to understand clearly what we are experiencing, but I think as time goes on and if you pay careful attention you will learn much about how media interprets events.

Eventually we will look back on what is unfolding in a different frame of mind, and at a time when we are a less angry public.

In the meantime, observe different sources and make mental notes. Think back about what you heard on live television in the evenings and carefully compare it to the newspaper headlines you read the following mornings. Also take into account what you will read in magazines over the next few weeks. Magazines have time to collect their thoughts and lean toward a more intellectual perspective. Compare their coverage to the newspaper headlines and the stories you have seen and heard this week. Compare what our political leaders are actually saying, and what you hear and see in media.

The attack on America is front and center in everyone's mind.

The newsletter that follows was prepared before the disasters.

I hope you find it to be of value and interest.

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___SAY WHAT YOU WILL,
HE IS A MASTERFUL COMMUNICATOR___

When it comes to communications skills, former US President Bill Clinton will long be remembered for his capacity to connect with people, both intellectually and emotionally. He didn't always have this ability. In fact, as keynote speaker at the 1988 Democratic convention, Governor Clinton was so boring, the audience applauded when he said "In conclusion."

Mr. Clinton took that episode to heart and devoted literally years to honing his public speaking skills. Now, he has the rare gift of being able to speak to millions of people at once with an intimacy usually dedicated to one-on-one encounters.

Recently, I had the opportunity to chat with former president Clinton and can personally attest to his tremendous talent for connecting with people.

Mr. Clinton was guest speaker at a performing arts center in downtown Toronto this summer. I was invited to write the speech that introduced Mr. Clinton and quite enjoyed the opportunity to meet with the former president.

At the end of our conversation I told Mr. Clinton that my specialty is media counseling in tough no-win situations. We shared a laugh when he put his hand on my arm and drawled in his trademark rasp, "I've had a few of those."

If you'd like a little background regarding why I was chosen to write the Clinton introduction speech, please click here.

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

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___SPEAKING OF CONTROVERSIAL POLITICAL TYPES___

Did you watch Gary Condit's interview with Connie Chung?

Condit did not help his cause. He was uptight, defensive and said nothing to shed light on the Chandra Levy controversy and his role in it.

Condit was clearly not forthcoming. Simply, he had a message and stuck to it - that was his undoing.

Condit's message was "I've been married 34 years, and I've not been a perfect man and I've made my share of mistakes. But out of respect for my family, out of a specific request by the Levy family, it is best that I not get into the details of the relationship."

When Chung persisted, Condit simply repeated his mantra. He repeated "married 34 years" another three times during the half hour interview, "not been a perfect man" four times and "mistakes" six times.

Want to convince people you're trustworthy and sincere? Answer questions you're asked and don't retreat to a repetitive message that's clearly evasive.

As Condit's hometown newspaper the Modesto Bee reported, Condit "had an opportunity to come clean, but instead rolled through the dirt of duplicity some more."

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___The ART of WOW – A New Edge for Women___

Helping female professionals promote their unique persona is the focus of our new "Art of WOW" workshop series.

WOW stands for Wisdom, Opportunity and Wealth.

In designing this unique program, Roz Usheroff and I identified what we call The Endless Loop Trap. It's where the capabilities and communications skills that helped women initially in the corporate world, no longer give them the edge.

Now more than ever, women executives are in the business of decision-making, motivation and leadership. The Art of WOW will help successful female professionals enhance their communications style.

The Art of WOW begins with a special 2-day workshop November 20th/21st at the Four Seasons Hotel in downtown Toronto.

Roz is an internationally respected image and communications specialist and we're thrilled to conduct this exclusive program. Enrollment will be limited. If you're interested in attending please email Shoana@jeffansell.com?SUBJECT=WOWinfo

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___IABC 2001 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE___

My colleague Shoana Martin recently attended the IABC 2001 International Conference in New York City.

Shoana offers these takeaways from the conference.

RUMORS, ROGUE WEBSITES and the FORD / FIRESTONE debacle were among issues showcased at the IABC 2001 International Conference.

IABC Chairman Charles Pizzo's presentation was on rogue websites, which he said are often created to bring unhappy people together, sometimes for class-action lawsuits.

Pizzo said that in order to identify the source of rogue websites go to www.networksolutions.com and click on the WHOIS link in the top right corner of the page.

Jason Vines, Vice President of Communications Ford Motor Company told the conference that corporations need to examine their underlying values before crisis occurs.

Vines talked of Ford's desire to be a socially responsible company. Ford's communications strategy in the tire crisis included fact updates on the web and TV, believing they are more relevant than print, which he referred to as a "throw-away."

When asked which media outlets provided balanced coverage to the Ford/Firestone controversy, Vines pointed to the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times. He also said the company's harshest coverage was in Detroit.

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___Who is Winning the Tire Battle?___

While there will never be a "winner" in the bitter costly war between Bridgestone/Firestone inc. and the Ford Motor Co., a survey of top PR executives reveals that Ford appears to have gained the upper hand in the battle for consumer approval and confidence. The survey, reported by PR Tactics Magazine, questioned 130 member companies of the Council of Public Relations Firms.

Respondents recommend that the Firestone brand be eliminated in favor of the Bridgestone name or a new brand name. A number of PR execs also suggest Firestone offer a \$100,000 quality guarantee on each tire to ensure it has no manufacturing defects.

Jack Bergen, President of the Council of the Public Relations Firms says, "The real question is why didn't these two supposedly responsible, respectable companies, join forces to discover the root of the problem and solve it together instead of throwing blame around like two adolescents having a food fight."

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___ALSO from Shoana . . .

___EXACTLY WHAT DO BUSINESS REPORTERS LOOK FOR IN STORIES?___

Andrew Willis, columnist for the Toronto Globe and Mail and co-author of The Bre-X Fraud (McClelland & Stewart, 1997) spoke recently to professional communication practitioners about information that business reporters want.

Willis, whose business column is read religiously, says journalists do not want to hear the minute details surrounding the success of your business. They prefer to understand the trends in industry and in your sector. We asked Willis how many of the executives he interviews have been media trained, he figures less than 50%; more like 30%.

In our opinion, a well-trained spokesperson who appreciates the value of a good corporate reputation can add to a company's bottom line.

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___BUSINESS LEADERS SEE CORPORATE REPUTATION AS BANKABLE ASSET___

According to Jim Copeland, CEO of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, "A good reputation creates demand, and demand can command premium pricing."

The third annual Hill & Knowlton corporate Reputation Watch survey conducted by Yankelovich Partners highlights the top three influencers of reputation to corporations:

1. Customers
2. Employees
3. The reputation of the CEO

Nearly 96% of respondents feel that at least some corporate reputation is based on the personal reputation of the CEO.

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___79% OF CONSUMERS CONSIDER CORPORATE REPUTATION BEFORE BUYING___

A staggering 79% of the population takes good corporate citizenship into account when buying products or services and 71% consider it when investing. The problem is that the American public believes that most corporations are not good corporate citizens. A Hill and Knowlton study conducted by Harris Interactive, showed that only 2% of the almost 3,000 respondents perceive US companies as excellent corporate citizens. H&K executive vice president Harlan Teller says, "Corporations need to do more than simply give away dollars. They need to act in ways that genuinely demonstrate their core corporate values."

___WHAT IS THE WORST DISASTER THAT COULD HIT A COMMERCIAL OR MULTIFAMILY PROPERTY?___

Fire? Earthquake? Terrorism?

Even with high degrees of diligence, bad things can happen to almost any property, including those that are the most safety-conscious.

This is an interesting article from the Puget Sound Business Journal. It was originally published in 1999, but still makes sense today.

Click the link below for the full story.

<http://seattle.bcentral.com/seattle/stories/1999/09/27/focus10.html>

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___ DEALING WITH AN ANGRY PUBLIC ___

The next "Dealing with an Angry Public" program is scheduled for November 1st and 2nd 2001 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Many of you are familiar with this MIT Harvard program through previous newsletters and my website, but what you might not be aware of is that the event attracts some of the highest profile corporations and government agencies in the world. Here's a short list of some of the titles and industries the program is designed for;

- Chief Executive Officers
- Senior Vice Presidents
- General Counsels
- Vice Presidents of Public Relations
- Regulatory Affairs Officers
- Consumer Affairs Executives
- Environmental Officers
- Heads or Members of Federal, State and Local Regulatory Agencies.

Dealing With An Angry Public was developed to address the needs of a diverse group of industry segments and organizations including;

- Energy
- Health
- Regulated Bodies
- Financial Institutions
- Chemical
- Construction
- Automotive
- Food Products
- Mining
- Education
- Legislative Assemblies
- and more.

Professor Larry Susskind and members of his team have developed a powerful new conflict resolution technique for managing and/or avoiding public disputes. Strategies we share in the program apply whether you are proactively attempting to defend controversial decisions or reactively trying to protect your organization from the consequences of an accident or a mistake.

Click here to learn more
<http://pon.execseminars.com/ap/faculty.html>

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___ JOURNALISTS CONSIDER REPORTING CHATROOM RUMORS___

Nearly one quarter of all journalists surveyed in a recent study said they would consider reporting rumors obtained via Web chatrooms or online news groups – even without verification from an outside source. PR firm Middleberg Euro and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism surveyed more than 4,000 print and broadcast journalists about their online habits and use of the Internet. Says Middleberg CEO Don Middleberg, “Because of budgetary and time constraints today, it’s obvious that journalistic standards have lessened from the days of jumping through hoops to verify information with multiple sources.”

_____ VIEWPOINT! _____

___ MEDIA CONVERGENCE HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOU & YOUR COMPANY?___

News Media are converging as a direct result of the Internet. It started quietly over two years ago in Tampa and is spreading steadily throughout North America and around the world. In United States it’s estimated that there are fifty media partnerships and affiliations that could be considered “convergent” - twenty-five of which are deemed very serious. Recently, the Canadian regulatory agency known as the CRTC announced it will also allow print and broadcast newsrooms to share resources and information.

Sounds innocent until you look a little deeper.

How does this affect you and your company?

Though few can answer that just yet, one concern is that fewer voices in media limit opportunities to understand the world around us. If much of the news comes from a limited number of suppliers we may be receiving information that lacks a broad enough context.

Common sense dictates too that the more pressure put on journalists to deliver the harder it could be for them to separate fact from fiction.

As such, truth and perspective could become casualties in the world of news reporting. We all know that it’s human nature to make mistakes when you are put under pressure to deliver.

What does this mean for you and your message?

Read the following and you tell me.
I look forward to your comments and observations.

George Hutchinson recently wrote an opinion piece regarding media convergence in the Toronto Star. His quote, “But, while it made good

sense for the three news arms to trade and share copy, it didn't serve the public very well because it deadened the competition that often stimulates good investigative journalism and investigative reporting initiative." He went on to say, "No surprise, then that stories in the paper, on radio and television frequently had a perceptively homogeneous tack and tone."

George was speaking from experience. The above quote refers to his experience in 1964 when he worked in a newsroom where print reporters were "required to share notes with their electronic colleagues." The practice was short lived, but thanks in large part to the Internet it is now back with a vengeance.

Media convergence is driven by economics and the need for speed.

Accuracy falls by the wayside.

Is this starting to make sense now?

Let's take a quick look at what happened in Tampa.

As reported by Mike Wendland in the Detroit Free Press, "It sits on the banks of the Hillsborough River in Tampa, a gleaming new \$34-million building that has become the poster child for one of the most powerful but controversial trends sweeping the news industry.

"News Center," says the sign out front.

Inside this building is the headquarters of the Tampa Tribune newspaper, the local NBC affiliate, WFLA-TV, and a booming new Web site called Tampa Bay Online.

What happens in this building is the latest media buzzword: Convergence."

The TV station, newspaper and Web site are all owned by the same corporation - a company called Media General.

In his article Wendland shares with readers that "newspaper subscriptions and TV viewers are declining." We know economics is the corner post of all successful business models. He also goes on to share that convergence is happening in Chicago at the Tribune, plus in Dallas, Ft. Lauderdale, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas and even Topeka Kansas, plus many more cities.

Wendland quotes Bob Haiman, president emeritus of the Poynter Institute as being "a strong critic of convergence. Among other things, he (Haiman) argues that the practice will dilute independent, diverse journalism by merging mediums and messages."

Convergence of media is a trend worth following. I put together a few links you might find helpful including the articles mentioned above in the Toronto Star and the Detroit Free Press. If you're interested check them out because I don't know how long the respective sites will keep them alive online.

Media Convergence is Bad News – George Hutchinson – Toronto

Star

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

Newspapers, TV and Web sites converge to create a new media entity – Mike Wendland Detroit Free Press

http://www.freep.com/money/tech/mwend21_20010221.htm

___ALSO check out . . .

CRTC okays merged newsrooms – Toronto Star

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

Journalism or Just Stenography – Dick Schouten – Journalism Review Thunderbird Magazine

<http://www.journalism.ubc.ca/thunderbird/2000-01/february/sainath.html>

1999 Annual Report – Media General Tampa

http://www.media-general.com/reports/annual/1999/ar99_aboutcover.htm

CTV head says media convergence will benefit Canadian broadcasting – InfoCulture CBC

http://www.infoculture.cbc.ca/archives/cultpol/cultpol_04182001_fecan.phtml

Honeymoon Underway for Tampa's Media Marriage – Press Release – Media General April 2000

<http://www.media-general.com/newscenter/poynter1.htm>

Media convergence shows up in headlines, not bottom line, publishers find – Canoe

http://www.canoe.ca/PortalWars/may3_convergence-cp.html

Tampa Bay Online

<http://www.tbo.com/>

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___HOW EASY IS IT TO CHECK THE FACTS?___

Considering the convergence article above you might think it will soon be easy to slip a few things past a journalist pushed to a deadline, but don't count on it.

You better have your facts straight and also be able to communicate your message accurately and clearly. Media are under greater pressure to get the story to the public faster, and recently as a result of competition and convergence they've been accused of not always performing due diligence, but they still have a responsibility to maintain professional integrity by checking the facts. An easy way to check the facts is to contact an expert. New sites pop up every day that make it easier to check out the accuracy of your media statement.

I recently discovered a site that makes it easy on a number of levels. It's called the Journalist's Toolbox. One area in particular, "Find Expert Sources" offers a wide variety of fact-checking resources for journalists."

For the most part the site doesn't actually create the expert information, instead it's more of an aggregation portal that describes and lists independent sources. It's very powerful and can be used by anyone wanting to learn more about circumstances that might impact a story they want media to report.

Be sure to check it out, but be careful not to get lost in this incredible labyrinth of journalistic resource information.

The Journalist's Toobox

http://www.geocities.com/mike_reilley_2000/newswriting/expert.html

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___CAN YOU ENFORCE A NEWS EMBARGO?___

Is there any point in trying to enforce a news embargo when news is such a competitive business? In the past, when PR companies and newsmakers labeled information as being embargoed, media would hold off on reporting the information until the end of the embargo period. "We're much less likely to accept embargoed information now than we were five years ago," says Deidre Depke, senior editor at Newsweek in New York. According to Richard Tofel, VP of corporate communications at the Wall Street Journal, "Our general view is that if news is sent to us unsolicited, and we consider it newsworthy, we will publish it. In order for it to be embargoed, it requires our agreement."

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___HOW OFTEN DO WE READ NEWSPAPERS?___

Here are the latest numbers on the percentage of adults who read a newspaper.

Stats are from the American Journalism Review and the Ford Foundation.

- 42% every day
- 19% a few times a week
- 16% once a week
- 13% never
- 10% less than once a week

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___THE POYNTER INSTITUTE___

The Poynter Institute Web site provides journalists with reliable information, useful tools and provocative suggestions. PR pros can

benefit from its specialized search engine that collects stories daily from journalism sites (about 400 newspapers, broadcast outlets and online sites) around the Web and around the world.

Check it out here
<http://www.poynter.org/>

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___QUOTES / MISQUOTES___

Take 5 and check out this humorous article in ABOUT.com regarding misquotes. Guaranteed to put a smile on your face as it treats you to a couple of surprises about well know quotes / misquotes concerning public figures.

Excerpt from About.com . . . “Aside from the fact that style is substituted for substance, there is always the chance that the media will get it wrong; the dreaded misquote, or what’s sometimes worse, an idle comment correctly quoted but endowed with more cache than intended.”

In the link below you’ll find surprising quotes / misquotes from people like George Bush, W.C. Fields, Vince Lombardi, Harry Trueman and a long list of others, plus the most famous misquote of all regarding James McNeill – the artist who painted “Whistler’s Mother”, or so they say!

This article humorously demonstrates why you should be clear when dealing with media.

Click below for a 5-minute lighthearted view . . .
<http://trivia.about.com/library/weekly/aa110299.htm>

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___One last thing before I sign off . . .

More and more I see newsletters that use graphics and images.

Is this something that would appeal to you?

I would of course still offer the “text only” version you see here, but if it’s something you’d like I’d be happy to consider it for future publications.

Please email me and let me know. I look forward to your response.

Thanks

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That’s all I have for this edition of News & Views folks.

Thanks again for taking time out of your busy schedules.

I hope this info was enlightening and thought provoking.

Until next time,

I'm Jeff Ansell . . . be well

DON'T FORGET TO PRINT THIS NEWSLETTER.

Read it on the train or at home.

Check into my News & Views site for updates between Newsletters.

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

I'm always interested in your comments and viewpoints.

Forward News & Views to a friend or colleague

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Jeff Ansell & Associates

(905) 707-7088

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