

Hello everyone and welcome.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to friends and colleagues.

Occasionally, some of the sites I link to ask that you register to access their information. It's always free, it only takes a moment and it is well worth your effort, so please give them a bit of your time and they'll repay it handsomely in easily accessible and valuable information.

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 master, and something anyone can learn or improve upon.

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

- Election Fever On Both Sides of the Border
- Political Animals
- Politically Biased Media
- The Butler Didn't Do it – Paul Burrell & Princes Di
- Getting Under Your Skin
- Henry Blodget Covers Martha Stewart

Calendar Update - advertisement -

We have a NEW WEBSITE!
Click here to take a look . . .
<http://www.JeffAnsell.com/>

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MEDIASTRATEGIES PHONE TUNE-UP _____

We recently launched the MediaStrategies Phone Tune-Up, which is a great way to keep media skills fresh in between coaching and interviews.

The Tune-Up is a phone exercise to test the ability of MediaStrategies graduates to think on their feet and confidently deliver messages. Participants conduct either a print or radio interview with me or my colleague Meghan Slan, formerly of CTV News and CHUM Radio, Toronto. The Tune-Up results in an actual news report that gives participants a great way to practice or test out messages before interviews.

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ART OF WOW --- FOR WOMEN ONLY _____

Roz Usheroff, Shoana Martin and I are having a wonderful time delivering Art of WOW programs!

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 June 28 & 29, 2004 Art of WOW Conference was SOLD OUT.

Our next conference is November 22 & 23, 2004.

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

We look forward to your questions.

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DEALING WITH AN ANGRY PUBLIC _____

Our next Dealing With An Angry Public Harvard Law School conference is slated for November 18 & 19, 2004. 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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ELECTION FEVER ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER

In a hotly contested battle, Paul Martin leader of the Liberal Party was elected Canadian prime minister this week. For a good part of the campaign the race was neck and neck and as usual personalities played a pivotal role in the campaign.

Critics of the liberal leader say Paul Martin went in to the campaign with the presumption he was stepping up to destiny. Martin, Canada's former finance minister had been waiting for the top job for more than a decade.

As a communications coach to government and corporate leaders, I stress the importance for leaders to blend confidence with humility. Humility genuinely felt and expressed gives a leader tremendous slack - especially

when they screw up.

If there is ever a time that politicians regret what they say to media, it is during election campaigns. In both Canada and the United States politicians walk on tiptoes with media, not wanting to say anything to hurt their election chances. Is it any wonder it's so hard to figure out whom to vote for?

Journalists and the public will make sure that if a politician says something inappropriate or newsworthy, they will live or die by it. No matter how inconsequential their remark, somewhere along the electioneering timeline that errant sound bite will bite back.

Quite often, when we are under stress all of us have minds that go into autopilot, usually with a stream of semi conscious thought spewing forth. Many times we don't even know what we are saying or recall what we said until we see it in all it's glory on the front page or the 11 o'clock news.

Politicians rarely give themselves away, especially during election time, but when they do it's fun to watch. You on the other hand don't get as much coaching, training and practice as they do. If you think they look bad, think about all the other executives and spokespeople out there who have never had the opportunities to be coached.

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POLITICAL ANIMAL

Running for political office is an open invitation to have your words mixed, jumbled, and yes, even sometimes mangled by media. It's hard to tell what came first, the chicken or the egg. Did politicians invent double talk to beat media at their own game, or did media invent creative 'wordsmithing' to expose politicians who hide the facts?

Regardless of the current atmosphere . . . double talk, side-stepping and re-interpretation are here to stay. The best we can do is be prepared make our messages as clear and as responsive as possible in order to minimize the risk of our words being used unfairly against us.

I recently had an opportunity to work with a new reality-based TV show produced by Disclosure/CBC called 'The Making of a Political Animal'. It was billed as the 'Amazing Race of Politics' and was in effect a fictional race for the highest political office in Canada, the Prime Minister's position.

Three candidates were picked from a long list of entrants. They were groomed across a number of levels, from how they looked to how they spoke and carried themselves. It's not hard to see after watching the show that 'how you say it' is as important as, or maybe even more important than 'what you say'. I worked on camera with two of the candidates, and one, Bridget Pastoor stands out. In the segment-broadcast I demonstrated (unfortunately at her expense) how easy it would be for a probing and persistent journalist to turn her words against her and reduce her to, as the Toronto Star described it, ' a defensive heap of incoherence'.

The fact is, without training or at least a modicum of experience anyone would be a sitting duck and defenseless against the grueling barrage I put her through. Anyone can sit at a piano and with two fingers poke out 'Chopsticks', but it takes training and practice to perform Beethoven's 5th with style and grace. Politicians, real or fictional are no exception. Media training and rehearsal time are critical aspects of anyone's career whether they are Managers, CEOs or Politicians.

The TV show, Political Animal vividly demonstrates how important it is to be prepared.

To view the Disclosure/CBC Political Animal website click here . . .
http://www.cbc.ca/disclosure/archives/031111_political/main.html

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POLITICALLY BIASED MEDIA

Remember a time when news was supposed to be balanced and unbiased? According to a new Pew Research Center study, political polarization is at play at cable news networks. Fox News has increasingly become the home of the Republicans, while CNN is the bastion of the Democrats. Interesting to note that this partisan political model was one that newspapers used successfully 100 years ago, but eventually dropped in favor of more middle of the road reporting.

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THE BUTLER DIDN'T DO IT Paul Burrell & Princess Di

I bump into and meet famous people with great frequency. It's almost a running joke with my family and friends.

Recently at dinner in Boston I met Michael Constantine, the father in 'My Big Fat Greek Wedding'. (For those of you curious about minor skin disorders, no he was not carrying a bottle of Windex.)

Two days later in Boston I met Paul Burrell, author of the bestseller, 'A Royal Duty'. Paul was royal butler to Princess Diana, and prior to that, Queen Elizabeth. The princess had a special friendship with Paul. In fact it was he who dressed her body for burial in the Paris mortuary.

Burrell's critics call him 'The Queen of Mean' for revealing the princess' secrets. The book also raises the specter of a conspiracy in Diana's tragic death. He himself is mindful of security as he reminded me a couple of times in our conversation.

Burrell had already been interviewed by Larry King and Barbara Walters and was heading to Toronto on his book tour.

Paul and I chatted for about an hour, along with Steve Dennis, the London Daily Mirror reporter who co-authored the book.

Paul told me he was looking for an agent who might possibly pursue a movie deal. When asked which actor he'd like to see in his role, I half expected him to answer Hugh Grant. Truth is, aside from Michael Caine, he's the only appropriate British actor I could think of at the time. Paul said he'd like his friend Tom Hanks to play him. It makes good sense from a visual perspective. They really do look alike.

Paul is off on another tour, this time to New York City.

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QUANTUM SPEAK & SPEAKING SKILLS

My associate, Shoana Martin recently returned from Montreal and also New York's Wall Street where she delivered Quantum Speak coaching programs for executives in financial services. Knowing that people communicate based on a lifetime of habit, our approach to changing one's personal presentation style involves a process and commitment. What follows are Shoana's thoughts on how important it is for executives, especially those new to the corporate suite, to make communications skills a top priority.

By Shoana Martin

Junior executives today often represent Boomers at the end of their terms and are the next generation of executives on the way to the top. Like the generation preceding them, up and coming executives hit the "real world" needing to know how to communicate in ways that will leverage the knowledge they learned at an academic level.

As valuable as educational degrees are, strong communications skills are needed to separate successful executives from the crowd of wannabes in the corporate environment. How we communicate is largely based on the speaking and listening skills we developed as children.

In fact, it is amazing how quickly people turn into seven year olds when authority figures in the boardroom shoot a penetrating gaze and say a few words perceived to be critical. At moments like these, it helps to ask, "How do I want to come across?"

Despite our good intentions, few of us appreciate how our words and style send messages about who we are. It is critical to communicate with purpose. Know what you want to say and how you want to say it.

How can you reach your goal without a plan and path regarding how you want to communicate? It's like setting out on a road trip without a map. Choose words that describe how you want to come across and then do your best to bring them to life, not only in presentations and speeches, but also in everyday conversation. For example, choose words like confident, approachable, humble and so on.

Here are a few 'physical presence' tips to improve your communication;

Breathe - Breathe in, belly out; breathe out, belly in. Breathing is the key to any good communication.

Hands - Effective use of your hands when you speak helps you look commanding and makes your voice more authoritative. Use firm, deliberate hand movements to show your confidence. To show your softer side, hold your hands out in a palms up fashion and lower your voice.

Strong Stance - Place one foot under each shoulder. This stance balances your weight, and gives you a steady presence when you want to show strength.

Pause - A slowly delivered pace also shows you are confident. Hold the silence; it's powerful on you.

Our Quantum Speak coaching sessions are a transformational experience. We offer a variety of services to clients regarding public speaking skills and media communication. Our Media Strategies program will help you improve your media skills by training you to answer all manner of questions as you project warmth and honesty.

For more information on any of our programs please click the following;
<http://www.jeffansell.com/programs.html>

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GETTING UNDER YOUR SKIN

As you've heard from me before, it's not just what you say, but how you say it. 'New Yorker' interviewer and writer Larissa MacFarquhar pays close attention to the smallest idiosyncrasies of her subjects in order to better understand their personalities. She watches closely even their smallest moves and emotions to help her define personality traits. Larissa even occasionally jiggles her tape recorder to remind subjects they are being interviewed by a journalist and not a friend.

Even scarier, Larissa researches her subjects so thoroughly beforehand that at times she feels she becomes obsessed with them. My hat is off to her for her dedication, but it should send a strong message to any of you who think a 'reporter' just shows up and shoots from the hip.

Click below for a few more tricks of her trade . . .
<http://www.medill.nwu.edu/inside/2004/macfarquhar.html>

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HENRY BLODGET COVERS MARTHA STEWART

Slate.com, a Microsoft company and one of the most successful online magazines in history hired Henry Blodget, Merrill Lynch's star Internet analyst during the 90s to cover the insider-trading trial in New York.

Blodget seems to think he has a lot in common with Stewart. To quote Blodget, 'Like Stewart, I was, for a while, bathed in the golden glow of prosperity, a symbol of American capitalism and the optimism of the Internet Age, and, now, like Stewart, in the harsh light of the bust, I am seen by some as a symbol of "excess," a "fallen star," a "disgrace." Like

Stewart, I have been charged with securities fraud. Like Stewart, I have been the object of adulatory and venomous press coverage. Like Stewart, I have had the bizarre experience of watching legions of people I have never met come to trust me, look to me for guidance, regard me as a "guru," and then decide that I am, in fact, a scumbag.'

A survey by Hill and Knowlton, the global PR firm, reveals most in house lawyers surveyed do not think corporations can get fair trials these days because of negative publicity resulting from recent financial scandals.

Forty-eight general counsels at Fortune 150 companies were asked to comment on the statement that, "Corporations are guilty until proven innocent in today's regulatory and litigation environment." 49% of general counsels 'strongly' agree with the sentiment, while 29% agree.

This attitude makes good communication absolutely necessary for companies facing litigation. It also speaks to the need for topnotch communications coaching for spokespeople to ensure their message carries in the court of public opinion, in addition to the court of law.

Read more about how Blodget reports Stewart here . . .
<http://slate.msn.com/id/2093610/>

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

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