

Name

Hello and welcome to my June 2006 Newsletter

Jeff Ansell News & Views

Always keep in mind that everything you're exposed to in media is just someone else's interpretation of issues and events, so 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, yet it is something anyone can learn or improve upon.

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

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

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BLOGS DRIVING NEWS

It's official. Blogs are considered mainstream. Actually, they've been mainstream for quite a while, but recently a few new twists and alliances have made them even more pervasive. Companies are jumping on the blogwagon faster than the news industry can keep up. David Sifry, founder and CEO of Technorati recently told CBS Marketwatch that his company literally cannot fill all the orders sitting on his desk. Technorati is "the" search engine for blogs. They quadrupled their traffic in four months in Q1 2006. A large part of their growth is attributed to blogs originating from newspapers, which means journalists have embraced the technology.

When I first started writing about blogs in this newsletter most people weren't even comfortable saying the word. Now it rolls off the tongue so easily that according to Sifry, if you post something on your company blog, he claims he has it on his site in less than five minutes, which means that's how long it takes your competitors to have less-than-flattering news

about you on their stealth blogs. It gives "citizen media" a whole new depth. Stealth blogs are managed by third parties, but paid for by your competitors.

AP Newswire recently made major changes in an effort to incorporate the management of blogs in their system. On May 23 they announced an agreement with Technorati that will provide instantaneous links helping readers navigate between AP news coverage and new blogs. Quite literally, this means that in a crisis situation, you now have more to fear from a blog than you do from a newspaper headline. The blog gets to everyone in a matter of a few minutes, sometimes while the crisis is still in its critical stage. Remember too, blogs carry audio and video feeds.

If you subscribe to AP Custom News you will see a continuously updated Top 5 list of stories. When you click on a story it takes you to a search page on the Technorati site that lists everyone who is currently blogging about that story, which means that bloggers will be read instantaneously by several hundred news organizations. Never in history has this exchange of information been so quick and all encompassing.

Anyone who speaks to media is a newsmaker, and in the past, all they had to worry about, was how poorly they interacted with media at 6 and 11pm. It's great incentive to make sure you are communicating professionally and effectively the first time, every time.

You can read all the details from PR Newswire here . . .  
<http://www.jeffansell.com/nv/B1PRnews062706.htm>  
.....JeffAnsell.com

## 50 MILLION AND RISING

50 million Americans receive their news from online sources daily. According to Pew Research, a well-respected media think tank, this number has grown enormously since 2002. They attribute it to the adoption of broadband. 71% of broadband users get their news online every single day, while only 59% of people get it from local television, just over 50% from national TV, and a paltry 40% from local newspapers.

Read the entire report here . . .  
[http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/178/report\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/178/report_display.asp)  
.....JeffAnsell.com

## MICHAEL MOORE UPDATE

Just a quick follow up to the Michael Moore piece I had in my last newsletter. Apparently Moore is asking Americans to send him stories about their experiences with the health care system.

It's part of his upcoming movie called "Sicko," which is about the U.S. healthcare system, with specific focus on the pharmaceutical sector.

You can learn more about it here . . .  
<http://www.michaelmoore.com/words/message/index.php>  
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## REWIND TO JEFF'S TV DAYS

Often, when I am coaching clients how to think on their feet, I'm reminded of all that I learned during my days as a reporter and news anchor. Imagine how surprised I was when I turned on the television and saw myself in a role I played twenty years ago. It happened recently when I turned on CP24, the Toronto-based all news channel and saw myself reporting news stories of the day.

Daily at 2 am, CP24 airs newscasts that date back to the 1980's. As I watched the old newscast, I realized that many of the same types of controversies and bad news stories that happened then are still happening today, only that the names and faces have changed to protect the guilty.  
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## NO COMMENT – A GAFFE OF OLYMPIC PROPORTION

The last thing you want to say to a reporter is "NO COMMENT." It's like saying, "Yes, I have an answer, but I choose not to share it with you." Only guilty people on 60 Minutes say "No Comment," usually while a bead of sweat slowly rolls down their forehead.

"No comment" from a newsmaker implies you have something to hide. Everyone has a comment. It is up to you to answer questions in an upfront, responsible way.

Prior to the recent Olympics in Turin, a Vancouver reporter I know traveled to Italy to conduct pre-arranged interviews with local Italian merchants. Expecting to hear shopkeepers laud the merits of hosting the Games, merchants instead clammed up and many literally told the reporter, "no comment." Apparently, the retail people expected to be asked about high operational costs in Turin and they were afraid answering the question would worsen the situation.

Canadian retailers preparing for the 2010 Games in Vancouver ought to consider bringing their front-line people up to media speed to help spread the good word. After all, comments from floor retailers can provide enough inside information for the news media to confront a CEO. The secret is to ensure everyone is prepared, from the chief executive to retail affiliates.

Click here for my "media tips to live by" . . .  
<http://www.jeffansell.com/media-tips.html>  
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JEFF'S CALENDAR UPDATE ..... advertisement

## DEALING WITH AN ANGRY PUBLIC – HARVARD LAW \_\_\_\_\_

The next Dealing With An Angry Public Harvard Law School conference is slated for November 9 & 10, 2006, and the one following is scheduled May

3 & 4, 2007. The conferences in Cambridge Massachusetts provide 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 PM DISCOVERS SHUNNING MEDIA DOESN'T WORK

Can you say STANDOFF? Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper told national reporters he would no longer answer their questions, ever. Upon hearing that remark they turned on their heels and left the room.

Prime Minister Harper responded by saying he does not need national media, and that he can run his office by taking his message to local journalists as he moves across the country. Canada is a big country with the second largest landmass in the world. Good luck Mr. PM, especially considering the price of gas. Maybe it's time to update your blog.

Appreciating the corner he boxed himself into, Harper and his aides revisited their media strategy and in fact, reached out with an olive branch recently by hosting a garden party for reporters and their families. There were clowns, chips and ice cream. I'm told all played nicely.

The story from CBC as it unfolded

<http://www.cbc.ca/story/news/national/2006/05/24/harper05242006.html>

A commentary from CBC regarding the current state and role of media

[http://www.cbc.ca/news/viewpoint/vp\\_basen/20060526.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/viewpoint/vp_basen/20060526.html)

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Blog

<http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/default.asp>

Garden Party Media Version #1

<http://www.jeffansell.com/nv/B2OttSun062706.htm>

Garden Party Media Version #2

<http://www.jeffansell.com/nv/B2OttCiti062706.htm>

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## YOU CAN INSULT MY PRESIDENT, BUT DON'T INSULT MY FLAG

What you say is important, and how you say it is critical.

The "Dixie Chicks" learned this lesson the hard way in 2003 when lead singer for the country band, Natalie Maines said, "Just so you know, we're ashamed the president of the United States is from Texas."

Over the last three years people have forgiven her for 'dissing George W. Bush, but they will not forgive her for a perceived insult to Texas. The public is voicing its displeasure by not buying DC's CD's at the rate they have in the past. President Bush's ratings are at an all time low, so you would think The Dixie Chicks might have been forgiven for the remark, and maybe they would have if Maines had originally said, "We don't support President Bush's decision to send troops to Iraq." Unfortunately, she made it personal, and it cost, and it is still costing her band a fortune. Not only did the comment inflame country music fans at the time, recently, in an effort to continue to justify the comment and in regard to the loss of thousands of fans, another band member, Martie Maguire told Steve Kroft of 60 Minutes, "When I looked into the audience, I didn't see rednecks. I saw a more progressive crowd." In other words, now they are 'dissing their old fans. The challenge is that The Dixie Chicks need country fans, just like the PM of Canada needs to communicate with national media.

It's not only what you say, but how you say it. Entertainers, especially those with a little road experience are usually extremely careful how they mix politics with music. In fact for many years most entertainers refused to make political statements. Today though, many are mixing business with personal statements regarding politics, the environment, children's welfare, starvation, and social injustices in far off lands. The list is long.

The trend is not just confined to entertainers. Corporations are supporting social causes at an increasing frequency, and with this alignment the danger of making it personal rises. Journalists are trained to bait spokespeople into making it personal. Don't fall for it. They easily move from business to personal in one breath, and before you realize it your blood pressure is rising and you feel like you have to defend yourself.

Smart journalists are skilled at creating "if this then that" scenarios. For example, "Mr. Smith, if you agree that oil refineries pollute the environment, it stands to reason that your company is contributing to global warming. And by virtue of your position as the CEO, you are responsible for polar bears dieing in the Arctic. What are you doing to save polar bears?"

If all you can say is huh, you need help. Call me. 416.413.9660

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

.....JeffAnsell.com

## SPEAKING OF FOOT IN MOUTH – MARTHA IS BACK IN COURT

Is there a trend here? Martha Stewart, it seems, also takes things too personally. Stewart is now going back to civil court to defend against insider trading charges. She has a choice, but it looks like she is taking it personally and wants to try to clear her name.

It sounds like a big risk going to court when she can settle it privately and relatively quietly. Money is definitely not the issue because her company is back on good ground and she can easily afford any civil penalty levied against her. And considering the many millions Stewart and her shareholders have already lost, you would think she might want to continue to improve the reputation of her company and share prices.

Losing a civil case will without question negatively impact shareholder confidence. It could also encourage others to sue her.

Stewart spent the last three years repairing the damage and did a pretty good job of it, so why does she want to stir the pot again? Granted, if she wins the civil case, which will be incredibly challenging considering she already spent time in prison (juries will have a hard time ignoring it), she will regain the right to act as CEO of her company. Becoming chief executive again speaks more to Stewart's personal as opposed to her need to grow the company. Current management is doing fine the way it is and Stewart's role as founding editorial director provides her plenty of autonomy. So again, is this personal?

From the very beginning, three years ago, if Stewart had managed media more responsibly she would have been able to mitigate damages. But as you can see throughout this newsletter, people often take things a bit too personally, and let their egos get in the way of their business. Keeping a cool head is always a good defense, and you can learn to stay cool.  
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#### MediaStrategies Phone Tune-Up – advertisement

Mastering media communications requires the building of muscle memory. The practice of answering questions from reporters requires a careful balance of skill, confidence and most of all, expertise to think on your feet.

Conducting media interviews is unlike everyday conversation, and as such, practice does indeed make perfect. Unless spokespeople have opportunities to further hone their media response abilities, it is too easy for the message to be lost.

We are excited to offer the MediaStrategies Phone Tune-Up, designed for graduates of our full and half-day MediaStrategies program. The Phone Tune-Up is a quick and effective way to rehearse upcoming interviews and keep media skills fresh in between coaching sessions and actual media encounters. The MediaStrategies Tune-Up helps you test new messages and practice delivering them with ease and clarity. See your words in print, as our trainer-reporters write your company's story and/or prepare radio reports, complete with a clip of your voice.

For information on fees and availability, please contact;  
Jeff Ansell & Associates at 416 413 9660  
.....JeffAnsell.com

#### PODCASTS – WHY THEY MATTER ... OR NOT

Podcasts are MP3 audio files formatted to play on an iPod or your computer. Nothing really special about the technology, but due to the popularity of iPods they have taken off like wildfire. Ease of use is probably the biggest reason they are so popular. Everyone seems to be producing podcasts, from teens to CEOs. Basically, it allows you to download information and listen to it as you drive, take the train, or walk.

It's like an audio book that can contain numerous chapters, or maybe just a few select paragraphs.

Due to the convenience for the listener, plus the ease of producing a podcast, it is a relatively viable business tool for anyone who has information to share. You can podcast about stock prices, workshops, white papers, etc. The list is only limited by your imagination. Create your own weekly show! You can use a podcast to keep people informed about your company, or to respond to or expand on information published in mainstream media, or maybe even on another website. Place links on your company blog or website, place them in public podcast networks or email them in newsletters. They are easy to disperse.

Podcasts have been around for a couple of years, and as you know, technology like this can have a short shelf life. Some people already argue that due to the increase of broadband access, plus cell phones and PDAs capable of playing video, that audio podcast days are numbered as we ramp up to portable video. I have to agree, but keep in mind too that even though it is almost as easy for a person to view a video on their phone as it is to listen to an audio podcast, the process to create the video is more challenging, which means less businesses will opt for the more expensive and harder to produce video. But if you have the resources, video podcasting will definitely give you more impact.

When businesses first started streaming video many strived to meet broadcast professionalism. As you can see from the links below, short video segments produced by Fortune 500 CEOs have a very casual, but polished look to them. We have moved to an era that puts more value on the content than on a slick presentation, which lowers the bar and makes it possible for all businesses, big and small to participate. However, do not get lulled into complacency about how casual you can be. There is a fine line between professional communication and looking like an amateur. Now more than ever, managers, executives and sales associates need strong skills in front of a video camera. If you don't speak or present yourself well it can negatively impact your message, and career.

As always, with most things in life, a little training and practice goes a long way in developing a professional, and at the same time, a casual style.

Here are a few links to podcast and video sites . . .

IBM Podcasting Guidelines

<http://www.jeffansell.com/nv/B2Pod01-062706.htm>

Digital Podcast

[http://www.digitalpodcast.com/browse-business\\_and\\_finance-14-1.html](http://www.digitalpodcast.com/browse-business_and_finance-14-1.html)

Podcasting News

[http://www.podcastingnews.com/forum/link\\_10.htm](http://www.podcastingnews.com/forum/link_10.htm)

Washington Post Audio/Video Podcasts

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/mmedia/podcastfront.htm>

GM Vice Chairman Bob Lutz on the new Camaro

[http://fastlane.gmblogs.com/archives/2006/01/camaro\\_concept.html](http://fastlane.gmblogs.com/archives/2006/01/camaro_concept.html)

.....JeffAnsell.com

Don Imus, MSNBC radio host, and named by Time Magazine as one of the 25 most influential people in America, said, "the only reason to interview people is to get them to say something they will regret for the rest of their lives."

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

Sincerely,  
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/>

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