

McSWEENEY & ANTMAN'S OCCASIONAL UPDATE VOL. 3 NO. 1

From the corporate branding and strategic communications firm **McSWEENEY & ANTMAN**.

Welcome to the latest edition of McSweeney & Antman's Occasional Update, our periodic compilation of useful information and interesting news. If you wish to unsubscribe, just reply to this e-mail with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

1. NEW CLIENTS

McSweeney & Antman provided corporate communications services to **ASAP Software** www.asap.com, one of the world's foremost software services providers.

2. BLOGGING GOES CORPORATE

In a remarkably short period of time, blogging went from technogeek to mainstream to corporate. How corporate? The Executives' Club of Chicago recently hosted a breakfast on corporate use of blogs for a room full of suits with nary a soul patch in sight.

Represented on the dais were such corporate paragons as McDonald's (David D. Weick, CIO) and IBM (Jon Iwata, SVP of Communications). Both organizations use corporate-approved blogs to enhance internal communications.

Mr. Weick said McDonald's employee blogs are both functional, such as the one for the 2006 Winter Olympics, of which McDonald's is a big sponsor, and "personality-based," such as the blogs maintained by senior executives as a way to communicate with and get feedback from employees at all levels throughout the far-flung organization.

Mr. Iwata noted that with 8,000 internal blogs maintained by employees around the world, IBM knew that it needed blogging guidelines. Rather than impose them from on high, IBM used a "wiki" to let employees themselves collaboratively develop and edit the guidelines. The result, according to Iwata, was well-thought-out guidelines that needed almost no editing by corporate communications or legal. The guidelines are available to all at http://www.snellspace.com/IBM_Blogging_Policy_and_Guidelines.pdf. (A "wiki" is a piece of server software that allows users to freely create and edit web page content using any web browser. One of the most popular examples is the online encyclopedia at www.wikipedia.org.)

3. THE DECLINE AND FALL OF MAINSTREAM MEDIA?

The decline of the mainstream news media has been a hot topic lately among, well, the mainstream media, and much of the blame is placed on the Internet. Yet declines in print subscribers and broadcast viewers at traditional media outlets may have as much to do with content as they do with changes in the technology of the news delivery systems.

In an interesting piece making the rounds on Internet media sites, former *Time* and *Wall Street Journal* writer G. Pascal Zachary analyzes the pressures that in his opinion are tearing apart mainstream journalism www.alternet.org/wiretap/31775/. While we don't agree with all of his points, it is clear that new technologies have greatly expanded the number of media outlets and greatly compressed the news cycle. This creates "commercial pressures," using Mr. Zachary's words, to sensationalize to stand out from the competition and to rush stories into print and on the air (or onto the Web) much sooner than they would have 20 years ago.

Conducting public and media relations in this brave new world is not for the faint of heart. McSweeney & Antman offers public relations services, including media training, to help organizations take advantage of—and protect themselves in—the evolving media environment.

4. WILL THE WIKIPEDIA MODEL CHANGE TRADITIONAL MEDIA?

Speaking of both the state of traditional media and of Wikipedia, there's a fascinating interview with Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales, a former Chicago-based futures and options trader, at Q-and-A.org, a C-Span website. www.q-and-a.org/Transcript/?ProgramID=1042

Among the points of interest: Wikipedia is now larger in terms of readership, as defined by unique visitors a day, than the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *USA Today* combined. As Mr. Wales suggests in the interview, one of the reasons for this success is that Wikipedia has harnessed the power of the users of the Internet, just as its original creators envisioned, rather than building a "take it or leave it" top-down model as is the case with nearly all traditional media and most contemporary websites. In its inclusiveness of multiple viewpoints, Wikipedia also demonstrates that there's a third alternative to the classic conflict between objectivity and advocacy. It's not hard to imagine that, over time, the Wikipedia model may influence the way that traditional media collects and reports information.

5. FRUSTRATING, RIDICULOUS AND UNIMPORTANT

The popular online destination for marketing and marketing communications professionals, Marketingprofs.com, recently featured an article by McSweeney & Antman principal Michael Antman on the arcane art of corporate naming consulting. The article, entitled "Extremely Frustrating, Slightly Ridiculous and Completely Unimportant," also was picked up by several other marketing sites and blogs, and can be

accessed at <http://www.marketingprofs.com/6/antman1.asp>. Separately, Michael Antman has become a regular contributor to the “leading articles” section of another marketing and sales website, www.salespractice.com.

6. WE’LL SEE YOU IN BOCA

It has been a fantastic year for the futures industry in general and futures exchanges in particular, which should make for an interesting Futures Industry Association 31st annual conference in Boca Raton, Florida March 15 through 18. We look forward to seeing our friends in the futures and options industries at the event.

CONTACT MCSWEENEY & ANTMAN

As always, we welcome your comments, questions and suggestions. Please contact Dennis McSweeney at dennis@mcsweeneyantman.com, Michael Antman at michael@mcsweeneyantman.com and Riva Aidus-Hemond at riva@mcsweeneyantman.com. Or call us at 630-661-3624.

McSweeney & Antman, 1448 Coralberry Lane, Downers Grove, IL 60515.