

MCSWEENEY & ANTMAN'S OCCASIONAL UPDATE VOLUME 5 NUMBER 2

From the corporate branding and strategic marketing communications firm
McSweeney & Antman.

Welcome to the **15th edition** of McSweeney & Antman's Occasional Update, our periodic compilation of useful information and interesting news for anyone with marketing, marketing communications or sales responsibilities.

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If you're new to our recently expanded mailing list, and would like to read one or more of the previous 14 issues, please visit our archive at <http://www.mcsweeneyantman.com/index.asp?page=9>

As always, we welcome your thoughts and comments. Please send greetings, gripes and other correspondence to michael@mcsweeneyantman.com

1. NEW FRONTIERS IN COPY EDITING: THE RISE OF THE TYPO VIGILANTE

Two young men, evidently driven quite mad by the inability of practically everyone these days to distinguish between "its" and "it's," or "their," "they're" and "there,"* took it upon themselves, according to this recent news report on CNN.com, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/US/08/22/sign.vandals.ap/index.html> to travel across the United States correcting written errors on public and private signs.

Typo terrorists with too much time on their hands? Or well-intentioned defenders of the English language with, uh, too much time on their hands? You decide.

* According to a recent item in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the distinction between "their," "they're," and "there" is complicated by the fact that, at least in Chicago and environs, everyone pronounces all three as "dere."

2. PSSST...PASS THS ALONG TO A FRIEND...WORD OF MOUTH DOESN'T WORK

A new article by McSweeney & Antman President Michael Antman, "Six Reasons Word-of-Mouth Doesn't Work," appeared in a recent edition of MarketingProfs (www.marketingprofs.com), and subsequently provoked quite a bit of online commentary, pro and con. The article can be found here:

<http://www.marketingprofs.com/8/reasons-word-of-mouth-wom-doesnt-work-antman.asp#storyContinued>

While the title of the article (supplied by the author, not Marketing Profs) deliberately overstated the case, the fact is that word of mouth is limited in reach and effectiveness, especially on the B-to-B side, and needs to be supplemented with mass marketing techniques (such as advertising), more-scalable communications (such as social media) and more-objective measures of quality (such as white papers, case studies and the third-party credibility created by public relations programs.)

A couple of the online critiques of the article, which pointed out that McSweeney & Antman is an integrated marketing communications firm that supplies clients with advertising, white papers, bylined articles, brochures, case studies, and public relations services, and therefore has a vested interest in promoting these tools at the expense of word of mouth techniques, were written by firms that themselves happen to supply amplified word-of-mouth marketing services. Hmmmm...

3. WORD-OF-MOUSE VERSUS WORD-OF-MOUTH

Although they're sometimes linked together, word of mouth is different from the online marketing efforts, such as social media, that attempt to bring together large communities of people, often in an interactive or collaborative manner. These "social media" tools can be described collectively as "Web 2.0."

Facebook is one good example. If you're not familiar with Facebook, check out this example of a Facebook profile, selected completely at random:

<http://www.new.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1026443242>

And for a more-comprehensive description of Web 2.0, here's the Wikipedia definition: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0. (Incidentally, Wikipedia itself is an an example of a Web 2.0 phenomenon.)

Finally, here is an excellent short article that illustrates the many practical ways in which a business can put Web 2.0 to work:

<http://www.marketingprofs.com/7/small-business-goes-global-web-2.0-delaney.asp?sp=1>

4. HEY, DID YOU SEE THAT ITEM IN THE PAPER TODAY? DIDN'T THINK SO.

Speaking of Web 2.0, what's happening these days with Print 1.0, otherwise known as the newspaper?

It used to be, in the days before the Internet, that newspapers were the single greatest bargain in America: For 10 cents, and later 25 cents, you could get the news of the world, department store ads, "funnies" that were genuinely funny (at least to a kid), entertainment calendars, spurious horoscopes, coupons for canned beef stew, the police blotter, stock prices, recipes for tuna casserole, photos of funny animals, and all manner of interesting, relevant and esoteric nuggets of information.

Now a lot of daily papers cost 75 cents, and you can get all of the above stuff, and much, much more, delivered instantaneously and for free to your laptop screen, I-Pod or wristwatch video device (oh, wait, that's not being released until 2012.). But the real reason the Internet is supplanting newspapers isn't merely that the Internet costs nothing (other than access fees) and delivers much more information much more quickly: It's because the Internet has become the "best provider of social currency," according to this interesting article in a recent edition of Slate: <http://www.slate.com/id/2196485/>.

Newspapers are still more authoritative and reliable and, for many people, more pleasurable to read, than online news sources. Few people in the world of marketing want to see newspapers fade away into utter irrelevance, but the art form clearly needs to be re-invented. The question is, in this time of diminishing budgets and absentee corporate ownership, who will step up to the plate and create a new newspaper for the 21st century?

5. BASED ON BAD DATA: WHY YOUR COMPANY MAY BE NEEDLESSLY LEAKING CASH

A new article developed by McSweeney & Antman on behalf of client Loreto Services & Technologies (www.loretotech.com) appears in the new issue of the prestigious industry publication *Journal of Compensation and Benefits*.

The piece explains why companies are losing billions of dollars a year as a result of bad pension-fund data, and the surprising reason why accidental underpayments are far worse for a corporation than overpayments – even though overpayments cost companies money and underpayments presumably "save" them money. The article can be found here:

http://www.loretotech.com/pdf/Pages_from_JCB24_4copyright.pdf

6. ARTIFICIALLY CREATED UNHAPPINESS, OR, WHY BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS IS BETTER

As a firm that specializes in “marketing complex products and services to sophisticated target audiences,” over the years approximately 75 to 80 percent of McSweeney & Antman’s consulting work has been for business-to-business (B2B) rather than business-to-consumer (B2C) clients.

There are advantages and disadvantages to concentrating on the business-to-business side, but one clear advantage is that there never is any doubt that the customers to whom marketing efforts are directed are likely to actually want and/or need the product or service being marketed. But that’s often not the case with B2C. Consider this recent blog entry from marketing guru Seth Godin:

“A journalist asked me, Most people have a better standard of living today than Louis XIV did in his day. So why are so many people unhappy?

What you have doesn't make you unhappy. What you want does.

And want is created by us, the marketers.

Marketers trying to grow market share will always work to make their non-customers unhappy.”

7. THREE NEW POLITICAL NOVELS FOR THIS ELECTION SEASON – ONE GOOD, ONE BAD, AND ONE VERY UNUSUAL

McSweeney & Antman President Michael Antman recently reviewed two new novels on ostensibly political topics that, while not concerning themselves with the upcoming Presidential election per se, still attempt to make important statements about our current condition.

One of them, Ethan Canin’s *America, America*, deals with an invented Presidential candidate who destroyed his career by means that will be all too familiar to anyone who follows American politics. The other, Paul Auster’s *Man in the Dark*, imagines a parallel universe in which 9-11 and the Iraq War never happened but a new American civil war did. One of these novels succeeds beautifully because it renders the political personal. The other novel, ambitious as it is, fails on almost every front.

Find out which is which by reading the two reviews, here:

<http://www.popmatters.com/pm/review/61577/man-in-the-dark-by-paul-auster/>

and

<http://www.popmatters.com/pm/review/60065/america-america-by-ethan-canin/>

Finally, here's another book that's not only very different from the first two, but different from just about any other book on politics you're likely to ever encounter. Politics, as we commonly understand the term, is all about cutting deals, building coalitions, making compromises, hewing to the mainstream and attacking those who stray too far from the center. But there's also a long history, especially on the far left and the far right of the political spectrum, of occult influence on political practice. For a fascinating study of this phenomenon, written by Gary Lachman (who is not only a philosopher and writer but, as it happens, a founding member of Blondie and once upon a time its bassist and songwriter), take a look at this new book:

<http://www.questbooks.net/title.cfm?bookid=1996>

8. MCSWEENEY & ANTMAN: OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

McSweeney & Antman provides the following services to clients in all industries:

- **Advertising creative development, design, and production**
- **Agency search management (for companies looking for larger, full-service advertising, public relations, investor relations, and integrated marketing communications agencies)**
- **Article copywriting**
- **Branding research, analysis and development**
- **Collateral (print and electronic) copywriting, creative development, design, and production**
- **Design services, including print and Web design and corporate identity development**
- **Internal communications programs**
- **Management consulting (with strategic partner Market Strategy Group)**
- **Marketing communications audit and analysis**
- **Media relations strategic development and execution**
- **Naming consulting (naming of companies, products, and services)**
- **Presentation training for executives and salespeople**
- **Recruitment of in-house marketing, marketing communications, and sales personnel**
- **Research, including qualitative and quantitative programs**
- **Sales consulting and sales-marketing integration (with strategic partner The Waterhouse Group)**
- **Seminar and trade show conceptual development and marketing**

- **Website user analyses**
- **Writing of white papers, case studies and other marketing/sales support materials**

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