

EDITORIAL

Obama VP announcement turns promise into problem

As pundit speculation regarding the VP choice mounted, the Obama campaign had promised Web-savvy supporters – who helped the Illinois senator build an extensive Internet base – that they would be “the first to know” via text message when he made a decision on a running mate.

The seemingly leak-proof Obama effort picked an inopportune time to break down – its handling of the candidates’ announcement of a running mate.

The seemingly leak-proof Obama effort picked an inopportune time to break down

When CNN became the first to learn that Sen. Joe Biden (D-DE) would be named Obama’s VP choice around midnight on a Friday, rather than the legion of followers who registered their cell phone numbers and e-mails, the campaign lost control of its message. McCain’s camp had rebuttals out before some had rolled out of bed Saturday morning. But, more importantly, Obama’s campaign disappointed some of its most ardent supporters.

This innovative technique was smart on two levels. One, it appealed to the “netroot” audience that favors direct communication with campaigns (opposed to being filtered through the mainstream media). Two, it was an amazing way to collect information for direct marketing purposes. Now, however, the campaign has to deal with the disappointment from those who were woken up by the text at 3am, after the networks had already called the post Biden’s.

Some tech-savvy supporters found out about their candidate’s choice on Twitter after all – but via CNN’s status update, hours before the official announcement. The campaign got credit for its innovative approach to message dissemination, but they should have known that embargoes are usually broken – especially if the traditional media feels it’s getting squeezed out. ■

PRWeek

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Agency PR is alive

I was pleased to read the recent column, “The cobbler’s children have no shoes’ line is worn out already” (*PRWeek*, July 28).

In my position, I have been lucky to work for executives who keenly understand the importance of treating our agency as a client of our own. My role is supported by colleagues who recognize the contribution that agency self-promotion makes toward elevating our profile. And, because Dorland Global is my only client, I do not have to sacrifice critical billable hours or put client work aside to concentrate on my in-house responsibilities.

I could not promote our successes and services without inside knowledge of what Dorland Global does every day for our clients, so I am fortunate that my coworkers are willing and eager to participate in the process with me.

The relationships I have made with editors at many of the leading trade titles prove that, in order to be the best PR pros for our clients, we have to hone our skills on ourselves.

Heather Brucker
manager of corporate comms
Dorland Global Corporation



LETTERS

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E-mail: letters@prweek.com
Note: Letters may be edited
for space

Millennials’ ideas valued

I appreciated your column “The culture war with millennials is overhyped and wrongheaded” (*PRWeek*, August 28).

More companies should be like Porter Novelli, as our company has allowed millennials, as you say, to “have a hand in shaping how [company] goals are met.”

The agency allowed a small group of millennials to start a pop-up fashion agency called Jack and Bill, dedicated to branding and publicizing emerging fashion talent for free during the summer leading up to Fashion Week.

This project means a lot to me. I sat down with Marian Salzman, CMO at PN, to discuss my interest in fashion. She empowered me to identify other like-minded millennial executives to join the project and run it largely on our own – with a significant investment from the company of more than \$150,000.

Alyson Campbell
consumer marketing
Porter Novelli

Corrections

In *PRWeek*’s Career Guide supplement, the transcript that appeared in “A hire view” was edited for length, intent, and clarity; this should have been disclosed at the end of the piece. In addition, Makovsky & Company’s name was misspelled in that same piece.

In the August 25 feature, “Sunny side of the Street,” Sesame Workshop CMO Sherrie Westin’s name was misspelled. In that same issue’s Agency Business, we implied that Adam Segal was with The 2050 Group while working on the documentary *Brothers In Arms*. He was actually with Rabinowitz/Dorf Communications at the time. We regret these errors.

OP-ED

Speaking conferences bring benefits

The slowdown in the US economy has communications executives scrambling to stretch budgets without sacrificing results. In times like these, a speaker’s bureau program might seem like a “nice-to-have” component of a communications plan. But a targeted speaking program can provide huge value to communications programs, without the high cost.

Let’s look at the benefits. One speech can reach a valuable audience of clients, employees, media, and shareholders. To this audience, your company is positioned as an industry visionary and your executive as a credible thought leader.

But the speech itself is only the beginning. By broadly publicizing engagements, repurposing speech content, and leveraging executive travel schedules, your company can expand the impact of each speaking engagement by multitudes.

■ **Get the basics right.** Focus on identifying the right conferences and building relationships with the organizers. This will help you understand what they need and create a pipeline of future speaking opportunities.

Establishing strong relationships with executive speakers is also

important. Make sure they are properly trained to deliver compelling, objective speeches that address key issues in your industry. You need speakers who will be thought leaders, not salesmen, at the podium.

■ **Maximum mileage, minimum coin.** Speaking engagements can deliver a great deal of bang for your buck. Issuing a press release about

Speaking engagements can deliver a [lot] of bang for your buck

your upcoming speaking engagement is an easy way to build brand awareness and boost visibility.

Speaking engagements can also help you strengthen relationships with the media. Invite them to attend your speaking session and arrange one-on-one meetings. These activities help generate press coverage – and are less expensive than press tours.

Repurposing speech content can enhance your communications

programs and enable you to deliver uniform messaging to internal and external audiences. Consider promoting the speech to employees via your intranet, capturing audio or video of the speech and posting clips on your Web site, developing a byline article for placement in a publication, or leveraging speech content to develop collateral.

■ **Prime location.** Leveraging the conference location is another way to get additional mileage from your speaking engagements. Use the conference environment to your advantage by attending networking events, inviting locally based clients to attend your speech, and leveraging executive travel schedules to conduct client meetings and employee recruiting activities in the area.

With PR budgets under pressure, a resourceful speaking program can help you do more with less. If you take full advantage of the complementary communications and relationship-building opportunities, you’ll reach the right audiences with the right messages – for less time, money, and effort. ■

Lori Zetlin and **Jeanne Tee** are managing partners of S3 – Strategic Speaker Services.