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[www.crisiscommunications.com](http://www.crisiscommunications.com)

## Crisis Comm & Media Relations E-Newsletter

October 1, 2011

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Our regular office number is 216-321-7774.

However, if your situation is DEFCON 4 (critical and **extraordinarily** time-sensitive), please call our 24/7 Emergency Crisis Comm Hotline at 216-223-8771.

If necessary, leave a voicemail and we'll get back to you within 30 minutes.



Huffington Post

### Muffingate's Sad Story: 178 Articles Perpetuate DOJ Myth, 37 Correct It

It seemed too good to be true and largely was. A report released by the Justice Department's acting inspector general on Sept. 20 uncovered a treasure chest of "wasteful or extravagant spending" at law enforcement conferences during the past two administrations. But one item stood out above the others: muffins that were apparently costing the department \$16 a pop. Such an extravagant price tag for a simple baked good was, undoubtedly, the perfect symbol of bureaucratic largess, along the lines of the Pentagon's \$600 toilet seat. But it wasn't actually true.

Three days after the study was release, Hilton Hotels (which hosted the conference at which the expenditure was made) clarified that the \$16 charge was for a full continental breakfast plus tax. Instead of a detailed invoice, the hotel just listed the charge as "muffins." By then, however, the damage had been done. CBS News had deemed it "Muffingate." Sen Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) had called for heads to "roll." Fox News' Bill O'Reilly had used the muffin anecdote to launch a screed against raising taxes: "Why should I or you work hard every day so some guy in a suit can have a \$16 muffin?" [READ MORE](#)



Holmes Report

### BP Communications Chief Shares Deepwater Horizon PR Lessons

Last year, post-graduate PR student Phoebe Rowell contacted industry observer Paul Holmes about her final-year dissertation which investigated the impact of social media on crisis communications. Specifically, Phoebe used BP's calamitous Deepwater Horizon oil spill as the guiding example for her work, and her recently-published interview with 'BP's head of crisis communications' makes for fascinating reading. According to Holmes, "For my money, the interview represents one of

the most intimate examinations of the public relations fallout from a landmark crisis."

"It is hard to escape the conclusion that BP's crisis plans were swiftly overtaken by the sheer magnitude of the unfolding drama. And like many companies, BP was also ill-prepared for the social media dimension," says Holmes. "Yet (in the interview) there is little acknowledgement of perhaps the most important factor in BP's fall from grace: Its efforts to create an image that was detached from the reality of the company's behaviour. In the years leading up to Deepwater Horizon, BP pledged to make safety a priority and move 'beyond petroleum'. The oil spill brought the company rudely back down to earth."

[READ MORE](#)



The Atlantic

## The Rich, Powerful Legacy of Andy Rooney

Tonight at 7:00 p.m., Andy Rooney retires from CBS' "60 Minutes."

Too often dismissed as merely a curmudgeon and behind the times, we agree 100% with The Atlantic: "For all of his achievements in the field of broadcast journalism, for all of the face time he earned on the most important news show in the history of television, Andy Rooney at heart is a great writer. Pointed. Concise. Revealing. And like many good war reporters, usually free of flowery prose." Read more from The Atlantic [here](#). You can view 11 quintessentially Rooneyesque essays [here](#).



CNNMoney, Mashable & The New York Times

## NetFlix Fail

Netflix, the company that changed the way tens of millions of people watch films and television shows, is quickly discovering that there's a downside to having cultivated a passionate fan base.

After Reed Hastings, the company's co-founder and chief executive, announced a plan - in a blog post and seemingly in a hurry a minute before midnight on Sunday - to split Netflix into two separate businesses, one for Internet streaming and one for DVDs by mail, the company's Web site was inundated with angry messages.

In many of the 17,000 comments (so far), disgruntled consumers mocked the name of the new DVD company, Qwikster, and predicted its demise. They complained that they would soon have to pay for and manage two separate accounts. And they wondered why Mr. Hastings was apologizing for "arrogance" - but not for disrupting a service that they adore.

Read The New York Times story [here](#).

From [Mashable](#), "(Qwikster is) the worst new product launch since New Coke."

An opposing view from [CNNMoney](#): "Hastings is still doing a few things right (short of actually giving customers what they want) that may help the company survive the pitchfork-wielding mob of subscribers and investors currently at its gates."



Holmes Report

## Ketchum, ConAgra and the Perils of Authenticity

Once again, we return to PR industry observer Paul Holmes: I've spoken and written extensively on the idea that we are living in an age of authenticity-when consumers

and other stakeholders demand that corporate communication reflect reality. And I have long argued that control and credibility are inversely related, which is to say that the more you control your message, the less credible it becomes.

Both of these ideas are, I believe, beneficial to public relations, which is inherently more authentic and credible (and less controlled) than advertising.

But that's not to say that seeking out authentic reactions to your product, or surrendering control over the message, won't on occasion lead to less than desirable results. (The possibility of a less than desirable result is precisely what makes this approach to communication more credible.) So I'm not quite as horrified as some of my friends in the business by this story about Ketchum, ConAgra and a bunch of food bloggers.

[READ MORE](#)

Hennes Paynter Communications

## News From Hennes Paynter



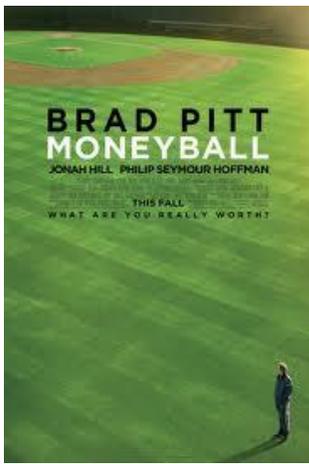
Barbara Paynter & Bruce Hennes

[Hennes Paynter Communications](#) is one of the few agencies in the U.S. focused exclusively on crisis communications. Contact us at 216-321-7774.

Hennes Paynter is proud to support [WCPN-FM](#), Cleveland's National Public Radio affiliate. If you hear one of our underwriting spots, drop us a line, would you?



ideastream®



PR Breakfast Club

## PR Needs a Moneyball Makeover

In the new Brad Pitt movie, Moneyball, one baseball coach uses the power of statistics to build a record-breaking team after losing his three all-star players. The movie glosses over much of the nitty gritty math, but you walk away with the same overall message: numbers are powerful.

And this is true in all industries, not just baseball or sports. But it's not necessarily the big and sexy numbers that matter. It's fun to say your latest campaign was likely seen by 100 million people, but does it make your team more efficient? Does it make your message more powerful or drive more sales? [READ MORE](#)



New York Times

## For Winter's Storms, a Stay Bag

With a handful of key items and a fresh look at some familiar household objects, you can endure a few snowbound days without power - even if you don't have \$600 or \$1,000 for a generator.

The obvious priority during a winter power failure is keeping warm, since most heating systems won't work. People with fireplaces and wood-burning stoves will do fine, of course, but everyone else needs a backup plan. [READ MORE](#)



Harvard Business School

## Lady Gaga: Marketing Phenomena & One of World's Most Recognized Brands

Celebrated for both her outré style and musical prowess, the recording artist known as Lady Gaga is not only one of the world's biggest pop stars, but also one of the most recognized brands. She's garnered five Grammys, holds two spots in the 2011 Guinness Book of World Records including "Most Searched-For Female," as recorded by Google, and made international headlines for donning a dress made of red meat, which Time Magazine called the top fashion statement of 2010.

So it's almost shocking to recall that in the autumn of 2008, Lady Gaga, born Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta in New York City, was merely a supporting act in a reunion tour of the erstwhile-boy band, New Kids on the Block.

"When you tell that to people now they look at you like you must have your dates mixed up," says Harvard Business School Associate Professor Anita Elberse. "That was just three years ago, and now she is, by many measures, the biggest celebrity on the planet. Gaga is a marketing phenomenon." [READ MORE](#)



Poynter Institute

## Why Sports Beat Reporters Rarely Break News About Scandals

Game stories don't shake the sporting world. Stories of forced coaching changes, player misconduct, agent malfeasance and cheating of all kinds shock sports fans, drive ratings and win the biggest headlines. But this kind of reporting comes with different challenges than the ones usually faced by sports beat reporters - magnified by the frenetic, constant sports news cycle.

Many sports reporters have never had to deal with these kinds of challenges. Sportswriters like Grantland Rice and "Red" Smith were venerated for their descriptions of games, plays and heroic athletes, not for digging into financial misdeeds, public records or systematic cheating.

But all of that has changed. Investigative reporters have turned their attention to sports, and sports reporters are faced with incidents and issues they need to investigate raising new questions about journalism values. [READ MORE](#)



### Phil Stella's Audience-Centricity Presentation Tips

## PowerPoint Tips

Our resident presentation trainer, Phil Stella, is back with another installment of his "Audience-Centricity" presentation techniques. This issue, Phil writes about using PowerPoint [here](#).

To read "The Best of Phil Stella" and all of his presentation tips, click [here](#).

Would you like to speak, argue, cajole, motivate, encourage, articulate and present with power and authority? Phil is available for one-on-one executive coaching and/or group presentations. Just give us a call at 216-321-7774 to tell Phil what your needs are and he'll put together a custom quote for you or your organization.

*Photo Credit: Michelle Meiklejohn*



### Curated by Hennes Paynter Communications

## Short Takes

[Associated Press World Series Guide](#) Romnesko  
[7 Things to Do When Media Get It Wrong](#) PRDaily  
[Abandoned Places](#) (hauntingly fascinating)  
[Exclamation Points !!!](#) The New York Times

[What to Do When Police Tell You to Stop Taking Photos, Video](#) Poynter Institute  
[1940's Downtown Los Angeles Time Capsule](#) The Atlantic  
[Lowe's "Never Stop Improving" Ad](#) (creative doesn't begin to describe this ad)  
[Seinfeld's "Puddy" Does a Honda Ad](#) (don't watch unless you don't like attitude)



Hennes Paynter Communications

## Check Out Bruce & Barb's Schedule

**10/6/11 Knox County Board of Developmental Disabilities (4.5 hours)**  
**Managing the Media: Crisis Communications + Extreme Crisis Communications**

**Co-Sponsors:** Knox County Health Department, Kenyon College, Knox Community Hospital, First Knox National Bank, Creative Foundations, Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Central Ohio Technical College

**Supporters:** Knox County Emergency Management Agency, American Red Cross of Knox County, The Knox County Chamber of Commerce

Government, business, safety, health, education, other officials and community leaders will receive practical instruction about how to "Manage the Media" in order to handle everything from good news to bad news in a crisis.

This seminar also includes "Extreme Crisis Communications" (i.e. how to communicate during extreme and extraordinary situations where there are threats to life & limb). This is the single best, most comprehensive "crisis" seminar we offer to the public.

This seminar has been approved for four (4) Continuing Professional Training (CPT) hours by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission, Office of the Attorney General.

For registration information, click [here](#).

**10/14/11 Ashtabula County Safety Conference (1 hour)**

**Crisis Communications**

For registration information, click [here](#).

**10/19/11 Lorain County Safety Council (1 hour)**

**How the Media Manipulate the News**

**10/25/11 American Association of Airport Executives Social Media Conference**

**Using Social Media During a Crisis**

**10/25/11 N.E. Ohio Entrepreneur Expo & JumpStart Community Meeting (1 hour)**

**Crisis Communications**

For registration information, click [here](#).

**11/6/11 Bowling Green City Schools (2.5 hours)**

**Social Media & Professionalism for Teaching Professionals and Administrators Co-Presenter:**

Scott Juba

**11/9/11 Independent Practitioners Group (1.5 hours)**

**Five Things You Should Always Do in a Crisis Situation and Five Things You Should NEVER Do in a Crisis Situation**

**11/15/11 Public Relations Society of America - Cleveland Chapter (3 hours)**

**Crisis Communications**

**11/17/11 Country Treasurers Association of Ohio (2.5 hours)**

**Crisis Communications**

**12/7/11 Senior Service Network of Stark County (1 hour)**

**How the Media Manipulate the News**

**12/19/11 Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (4.5 hours)**

**Managing the Media: Lawyers & The Press CLE**

Co-Presenters: Deborah Coleman, Esq. (Hahn Loeser) & Virginia Davidson, Esq. (Calfee)

**12/20/11 Akron Bar Association (4.5 hours)**

**Managing the Media: Lawyers & The Press CLE**

Co-Presenters: Orville Reed, Esq. (Buckingham Doolittle) & Jim Burdon, Esq. (Burdon & Merlitti)

For registration information, click [here](#).

**2/6/12 Ohio Parks & Recreation Association (1.25 hours)**

**Crisis Communications**

**4/11/12 Lorain County Safety Council (1 hour)**

**How Media Manipulate the News**

**4/23/12 Mansfield Economic Club (1 hour)**

**Crisis Communications**

**12/18/12 Akron Bar Association (4.5 hours)**

**Managing the Media: Lawyers & The Press CLE**

NOTE: Most of the above are open-to-the-public. Some of the seminars are free; others require a fee, payable to the sponsoring organization. Please call or write us for further information.

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Don't miss a single issue. To get your own subscription, simply send your name, email and a few words about who you are and what you do to [info@crisiscommunications.com](mailto:info@crisiscommunications.com).

**Know someone who might benefit from this newsletter?** If you just forward using your own email program's "Forward" function and your recipient thinks they're being spammed, they can click on the Opt Out link and opt YOU off the list. So use this "[Forward This E-Newsletter](#)" link, please.



## **Need a Presenter for Your Next Meeting or Conference?**

Are you looking for an eye-opening, inspiring presentation for your next event? If your organization, company or association is searching for something different—a content-packed, entertaining, how-to customized seminar on how to manage the media - then we should talk. Don't just take our word for it. [See what other people say about our seminars](#) .



## **Managing the Media: Lawyers & The Press CLE**

In today's world of high-profile litigation, law firms frequently retain PR consultants to help with media relations.

Our CLE, depending upon length, can include canons and case law surrounding the relationship between PR activities, PR counsel and the management of the media; establishing & maintaining "control of the message"; when a reporter calls - making point and not just answering questions; what reporters expect; what news makers should expect; defining and creating Key Messages; reporter's agenda vs. the attorney's agenda; the fundamental differences between print, television and radio interviews and how each requires a different skill set; dealing with the press proactively and reactively; "off the record, not for attribution" and other advanced techniques; and creating relationships with reporters and editors.

Numerous law firms have brought us in to do one of our seminars; some have used our seminar for a marketing opportunity, inviting a large number of corporate attorneys, as well as prospects

for new business. Call us at 216-321-7774 to discuss particulars.



## Media Training & Coaching

**Your organization is in trouble...your CFO has been arrested...the company truck was in an accident...hackers hijacked your database...the pressure is on...the camera crew is at the door....**

Do you know how to handle a high-pressure TV interview? Will your messages survive the editing booth? Do you know where to put your hands? What to wear? Do you look at the camera - or at the interviewer?

It takes a lifetime to build a reputation and only a few seconds to destroy one. In a split second you could find yourself in a position where you need to know how to handle the media or be a public spokesperson. Would you know what to do or how to respond?

More important - do you have the necessary skill set to "manage the message" and advance the cause of your business, agency or nonprofit?



You can be certain the senior executives at virtually all of the Fortune 500 companies have been through media training, working with a media coach to learn how to handle adversarial situations with journalists and stakeholders. Perhaps it's time for you to learn this specialized set of survival skills?

We also offer spokesperson & presentation training and coaching, designed to improve your daily interactions with colleagues, employees, investors, journalists and other outside parties.

Call Bruce Hennes, Barb Paynter and the staff at [Hennes Paynter Communications](#) today at 216/321-7774 and talk to us about media, spokesperson and presentation training and coaching for you, your top execs -- or anyone who might have to hold the fort down with a reporter until the appropriate spokesperson can be located.

Ask us, too, about how we can help you create, implement and test a crisis communications plan.



## Our Permanent Collection of Links & Tips

If you're a new subscriber to this e-newsletter, our [carefully-selected list](#) of links and tips will help you prepare for, and respond to, crisis situations.



**When your organization or reputation is threatened, you need a specialist.  
A crisis communications specialist.**



CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS | MEDIA TRAINING | LITIGATION COMMUNICATIONS

**[www.crisiscommunications.com](http://www.crisiscommunications.com)  
216.321.7774**



### **Administrivia**

This email newsletter about Crisis Communications & Media Relations is generally published twice a month.

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**OUR FAVORITE QUOTE:** You simply can't communicate your way out of a situation you've behaved

your way into (credit to Don Etling at Fleishman-Hillard for this insight).

WARREN BUFFET'S 4-STEP CRISIS COMM STRATEGY: Get it right. Get it fast. Get it out. Get it over.



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