

**CRISIS RUNNING – MEDIA INDUCED
WHAT TO DO WHEN IT HITS THE FAN
COMMUNICATING IN THE GOLDEN HOUR AND BEYOND
THE REAL 60 MINUTES**

THURSDAY 4 OCTOBER 2007

Welcome to old Parliament House in Canberra and the national summit on interest rates, petrol prices and rain. What other hot topic or crude awakening will cause Australia's Statesmen to communicate politics to the people? What other crude oil awakening will cause Captains of Industry to be running with the bulls or groaning with the bears? Indeed does the world really need high-capacity, low emission electricity?

For a primer and before we split into stakeholder groups please let's have an individual two minute belly-to-belly, U-tube style debate with your neighbour; one-on-one. Does the world really need high-capacity, low emission electricity? Let's have another debate with your other neighbour to get us interacting? Is there legitimate justification for tax payers money to be spent on politically motivated propaganda; or said another way should government communicators have a role in prime time reality TV?

Over the next 60 minutes we need to go face-to-camera and mouth or finger-to-wireless as we come to terms with what will be the next generation's communications strategies; 25 years from now; in calendar year 2032. This maybe the era when fly-on-the-wall TV footage becomes real through nanotechnology. For a baby born today, looking back when they are 25 years old in 2032 they might see that the world started to change at the time of their birth. There was a war about the world's most precious resource at the time, oil. Energy security was seen as a key economic imperative. Three of the world's largest companies were oil companies. There was talk of oil supplies peaking by 2010. Car companies, especially those that did not innovate to new sources of fuel, were heavily hit. On the other hand, climate change was starting to shape the world agenda. Carbon raised the consciousness of the consumer society. Carbon limits meant that transporting noodles from China or sparkling water from Italy or ceramic mugs from India would no longer be feasible. Whether carbon mile labeling becomes as common as calorie labeling remains to be seen.

What may telling it all, telling it fast and telling it true look like 25 years from now when newspapers have been completely replaced by pod casts; when information rattles along pipes at an eyeball popping 25G speed; when IBM truly offers stakeholders-on-demand; when other X and Y generational phenomena overtake Boomer norms or behaviour; when we move beyond the last generation that often used to get married in Bunning's warehouses. In this new world the media will probably talk in terms of Carbon Tzars and Carbon Traders who will become dime a dozen. Legally enforceable carbon neutrality and going carbon neutral maybe the cause celebre. In 2032 Kyoto expired 20 years ago but climate risk will probably remain supreme with legally binding emission cuts and Carbon Cops fining house holders and industry alike and businesses folding due to carbon fraud. GHG, meaning green house gas will probably dominated our vocabulary as clean coal becomes cool coal and as the allocation of carbon credits will

commodify the atmosphere; the largest commodity market that the world has ever seen. Who has another opinion? What will a technical market correction look like when GHG become the largest commodity on the market? Will interest rates or strip clubs be more important in 2032 when Al Qaeda currently generates more hits on Google than McDonalds and CocaCola. It is probably the best known brand in the world today thanks to the Internet. The web was designed to operate after a nuclear war and it has now become a weapon of mass communications. With a total of 7,000 terror and hate websites, blogs and chat rooms how should government communicators deal with this auto-radicalization? Will society tolerate big brother monitoring and catch radicals and politically motivated groups. Should false journalists be embedded in the Internet to reach out or is plain old censorship best rather than seeking to communicate to an angry electronic sea.

Financial Stakeholders in 2032. For the communicator after next, either Federalism will have gone crazy or the States may still be fighting with their backs to the wall defending their rights behind their borders. There could be a Nuclear bourse in Port Hedland in 2032 and the Murray-Darling Water Bank may well buy Wesfarmers; lock stock and barrel for cash. Cashed up super funds may continue to mercilessly rip into listed companies while the Doha Round may well be revisited with the advent of world free trade and a country's resources being purchased by individuals and traded openly on the world market. What impact will this have? These super funds may well compete with State Owned Funds for investment on the world stage. Free trade will either be either rampant across Asia or protectionism will have gone mad in the US through concerns over lack of quality constraints in China and India. Work choices has long since disappeared from the lexicon and Baby boomers all but dead with a new aging population in nursing homes supported by X and Y. Indeed the influenza pandemic could have come and gone leaving millions dead in its wake; having killed the legacy Boomers and the younger Zeds together. Who thinks this could be true?

Information Management in 2032; parity, superiority or supremacy? Where will the responsibilities of corporate begin and end in 2032 and will CSR become a cover for anti-corporate activism? Maybe the Corporate Social Responsibility wave will have come and gone as nation states take anti-globalization to a new zenith. Cartel Authorities may have joined the ranks of government regulators; it now being mandatory for companies to have a Communications Disaster Recovery Plan before they can list on the global Stock Exchange. What could such a plan look like? The world will have probably conceded defeat long ago on the war on information overload. International mediators will have risen to the fore in a new form of virtual community engagement @vegemite.org. This online social networking may have destroyed the Australian pub and the backyard BBQ, replacing it with a new class of online media which merges text, video, audio and interactivity as and when desired. Today MySpace and UTube are empowering the public to become the broadcasters of tomorrow. By 2032 the internet may have let almost anyone be an e-publisher. The Arabic News Channel of al-Jazeera joined U-tube this year so it will not be so surprising to find that Murdoch is still alive on wonder drugs when he buys al-Jazeera in 2032 with the concurrence of the US Federal Communications Commission. It should also not surprise us to find the Dow Jones Share reaches \$150 as print, broadcast and digital media have all been gobbled up by one big syndicate. Will that worry communicators who come after us?

What will be the mantra in 2032? Will it be tell it all, tell it warp fast and tell it cool earth true? With that backdrop and now that you have been front loaded with potential next

generation stakeholder communications requirements let's now go to old Parliament House in Canberra for the debate on interest rates, rain and petrol prices. Here you are as Directors of Corporate Communications, Public Company Corporate Affairs Managers, Private Company PR Managers, State Owned Enterprises Media managers. You represent mining companies. Government companies, biotech companies, private power companies, aviation companies, oil companies, water companies and government departments.

What will be different about the War of Words in 2032? High Interest, No rain & Not much Petrol. I would like to group everyone into public and private sector stakeholder and various Issue Motivated Groups. So to begin you must understand that you are all company spokespersons or Heads of Corporate Affairs and Investor Relations Departments. As Directors of Corporate Communications let's now practically apply next generation communications strategies and tools to these ten situations.

Prepare for a physical public forum or a Melbourne Town Hall briefing in 2032 over plans to build Melbourne's third desalination plant in Port Phillip Bay. Brief a company spokesperson on what the key message will be?

Respond to a future Shock Jock on talkback radio over accusations of fraudulent carbon reporting and an enquiry from a print journalist? Will we still repeat the Key Message at every sensible opportunity in 2032?

Prepare for an employee tool box meeting done by computer phones; the telecommunication equivalent of a fighter pilot's head up display. How will we engage employees in 2032 when many are tele-workers?

React to an Issue Motivated Group called *Men of the Trees* when sit in at an electronic AGM by blast email in 2032 that overwhelms our servers. What will we do? They are arguing for a carbon neutral country. Note that one tonne of carbon is offset by 5 trees grown over 30 years. The average Australian is responsible for 198 tonnes a year, it costs \$13 per tonne to offset emissions with tree planting.

In campaigning for the Federal elections in 2032 with Internet voting and electronic chat accusations what will form will campaign communications take?

The Global Stock Exchange never closes in 2032. Prepare a GSX response requiring market disclosure about loss of carbon credits after a business disruption?

Respond to an adverse digital newspaper headline on the side of a 20 building and recommend reputation strategy to the leadership team in 2032. How will we express it and in what format?

Respond to multiple blast emails and prepare releasable information for the receptionist. What should we say to the person at the switchboard? How will we launch a 'dark website' in 2032?

Respond to Shareholders Association request for instant market information now that it has become common practice for profit figures to be available to shareholders on a monthly basis. Prepare Q&A for 5W+H in 2032?

Respond to a blog attack on a website with accusations that Africa has become a quarry for the Australian Resource Sector. What do we do in 2032? Podcast?

How will we handle a sex scandal and other causes for senior Executive step down? Prepare an Internal employee communiqué on what we will say in 2032?

Facing a debt crunch from a sub-prime mortgage crisis and now that Australia has been in drought for ten years from 2022 until 2032, what will be our company position be in 2032 and will Corporate Affairs be represented in the Boardroom?

As government, engage in covert selling of a controversial policy to get green energy legislation in place to provide 35% of all power. How should we do it and by what mediums in 2032?

Running with the Bulls or Groaning with the Bears. That brings us to the end of the summit on interest rates, petrol prices and rain. With the bourse out performing and business ebullient, why should stakeholders and communicators be worried? The fact of the matter is that the bubble can burst at any time. Unlike the Master of the *Titanic* who when interviewed by the *New York Times* in 1907, one hundred years ago, said that he had never seen a wreck nor had ever been in any predicament that threatened to end in disaster of any sort, these days the headline is prepare for crises as it is part of business. So what should communicators in Australia prepare for next? What is the probable next hot issue and the crisis after next? Will we be running with the bulls or groaning with the bears? Will global warming continue to manifest itself in floods and violent storms? Will the environment continue to be second fiddle in the all consuming quest for energy? Will the Internet allow terrorists unparallel advantage as they butt up against the spread of capitalism throughout the world?

There is no doubt that white collar crime, executive mismanagement and shareholder activism will continue to daunt many companies as will the impacts of climate change, alternative fuel sources and carbon trading. Management buy outs and the rise of private companies is a phenomena which is perhaps confined to countries with cashed up superannuation funds. It is almost certain that as software and online networking continues to morph, business will continue to become highly interactive with new versions of products and services of all kinds and attendant challenges from eCrisis be they caused by blogs and Botnet attacks or blast email.

Whether it be financial, political or environmental issues, I suggest that stakeholder mapping will remain the best thing that you can do for Issues Management and crisis communications. Then when it hits the fan it is all about activating the virtual media back office with pre-packaged media to go and interfacing with the internal Call Centre. It will still be all about monitoring, analyzing and responding to media coverage; treating the media not as a threat but as a resource to be exploited. It will still be all about turning the camera on in people's minds by preparing spokespersons for first and subsequent contact with the media. Good afternoon and good luck with your key messages, target messages, video calling and multi-party video conferencing over the Internet.