

Monthly Musings



courtesy of Fletcher Consulting

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SMART OLYMPICS MOVE:

Brent Folan

"If they gave medals to fans, I think I would get a gold for this performance." These are the words of Super Olympics Fan Brent Folan in Rio.

First – a frame of reference: Rebecca and I experienced an inadvertent brush with future fame recently. While taking a few days away from work in Austin, I was wearing a TCU golf shirt as we visited the spa. Walking down the stairs was a couple that immediately spotted me.

"If they gave a gold medal to fans, I would get a gold for this performance."

"Hey, our son's a Horned Frog, too. As a matter of fact, he was Student Body President just four years ago!" They introduced themselves as Steve and Sharon Folan from Austin. They told us that we must meet their son Brent, so I gave them my business card.

... interviewed on *Good Morning America*, *People Magazine*, *Wall Street Journal*...

The next week I received a call from Brent, who works in logistics in the Fort Worth office of international minerals producer Lhoist.

Brent and I were enjoying lunch when he mentioned he would be a volunteer for the Olympics for three weeks, and that he had received sponsorships from companies for his clothing and some other travel expenses.

He described Phelps as "My white buffalo. He's the reason I had to skip..."

Brent is the wizard of social media – and ALL media – as you will see.

After he was interviewed on [ABC's Good Morning America](#), he caught the media's eye because of all the athletes and celebrities he had met. I saw him once in the background on NBC's Today Show (check out his [Instagram post](#) where he met all the main NBC Today Show anchors and then read about him in [People Magazine](#) and the [Wall Street Journal](#), which described Brent as "The Forrest Gump of the Rio Games."

To keep his streak going, I set up interviews for him on the WBAP Morning Show and in the [Fort Worth Business Press](#).

He also was interviewed by the [Fort Worth Star-Telegram](#).

Brent met and took selfies with all of the [Final Five gymnasts](#),



swimmers [Michael Phelps](#) and [Ryan Murphy](#), track stars [Usain Bolt](#) and [Allyson Felix](#), golfer [Bubba Watson](#), shooters [Sarah Scherer](#) and [Virginia Thrasher](#), volleyball player [Kerri Walsh Jennings](#), tennis star [Serena Williams](#), and wrestler [Jordan Burroughs](#), plus non-athletes [Warren Buffett](#), [Jenna Bush](#) and [Zac Efron](#).

He described Phelps as "My white buffalo. He's the reason I had to skip my ride back home."

Brent gained his most visible attention by wearing a onesie that was designed as an American flag, and did he ever stand out!

If you ask Brent how to make a bucket list opportunity come true, he will share these three tips:

1. **Lose your modesty but be in good taste.** Be willing to wear something out of the norm that gets everybody's attention – like the onesie.

2. **Be polite but courteously aggressive.** By having the nerve to walk up to athletes and ask for selfies with them, he received a lot of opportunities. Plus, often when with one athlete, another would walk up to see what was going on – with Brent's onesie. He always asked politely: "Do you mind if I get a picture with you?"

3. **Being friendly pays off.** Most of the free tickets he received were because he was a volunteer for the Olympics. Some fans were kind enough to give him tickets they were not using.

One thing is for sure: Brent Folan sure returned home with more good news than swimmer Ryan Lochte!

SMART FLEXIBILITY:

Princess Diana

Every girl and woman alive that day recalls the very moment she learned about Princess Diana's death early in the morning of August 31, 1997, in Paris. With France being seven hours ahead of Texas time, it was actually still August 30 at approximately 9:00 p.m. our local time when her death was confirmed.

This incident was the '90s version of the John F. Kennedy assassination – everyone at least 10 years old remembered precisely where they were on November 22, 1963 when they heard or saw the breaking news.

My response to the event was different than most because I was an adjunct professor at Baylor University in Waco, making preparations for my class in Media Programming that would begin that Tuesday morning.

On this first day of my class 19 years ago, I allowed the students the time to visit for the first few minutes as I overheard their thoughts about the impact of Princess Diana's death and what her legacy would be.

Ignoring my scheduled lesson plan, I announced: "The world of television just changed over the past two days. We are going to see every major network channel and every news and celebrity channel go primarily dedicated to this story, and it will last for at least a week... possibly two."

True to my prediction, every major network and every cable news network did indeed divert their attention throughout each day, trying to develop one scoop after another to cover the passing of the most photographed woman in the world.

Networks scrambled to dedicate programming to her life's humanitarian work, her charities, family life and divorce as a video obituary.

In case you did not know, newspapers and TV networks always have updated obituaries ready to roll for whenever high profile people die. Rookie employees in newspaper newsrooms have always been tasked with updating the obit on every living U.S. President and wife, plus high level cabinet members, as well as the Pope and such living legends in their time as John Wayne, Lucille Ball, Bob Hope, Elvis, Michael Jackson and Prince.

If a former President passes away tonight, his obituary in print, online and in broadcast can be pushed out in a matter of minutes.

While we did have the Internet then, we did not have the widespread social media resources that would have been unleashed



had her death occurred today.

Stories continue to proliferate about whether the accident was caused by the paparazzi and whether there was a conspiracy potentially involving the Royal Family. There were numerous theories but never enough conclusive proof.

In today's environment of "citizen journalists," there would have been numerous so-called confidential leaks and innuendo that would likely never end.

Princess Diana's death definitely influenced how the media covers celebrities and helped spawn the growth of the celebrity-driven infotainment programs we see today. Her death also led to restrictions in the media photographing the children of celebrities.

THE Tiebreaker

Unnamed grocery

There I was in line in an area grocery store at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, preparing to check out. I was waiting behind an elderly lady (The term "elderly" is getting a lot more flexible and kind as I continue to "mature"!) who was in line before me, as she was checking out.

I overheard a young man that appeared to be an assistant manager telling her, "Look, our computers change their prices on Tuesday afternoon to be prepared for the ad breaking Wednesday morning. We are NOT going to honor that price from this week's ad."

The woman protested and even showed him that the coupon had an expiration date of that day – Tuesday, August 30. He stuck to his guns, refusing to relent even with the evidence right in front of him.

I intervened and said, "Sir, unless that coupon states that it expires at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 30, it is still in force. You need to hit the override key and give this lady the discount."



He mumbled something and complied. Hearing the lady thank me for saving her 35¢ made me feel like a true American hero. I had completed my [#RestoringKindness](#) deed for the day.

On my way home, I glanced at the receipt for my purchases and found the store's phone number and manager's name. I called and shared the story with him.

I am happy to say that his response was the same as mine. He added that he wished he could have found that lady to apologize in person for his overly zealous enforcer of the ad program, and that he would use this as a teachable moment for the young man about customer service delivery.

Well done!

