

# Monthly Musings



courtesy of Fletcher Consulting

500 Grapevine Hwy. • Suite 362  
Hurst, TX 76054  
(817) 205-2334 • Fax (817) 796-2087  
Email: john@thefletch.org

Get **Linked in** with John at:  
[www.linkedin.com/in/johnfletcherpr](http://www.linkedin.com/in/johnfletcherpr)  
Read John's blog on  
[www.thefletch.org](http://www.thefletch.org)

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## SMART POLITICS:

### Trump dominates the conversation

What is that giant vortex sucking the air out of the room? Yes, that is Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump.

I delayed writing this edition of *Monthly Musings* to observe if the campaign would gain traction or implode. Well, it did more of the former than the latter.

One Fox News reporter on Sunday stated that Donald Trump is not playing by the traditional rules of political combat.

Whenever Trump makes a gaffe, such as the Senator John McCain comments, he usually continues on rather than making apologies. In other words, he stays the course, right or wrong.

Here are four reasons Donald Trump's popularity is growing in the polls:

Here are four reasons Donald Trump's popularity is growing...

1. **He speaks his mind and appears decisive.**

Fox News reports that Republican primary voters want consistency in where their candidates stand. Whether you agree or disagree with him, Trump does tell you where he stands.

He speaks his mind and appears decisive.

2. **He has a compelling message that resonates with much of the Republican base.**

While a large number of people may not speak out publicly about their immigration beliefs, Trump is giving voice to their unspoken convictions.

Voters are angry with the President and Congress.

3. **He is perceived as a successful businessman.**

Many Republican voters hope he can bring a business perspective to government, cutting a lot of politically motivated wasteful spending.

4. **Voters are angry with the President and Congress.** Voters are frustrated at the status quo and feel Trump offers a smarter opportunity for the future. Don't get me wrong – Trump will face his challenges.

While he is the absolute Republican Party front-runner for the August 6 debate on Fox with a 24% share of the polls, many feel he is a sensationalist and a bully who plays loose with the facts.

Wait a second – *playing loose with the facts* – isn't that what we've come to expect from so many politicians at the federal level?

We know one thing for sure: Donald Trump is a larger-than-life candidate who can play with his own money. The media see him as a "frenemy" because Trump's latest comments and antics provide fodder for news headlines.



## SMART STRATEGY:

### Know your 8-legged chicken

*The Wall Street Journal* reported on June 2 that some competitors of KFC in China are spreading false rumors on social media about the restaurant chain's food quality.

Microblogs (using short text to update a blog) and photos are **claiming KFC chickens have six wings and eight legs. Yes, SIX wings and EIGHT legs.**

There are three obvious conclusions to consider:

1. The claim is patently false and misleading.
2. The claim is leading uninformed consumers to believe that KFC is creating mutations through genetic engineering, which implies all sorts of bad thoughts.
3. Wow, I wish I had invented that – quadruple the chicken legs on every chicken. Cut food cost by 75%!

OK, let's remove that third option.

One of the great challenges of marketing today is the anonymity of the Internet and the influence that bloggers have on you and me as consumers.

When you and I consult a site such as Tripadvisor.com or Yelp.com, we trust that all those reviews are accurate



and honest. Actually, we HOPE they are honest.

Unfortunately, some of those reviews are written by professionals whose services are paid by that hotel or resort to promote how exquisite the property is. Others are written by professionals hired by COMPETING hotels with the intent of damaging the reputation of competitor properties. It's the same with restaurants, dry cleaners and car dealers, as well.

Such is the anonymous Internet-influenced world, which writes about eight-legged, six-winged chickens and alleged four-star service at two-star hotels.

While KFC has the option of legal action, which it has taken, most of us can merely live with the pain inflicted by negative reviews about our companies or believing the reviews about the vacations we are preparing to take.

How would you respond when someone starts spreading false rumors:

- Your note has been called at the bank and you are insolvent
- Your largest customer is moving his/her business to another supplier

Even if neither of these is true, the conversation has taken place and may be spreading like wildfire among your customers and suppliers.

What is your strategy when your competitor or former customer begins spreading rumors about you? How well have you developed and cultivated your reputation and your relationships with your customers? If you have fallen short in this area, now is the time to make some improvements.

Your reputation should be your greatest asset. If you feel it has taken a hit, then perhaps we need to talk.

In the meantime, please pass the eight-legged chicken and mashed potatoes!

# SMART FOCUS:

## How to catch a rabbit

Ask any successful businessperson how to grow your business and you will hear a litany of marketing philosophies:

- Disrupt the competition
- Tightly define your brand
- Live your brand
- Become a relentless guerilla marketer



My good friend and consultant Jim Goodnight in Dallas recently shared this pearl of wisdom. For you to receive the full benefit, please cover the rest of this article and reveal the copy one line at a time. Failure to do so will rob you of determining how insightful you are.

If you want to catch a rabbit...

(OK, this is where you cover the next line)

*Did you peek? If so, shame on you!*

If you want to catch a rabbit, think like a... **carrot**. Rather than analyze the size or fragrance of a rabbit, its favorite colors or where it likes to live or go, immerse yourself in the one basic love of a rabbit: Carrots.

The same holds true with your own customers/clients.

Research and data are extremely important, but you will find success most often when you:

- Discover that customer's most basic want/need (The carrot – or the successful launch of his new product line)
- Recognize what interests the customer (Find where the carrots are – Tell me why you developed this new product line and about your thought process)
- Talk that customer's language (Hey, I like carrots, too! – I use your existing product and I have personal experience with it. I'm interested in the new product line)
- Develop a relationship with that customer (I have plenty of carrots to share with you! – I have an idea we could explore together on how to launch your new product)

*Think like a carrot -- catch more rabbits!*

# THE Tiebreaker

## Your "Yeah, but..." moment

What's your "Yeah, but..." moment?

USA Today created this term a few days ago when describing several of the announced candidates for each party's presidential nomination.

While every candidate has his/her own set of talking points that would ideally be the focus of every speech and interview, each also has a "Yeah, but..." question or two.

To Hillary Clinton, the statement following her experience on being Secretary of State might be, "Yeah, but you're not telling us why you erased your emails."

For Chris Christie, the statement could be, "Yeah, but tell us what happens to all the State of New Jersey investments in the Atlantic City casinos that are closing."

And for Donald Trump, well, as popular as he is, there are still so many "Yeah, but..." questions for him, as well.

How well-prepared are you to handle your "Yeah, but..." questions regarding your company's product or service? Do you answer it to *your* satisfaction, or to your *customer's* satisfaction?

There is a huge difference between the two.

"Yeah, I'd like to buy from you, Bob... but you have two new competitors, yet you raised your prices 10% in a down market."

"Sally, you're a good friend... but you failed to deliver as promised three times this year and you're behind on the latest order."

Prepare your answers in advance of these questions so you are not caught off-guard and so you do not try to "wing it" with your reply. Be succinct and speak with the client's interests in mind.

Every company experiences "Yeah, but..." moments. Turn your "Yeah, but..." moment into a powerful weapon!

