

Monthly Musings



courtesy of Fletcher Consulting

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VOL. 7-6 • JUNE 2015

SMART LESSONS:

Horned Frogs baseball taught us

TCU's dramatic post-season successes and path to the College World Series taught us more lessons in sports, business and life than we can even fathom.

1. **If things don't go your way, plug the hole in the dike.** When TCU gave up four runs to fall behind 8-1, things could have been much worse. It would have been easy to give up. The Frogs kept the game somewhat in reach, even though it looked improbable, and staged a memorable comeback win.

If things don't go your way, plug the hole in the dike.

2. **Sometimes your opponent loses the game as much as you win it.**

In TCU's five-run eighth inning, NC State had the game within its grasp with two outs. By the end of that inning, NC State had committed three errors, given three walks, a balk, and only two hits that all totaled five runs. It happens in every sport – just as [Dustin Johnson](#) choked his way from the cusp of victory at Sunday's U.S. Open.

Sometimes your opponent loses the game as much as you win it.

3. **Realize your opponent... or competitor... is just as nervous as you are/needs the sale just as badly as you do.** We all presume our opponent will shoot a par round of golf/skim the net with his or her perfect tennis passing shot/bowl a strike every frame/make every sale without ever failing. EVERYONE loses on a given day, and they might as well lose to you today. *Sometimes we just need to show up.*

...you may just have to be bold enough to break the bounds of common sense.

4. **On some occasions, you give the game away yet STILL have the opportunity to come back and win the day.** The Frogs literally gave the tying runs to the Aggies in the top of the 9th inning – and even had the bases loaded with no outs – before holding on

to extend the game. Sometimes our worst business or life mistakes cripple but do not destroy us once we

gather our wits and overcome the challenge.

5. **When playing within the norms of the game, you may just have to be bold enough to break the bounds of common sense.** Here's the really tough one because it involves disobeying orders (the third base coach told the runner to stop!). When you keep hitting your head against the wall seeking traditional solutions, it makes sense NOT to make sense... and to do the unexpected. When Garrett Crain rounded third base and headed for home, he challenged the Aggies' third baseman to make the play at home. Under the pressure of the hugest game of both their careers, Crain's unexpected move led the Aggie to rush his throw past the catcher, thus allowing TCU to win the game 5-4 and advance to the College World Series. As Crain said later, "I just had to force something."

When things fail to go your way, keep yourself in the game, stay within striking distance, and always give yourself a chance to come back.

Oh, how I wish someone had taught me all this when I was 12 years old. I would have been amazing, even if only in my own mind.



SMART STYLE:

Futura: From Neiman Marcus and beyond

I was collaborating with Neiman Marcus on a project two years ago and learned this firm rule from their design department: Make the message clear and simple. Oh yes,

and use the Futura font.

Research taught me the reason. Quoting Designmodo.com, "Futura has razor-sharp apices, and is elegant and striking in its efficiency. But overall, Futura is *dramatic*."

Neiman Marcus

Check out the letter N and recognize the point at the top of the left leg is higher than the top of the right leg. Look closely and notice the capital M. The center lower point of the M swoops down lower than the two outside legs.

To you and me, this is no big deal. To designers, the Futura idiosyncrasies are everything!

Now that you are paying attention to Futura, watch print ads and TV. You will observe the following companies employing either Futura or very similar fonts in their advertising messages or logos:

- Acura
- Lexus
- Volkswagen
- Costco
- Swissair

Elegant. Striking. Dramatic. And oh-so-simple. The future may belong to Futura!

SMART APPROACH:

Taylor Swift conquers Apple

Did you see country-turned-pop superstar Taylor Swift bring Apple to its knees with the kindest, gentlest complaint letter?

On Sunday, Taylor protested Apple's policy to withhold royalty payments for the 90-day trial period for new subscribers to Apple Music.

Here are some of her tactfully penned statements that showed a savvy approach to a public berating. In each of these comments, Taylor recognizes and even compliments Apple for its past behaviors.



- I feel this deserves an explanation because **Apple has been and will continue to be one of my best partners in selling music and creating ways for me to connect with my fans.**
- This is about the young songwriter who just got his or her first cut and thought that the royalties would get them out of debt. This is about the producer who works tirelessly to innovate and create, **just like the innovators and creators at Apple are pioneering in their field.**
- These are the echoed sentiments of every artist, writer and producer in my social circles who are afraid to speak up

- publicly **because we admire and respect Apple so much.**
- We know **how astronomically successful Apple has been and we know that this incredible company** has the money to pay artists, writers and producers for the 3 month trial period.
- I say this **with love, reverence and admiration for everything else Apple has done.**
- But **I say this to Apple with all due respect**, it's not too late to change this policy and change the minds of those in the music industry who will be deeply and gravely affected by this.

Did you notice how Apple reacted? They responded at the speed of light with a smile. Apple Music chief Eddie Cue tweeted, "We hear you @taylorswift13 and indie artists. Love, Apple."

His next tweet read, "Apple will always make sure that artists are paid."

The result for Apple has been positive publicity for correcting a bad decision – one that could only have been forced by an artist with such elite status as Taylor Swift and only a handful of others.

Yes, Taylor took a bite out of that Apple and everybody won. Including Apple.

THE Tiebreaker

Schick teaches us to pay attention

My favorite TV commercial ran in the U.S. Open Goof... er, Golf... Championship this past weekend. Did you notice the advertisement for the Schick Xtreme 3 Razor?

The scene opens with six job candidates sitting in a reception area, each awaiting his turn for the interview. Each is dressed sharply and just killing time before his session.

This one participant, sitting all by himself, notices something the others cannot see: photos of the past CEOs. Interestingly enough, each has a bald head.

The young man springs from his seat and next we see him inside a store, where he purchases the Schick Xtreme 3 Razor. He reappears in the reception area with his head shaved totally bald.

The door opens and the CEO leans in. The young man smiles as he notices the man has a shaved head just like his. The other interviewees know they have lost.

Check it out right here and prepare to laugh!
<http://buff.ly/1HcBUdO>

