

Monthly Musings



Courtesy of Fletcher Consulting

500 Grapevine Hwy. • Suite 362
Hurst, TX 76054
(817) 205-2334 • Fax (817) 788-2334
Email: john@thefletch.org

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

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APRIL FOOLS DAY EDITION

Stories 2-3-4 are true!

SMART TIME TO PLAY:

April Fools Day!

Burger King just announced a way to make every woman absolutely irresistible to men with its Flame Grilled Fragrance Cologne.

Since the product is available for April 1 only, and exclusively in Japan, I figure it's an April Fools' ploy. I wonder if it's Kobe beef!

Rahr & Sons Brewery played its prank last Friday, March 27 – so a few days leading up to April Fools Day. The brewery announced on Friday that it would host its final Tour & Tasting event on April 1 and then shut down operations a few weeks later.

Customers, distributors and retailers panicked until they learned about the joke.

A company reveals its personality and sense of humor when it plays with its customers in a tasteful and appropriate manner.

Here are four of the greatest April Fools Day pranks EVER:

1. The Taco Bell Liberty Bell: On April 1, 1996, Taco Bell announced, "In an effort to help the national debt, Taco Bell is pleased to announce that we have agreed to purchase the Liberty Bell, one of our country's most historic treasures. It will now be called the 'Taco Liberty Bell' and will still be accessible to the American public for viewing." Taco Bell bought a full-page newspaper ad in six major newspapers nationwide.

2. Swiss Spaghetti Harvest: On April 1, 1957, jokesters at the BBC ran a segment stating that following a mild winter, Swiss farmers would enjoy an unusually large crop of spaghetti. The Swiss Spaghetti Harvest fooled thousands, with many calling to



A company reveals its personality and sense of humor when it plays...

Burger King announced... Flame Grilled Fragrance Cologne

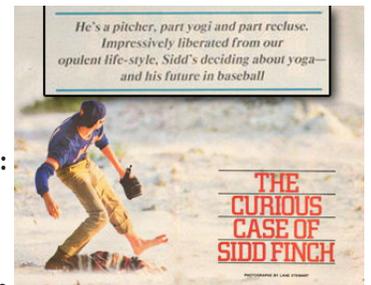
New York Mets pitcher Sidd Finch had a 168 mpg fastball

ask how they could grow their own spaghetti tree. Of course, spaghetti doesn't grow on trees – money does!

3. **Helicopter:** On April 1, 2009, a video went viral, fooling millions of people into thinking the world's first luxury helicopter was a reality. The high quality of the images mixed with the sincere hope this awesome invention of a hotel inside a helicopter led to thousands of Facebook friends and Twitter followers.

4. And my favorite – **New York Mets' pitcher Sidd Finch:** The April 1985 issue of *Sports Illustrated* revealed that the New York Mets had recruited a rookie pitcher named Sidd Finch who could throw a baseball at 168 mph — 65 mph faster than the previous record. Surprisingly, Sidd Finch had never played baseball before, but he had mastered the "art of the pitch" in a Tibetan monastery. Mets fans couldn't believe their good fortune. Accepting at face value the peculiarities of Sidd's past, fans flooded *Sports Illustrated* with requests for more information. But in reality this amazing player only existed in the imagination of author **George Plimpton**, who had left a clue in the sub-heading of the article: "He's a pitcher, part yogi and part recluse. Impressively liberated from our opulent life-style, Sidd's deciding about yoga—and his future in baseball." The first letter of each of these words, taken together, spelled "H-a-p-p-y A-p-r-i-l F-o-o-l-s D-a-y — A-h F-i-b".

You can find 100 of the best April Fools' Day pranks at <http://hoaxes.org/aprilfool>.



NOT SO SMART TIMING:

Indiana's controversial new law

If you're going to create a gigantic controversy, you might consider making the calendar work in your favor. The latest example is the Indiana State Legislature, which passed a religious

freedom act this last week.

While the bill sounds harmless enough by nature, there are some controversial aspects such as the right for local businesses to refuse service to people with whose lifestyle they disagree.

This legislation would be controversial at any time but it's even more prominent since Indianapolis is hosting the NCAA Men's Final Four portion of March Madness this weekend through Monday.

The city and state are now in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons.

Since the state legislature's session is required to end by April 29, it would have seemed wiser to wait and then pass and sign this bill following the high profile event. Many in the industry call this timely news release "[Bad News Friday](#)."

April 2015						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

As America would move on to NBA playoffs, the Masters Golf Championship and Major League Baseball, the story would have garnered attention, but not nearly as much.

"John, what are you talking about?" you might ask. "Nobody else times news releases to coincide with the calendar." Oh really?

Consider this: The White House consistently releases news on Friday afternoons and holiday weekends. After all, most people are not paying close attention to the media then and a story can easily get buried without notice. Here are some examples:

- The White House has released its semiannual regulatory agenda that details its plans for thousands of rules at agencies across the government four consecutive times on the eve of a federal holiday.
- When the iPhone 4 was experiencing challenges with reception depending on how customers held it (remember the "[death grip](#)" story?) and other software missteps, Apple released its response on Friday, July 2 – leading into the 4th of July weekend.
- Investopedia.com reports that companies tend to bury bad news or a disappointing earnings report by releasing the story when the smallest numbers of people watch TV, such as the Friday going into a holiday weekend.
- The other time to release bad news? When a major story is capturing the headlines such as Ebola, a major transportation disaster or a food scare.

If you must release a story that you would like fewer eyes and ears to discover, use the news calendar to your advantage. If you need help in this area, please feel free to give me a call at 817-205-2334.

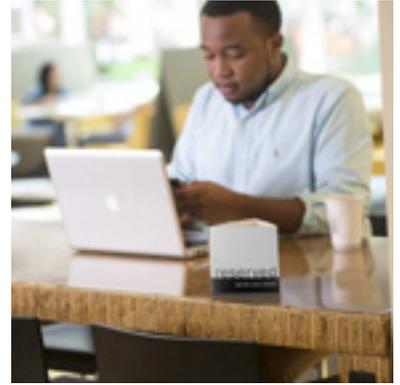
SMART DECISION:

Marriott reverses a wrong

Recently Marriott International responded to guest complaints and stopped blocking guests from using their

own Wi-Fi devices at its hotels and resorts due to a decision rendered by the Federal Communications Commission.

Their initial reasoning was that if guests could not access their own wireless hotspots, they would be required to pay a fee to log into the hotel's supplier and generate incremental revenues.



Marriott's official rationale was that unauthorized rogue providers and hackers would set up hotspots in the conference center and then gather data and private information for their own illicit use.

You may have seen a hotspot named "Conference Center" or "Convention" while at a hotel and presumed it to be the hotel's site. Well, often it is not, and you are giving your private information to a hacker. Now that IS scary!

Back to the original story here. Once the company learned the FCC was going to require action, Marriott responded and did its best to look like a hero. The online eAdvocacy group Care2 praised Marriott's decision to cease the blocking of personal Wi-Fi networks.

As I advise my clients, once you decide to or are forced to take corrective action, move forward "at the speed of light with a smile!"

THE Tiebreaker

Hostess has kept its promise of bringing back its beloved Twinkies along with Cupcakes, Zingers, Ding Dongs and HoHos – oh yes, and my precious Sno Balls. The company has expanded its distribution channels by selling into dollar stores and vending machines.

I even did my own part by convincing my client Curly's Frozen Custard in Fort Worth to create the Twinkie Sundae, and that was a tasty treat!

When you have a beloved product – and it's wonderful when people use it in jokes, such as the half-life of a Twinkie being 100 years – then leverage the enthusiasm and enjoy the ride!



HAPPY EASTER

