

The Lustberg Communicator

Volume 19, Number 1

“Communication should be an intellectual act of love.”

Spring 2010

Lustberg on... Great Expectations



Photo by Mary Norman

Arch Lustberg

In late January I saw *Up in the Air*. The movie received fabulous reviews, six Academy Award nominations, and a multi-million-dollar marketing campaign. The

timing of its release was perfect: in a deep recession, the main character's job was to fire people. American Airlines had contributed to the production's charmed life by providing the filmmakers free use of an airplane and its Admirals Club facilities for shooting.

It was one of the most eagerly-awaited films ever, right up there with *Harry Potter* and *Avatar*. I couldn't wait to be swept away! But there'd been so much hype that it failed to meet my expectations. I was so ready to be delighted that I was disappointed. It was a good movie, but I was expecting a masterpiece.

Of course Paramount Pictures got my money anyway, so they may not care. The next time they over-hype a movie, though, they might feel like the boy who cried “wolf,” when a more skeptical

audience stays home.

President Obama may be suffering from the same phenomenon. He may have been so over-hyped that the electorate, expecting miracles and getting only competence, is beginning to lose trust and faith.

In the run-up to the 2008 election there were those who loved him, those who hated him (they're both still with us) and those we're now calling independents who gave him a chance, but are still not sure what to make of him. He's discovering that these are the people he needs to attract again.

Barack Obama was so fabulously marketed and was such an appealing lead character in the Obama major motion picture, that the electorate was not only hoping for change and transparency, they were expecting it... counting on it... *banking on it*, if you'll excuse the expression.

Now the “audience” is getting restless. The opening scenes have been anti-climactic; not up to the hype. And aside from the die-hard Obama lovers and haters, nobody seems to know where the action will take us next. Or whether there will even be any action. Will the pace quicken? Will the hype be realized, or will the movie fizzle? Thumbs up or thumbs down?

Opinions about this intriguing character abound. He stirs great interest and great emotion. That was made clear by the number of responses to my Commentary #111, on the State of the Union address.

In a nutshell, I wrote that it was a mediocre speech reasonably well



delivered. It would have been a good speech if he'd cut it by half.

As with most State of the Union or State of the State speeches, it was simply too long. Typically, he tried to cover every issue facing every constituency, and in too much detail. I noted that he couldn't lose the true believers or win over the opposition no matter what he said or how he said it. Time will tell how he fared with the undecided, or independents, whom he won over so handily before the reality of the presidency set in.

As I mentioned, my commentary drew a remarkable reaction. I heard from a lot of you. Some took issue with me, some approved enthusiastically. But all

your notes were thought-provoking, insightful, and made me appreciate my readers more



than ever. There were far too many responses to reproduce in this newsletter, so you'll find a cross-section sampling on page 3, under the banner “State of the Union: Your Thoughts.” □

What's Inside

Nits & Picks.....	2
Communicator Tip.....	3
State of the Union: Thoughts.....	3
Dear Arch.....	4
Wisdom of the Ages.....	4
Bringing Arch to Town	4

Nits & Picks



Easy-to-Understand

Using words the audience may not understand is a no-no unless you gracefully give the meaning in the next sentence without suggesting the audience is stupid for not knowing it. If it's done right, the members of the audience will think they knew the meaning all along.

I found a perfect example of doing it right in an article about Toyota's problems, by David Segal of *The New York Times*:

"...But because this is Toyota, the story has a subtext that just wasn't in evidence when the other carmakers took their turn in the recall doghouse: a whole lot of schadenfreude. Yes, we needed the Germans to come up with a compound word that means joy in the misery of others..."

Likeability Wins

Thanks to TLC reader Joe Kelly, who runs an association management firm in Des Moines, for sending this message about the political upset in Massachusetts:

Bruce Wallin, a political science professor at Boston's Northeastern University, said Brown gained traction by using the formula

Republicans, including William Weld and Mitt Romney, used to win gubernatorial races from 1991 to 2003. Part of it, he said, is simply likeability.

"Their opponents ran bad campaigns and they [the winners] were more likeable; the Coakley campaign was overconfident."

Oh yes, it seems that someone once told me that likability wins!



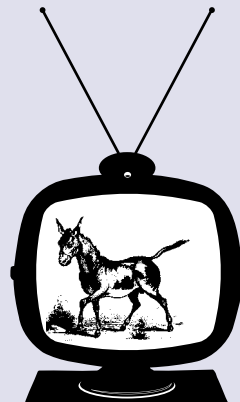
The Trouble With Audible Pauses

Thanks to TLC reader David Wilson, president of the Graduate Management Admissions Council, for this story:

We recently interviewed a number of candidates for a senior position. One candidate was poised, professional and had a superb resume. Alas, her pause as she framed a response was "well, um, sorta" almost as a single word: "wellumsorta." As one colleague noted, after a while you start to count the wellumsortas and ignore the content. Remember to keep your pauses silent!

Pompous Ass Syndrome

Many thanks to TLC reader Bob Mannion for responding to my article on garbage language: *I enjoyed reading your newsletter very much. Dick Cheney says "if you will" when he speaks. I always find myself yelling back at him, "I will not, you pompous ass!" I do realize that yelling at the TV is a sign of one losing his mind... I resolve to try and be a little less bonkers.*



Toyota's Crisis

One of the biggest stories in business this quarter was the Toyota recall. The reason it became such a big story is that, for the longest time, it was the Toyota NON-recall.

Years ago, when Audi drivers experienced sudden acceleration, the explanation from Audi HQ was "Driver incompetence!" Sales plummeted. For virtually the same reason, Toyota lost a lot of its market share.

When there's a problem, admit it. Figure it out. Fix it. And tell

your story all along the way: Here are the factories we've temporarily closed. Here are our engineers, testing every part. Here's the man who found the faulty circuit! Here are our dealers, fixing your cars. Here are our factories, up and running again and producing cars with our famous standard of quality. Here are our customers, smiling again!

We all saw dramatic stories on the news about out-of-control Toyotas in hair-raising, often deadly accidents. Vivid stories like those get imprinted on our brains and make "there isn't a problem" unbelievable.

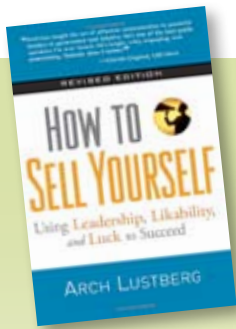
Toyota's CEO appeared before Congress. He had to. Toyota's reputation had been so bloodied that only Mr. Toyoda himself could have stemmed the flow. He wasn't a natural. His staff probably had him trained for the occasion but, possibly because of cultural differences, he didn't come across as remorseful, concerned, involved, and willing to do whatever it takes to get quality back to the level that made Toyota the most popular car company in the world. Stay tuned.

Speaking to the Undecided, the Unaligned, the Independents

Lee Hockstader, a political pundit at the *Washington Post*, credits Virginia's new Republican governor with understanding how to win a political campaign by both being likeable and speaking to the needs and concerns of the undecided by staying away from the political extremes. McDonnell's victory, Hockstader sums up, was the result of an "agile, disciplined, focused



and attractive Republican against an unpolished Democrat who ran a lackluster campaign." □



Use the Handbook!

I've mentioned before that Bill Graham teaches a Masters

program in

Communications at Seton Hall University using my book, *How to Sell Yourself* (available at www.amazon.com) as a text. Here's his interesting news about chapter 16, The "Selling Yourself" Handbook:

As you know, *How to Sell Yourself* is required reading for my

Seton Hall grad students and this year, as usual, they LOVED it.

In their book analysis, the number one thing that they mentioned is the handbook in the back. I thought you should know, because I don't remember it being so important in the past. At least a third of the class said that they had immediately started using the handbook as a quick reminder whenever they needed to speak.

All the students are professionals. One young lady,

who had struggled with some of the concepts of the course, came in the week after the "Interview" class. She said she had reviewed the handbook before a job interview a few days earlier. She had decided she was going to put the ideas to the test. She knew she had the job as soon as the interview was over. The new job is a 25% increase over the salary she was making, and she credited the handbook. That is a very normal experience. It happens at least once every semester. □

STATE OF THE UNION YOUR THOUGHTS

One might ask, "Where has the Obama we saw Thursday night been hiding?"

Sam Hunt

Washington State Representative

While I strongly believe in the power of words, especially if they are crafted and delivered in a manner that invites and entices good listening and understanding, I find that they ring empty unless they are backed by the actions that make them useful; which, in my opinion, is the true essence of their use. I liken this to listening to music; there are many songs that I enjoy hearing but if I take the time to really listen to the words I find in some circumstances that I no longer enjoy the music.

Thomas Culpepper

Soringa Solutions LLC

From your commentary to God's ears. We politicians need to appreciate the impact of brevity and conciseness. It is so easy to say everything that the important pieces are lost.

Jon S. Cardin, Esq.

Attorney at Law &

Maryland House of Delegates

I think you need to separate among the independents those whose support for the president was already sliding. The momentum pushing marginal independents against him was probably not overcome. Some of them were probably disappointed with his accepting after a year in office so

little ownership of the nation's many difficulties and blaming everyone else in sight for his own party's impasses. This seems to me to underscore a worrisome personal fault.

I was especially disappointed that the president did not tell us how his agenda could be adapted to allay widespread and growing concerns about how it was unfolding; particularly the deficit and the Obamacare.

I would note that the president appears to have gained some stature from his televised meeting with Republican legislators, but I did not see that performance myself.

Edward J. Kane

Department of Finance

Boston College

I play lunch at the Prime Rib on K Street and I've never heard such harsh anger vented by the regulars. It's alarming. My middle-of-the-road material is perceived as left-wing poison. No laughs. Nothing. I've died many times but never like this.

Dan Ruskin

[Dan's quote may be more meaningful with this background: He's the most popular cocktail pianist in Washington, D.C., and his current gig at the Prime Rib places him at the heart of the "Lobbyist Corpus." He was a student of mine at Catholic University's Speech & Drama Department. Then, in 1963, we worked together in an off-Broadway political revue, "A Political Party." His brother, Mark Russell, is one of the nation's most-loved and even-handed political satirists. Dan writes much of Mark's material.] □

Dear Arch



Bottom of My Heart

There I was, stranded at a maximum security resort-hotel in Orlando, surrounded by what appeared to be reclaimed

swamp land. After three grueling days of business development training and leadership speeches, you came out on stage and blew our socks off. Mr. Lustberg, you gave what I thought was one of the most inspiring presentations I have ever seen. Much as I am loath to use that catchword of the day, “transformative,” I can think of none more fitting. I sat in that audience utterly transfixed, and I thought “This is it!” I feel that I am finally on the right track. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for your precious gift to me.

Name Withheld Upon Request

A New Lesson

I'm a new Financial Advisor with Merrill Lynch in Bloomington, Indiana. As part of our coursework, we are directed to view a presentation you delivered to a Merrill group in the past called Communicating for Success. I just want to tell you that I really enjoyed learning from you. You teach some very powerful points that I can see have the potential to make a big impact for people like me who are always sharing information with individuals and small groups.

In my former professional life, I was a Spanish teacher to students of all ages. I wish I would have known about you back then! I've been frightfully guilty of the fig leaf and royalty hand positions. Yikes!

Now I'm in a rush to buy *How to Sell Yourself*. Thank you so much for the gift of your teachings.

Loni M. Dishong

Wisdom of the Ages



“You do not really understand something unless you can explain it to your grandmother.”

Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

German-born Swiss-American Nobel Physicist

The Lustberg Communicator

Editor: Susan Paynter

Graphic Design: Marlece Lusk, MLK Designs

Web Management: Karen Thompson, Shadyvale Press

Copyright © 2010 by Arch Lustberg Communications, Inc.

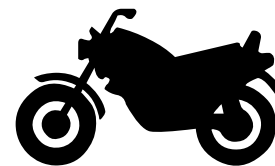
1806 S. Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202, Phone: (703) 979-4150, Fax: (703) 979-4160

E-mail: lustberg@erols.com, Web Site: www.lustberg.net

Arch Lustberg, President

Marguerite Stone, Executive Director

All rights reserved. To use or reprint material from TLC, please credit: *Arch Lustberg, Arch Lustberg Communications, www.lustberg.net*, and send your publication to Arch Lustberg Communications.



Bringing Arch to Town

Would you like some gratitude from your program attendees? Want to help them do their jobs better? Book Arch Lustberg! A few comments from recent audience members: “I would give Mr. Lustberg a six on the five-point scale.” “Outstanding. His clear suggestions for change will be put to work quickly.” “This single training gave me the tools to do what people expect me to do and what I want to accomplish -- talk and have people listen and remember what I said.” “Absolutely fantastic.” “Extremely helpful.”

To discuss bringing Arch to your crew, call Marguerite Stone at (703) 979-4150; or email her at lustberg@erols.com. Here's where Arch is booked so far for the months ahead:

March

19 Tallahassee, FL

April

17 Salt Lake City, UT

May

20 New York, NY

22 Birmingham, AL

June

5 Salt Lake City, UT

11 Frankfort, KY

22 Salt Lake City, UT

July

13 Madison, WI

15 Colorado Springs, CO

August

24 Lexington, KY

October

23 Salt Lake City, UT

For updates, visit our home page: www.lustberg.net

The Lustberg Communicator