

4M FORUM

Issue 1 Summer 2008

MARKETING

1. Please consider how often consistency turns into boring predictability – transmogrified like a steak into shoe leather. How many truck ads will have a deep C&W male voice narrating machismo sentiments? How many furniture or car dealers have to be featured in their commercials?

2. If marketing interests you, I suggest you download a free copy of **Getting Down to One: A Novel Approach For Successful Marketing Actions**. Go to

<http://www.kaplanmarketing.com/dosndonts.html> - Anchor-Getting-49575

MISTAKES

Why Ain't Writers Got Good Lingo?

We all get loose with language and sloppy with sentences, but some persistent errors result from a strange aspiration to sound sophisticated. Here are some annoying examples which we'll call Please feel free to contribute some of your own to this Web site. To provide the examples which annoy you the most, email them to don@kaplanmarketing.com.

- "It's" means "it is" not the possessive and does not mean belonging to "it." Apostrophe is critical.
- The incorrect use of the word "unique" to replace "unusual" as in "most unique." As most people know, unique means one of a kind. It's an absolute; one thing can't be more one of a kind than another. Our service/product is "most unique" is most stupid.
- Where does "irregardless" come from?
- Past redundancies – "past history"
- Future redundancies --, "going forward" Nine times out of ten, the use of the future tense is a big clue for the former and the latter adds no meaning.
- Directional misdirection – "out there." Out where?? Could use "available", "in existence" etc.

The next MISTAKES section will focus on improvements which are useless impediments, or as I like to call it – **over-engineering** -- such as in Microsoft Excel which seems to get less and less intuitive, the GE Profile refrigerator whose design wastes energy and whose icemaker periodically tosses ice on the floor. Please email me suggestions: under 4M.

MUSIC/MOVIES

If you like movies and you haven't tried <http://www.imdb.com>, you're missing something. You can look up entire casts, all the movie credits of an actor or director, and knowledge link all of them. Before I get into music in the next edition of 4M Forum, let me make note of a wonderful, little known movie that uses music well for a central theme. It's called Tic Code and it's about a kid with Tourette's Syndrome who functions better than normal when he's playing jazz piano. It features Gregory Hines and humor and drama in equal parts. Also stars "Monk" Tony Shalhoub. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0165986/>

Please feel free to send your review of this movie or the title of one it brings to mind for you.

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MISHIGAS/MONKEY BUSINESS

CHICKEN ROULETTE: A True Story

by I. B. DeCamper

It happened at our campsite. Six guys. Eighteen varieties of beverage. Most of them alcoholic. Many of those beer. Six guys trying to pitch in, desperately trying to coordinate efforts and make dinner. Ah, the healthful joys of campground cooking. At one point one of the chefs al fresco holds the main course of the evening's repast to his nose, screws up his face, and observes, "this piece smells awful." He passes the raw chicken to the next chef who sniffs and makes the same face, "oh yeah, this is definitely rotten." The putrid poultry is passed around and the judgment is unanimous.

Cautious and methodically scientific to a fault, each of the other five portions of dinner is in turn passed and sniffed by each member of the contingent. Each is deemed edible. The decision is made to dispose of the contaminated entree'.

The meal begins well. Crackers, cheese, corn, vegetables, and, of course, beers, vodka, whiskeys, and wine. Grunts of satisfaction and multiple moans of enthusiasm are interspersed with occasional pleasant remarks about the incomparable pleasures of eating by the campfire in the great outdoors.

Suddenly, someone realizes that each of the six diners still has a piece of chicken before him. This time the smell-around test does not reveal which piece of the barbecued chicken is unfit for consumption. So the group giggles and decides to play "chicken roulette." In the true spirit of Jeremiah Johnson ("what's the matter, growd particular (particoolar)?"), all dig in with genuine or feigned relish.

Early the next morning, tired and alone, I'm making coffee, and I hear the zipper on one of our tents. Turning expectantly, I see Rick's head poke through at the opening at the bottom of the tent. As he crawls out, I greet him, happy for the company and glad that the camp is about to come to life. Instead of straightening up and standing for a morning stretch, Rick continues crawling and tosses his cookies.

Each camper arises and acknowledges that Rick is the hapless loser of Chicken Roulette. The group assembles and prepares to depart for the day's hike, urging Rick to remain behind in camp, relax and recover. For his part Rick bravely stands, his face a yellowish green pale enough to be outshined by the fall foliage, and insists that he is well enough to go. However, he punctuates each bold declaration by rolling his eyes skyward, having all the color drain from his visage, and turning away, knees buckling, and further emptying the contaminated contents of his stomach. Here's the embarrassing part. Five sensitive and responsible adult men, most of them caring husbands and loving fathers, have the exact same reaction each time Rick does his turn-bow-and-throw routine. Five hands cover five mouths and every muscle tenses as the grizzled outdoorsmen stifle the most childish of giggles.

The moral of the story? Unless you actually dispose of the polluted pullet, don't count your chickens before they match.