

June 2006  
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SCHOOL'S OUT - SOME NEW AND OLD IDEAS FOR SUMMER

June marks the official start of summer. For kids it means camps and the pool. For writers it means we're hunkered down over our computers wishing we could be outdoors. So here are some tips that may at least take your mind outside the office.

- [1] Speeches: What we can learn from "intelligent design"
- [2] Press Releases: A Brand New Approach
- [3] Marketing: Yes, Little Things Really Do Mean a Lot (cont'd)

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1. Speeches: What we can learn from "intelligent design"

Randy Olson is the director of the movie, *Flock of Dodos*, which takes a look at the "creationism" or "intelligent design" movement, which has tried to displace the teaching of evolution in schools. Although the creationists have suffered setbacks in court, they seem to be winning the battle for public opinion, at least as measured in opinion polls.

In a recent blog posting, Olson says a big part of the problem is that scientists need to improve the way they communicate to the public. Speech writers dealing with almost any issue could benefit from some of his insights, including:

"Attitude - 'Never rise above.' It's one of the simple principles we learned in acting class. Whenever you condescend you lose the sympathy of your audience. Plain and simple."

"Concision - It's a byproduct of the information era. Get used to it. In fact, practice it. The most effective means of communication is through storytelling. The shorter, more concise, and punchier the story you can tell, the greater the interest you will hold with an audience."

You'll find his complete TEN THINGS EVOLUTIONISTS CAN DO TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION at

[[loom.corante.com/archives/2006/02/17/randy\\_flock\\_of\\_dodos\\_olson\\_speaks.php](http://loom.corante.com/archives/2006/02/17/randy_flock_of_dodos_olson_speaks.php)]

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## 2. Press Releases: A Brand New Approach

David Meerman Scott doesn't mince words. "The Web has changed the rules for press releases," he says. "The thing is, most old-line PR professionals just don't know it yet." The marketing blogger is talking about press releases used to sell products, so his comments may be less relevant to those of us working on public policy issues. But they are worth considering, and he's giving them away free. You can download his e-book: *The new rules of PR: How to create a press release strategy for reaching buyers directly*.

The book starts out with these "new rules of press releases"

- Don't just send press releases when "big news" is happening; find good reasons to send them all the time.
- Instead of just targeting a handful of journalists, create press releases that appeal directly to your buyers.
- Write releases replete with keyword-rich copy.
- Create links in releases to deliver potential customers to landing pages on your Web site.
- Optimize press release delivery for searching and browsing.
- Drive people into the sales process with press releases.

It's definitely worth a look at

[http://www.webinknow.com/2006/01/new\\_complimenta.html](http://www.webinknow.com/2006/01/new_complimenta.html)

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## 3. Marketing: Yes, Little Things Really Do Mean a Lot

Last month's issue was all about those little things in writing that mean a lot. More proof of the importance of the LT's came at a recent meeting in the Washington, DC, area of the Independent Public Relations Association (part of the capital area PRSA.) Pam Jenkins, President of Powell Tate|Weber Shandwick Public Affairs' DC office gave a talk titled, "Is There a Place for PR Independents in Agencies?"

In talking about pitch letters she gets from independents and job seekers, she noted that if the letter writer puts a hyphen between "Powell" and "Tate" she already knows the writer is either careless or hasn't done his or her homework.

So proofread those pitch letters, press releases, backgrounders, etc. Even a little flyspeck hyphen can make the difference.