

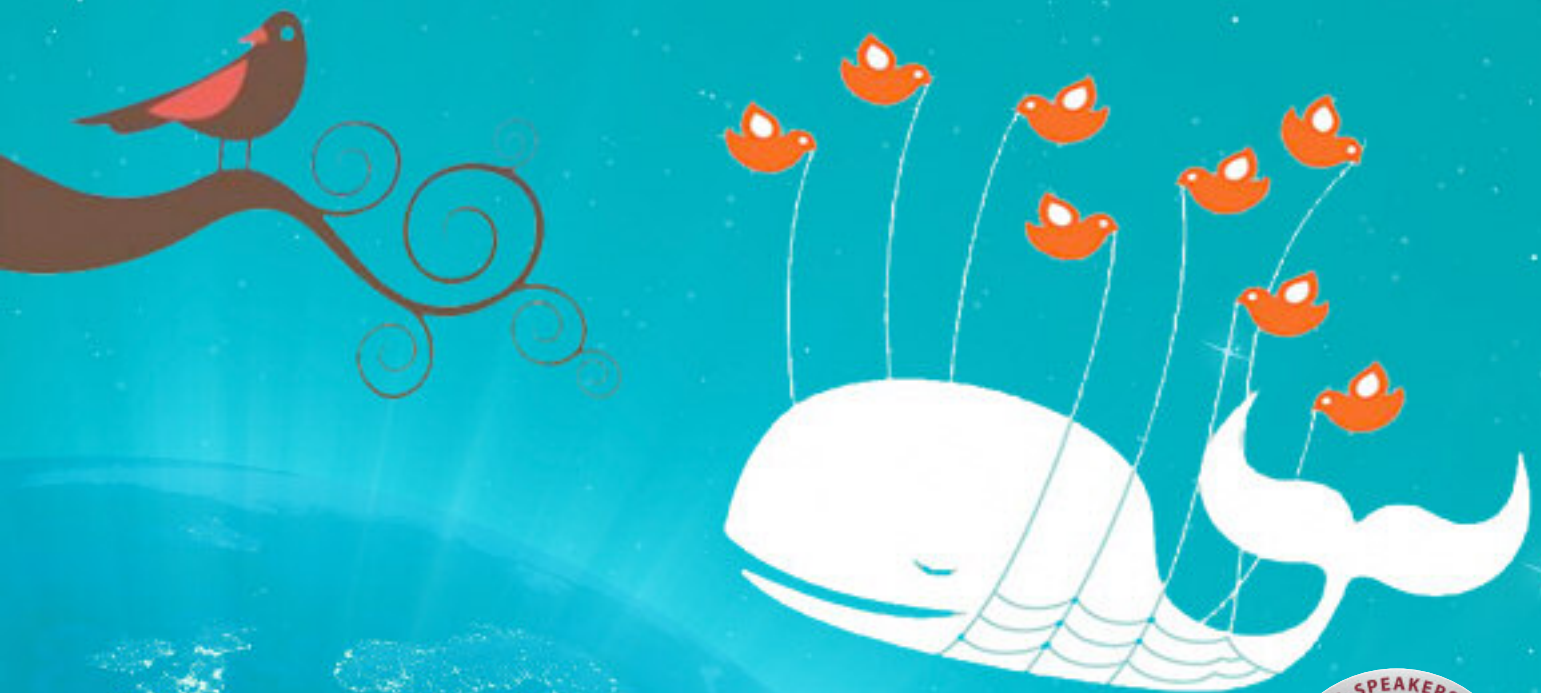
Summer 2009

# speakeasy

the magazine of the Professional Speakers Association

## New ways to find clients

Top speakers give  
their ideas and secrets  
with strategies old and new





# Professionalism and why we need it

Susie Kay

Over the last few months it has been virtually impossible to avoid discussions in the various media on the failings of a range of professionals – those who you would have assumed would know the difference between right and wrong and would be required to act accordingly.

These events have allowed us a truly disturbing view of the shortcomings of a range of professions who, frankly, should have known that their behaviours were falling short of expectation - financiers, social workers and now the members of both Houses of Parliament, to name but a few. They have all demonstrated with clarity a profound lack of internal ethical and moral codes and standards which should have guided their behaviour, both individually and for the benefit of society as a whole. Can we name this apparent lack of a moral compass as a lack of professionalism? Should we not also seek to understand how such a situation has arisen?

## Personal and collective responsibility

It seems to me that the fundamental issue to be debated is about taking personal responsibility for our actions and living by moral and ethical codes which drive every aspect of our behaviour, both public and private. Would it not be more appropriate for us all, collectively, to take some of the blame for allowing the cultural changes which mean we have either not noticed or turned a blind eye to these shocking behaviours becoming 'normalised'? Why have we only reacted so forcefully when transgressions are so appalling that we have no option but to register our protest that things have gone so wrong?

It is all very well pointing the finger at specific individuals or groups of individuals whose failings are now so very public but this slide from expected standards did not happen in a vacuum. Public abasement of the culprits is all well and good

and allows us all to indulge in a feast of finger pointing but diving into activity mode and passing rafts of legislation will be of no benefit unless we get to the heart of the problem.

## Professionalism affects us all

Professionalism is a living thing not an academic argument and it affects us all. The lack of this missing moral compass has had disastrous effects on many areas of public life. Those offering services to the public must have the secure bedrock of ethical considerations over individual desires. In that way we avoid the 'it was OK, it was in the rules' scenario - the idea that it is someone else's responsibility to exercise control over their excesses and that abdicating responsibility is in some way acceptable behaviour. It is not, and never could be, a suitable alternative to adherence to an internal understanding of the difference between right and wrong and always acting accordingly.

We all know that fundamental changes will be needed to rectify the situation but I believe we should first take the time to ask these very difficult questions, giving ourselves time for reflection before we embark on the required course of action. We cannot afford any more shortcuts and we really should expect more of those we consider to be skilled in the detailed competences necessary to undertake their chosen professions - as well as the rest of us.

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## Home and away (ECAD, ACAD, TKA)

Tim Kidson

**There has never been a better time to revisit your business and personal Bull's Eye but when you do, there are surprises in store for sure!**

I've been a free range chicken for twenty five years now and when you are self employed or in partnership pecking away, you may find a juicy slug on Monday, nothing on Tuesday, a fat lobworm on Wednesday and nothing again on Thursday. That's just how it is.

Some four years ago, although there has always been plenty of work in the West Midlands region where I live, I fancied trying my luck further afield, nationally and even internationally. It may be mixing metaphors but when you have played for Hereford United for a period it feels like an exciting challenge to see whether you might be able to get a run out with Manchester United. And the

fact is that I now do enjoy working away. But recently some local clients had approached me to suggest that I might like to do some stuff in my own back yard once more in Hereford. At first this felt a bit like going out with an old girlfriend. After all, the recent strategy had been to explore pastures new. Anyway three Mondays ago I made fifteen phone calls and amazingly twelve Managing Directors of local businesses signed up to our Herefordshire Directors Forum.

We start tonight and as I prepare all the files, each with the client company logo on, the prospects for this ten session event is just about as exciting and fun and challenging as it could be.

Enjoy the journey.

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