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Charlie Hayslett Asks: What Game Are You Playing?

I'm really bad at golf and so several years ago took up chess. I'm not much better at that, but it's not as expensive or time-consuming, and my wife says it keeps me out of trouble. Occasionally it even yields an insight that comes in handy in business and, believe it or not, PR.

Take strategy and tactics for instance. I had been fumbling around on the chessboard for several months before the scales finally fell from my eyes and I came to really understand a couple of things. First, strategies and tactics have absolutely nothing to do with one another; second, in the vast majority of chess games - even at a very high level - tactics rule.

The same is true in business and in PR. In chess, excellence at identifying, provoking and exploiting tactical situations will win most games. On the chessboard, tactical weapons include the pin, the fork, the skewer, the discovered attack, and the decoy, among others. In PR, the tactical tool kit includes press releases and speeches, white papers and op-eds, grassroots campaigns and community affairs programs.

Tactics is about competence. If the business objective is clear, a solid tactical plan - well executed - will almost always carry the day.

It's when the ultimate goal isn't so clear that strategy comes into play. One of my favorite chess quotes, uttered long ago by some long-dead grandmaster and cleaned up over time, is: "A tactician knows what to do when there is something to be done, but a strategist knows what to do when there is nothing to be done."


In chess, strategic games tend to occur in important contests between players of comparable strength; they also tend to have long time controls. They involve such mundane elements as pawn structure and the careful deployment of pieces on one side of the board or the other. They require great patience, and to non-players can be maddeningly dull.

Likewise in business, and in the execution of complex public relations campaigns. Major competitive struggles are often played out over years if not decades, and it's rarely clear - especially early on - when or where or how the final battle will be fought. In those situations, the true communications strategist will work not to organize a media blitz that might be premature, but to build an array of sometimes subtle advantages that will prove decisive in the end. A long-term campaign to position the CEO as an industry leader. A deliberate program to improve relations with a pivotal constituency. A sustained initiative to organize and motivate employees so they can be mobilized when the time comes. All orchestrated so they can be brought to bear when the final battle begins.

All too often businesses and organizations rely solely on tactics and never realize their adversaries are pursuing a long-term strategic campaign designed to tolerate early losses and then prevail in the endgame. Conversely, there are those who labor endlessly trying to define just the right strategy - when a crisply executed tactical plan would get the job done.

On the chessboard and in business, the challenge is to know the difference and to be able to plan - and act - accordingly. So it's your move.

What type of game are you in?



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News around the Firm

Hayslett Group Lands McCarthy Account

McCarthy is a St. Louis-based construction company that was founded in 1864. With more than \$1.5 billion in annual revenues, McCarthy is ranked among the top 20 U.S. builders and one of America's oldest privately owned construction firms. The company has seven full service offices in the United States and plans to open an Atlanta office this spring.

Hayslett Group will work with the firm's Atlanta executives on brand building programs in the Atlanta market.

For more on McCarthy, visit www.mccarthy.com.

Emory University and Hayslett Group in Production

The Zyman Institute of Brand Science, a recent addition to the Goizueta Business School at Emory University, is a network organization that offers the benefit of being bonded with a top-tier business school with highly lauded scholars. The institute will be focused on developing and sustaining synergistic partnerships with corporate sponsors, research firms, other universities, scholars and thought leaders.

Hayslett Group will be guiding the institute in the production and printing stages of new marketing pieces.

For more on the Zyman Institute of Brand Science, visit www.goizueta.emory.edu.

Collateral and Chamberlain Hrdlicka

Chamberlain Hrdlicka, a full-service law firm with offices in Houston and Atlanta, has approximately 100 attorneys representing public and private companies, individuals and family-owned businesses.

Hayslett Group has been serving the Atlanta office's public relations needs, and has now been chosen by the Houston headquarters to redesign the firm's identity and associated collateral.

For more on Chamberlain Hrdlicka, visit www.chamberlainlaw.com

Communiqué is written by Hayslett Group staff and published as a service to our clients. We appreciate your comments, suggestions and ideas for the newsletter. Please email your input to mclark@hayslettgroup.com.

This past year, Hayslett Group worked with Sumter Regional Hospital in Americus, Ga., on the creation and implementation of its new "Community Minded, Just Like You" campaign. The launch event, billed as a film premiere, included movie posters, movie ticket giveaways for attendees, event entrance tickets, popcorn and more, met with delight by more than 500 hospital employees.



Hayslett Group Extends Services with Southeast Georgia Health System

Southeast Georgia Health System, a full-service not-for-profit system, serves the health care needs of 13 counties. Approximately 10,800 patients are admitted annually to the Brunswick Campus, and more than 40,000 are treated in the emergency department.

In 2004, Hayslett Group conducted research for the system. Now, SGHS has extended our contract to promote high-quality services, physicians, and community relations activities at both campuses of the health system.

For more on the SGHS, visit www.sghs.org.

Hayslett Group Retained by MAP International

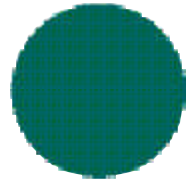
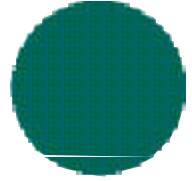
MAP International, based in Brunswick, Ga., is one of Forbes' "100 most prominent charities." MAP's international programs are eliminating the causes of sickness and disease by providing free medicines and medical care, improving water supplies and food production and establishing community directed health education and training. The group is currently assisting victims of Sudan's civil war and the Asian tsunami, among other crises.

Hayslett Group will provide counsel on promotional materials and additional public-relations assistance, as the organization seeks to increase awareness of its work among supporters, partners and the public.

For more on MAP International, or to make a contribution, visit www.map.org.

Join Us to "Lunch & Learn"...details on back!
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third-party experts, statistics and examples. Don't use industry jargon. Make your key point and then follow it up with details. Your answers are more important than the questions, so make sure each answer is a stand-alone statement that doesn't require the reporter's words to make it complete.

Use interview techniques

Reporters use various interview techniques. By recognizing the type of question they are asking, you can skillfully craft your answer. Watch out for negative questions. By repeating one, you've let the reporter put words in your mouth. Instead, find a way to bridge to one of your key messages. Don't be afraid of silence; sometimes reporters will leave an awkward pause just to see if you'll add anything. Avoid the speculative question. No one knows what the future will bring and you don't want to be held up as a soothsayer. Never say "no comment" -- it makes you look uncooperative. At the end of every interview, recap your key objectives: "I've talked about a lot of things today. It boils down to three points..."

R & R - rehearse and relax

The old adage "practice makes perfect" is true with media interviews too. Hayslett Group can help you rehearse your interviews, and learn even more about how to effectively interact with media. Media training with us will help you relax and tell your story more successfully. If you want to learn more about Hayslett Group Media Training Sessions, give us a call at 770.522.8855.



Lunch & Learn

Feed your mind & body...free!

Hayslett Group would like to invite you to join us for a casual *Lunch & Learn*. Have lunch, chat with other professionals and take in an American Marketing Association sponsored webcast.

Trout on Differentiation
Wednesday, May 18, 2005
11:30am - 1:30pm

Please RSVP to mclark@hayslettgroup.com to reserve your spot. For more information on the event visit this issue of *Communiqué* online at www.hayslettgroup.com.

A past guest comments on her experience:

"Great to attend, both to meet others in the pr/comm industry, and also to hear the content. Thanks!"

-Cathy High, Novare Group