



**Bill Bradley, Principal  
Bottom Line Communications**

I'm resisting writing at length on the stunning outbreak of democratic free speech in much of the Arab world, which already has changed that region's way of life. I applaud the mainstream media's largely factual reports of these historic events, when it would be so easy to editorialize.

My lead story on corporate growth reinforces a viewpoint I've held for a long time: organic growth is more sustainable than the merger & acquisition (M&A) variety. I think the upheaval caused by the continuing string of mega-billion dollar M&A moves has contributed to the mess on Wall Street, the trade deficit when multi-nationals are involved, and to the high unemployment ranks as mass layoffs inevitably result.

It makes sense to follow the insights on self reliance the growth survey sponsors suggest. And nothing sustains profitable growth more consistently than exceeding the expectations of your customers for service quality. There's an event in Boston at the end of April that explores the wisdom and logic of this approach (see p. 2).

The Dell internal comm story reminds us that you indeed can get way too cute for your own good. I run this story also to point out the fallacy of "there's no such thing as bad PR." Believe me, no one at Dell is smiling about this little episode.

I've raked companies like Toyota, BP and Johnson & Johnson over the coals for poor PR planning and tactics. So it's only fair to recognize the positive things some of these companies have done to restore public trust. Toyota seems to have (pardon the pun) turned the corner in this department (see p. 2). The truth can indeed set you free.

Think Spring! The calendar is becoming our friend again.

## Corporate growth efforts lead to waste, survey says

A recent Booz & Company survey of over 1,800 executives confirms the importance of — and difficulty with — growth.

For 41% of executives, growth is the most significant challenge their company faces. But less than half of executives (48%) actually believe their strategy will lead to success. In fact, executives concur that they're chasing too many conflicting opportunities (64%) and that growth efforts lead to waste (81%).

"Too many companies pursue growth via acquisitions, or adjacent markets, or expansion into emerging markets. They look everywhere but inside the company. The companies that do grow sustainably do so because they invest in a few differentiating capabilities and leverage what is uniquely strong about the company to grow where they will win," said Booz & Company partner Paul Leinwand.

"In fact, companies and their leaders feel caught between delivering the required growth performance and building a strategy focused around the company's unique strengths," added Leinwand. "In actuality, doubling down on what the company's great at is the best enabler for the growth they need."

Growth must not be the first objective; when it

is, companies chase any opportunity that has short-term revenue potential, independent of whether they can profitably and sustainably win in that market," said Booz & Company managing director Cesare Mainardi. "Building a coherent company, one differentiated through what it does better than anyone else, should be the prime objective; that approach leads directly to growth and performance."



Some insights about growth that are supported by the executive survey include:

- No company can sustain growth without a differentiated approach to adding value for customers — its unique "way to play."
- Every company needs to build a well-defined set of capabilities that supports its way to play and ensures growth through sustained competitive advantage.
- A company's top priority should be growth from the core: doubling down on core capabilities, and capturing headroom in the market it already serves.
- The imperative for extending into new markets is that they must fit the company's capabilities system, or they will be a drag on financial and operational performance.
- Successful geographic expansion depends on having capabilities valued by the local market.

## Dell Botches internal comm stunt, two execs land in jail

Unable to contain their excitement over the launch of the new Streak tablet (*photo at right*), two Dell executives were arrested on misdemeanor charges on Feb. 14 stemming from a botched internal communications stunt, executed in poor taste and without anyone else in on the details. The incident took place at Dell headquarters in Round Rock, Texas.

According to the police source in the local paper, a person "wearing dark clothing and a skull-pattern mask held small metallic items aloft as he ran through office areas yelling, 'Go to the lobby.'" He was trying to round up Dell employees for a celebration of the tab.

Many of the 400 witnesses told the police they thought they were under siege.



Though cooperative and apologetic, Dell's director of sales was charged with misdemeanor deadly conduct and taken to county jail.

Dan Rawson, business transformation manager, initially refused to give the police the location or identity of his cohorts and was charged with a misdemeanor, interfering with public duties.

## Part 4: 5Ws and the H: what businesses can learn from this journalism primer

In November I introduced this multi-part series on how businesses can improve their market positioning by following the time-honored process journalists use to write a news story. They always start with the “5Ws and the H”: who, what, when, where, why and how.

This month I discuss your “where” aspects. This “w” is similar to the “when” positioning in that the options are more limited than the many nuances presented by “who” and “what.” But that doesn’t detract from the significance of this communications element.

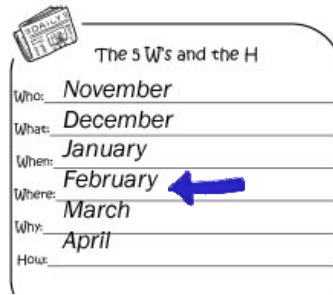
“Where” of course has a geographic basis, as in where your organization is based and in what cities, states or countries you choose to do business. It also can be used to assess “where” you are in reaching your business goals. This is an important consideration, because “where” you are on this path absolutely has a bearing on the other “Ws” and the “H.” For example, if you haven’t reached a

key revenue goal, your marketing budget will not be as big as you otherwise may want it to be.

But I want to get tactical on “where” and look at making product announcements at big trade shows and conferences at which you’re exhibiting. This is also a “when” question, and is related to my discussion on product strategy in this column last month.

You definitely want to exploit the build up that big trade shows get to showcase your product announcement, especially if it’s a major one. But your competitors think the same way, and you don’t want get lost in crowd.

So here’s your strategy. Make your product announcement two or three weeks in advance of the show but keyed to the product’s “worldwide debut” at your booth. You’ll be positioned for pre-show coverage the news media typically provide, and improve your chances of journalists and attendees being aware of your product when they hit the show floor. That way they’ll have more rea-



**Taken from journalism, the “5 Ws and the H” are the necessary components that the lead paragraph of a news story should contain. Apply these same ingredients to create a profile of your business that defines your USP (unique selling proposition).**

sons to visit your booth to find out more. Better yet, you can show the actual media coverage at your booth if the print/online stories are out in time.

If you delay your announcement for the start of the show, you will lose this valuable time advantage, and will be competing for attendee and media attention with everyone else. Unless you’re a big name company, you’ll likely be drowned out by all that noise.



**Put this event on your calendar!**

Regardless of the economy, the best way to drive revenue and profits is by boosting customer satisfaction and loyalty.

At **SCORE 2011**, you will learn about customer experience management (CEM) strategy from expert presenters and see the latest technology solutions in the exciting customer care field.

The SCORE Conference is produced by a long-time client of mine, Omega Management Group Corp. Visit [www.omegascorboard.com](http://www.omegascorboard.com) and click on the logo above. Or call **811/711-5196**. Mention “Got PR” to receive the \$700 Early-Bird Discount even after it expires on March 15.

### A new way for publishers to manage access to digital content

Google CEO Eric Schmidt recently announced Google One Pass, a service that lets publishers set their own prices and terms for their digital content. With Google One Pass, publishers can maintain direct relationships with customers and give readers access to digital content across websites and mobile apps.

Readers who purchase from a One Pass publisher can access their content on

tablets, smartphones and websites using a single sign-on with an email and password. Importantly, the service helps publishers authenticate existing subscribers so that readers don’t have to re-subscribe in order to access their content on new devices.

With Google One Pass, publishers can customize how and when they charge for content while experimenting with different models to see what works best for them – offering subscriptions, metered access, “freemium” con-

tent or even single articles for sale from their websites or mobile apps. The service also lets publishers give existing print subscribers free (or discounted) access to digital content. We take care of the rest, including payments technology handled via Google Checkout.



**Google One Pass promises to add more idioms to our daily language.**

this is another initiative developed to enable publishers to promote and distribute digital content.”

Google One Pass is currently available for publishers in Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the U.K. and the U.S.

“Our goal is to provide an open and flexible platform that furthers our commitment to support publishers, journalism and access to quality content,” said Schmidt. “Like First Click Free, Fast Flip and Living Stories,



### Toyota bouncing back

*Automotive News* this month reported that it only took two days for crisis-impaired automaker Toyota’s reputation to rebound after engineers at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) found that the company’s electronics were not to blame for spate of unintended acceleration incidents.

The company’s reputation, which is being analyzed by YouGov/Brandindex, a company that tracks customer perceptions of popular brands, has climbed out of the cellar just days after the announcement was made — and Toyota’s stock jumped by 7.68 over pre-announcement levels.

“Nobody is viewing this as a victory,” says Bob Carter, Toyota Division general manager. “It’s more a validation of what we’ve been saying all along.” Toyota has been persistent in stating that their electronics were not to blame for all those incidents, insisting that last year’s pedal and floor mat recalls solved the problem. And now, NASA experts have substantiated Toyota’s claims.