

Comment

Periodically falling on one's sword is an excellent strategy

Apologies cost nothing. Retractions are free. Once given—unequivocally, sincerely, directly, and without condition—they have magical healing powers.



Warren Kinsella

The War Room

TORONTO—White House press secretary Sean Spicer standing at the door to a United Airlines plane, sipping a Pepsi.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, and it assuredly is, then that would be the picture for the past few days. To wit:

- United Airlines forcibly “re-accommodated” a Vietnamese-American physician out of the seat he had paid for on an oversold flight in Chicago, smashed his face against an arm rest, broke his jaw, then blamed him for being “disruptive.” When that turned out to be a bald-faced lie—and when a global backlash resulted in United losing \$1-billion in value in just 24 hours—the airline did a whiplash-inducing

about-face, and apologized, and said it would never happen again, blah blah blah.

- Pepsi’s in-house “creative team” put together a commercial featuring one of the Kardashians modelling, then rushing outside to join a passing protest, with lots of knowing nods and fist-bumps ensuing. The Kardashians—famous-for-nothing Kendall Jenner, who later insisted she was “traumatized” by the ensuing mean tweets—hands a grateful cop a can of Pepsi, and all is well in the world. Take that, Women’s March, Black Lives Matter, et al.: you wouldn’t have so many darn problems if you bought the right soft drink. Global backlash, withdrawal of ad, grovelling apologies, blah blah blah.

- Sean Spicer, the groper-in-chief’s liar-in-chief, (a) calls the Nazi gas chambers “Holocaust centres,” quote unquote; (b) repeatedly mispronounces the name of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, who his boss had just, you know, bombed; and (c) says Hitler didn’t use “chemical weapons” on millions of Jews, gays, gypsies and dissidents when, in fact, he had. Standing before the assembled White House—all

of them agog and agape—Spicer said: “You know, you had someone as despicable as Hitler who didn’t even sink to using chemical weapons.” Immediately, the Anne Frank Centre and many others demanded Spicer be fired. Spicer retracted, apologized, blah blah blah.

Quite a week, eh? It all reminded me of a long-ago Canadian equivalent. During the year 2000 federal election campaign, former Canadian Alliance leader Stockwell Day—who, it should be noted, this writer always thought bore more than a passing resemblance to Dan Quayle, of potato/potatoe infamy—decided to use Niagara Falls as a backdrop to a campaign announcement.

Standing at the falls’ edge, Day attempted to draw an analogy between the flow of Lake Erie from “north to south” and the “brain drain” from Canada to the United States. A reporter from the area pointed out to Day that, in fact, the relevant body of water drained from “south to north.” Oops!

Missing a golden opportunity to poke fun at himself, and thereby seem as human, Day darkly warned that he would “check the record, and if someone has wrongly informed me about

the flow of this particular water, I’ll be having a pretty interesting discussion with them.” So, not only did Day succeed in making himself look like a dummy, he also came across sounding like a dummy who couldn’t take responsibility for his own mistakes.

Such mistakes can have profound consequences, if you don’t deal with them quickly. Personally, I am always a big fan of Bible-thumping Republican/Conservative politicians who regularly denounce gays/abortion/infidelity—and then, subsequently and inevitably, get caught having gay sex/procuring abortions/working with sex workers. Without fail, they end up exposed as sweaty, creepy, debauched nut bars, not self-professed men of God. And regular folks—as United, Pepsi and the White House certainly discovered in recent days—punish them not for the sin, but for the hypocrisy.

The lesson, naturally, is that candidates/companies/communicators should, if the circumstances warrant, ‘fess up, laugh at themselves, then move on. Periodically falling on one’s sword is an excellent strategy. Always.

In this writer’s experience, voters and consumers are forgiving.



White House press secretary Sean Spicer. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

They are profoundly aware of the tendency of humans to have human failings, being human beings themselves. And, as long as mistakes are not being made all the time—cf. Messrs. Day, Quayle and Spicer, above—they will forgive and forget and move on.

Apologies cost nothing. Retractions are free. Once given—unequivocally, sincerely, directly, and without condition—they have magical healing powers.

But the best approach, of course, is to avoid making the dumb mistake in the first place.

Sean Spicer, sipping a Pepsi on that United flight to ignominy, would certainly agree.

The Hill Times

Despite much talk on marijuana, distribution largely overlooked

So what is the right answer? Pharmaceutical distributors.



David Johnston

Marijuana legislation

By Canada Day 2018, Canadians will have access to legalized marijuana. It’s an issue that’s been widely debated—as it should—because it’s not often that a whole new and controversial industry is created from scratch.

But one thing that’s been missing from the debate is how marijuana is going to be distributed throughout Canada.

We’ve heard plenty about how recreational marijuana should be sold to the public, whether it’s through pharmacies or government-run dispensaries. But what’s being ignored is how the product will get from the licensed producers to the retailers.

The federal government says it will be responsible for ensuring Canada’s marijuana supply is “safe and secure.” It has also indicated that it is leaving it to the provinces to decide how to “distribute” it to the public.

But how will it get “distributed” to retailers?

Overlooking the distribution question at the federal level could have untended consequences, so it’s important that the federal government give it some serious thought at the onset.

So what is the right answer? Pharmaceutical distributors.

They comprise one of the most important components in Canada’s health-care system, delivering more than 95 per cent of all medications to hospitals and community pharmacies. That’s more than four million deliveries a year to over 10,000 pharmacies and hospitals across Canada, and it is all done with greater than 99.9 per cent accuracy.

What that means is that no matter how remote your location, whether you live in Moose Jaw or Mississauga, Canadians always receive their medication within a day, without question and without having to pay a premium.

That experience makes pharmaceutical distributors the ideal partner to ensure legal marijuana gets from producer to retailer in the safest and most cost-effective way possible. Not only that, but with a national, highly-regulated distribution infrastructure already in place, it is a turnkey solution for government that will require minimal oversight.

Pharmaceutical distributors already store and transport controlled substances in secure and temperature-controlled warehouses and vehicles to maintain product integrity. They can do the same for marijuana.

They also have incredibly sophisticated tracking and reporting systems that allow them to keep track of sensitive material. Having access to this complex data will be important in managing the marijuana industry over the long term because it will allow regulators to track product movement and sales trends for this new and rapidly developing market.

Pharmaceutical distributors already store and transport controlled substances in secure and temperature-controlled warehouses and vehicles to maintain product integrity. They can do the same for marijuana.

Since distributors can deliver product to all corners of the country within 24 hours, retailers will also be able to keep in-store inventory low and thereby lower the risk of robberies. This will help control diversion of the product back into the black market.

The federal government should regulate cannabis distribu-



Marijuana legalization is coming, though distribution from producers to retailers is a detail that’s been largely overlooked, writes David Johnston.

The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wright

tion so we avoid a patchwork system of regulations across provinces that could have negative ripple effects for years to come.

Now that legalized marijuana is becoming a reality, the time is now for the government to get this right.

David Johnston is president and CEO of the Canadian Association for Pharmacy Distribution Management

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