

# James Butler's Newsletter #74

Amuse, Inform and Inspire

October 2008

One of the pleasures of creating this newsletter each month is the feedback I get from readers (thank you). This month, the inspiration for both the article and the pun have come from readers (so blame them!).

Have you ever Googled your own name? Or your business name? Whilst this may be the height of vanity (though I don't think so, because I've done it!), it is an interesting way to determine what may be being said about you, or what your reputation is.

## *What's in a name? What's your reputation?*



So, having Googled my name, what do I discover? I am pleased to say that a piece about me does come up on page 1 (thanks to the BBC), and this newsletter appears on page 3. But the other James Butler's are interesting.

There is a sculptor, an Earl from the 1600s, an NFL player and a boxer with the same name as me. The boxer is most famous for the fact he is currently serving 30 years for murdering someone (obviously a different branch of the family).

Perhaps the most famous James Butler of all (and thanks Claire for reminding me) is actually the guy opposite.

Obviously it isn't me – although the last time I had that much hair probably was in the mid 1800s when the picture was taken. This is James Butler Hickock, more commonly known as Wild Bill. His reputation goes before him, as one of the Wild West's wildest men. For details of his fame, see below, but for the newsletter, the key point is his reputation goes before him. As does yours. Is yours as notorious as Wild Bill's? Is it as negative?

Whether you are building a reputation in your job or career, or your reputation or brand in your business, it can be a key part of your success. In terms of creating recognition amongst your target market (your boss, your customers, the lasses at the local disco), your reputation is crucial to being remembered, and for the right reasons. So what do you need to consider about your own name and reputation?

**The words can be important** – Mildly Annoyed Bill Hickock may have struck less fear into his gunfight opponents than his actual nickname. What does your name or business name say about you? In my training days on building a business, I have an example business card from a clinic, where the principal's name is an alternative word for prostitute. Had I been discussing his branding, I may have suggested this was not the best choice of words – especially as his card offer's massage and evening appointments. Have you tested your business or brand name with some objective sources of feedback?

**You have to build a reputation** – Henry Ford is quoted as saying "You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do". So, you have to invest time in doing the right things, in the right places, with the right people, to build that reputation. This can be networking, getting customer testimonials, encouraging referrals, generating PR or any manner of things, but you have to take action to build the reputation you want.

**It's worth protecting** – I am a strong advocate of protecting your brand – through trademarking, registering domain names and taking action against those passing off as you, or using your name. For a few hundred pounds you can register and protect your trademark (provided it is distinctive). If you have a business, and haven't done this yet, please go to [www.ipo.gov.uk](http://www.ipo.gov.uk) and/or contact me for the name of a great patent attorney. Alongside the legal side, protecting your reputation can be about ensuring you have positive messages in your target media to reinforce and strengthen your reputation – especially if you ever have negative publicity in your field.

**Reputations fade** – a quick glance through the tabloid papers will teach you a lot about maintaining a reputation. Perhaps the pinnacle of reputation management are Posh and Becks (especially Posh). She is far better at being famous than being a pop star, so that is what she has focussed on since day one of the Spice Girls. Her brand needs regular exposure, so her team will be placing regular stories, staged paparazzi shots etc to ensure she gets column inches. Because that is what creates value for Brand Beckham. (Sigh)

#### **What's Your Reputation Action Plan?**

- What is your reputation in your market place (in the words of your customers, not you!)?
- What do you need to do to strengthen, develop or build that reputation?
- Where do you need to appear in order to build your reputation amongst your target group?
- What protection do you have for your brand/reputation?
- What specific steps will you take to improve awareness of your reputation in the next 90 days?
- On what day in January will you review progress against your specific steps, and plan what you need to do in the following 90 days?

For those who want the Wild Bill facts, there are a few:

- It is thought he was originally known as Duck Bill Hickok, because of his large nose (he didn't come from my, good looking, side of the family). Wild Bill came later, and perhaps improved his hardman reputation!
- Wild Bill Hickok is believed to have won the first recorded quick-draw duel in the West (his opponent on the day is sadly not the only man he is thought to have killed).
- Wild Bill met an early death, shot in the back whilst playing poker. His hand at the time was two Aces and two Eights, all black (the fifth card is uncertain). This is now known as the Deadman's Hand, thanks to James Butler Hickok.
- Wikipedia makes no reference to him trading as a business coach, nor looking like Dr Greene from ER, so that must be another James Butler....

### *Painless Business News*

I am happy to report that this month has been my best ever in revenue terms, so thanks to all the clients, suppliers and referrers who help make that possible. As I often encourage clients to say, I still have spare capacity, so am happy to welcome new business if you, or someone you know, has a need! Let us all prove the media frenzy wrong and keep trading in the downturn.

Welcome to this month's new subscribers, I hope you have enjoyed this issue and will continue to subscribe. For all readers, thank you for forwarding this newsletter to those whom you think may be interested. I am close to a significant milestone in subscriber numbers (currently 96 short!), so any extra help in spreading the word would be greatly appreciated.

## Book Review

Easily the most interesting book this month has been *On The Trail Of The Last Human Cannonball* by Byron Rogers. This is a collection of feature articles Rogers has written, spanning at least 30 years. A beautifully eclectic mix of topics, very intelligently researched and written. Absolutely fascinating, lovely bite-sized chapters that opened the mind to a whole side of life I never knew existed.

In this time of press fascination with bad news, it helps to have a pick me up every day. Personally, I find two pints of real ale with breakfast helps. (Just kidding, please drink responsibly, alcoholism is a serious disease and does not deserve to be mocked, please don't write letters of complaint.) So, back to the pick me up. I am a massive fan of the cartoon strip Dilbert ([www.dilbert.com](http://www.dilbert.com)). You can subscribe to a daily email which almost always hits the mark somewhere. Scott Adams is a genius at observing corporate/management interactions and delivering great satire. And they are great things to forward to colleagues and keep in touch. I can't share examples with you because of copyright, so please do visit the site and subscribe. It will be the second funniest and most inspiring email you get regularly (after this newsletter of course).

## Painless Puns

On the issue of reputation, two very historical quotations show that truisms never change:

*Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation for 'tis better to be alone than in bad company.* George Washington

*A good reputation is more valuable than money.* Publilius Syrus

For any that think Mr Syrus (I'm guessing it is a man) has a weird first name, he did write this in about 100BC, and perhaps it was a common name then. And his message is timeless. I think he went to school with my sister-in-law...

Thanks to my best friend and old schoolmate Graeme for the following:

*Following the problems in the sub-prime lending market in America and the run on HBOS in the UK, uncertainty has now hit Japan.*

*In the last 7 hours Origami Bank has folded, Sumo Bank has gone belly up and Bonsai Bank announced plans to cut some of its branches.*

*Yesterday, it was announced that Karaoke Bank is up for sale and will likely go for a song, while today shares in Kamikaze Bank were suspended after they nose-dived.*

*Samurai Bank is soldiering on following sharp cutbacks, Ninja Bank is reported to have taken a hit, but they remain in the black.*

*Furthermore, 500 staff at Karate Bank got the chop and analysts report that there is something fishy going on at Sashimi Bank where it is feared that staff may get a raw deal.*

Apologies to anyone in banking for whom this is too close to reality.

## *Final Words*

I am sure that none of you have the wild reputation of James Butler Hickok, but you will all have a reputation in some form or other, and it will be having a good or bad impact on your progression with your job, life or business. I hope that this newsletter will encourage you to reflect on the issue, and take action.

And in case you do Google James Butler through idle curiosity, I would like to assure you I am not connected with [www.fantasybutlers.co.uk](http://www.fantasybutlers.co.uk). This may come as a disappointment to some of you, but a huge relief to the majority of you, I am sure.

Warmest regards

James Butler

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Careful assessment of your needs ensures that the most appropriate intervention is supplied – whether one to one ongoing coaching, strategic reviews, training events or facilitated group exercises within a team.

To discuss how you can painlessly build the business you want, call James today for a no-obligation discussion of your situation.