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Lebron on a Jet Plane

I'll admit I sat through about 28 minutes of the Lebron James spectacle recently when he announced to the world his intention of leaving his hometown team, the Cleveland Cavaliers, to play basketball for the Miami Heat.

If you saw it, you saw perhaps one of the worst PR ideas of all time played out in front of millions of people. It is one thing to have something occur to you, beyond your control, which puts you or your business in a negative light. It is another thing entirely to go out and do it to yourself on purpose. The Lebron James brand, in the course of one hour, took a hit from which it will never fully recover.

The title of this newsletter was inspired by those Southwest Airlines TV ads where embarrassing moments are followed by an announcer saying "Wanna get away?" As Lebron sat there in the chair, answering the interviewers predetermined, inane questions, with a group of Boys & Girls Club kids stationed in the background, I could hear Lebron's jet plane calling him away from the discomfort of it all. He knew that he was about to break the heart of his hometown fans, and I don't think he realized until he was sitting there what a huge mistake he had made in doing so on national television.

Was there a teachable moment in all of this? Of course there was and it is a pretty easy lesson. Have an editor for critical communications from your business. As a business owner, you should be the editor of others in your business and the communications they direct outwardly. Anything critical you want to put out there should be edited by someone you know and trust as well. We're talking about communications such as:

- Press Releases
- Sales Proposals
- Newsletters
- Advertisements
- Marketing Materials

It is your company, your image, your promises and your responsibility to assure that the world outside of your business sees just the image you want them to see.

It should go without saying that anything you might transmit that has even the vaguest legal ramifications should be reviewed by a qualified attorney. In the litigious world we live in, you just cannot chance a mistake in these matters.

I can tell you that *Successes & Strategies* does not go out without a review from the top of our company. Though this is largely an opinion/advice column, I like the idea that a responsible person is assuring me that I am not saying something I do not intend to say.

Someone responsible in the Lebron James camp needed to step in and give a huge reality check to

their friend/client/spokesperson. Lebron will never be poor but his carefully crafted image and brand just took a huge torpedo in the bow, and it did not have to be that way.

See you next time.



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