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Accuracy translates into credibility

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Accuracy is important. What you say and how you say it reflects on your company, your products and services. When publicity and marketing materials are factually accurate and error-free, people naturally have more confidence in the veracity of your claims about your company. They'll trust you and refer others to you.

Accuracy (or lack of it) in all your promotional material says a lot. If you're sloppy in your brochure, maybe your staff is careless in other aspects of your business. It's like wearing a nice suit - but your shoes are scuffed..

On a recent walk along Boston's bustling waterfront, my wife and I got a schedule of cruises and tours for the Harbor Islands National Park. Their colorful, graphically appealing brochure contained 8 errors - misspellings, incorrect punctuation and capitalization. Does it matter? Should these errors make me skeptical about information in the brochure? Are the departure/arrival times correct? Is management lazy about boat maintenance, too? Maybe one thing has nothing to do with the other. Maybe their focus is on their boats. But image is important. Every owner needs to put their best foot forward in all their marketing. It's too important to hand off to an intern or someone in the office with a few minutes to spare.

Someone you trust should create the materials and do a final review of facts, spelling and grammar. The owner or manager should give the final OK. A trader once sued JPMorgan for \$1 million due to a typo. The contract for a job in South Africa said he'd be paid 24 million rand (\$3.1 million). Oops! JPMorgan said they meant to put a decimal point between the two and the four. The pay was supposed to be 2.4 million rand.

Last year Starbucks misspelled "vegetables" when they introduced a new juice bar concept. Luckily, poor spelling doesn't correlate with juice quality. But the story made the news - and a blemish on the company brand. A typographical error resulted in an extra \$4 billion for Louisiana's Medicaid program. Maybe the same person who proofread the harbor cruise brochure proofed that document.

Another case of carelessness: Bank of America foreclosed on a home because of a typo on an online payment that resulted in the homeowner owing an extra 80 cents. And there was a recall of a certain painkiller. The correct dose was supposed to be one milligram. An improper adjustment at the factory doubled the dose. Thank goodness that small error was caught before anyone died.

If the pilot of your airliner announced you were flying one degree off course, most passengers wouldn't blink. But one nautical mile off course at the start of a trip means your plane would be two miles off course after just 120 miles (10 minutes.) After 350 miles, you'd be 23 miles off course.

Of course we all aim for 100% perfection. But we're human and mistakes sneak by. Special attention needs to be given to your public face - your publicity and marketing materials. The PR pro who creates great content and programs to keep your name in front of your target audiences will be

vigilant, ensuring accuracy, consistent quality and the avoidance of embarrassing errors. It's a proven way to keep your brand shiny.

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