

Advertising Age.

Plan B Week, Day 5: Surviving the Media Meltdown

How Are You Rethinking Your Role in the Media Economy? More Word from Ad Age Readers

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It's the last day of Plan B Week. Each day this week we've run reader responses to my recent "Media Guy" column titled "[Topic A in Rapidly Shrinking Medialand: What's Your Plan B?](#)" in which I wrote about soul-searching in the media business in the wake of massive restructuring and layoffs. (The first batch of responses appeared [here](#), as well as in the print edition of Advertising Age; the second batch appeared [here](#); the third batch appeared [here](#); the fourth batch appeared [here](#).)



Photo: Discovery Channel

ROUGH WATERS: It's Plan B Week -- sort of like Shark Week, but with (slightly) less gore.

Surviving the Media Meltdown:

[Plan B Week: Day 4](#)

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Michael T. Norton of Ambler, Pa., writes, "**My advice is to embrace the changing media landscape.** Five years ago I left a bigger agency, where my name was on the door, to start a smaller, more nimble agency, Norton, Lipp & Associates, Inc. We didn't hire a big staff, as there are so many proven freelancers available. By staying small, nimble and keeping overhead low, NLA has won some significant accounts, beating out many New York, Philadelphia and Boston agencies. **TV, radio, print and outdoor, while considered old-school, are still very effective when used properly. Integrating the web, blogs, social networking, SEO, etc., into the mix of advertising tools has helped us create more effective and measurable campaigns.** Granted, it has been helpful to have what I think are three of the best young minds directing our interactive efforts. Clients want to see ROI. By keeping costs low and efficiencies high, we are building a very nice business."

Ben Johnson of Columbus, Ohio, writes, "I am not a Bernie Madoff victim. I wasn't in the UAW job bank. I didn't pack up my own workstation and ship it to Mexico, and I've never waited in line at the unemployment office."

"I'm not campaign propaganda material.

"I am a man without an identity. More accurately, I am a man searching for a new identity."

"On Jan. 20, Clear Channel Communications laid off 1,850 employees. I was one of them. Since that day, everyone has asked two questions: How are you doing? (I'm fine.) Are you going to stay in radio? (I don't know.)

"The first question is tripe. It is meaningless small talk meant to show sympathy. The second question, however, is heavy with significance. Like most work-a-day American men, my job ~~is~~ was my identity. In a nation of farmers, bankers, teachers and insurance agents, I was a radio guy.

"There are men with identities that are not work-related: fly fisherman, church deacon, alcoholic, card shark, community activist, industrial scion. I have never been one of those men. I ~~am~~ was radio guy. I may still be radio guy. That is what I am trying to figure out.

"My grandfather begins every story he tells by giving the protagonist's name and occupation. 'Jack Smith,' he'll say, 'who spent thirty-five years with Chase Bank in Boston.' Or 'Jim Wilson, who worked for IBM.' (It's worth noting, but not germane to this story, that my grandfather only does this with men.)

"I wonder if my grandfather now refers to me as, 'My grandson, Ben Johnson, who's unemployed.' I doubt it. I think to his neighbors at the retirement community, I remain, 'My grandson, Ben Johnson, who works in radio.'

"To most people I remain a radio guy, and there is a part of me that wants to take this opportunity to rebrand myself. I could be blew-his-severance-in-Las-Vegas guy, started-drinking-heavily guy or went-off-to-hike-the-Appalachian-Trail guy. With a little help from a benevolent human-resources director, I could become highly-paid-corporate-communications guy. Or, I could become stay-at-home dad (though our crappy short-term insurance policy makes starting a family seem misguided).

"For now, I guess I'm just me: 28-year-old, part-time broadcast teacher, occasional jogger, bad cook, decent husband. I'm a former radio guy looking for a new gig and maybe a new identity.

"Does anyone know anything about fly-fishing?"