

# Insight

November 2010

*Presentation  
is Everything*

strategic counsel and planning • media relations • media training • social media • lobbying and government relations • crisis communications • community relations • internal communications • event planning • writing and

• grassroots and grasstops organizing •

editing • design and production •

**GOFF & HOWARD** INC.

Public Relations/Public Affairs

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# Crowd-Pleasing Communications

**M**aking a meal that people praise and remember is a challenge. If you leave out an ingredient, the finished meal will not taste as good as it could have. And if you serve it on a paper plate, it will make a different impression than if you had garnished it on fine china.

Like good cooking, quality writing is all about the process and the presentation. If you want to impress your audience, you need to devote time, thought and creativity to writing.

The Goff & Howard team dedicates every day to practicing the art and

science of communications. Whether you need a speech, presentation, talking points, legislative testimony, video script, report, award nomination, or any other piece of quality writing, our experts thrive on meeting your expectations.



## *Company-Worthy Video Script*

*Project:* Tenth anniversary of CitizenBlue, the award-winning civic engagement program for employees of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota

*Serves:* More than 3,000 employees, including 650+ CitizenBlue members

*Ingredients:* Video featuring federal, state and local officials congratulating CitizenBlue on its first 10 years

CitizenBlue brings policy leaders, candidates, and educational programs to Blue Cross employees to help take the mystery out of politics and government. To celebrate a successful first decade, Goff & Howard worked with CitizenBlue to script and produce a video that tied together messages from officials such as Congressman John Kline, State House Majority Leader Tony Sertich, and State Representative Joe Atkins.



“Easy reading  
is damned  
hard writing.”

*Nathaniel Hawthorne*  
(author of *The Scarlet Letter*)

## *Pass-It-On Legislative Testimony*

*Project:* Testimony for Goff & Howard lobbying clients to deliver before House and Senate committees

*Serves:* 134 state representatives and 67 state senators

*Ingredients:* Client's choice of fully written talking points, an outline of main arguments for the spokesperson to develop, or feedback on testimony drafted by the client

Goff & Howard has helped clients such as Polaris Industries, Securian Financial, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and Fibrowatt provide lawmakers with compelling reasons to either pass or oppose legislation.

“Policy makers have a lot of information to absorb. When Polaris representatives testify before a committee or meet with a lawmaker, Goff & Howard helps us identify our key points and make them succinctly.” Marlys Knutson, external relations manager, Polaris Industries



## *Neighbor-Inspired Communications Medley*

*Project:* Communications about the proposed effort to extract manganese from one of North America's largest known deposits, located in Emily, Minnesota

*Serves:* Emily, population 930, which is part of Crow Wing County, population 60,000

*Ingredients:* Communications that inform and engage local residents and businesses

Goff & Howard is helping project leader Crow Wing Power and its subsidiary Cooperative Mineral Resources keep the community involved and up-to-date. Through public meetings, a citizens' advisory committee, websites, social media, and other communications, we are helping Cooperative Mineral Resources turn a local resource into a project that can create jobs and benefit the region.



“Writing – the art of communicating thoughts to the mind, through the eye – is the great invention of the world.”

*Abraham Lincoln*

## Prize-Winning Presentations

*Project:* Presentations on American Indian law and tribal sovereignty

*Serves:* State and federal agencies; religious, education and business organizations; civic groups; attorneys seeking continuing education credits; and many others

*Ingredients:* Straightforward language to describe one of the most complex subjects in American history and current affairs

People of all education levels have questions about why tribes are called “sovereign nations” and why there is a legal specialty called “Indian law.” The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, a federally recognized tribe and a Goff & Howard client since 1991, is highly sought-after for its presentation explaining these complicated topics. We help the Band tell its story to illustrate tribes’ unique place in history and the modern world.



## Soup-to-Nuts Report

*Project:* Annual report of the Saint Paul Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA)

*Serves:* Thousands of commercial real estate professionals, public officials, regional and national financial sector leaders, and others with a vested interest in Saint Paul

*Ingredients:* Much more than statistics

BOMA’s annual report provides occupancy and vacancy statistics as well as comprehensive analysis of the most important property developments in the downtown area. Goff & Howard has helped with the writing, design and printing of the report for 15 years.



Ask  
the  
Chef

*What tools of the trade does Goff & Howard use to achieve a polished final product?*

**Here are three essentials to providing quality writing to our clients.**

**Core dump:** The process in which a client “dumps” his or her thoughts into the mind of a Goff & Howard writer. The writer takes the information, asks thoughtful questions, and talks with other Goff & Howard team members to gain additional insight on that client’s goals.

**Editing:** The step in which someone reads and comments on a document’s tone and content.

Editors ask questions including: Does everything make sense? Have any convincing arguments been missed? Has the writer accomplished the client’s goals? Will this capture the audience’s attention? Does the writing flow well from one sentence and one paragraph to the next?

**Proofreading:** The process that identifies spelling, grammar and syntax errors, as well as inconsistencies in style. Proofreaders find what your computer’s spell-check tool may miss. They also make sure that the margins, fonts, and headings follow the same pattern throughout your document. Proofreaders understand the intricacies of the English language and the importance of details.

“You did an absolutely superb job proofing our site! I have great appreciation for those who have mastered language and grammar. You obviously have.

Kudos and thank you!”

Michael J. Ackmann, managing partner,  
Ackmann & Dickenson, Inc.



# Secret Ingredients



*What do you use in presentations to help engage your audience?*

“Humor. When I meet with a potential new client, I sometimes bring out the ‘Goff & Howard nose’ [a stress ball in the shape of a nose that says, ‘Goff & Howard knows’]. It helps break the ice and get the conversation started on how we can help people solve problems and improve their communications efforts.”

*Jennifer Hellman, principal*



“You have to know your material and anticipate the audience’s questions. Conveying authority and first-hand knowledge gets people’s attention.”

*Chris Georgacas, president*

“My favorite words to live by (and write by) are taped to my computer monitor. The tip I refer to most often is, ‘If it sounds like writing, I rewrite it.’ Hearing the words as I type them is my best way of gauging whether my writing will resonate with the outside world.”

*Tricia Nissen, senior writer*



(The tip is a quote from novelist Elmore Leonard, best known for *Get Shorty* and *Three-Ten to Yuma*.)