



Communications Digest

**Telling stories of how small businesses succeed & give back to our community.
*Let me tell your story!***

Welcome Mid-December!

After we endured a frigid start to winter last month, the temperatures have grown moderate and the sunshine overpowers much of winter's gloom. As we approach Hanukkah and Christmas, I'm grateful to be able to pen another issue of "Communications Digest."

In last month's issue, I visited Michael Hyatt on how to prepare a "Not-To-Do-List" as busy entrepreneurs and business types. And in "Word Nerd's Corner," Bryan Garner explained the confusion we often find between uses of "disburse" and "disperse."

In light of the festive season, which often is not a "Ho-Ho-Ho" time for many, I return to a list compiled by the American Hospice Foundation (AHF), on "Coping with Christmas." For those of us who provide much care for others or who for other reasons feel overwhelmed by the season, the AHF reminds us that it's healthy to take time for ourselves. And in "Word Nerd's Corner," Bryan Garner resolves any confusion we may have over the term "harebrained."

Despite the world's many challenges, I hope that you, good reader, can take the time to enjoy the last weeks of 2017--giving thanks for the multitude of good books to read and good friends with whom to visit. I wish you peace this holiday season.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth

Principal
Elizabeth Shih Communications
www.elizabethshih.com

IN THIS ISSUE:

→**ARTICLE 1: Can you cope with Christmas?**

→**WORD NERD'S CORNER:**

Wordsmithing with Bryan Garner: the case of "harebrained"

→**SHOP NEWS**

→**ABOUT US**

Article One: Can you cope with Christmas? Choose from these suggestions on how to survive the (not so) "Ho-ho-holiday season!"

For many of us, even if we have been raised to observe Hanukkah or Christmas as a blessing, the holiday season can be painful. The pain may come from the loss of a loved one, the loss of a job, separation from a significant other, health or financial difficulties, the excessive pressure to buy and give and so on. The so-called "holiday season" can be anything but "ho-ho-ho" in reality. . . .

In the spirit of last month's article (on "Not-To-Do Lists), I find comfort from reading this holiday survival guide (originally from the American Hospice Foundation). It offers some ideas that may help us as we plan (or choose not to plan) our lives through the holidays:

Christmas cards (choose one):

1. Mail as usual
2. Shorten your list
3. Include a Christmas letter that you've written
4. Skip it this year

Christmas music (choose one):

1. Enjoy as usual
2. Shop early, to avoid Christmas music
3. Avoid turning the radio on
4. Listen to the music and allow yourself to feel sad (or to cry)

Decorations (choose one):

1. Decorate as usual
2. Let others do it
3. Choose not to have decorations
4. Have a special decoration for a loved one, who may have died or left
5. Modify your decorations

6. Make changes, such as an artificial tree
7. Ask for help

Shopping (choose one):

1. Shop as usual
2. Shop early
3. Make your gifts
4. Make a list of gifts to buy
5. Shop through catalogues or the internet
6. Ask for help wrapping gifts
7. Shop with a friend
8. Give cash
9. Give baked goods
10. Ask for help
11. Go giftless and make a donation to charity

Traditions (choose one):

1. Keep the old traditions
2. Don't attend Christmas parties
3. Open gifts on the usual day
4. Attend a worship service
5. Attend a totally different place of worship
6. Visit the cemetery
7. Attend Christmas parties
8. Go to an entirely new place
9. Open gifts at another time
10. Do not attend a worship service
11. Light a special candle to honour your loved one
12. Bake the usual foods
13. Modify your baking
14. Buy the usual foods
15. Spent quiet time alone

Christmas Dinner (choose one):

1. Prepare as usual
2. Invite friends over
3. Eat in a different location of the house
4. Go out to dinner
5. Eat alone
6. Change time of dinner
7. Have a buffet/potluck
8. Ask for help

Post-Christmas and New Year's Day (choose one):

1. Spend the days as usual
2. Avoid New Year's parties
3. Spend time with only a few friends
4. Write in a journal about your hopes for the next year
5. Go out of town
6. Host a New Year's Party
7. Go to a movie
8. Rent a movie from the library
9. Go to bed early

WORD NERD'S CORNER: The case of "harebrained" (with Bryan Garner)



The term “harebrained” causes a surprising amount of confusion, American etymologist Bryan Garner recently shared.

“Harebrained” is the correct term and denotes (of course) stupidity or foolishness. However, it is often misspelled as “hairbrained,” which in his estimation “falls just short of being what it attempts to denote!”

Here are two inept examples from Garner’s treasure chest:

“But what makes the episode such a delight is that it takes us inside the goofy mind of Helms and his *hairbrained* [read “harebrained”] sidekick” (David Zurawik, “Homicide Goes Out with a Bang,” *Baltimore Sun*, 5 May 1995, D1).

“Mocked by its failure to find Osama bin Laden, the Bush Administration . . . exchanged the hard currency of our inherent idealism for the counterfeit coin of a *hair-brained* [read “harebrained”] cynicism” (Lewis H. Lapman, “Cause for Dissent,” *Harper’s Magazine*, Apr. 2003, 39).

Do you have language and usage bugbears? Please send them to me on my website and I’ll use them in an upcoming blog posting or enewsletter.

SHOP NEWS



Renewed thanks to the Raj Manek Mentorship Program (RMMP) for enabling me to continue to consult and share conversation with mentor, Monica Kreuger (Chief Visionary Officer of the Praxis School of Entrepreneurship). Our monthly discussions make it possible for me to plan and strategize for the future. In gratitude, I dedicated my new ebook (released last month) to Monica.

I want to thank friend and Presbyterian minister Gwen Ament (the other person to whom my recent ebook was dedicated) for her ongoing support for and encouragement of my writing projects. Her friendship is a source of joy and inspiration and has warranted recognition much sooner than now! Thank you, Gwen!

Thank you also (in no particular order) to the fellow women of my Freelancers' Roundtable Group--Ashleigh Mattern, Katherine Duncombe, Julie Barnes, Leanne Bellamy, Katee Pederson, Hilary Klassen, Ashlyn George and with incoming new members! We share highs and lows, best practices in freelancing and more.

I wish all of the above people, and you, good reader, the best of the holiday season and good health and happiness in 2018!

ABOUT US

Since 2011, Elizabeth Shih Communications has provided B2B marketing and communications services on the Prairies and across Canada.

Do you need help writing your “marcom” materials?

Please contact me through my website, via the CASL-compliant email form, on the right-hand side of each page (www.elizabethshih.com).

After I have received your permission, I'll be pleased to discuss projects with you!

I specialize in entrepreneurial storytelling, in which I chronicle how small businesses succeed and at the same time give back to our community. I tell such stories primarily through articles, newsletters, promotional emails, case studies, ebooks and related formats.

Please visit my website for more information (www.elizabethshih.com).