

11. Whether Bare

By far Ted's favorite television channel is the Weather Channel. In fact, apart from an occasional sporting event, it is about the only channel he watches. He is quite impressed by the professionalism of the staff, the accuracy of the forecasts, and the generally high level of attractiveness of the female broadcasters. In fact, the female broadcasters seem to be in the same situation as the Pan Am stewardesses of years ago – get a few years older, gain a few pounds, get a wrinkle or two, and ZIP, you're off the air and working in the back room, or at the very least shunted to Saturday at 4:00 in the afternoon. So what you see on the air is prime stuff.

Ted was therefore both disappointed and offended when his application for employment at the Weather Channel was rejected. The stated reason, that he lacked training in meteorology, seemed dubious given his multiple degrees in mathematics, spoor identification and veterinary psychology. Furthermore, like other wild creatures, he had a natural sensitivity to the weather and could often make accurate predictions just by looking at the sky or by listening to a train whistle or by noticing whether he could clearly smell pizza crusts in a dumpster. Of course, these predictions would be fairly local in nature. The sky or the smell of pizza crusts in Michigan doesn't tell Ted or anyone else much about the forecast for Colorado. But Ted was prepared to organize a nationwide bear network (connected via the Interbearnets) to share the forecasts, which he would aggregate into a coherent product. At the very least, this would be more informative than a groundhog looking for its shadow, which the Weather Channel has been known to feature prominently.

Ted had also volunteered to be one of the broadcasters who was sent out into the path of hurricanes, blizzards and other natural disasters. All that he demanded was a GoreTex outfit made to measure (none designed for people fit his small size and non-human proportions), a pair

of lead boots so that he would not blow away, and an expense account sufficient for a motorcycle rental and 12 bottles of beer a day. Alas, perhaps because of these extravagant demands, no job offer was forthcoming.

Ted believed that really he was rejected by the Weather Channel for speciesist reasons. They just didn't want a Weather Bear on their network. This made him very angry and he considered a lawsuit, but in the end he decided it would be easier to just start his own network. This would become the famous Whether Bare Network, and Ted would be the Weather Bear.

In order to properly position his product in the marketplace, Ted spent a lot of time watching the Weather Channel and analyzed what they did *wrong*. These would be the things he would do differently. Here is a partial list.

1. The Whether Bare Network would acknowledge the existence of Canada and Mexico. Ted thinks that in this day and age, weather maps that stop at the US border are silly. It is insulting to adjacent countries and anyway some individuals, human and otherwise, do travel to Canada and Mexico and would like to know whether it is going to rain.

2. On the Weather Channel, the atmosphere is excessively egalitarian. Except perhaps from 6:00 to 7:00 am, *no one seems to be in charge*. On Ted's channel, Ted will be clearly in charge. He can't be on the air 24 hours a day, of course, but a large picture of him will always be prominently displayed above the national map. This feature should appeal especially to older viewers from China.

3. All weathercasters will be from dignified species (no groundhogs!) and all human female broadcasters will have large breasts.

4. During special programs, there will be a positive focus on good weather rather than a negative focus on bad weather. Ted does not understand the point of the Weather Channel's

shows like Storm Stories, Tornado Week, etc. which focus on disasters such as blizzards, tornadoes, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, floods, earthquakes, avalanches, forest fires, tsunamis and lahars. He will produce shows like Sun Stories (seven days of the best weather on earth), with relaxing hour-long segments showing the sun shining calmly and gently in La Jolla or Bali, with attractive suntanned couples making unhurried love with New Age music playing in the background. For his ursine viewers, he will also have Salmon Stories, showing bears cheerfully fishing (in streams in western *Canada*, no less) and eating undignified salmon. Generally the locale for the stories will be chosen on the basis that the greatest threat to human life there is death from boredom.

5. Female broadcasters will wear more supportive bras, if they wear bras at all, and less clothing. Every segment will feature impressive cleavage. (Ted learned that one watching the weather shows in Greece.) We all know that sex sells perfumes, watches, cars and beer (just pay attention to the commercials the next time you watch TV), so why shouldn't it sell weather forecasts?

6. There will be more audience participation. For example, Ted is sure that his *Whether Bare with the Weather Bear* program will be very popular. The shows will be hosted by Ted and by a well-endowed female broadcaster wearing a low-cut raincoat that exposes cleavage but does not reveal what if anything is being worn underneath the raincoat. A member of the live audience will be chosen, and they will be asked to answer weather trivia questions. Some questions will be easy (*What kind of weather are you likely to encounter in a rain forest?*) and others will be harder (*Which of these pictures shows a cumulo-nimbus cloud?*) or nearly impossible (*What is the average annual rainfall in the vicinity of Lake Titicaca?*) If the audience member scores five or above (out of ten questions), the female broadcaster will open her raincoat

and reveal what if anything she is wearing underneath, that is, whether or not she is bare. For legal reasons, “bare” will not really mean bare, but rather wearing nothing other than thong panties. To keep the suspense level high, the female broadcaster will actually be bare only two days per week, and on those days the trivia questions will tend to be harder than average.

7. The broadcasters will be more ethnically diverse. The Weather Channel does have African-American broadcasters and some Hispanics, but the rest of the world is sorely underrepresented. Ted wants his viewers to be able to see Vietnamese knees, Thai thighs and Tibetan tits, for example. (He takes no position on the political question of whether Tibetan tits are a distinct concept or just a regional variant of Chinese chests.) Piotr tells Ted that, apart from Kristin, Bulgarian women are the most beautiful in the world, and Ted would like to include some, but the only Bulgarian women that Piotr still knows are ex-weightlifters who in general are, shall we say, a bit too hefty for Ted’s tastes. Some of them are old enough to have adult daughters, though, and Ted is looking into this. He has also found a large number of attractive young women from the former Soviet Union on various internet sites, but it appears that weather forecasts are not what they are interested in broadcasting.

After he establishes the Whether Bare Channel, Ted intends to move on to USPN, an ursine sports network. Some of his shows will feature traditional ursine sporting events like tree climbing, dumpster tipping and hiker chasing. But, because human audiences are the key to profitability, he will also show bears performing human sports. One of his favorites is the decathlon, at which bears are surprisingly good. They are competitive at all of the running and jumping events except the high jump, and can be trained to do fairly well in the shot put. The javelin throw and the discus will never be their best events. The pole vault was difficult at first until they learned to just climb the pole (balancing *very carefully*) and jump over the bar.

Ted intends to work on training bears in gymnastics and wrestling next.