



CONFESSIONS OF A SPIN DOCTOR

Spin doctor is often used to describe public relations experts as well as political or corporate representatives whose job it is to put a 'positive spin' on events or situations. The verbs "spin doctoring" and "spinning" are also commonly used to describe the work of a spin doctor.



I've lied, cheated and swindled, and I did it professionally. I spent this past year working in a public relations agency. Let me boil it down for you. The job had one goal: make you care about the things my clients cared about, even if they were inconsequential to your life. Unfortunately, I often succeeded.

You see, only giant corporations can afford to hire PR agencies. I was billing clients for \$120 per hour. With that kind of cash changing hands, you can bet that only one perspective was going to be represented -- the one that had serious financial backing.

We write stories that our clients want us to write, send them to newspapers, magazines or TV stations and journalists write their stories using our information. Often they'll get another perspective on the topic by contacting another source and call that "balanced reporting."

Sometimes they didn't—which was great! It meant that our message wasn't diluted by an opposing opinion. If we were lucky, the journalists we contacted would be lazy or overworked. That way they wouldn't have the time or energy to come up with their own story angles, quotes or research, and they'd just use ours.

Once we got hold of the news stories, we'd scan them to see if our "story" made it into the journalist's piece. Sometimes the headline we wrote in our news release would be the headline of the article in the newspaper. Sometimes the article was our news release, the only change being the addition of a reporter's name at the top. When that happened, it was called a "good hit," and we'd send it through to the client as justification of our exorbitant fees.

Why should you care? I promise you that you have read a spin doctor's words today either online or in print. The quote that is attributed to the CEO of the company in that front page article? He never said it-- a PR guy created that quote. Whole sentences, sometimes entire paragraphs, will be pulled directly from a news release and reprinted in a newspaper, words that were written by guys like me with the specific intent of convincing you to be a customer of my client.

I did it for a year before I was utterly disgusted. I didn't tell too many lies and I don't think I was responsible for any environmental catastrophes. Some of my former colleagues might not speak to me after they read this. I guess I'm letting the cat out of the bag. Well, it had to be done, because every day you are being lied to by guys like me.

FIND THE WORD(S) IN THE TEXT THAT BEST FITS THE GIVEN DEFINITIONS:

To reduce a problem simply: _____

Unimportant: _____

Weak; watered down: _____

Read quickly: _____

Very expensive: _____

Credited: _____

Disasters: _____

Telling a secret: _____

