

# What's in a Month? Think about October Commemorations for Improving Job Effectiveness

What's in a month? Typically, 28 to 31 days on a calendar that is a convenient tool for reminders of important things to do. Taking cues from the October calendar, specifically – and since it's one of the purposes of our Jaffe blog, I thought this would be an opportune occasion to suggest some workplace best practices and work ethic protocols that coincide with October commemorations, and that can help enhance our efficiency and [effectiveness as communications](#) and public relations professionals.

Yes, these all are legitimately recognized October commemorations. I won't bog down this post with too much history, but feel free to look up their origins.

**American Archives Month** – In the context of extensive recording and collection of data, I know I've got various notes, names, phone numbers and email addresses from and about media contacts scattered among pieces of paper and sticky notes, emails in multiple folders, unread email messages, email drafts, Word documents and PDFs, along with other assorted note-taking applications. I don't even know what all I have, but I know it would be helpful to review and archive these items. That way, I could use the information better and in a timely manner the next time I'm in a rush to identify the best reporter or editor to interview an attorney for a breaking news story.

**National Bullying Prevention Month** – This is by no means intended to make light of the anti-bullying movement, which I believe is vital in today's culture, but subtle bullying can also be corrosive in a professional context. Although I've never been a bully, I have, in the past worked with colleagues who would try to bully reporters or editors into media placements and/or positive media coverage. Whether it's through exaggerating facts or news value, threatening to withhold information, making pleas for pity or other assorted flavors of intimidation, the tactics almost never work and end up soiling important relationships with the media – for both the practitioner and the client.

**National Cyber Security Awareness Month** – This should be top-of-mind every day because [cyber security is critical subject matter for law firms](#) and the majority of their business clients. While I'm thinking about how to leverage my clients' and their attorneys' insights in this area, I'm also reminded that [cyber threats](#) can foretell a crisis involving my own computer, workplace and clients to whom I send emails on a daily basis. There are many knowledgeable sources to tell me what to do, what not to do and how to navigate cyberspace safely; the [U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team](#) is a particularly good one. But I am at least generally aware of the importance and value of using strong passwords and not to click on suspicious email attachments or links. I know about limiting web browsing on a public network, regularly saving and backing up data, keeping



**Randy Labuzinski**

Vice President  
Public Relations

773.405.7583

[rlabuzinski@jaffepr.com](mailto:rlabuzinski@jaffepr.com)

personal information private, password-protecting my computer and other electronic devices, and generally being wary of suspicious online activity.

**National Information Literacy Awareness Month** – President Obama proclaimed this observance in 2009, imploring Americans to “be adept in the skills necessary to effectively navigate the Information Age. Though we may know how to find the information we need, we must also know how to evaluate it.” This one calls out to the reporter in me. Craving, seeking and processing all necessary information can only help us to be more-effective communicators. According to the proclamation for National Information Literacy Awareness Month, among other things, information-literate people are better at determining the extent of information needed; evaluating information and its sources critically; incorporating selected information into their knowledge base; and understanding the economic, legal and social issues in the use of information, as well as accessing and using the information ethically and legally.

**National Dental Hygiene Month** – I just had my annual check-up and teeth cleaning a couple of weeks ago. Of course, it was a separate, unfortunate tooth issue that really drove me to see my dentist this time – but I digress. No one wants to experience someone’s bad breath or look at disfigured teeth, nor do yellowed teeth leave a good impression on your clients, co-workers and colleagues. We can’t all be Hollywood stars – but healthy teeth, good hygiene and a nice smile can be effective communications tools.

Looking ahead to November ...

**National Career Development Month** – With day-to-day tasks and jobs understandably taking up most of our bandwidth, it can be difficult to carve out the time to focus on self-improvement and better communications skills. November is the month to take that dive. Whether it’s a media, writing, public speaking or marketing workshop, or a seminar on trends in America’s newsrooms, the insights gleaned from professional development programs and initiatives can only bear fruit in helping us serve our clients better – and lead to enhanced PR results. The cooler fall weather also tends to put me in the mindset of higher learning.

**America Recycles Day** (November 15). I’ll just take this opportunity to ask you to share this post with any colleagues you think might appreciate reading this twist on tips for how to be a more effective communicator.

Do you have a great suggestion for getting – or keeping – your (work) house in order at this time of the year? Or need some help in managing your public relations initiatives? Feel free to email me at [rlabuzinski@jaffepr.com](mailto:rlabuzinski@jaffepr.com).