

Thames Watered Down

Meeting Room.

CEO and 3 executives

Music playing in Background. Simon and Garfunkel 'Bridge Over Troubled Waters'. Music fades.

CEO: Right guys thanks for coming in at short notice. I've been looking at our website and frankly we're on steroids big time with this one. No chance whatsoever that it is going to start raining before mid-November and Joe and Joanna Public seems to have cottoned on that we are leaking 24% of our supply on a weekly basis to say nothing of the salary I'm on and our profit margins and there's some sort of campaign to report every mains burst in every street in the region. No one seems to realise we are in a severe and prolonged drought situation with bloody wall-to-wall sunshine everyday encouraging people to drink more water and shower all the time and water their gardens and then blame us for continuing to charge them when they can't use a hosepipe or fill a paddling pool for the kiddies or water their precious lawns. Any ideas guys how we get round this particular PR disaster? Or we are going to be up Shit's Creek so to speak without a paddle but wouldn't be needing the paddle.

Exec 1: We could change our name and pretend to be someone else.

CEO: Like what?

Exec 1: Maybe take out the word 'Water' so as not to emphasise what we aren't supplying if you see what I mean.

Exec 2: And perhaps take out the word 'Thames' as well? And maybe change the logo so no more blue wavy lines? And looking at the website here (device in hand) there are other things we could avoid saying so the punters might begin to forget what we are supposed to be providing.

Exec 3: So for example do you mean things like not talking about the 'current' situation and 'drip-feeding' information to the public on a daily basis?

Exec 1: And we should drop the strap line 'Thames Water-on the Crest of a Wave, where a Trickle becomes a Torrent'. Don't think customers appreciate that kind of thing right now.

Exec 3: And ban water fights. Oh actually we've already done that one.

Exec 2: And do away with 'Thameslink'. These reminders are just seen as

plain provocative.

CEO: Indeed. But we need a positive spin on all this too guys. You know, turn having no bloody water into some kind of an asset, a stroke of good fortune if you see what I mean.

Exec 2: Like calling those leaks you were talking about 'irrigation opportunities'?

Exec 3: And filling paddling pools with goldfish so they are then technically wildlife ponds and not under restrictions thereby saving the fish and providing a wild water experience for the little ones at the same time?

Exec 1: And what about a weekly gardening column, something like growing cacti in your window box? Get Monty Don to endorse, well maybe not Monty but someone a bit cheaper like Carol Klein or Charlie Dimmock, do you remember Charlie Dimmock? Put a picture of her up on the website and the male half of the population would forget about not having any water pretty quickly if you ask me. (Laughs at his own reference).

Exec 2: What about a campaign to 'Share a Shower with a Friend'? Invite someone over for dinner and then have a shower together, save water and have a bit of fun, you know, that kind of thing.

Exec 3: Not sure about that one. Could be controversial. Perhaps if they then saved the water for the washing up afterwards it might seem more acceptable.

CEO: OK guys so we are going to clean up the website, take out all references to water, be positive and offer lifestyle tips that would appeal to the paying customer. Any more ideas?

Exec 1: Where exactly are we most short of the old H₂O? Perhaps if we called it H₂O the public might be less susceptible to realising exactly what the situation is.

CEO: Well we cover an area from parts of Gloucestershire in the west to Kent and Essex in the east. A veritable disaster waiting to happen big time if you ask me.

Exec 2: So it might be good to change a few names along the way so as not to create a deluge, probably not the best word in the circumstances, of anger from those living where there is supposed to be water and there isn't if you

see what I'm getting at.

Exec 3: Like where for example?

Exec 2: Well Bourton on the Water for one in the beautiful Cotswolds and Virginia Water in Surrey

Exec 3: And Canada Water

Exec 1: And while you're at it Waterloo I suppose.

Exec 2: And Henley on Thames-drop the 'Thames.'

Exec 1: And drop the 'ford' in Dartford, no need to have one any more. I get it now guys.

Exec 3: Thank God Bath is not on our patch. It's isn't is it?

CEO: OK so we've got strategies guys. (Pause. Looks at phone). That bloody Tomasz Schafernaker is saying it's going to rain as from tomorrow so we'll now have to explain why there's a hosepipe ban when it's pissing down.

Music gets louder and at words '.....like a bridge over troubled waters