

# Being upfront is good policy

As you have no doubt read somewhere else, the governor of North Carolina, Mark Sanford, had disappeared for a few days and no one seemed to know where he was. His staff first said they didn't know, and then they said he was hiking the Appalachian Trail. Well, it turns out the good governor was a lot farther away...he was in Argentina. And when he arrived back in the United States he expressed surprise about the amount of coverage.

First, let's start with the public relations aspect of this. Sanford screwed up, and not by going out of town, but by being secretive about it. He could have easily said he was taking a few vacation days and that would have been the end of the story. Instead, he chose secrecy and his staff chose disinformation or misinformation. These decisions reflect poorly on the governor's and his staff's judgements. Clearly, these poor folks don't understand how the media works. News is instantaneous and has a wide net. Everyone reported his "disappearance" and they also reported the explanation and now they are reporting (and commenting) on what really happened. Not being able to understand the consequences of your actions is the definition of lack of judgement.

When you are in a political position you are also in a public position. It is probably hard to adjust to losing your privacy but that is the what happens when you get elected to office. President Obama has made comments to this effect, about how he is living in a bubble and so forth. Nonetheless, it is best to acknowledge and deal with the situation. Not understanding that the public is now invested in an elected official's moves is not understanding how politics works.

In any case, this case shows that a being upfront is good policy and good politics. Not talking or being secretive always carries a negative connotation. People imagine the

worse and in today's hyperfast communications environment, negative comments can transverse the globe in seconds.

You can read great insight on this situation in [Politico.com](#) and on [The Fix](#) blog in the [Washington Post](#).