

What does April 1 mean to you?

For many, April 1 is April Fools Day, and they act accordingly foolish. For others, it is Opening Day for Major League Baseball, and they make plans to attend a game. For some, April 1 may simply be the start to a new month or the second quarter of the year.

My point is that just because for you April 1 means pulling stupid pranks on people or going to the ballpark it does not mean other people share your views. As a communicator or marketer, you have to be sure that your target audience will get or share the prism with which you see the world.

Corporations use holidays/special days in their advertising all the time. Maybe it's Easter or Christmas, or Valentine's Day or MLK Day. Those days may or may not resonate with your target audience. It is your job as a communicator to make sure that you are not losing your audience by focusing on the wrong thing.

Last week, a local DC organization (which I will not name because it certainly does not deserve publicity) thought it would get a jump on April Fools, so it pranked its membership. In my mind, it made the organization look juvenile. I am sure to the organization's leadership it was a harmless joke—just having a bit of fun.

However you choose to celebrate April 1, take a moment to check whether your audience understands and embraces that. The Onion is expected to make an April Fools joke, but is CNN?

