Marcomm takeaways from the Iowa Caucus

Last night, FINALLY, the results of the Iowa Caucus gave us a more real sense of where people are headed in the GOP race. You can read about the results in this Karen Tumulty story for the Washington Post.

As you have probably heard *ad nauseum* the results may or may not indicate who the eventual GOP nominee will be. That said, I think we can draw the following three marketing communications lessons from the caucus:

1. **Advertising works**. Furthermore, negative advertising is VERY powerful. Mitt Romney spent the most and won the caucus (OK, Romney's Super PAC spent the most…but that is another discussion).

2. **It's the message AND the messenger**. The message is important, but perhaps not as important as the messenger. People vote for people they like, explaining why Santorum did so well. Santorum comes across as a sincere, committed and caring person. And he rocks a sweater vest (and sweater vests are what grandads and jolly uncles wear, right?). Gingrich, who came in at a distant fourth, comes across as pedantic and angry. Even his post-caucus speech was angry (I didn't watch it, but read commentary like this analysis from Mr. Media Training).

3. **Be present.** Jon Huntsman made the decision to skip Iowa, and the numbers show it. He came in with 0.6% of the vote. People like to see something they want to buy, not just hear about it. Lots of pundits describe the Iowa caucus as true retail politics, where politicians meet and greet (in person) their potential supporters. You have to be the bricks and mortar in the case, and not just the virtual.

What did you think? Any marketing lessons you took away?