



ALL EARS!!

*The Litchfield Fund
Weekly Newsletter*

“We just don’t hear it on the street, we have our ears spread across all the fields!!!!”



Litchfield

With ardent apologies to both Clement Clarke Moore & Charles Dickens, & with the many new weekly *All Ears!!* readers, we decided to dust off a couple of our previous Christmas stories! Hopefully, just like those classic holiday tales, our stories are worth a bit of retelling & will not stick in *our ears* – like the carol we repeatedly heard over & over again in the shopping mall! Of course, *All Ears!!* does approach the holidays with a bit of its usual irreverence, but like everyone else, we look forward to this special time of good cheer!!! We wish all our faithful readers the best of the season, enjoyment & *a bit of prudent indulgence!*

The Claus Copywrite: For many, many years the red & yellow *Kodak* brand was the most valuable brand worldwide. But *Kodak* put digital technology on the back burner & focused on film & paper. Then, in the blink of an eye, most of the world’s photo images were captured on *Nokia* phones & in a second blink stored on *Facebook*. *Apple*, *McDonald’s*, *GE*, *Coke*, *Microsoft* & others have seen their brand value rise & fall over the years. Young entrepreneurs can learn a lot about branding from the most successful brand of all-time – *Santa Claus*.

Okay, all irreverence aside, Jesus Christ, *The Son of God*, is a darn good brand. But frankly, it is facing extensive competition & experiencing decreasing market share. *Claus & Co.* has seen competition from the likes of the Easter Bunny, Tooth Fairy & even The Great Pumpkin, but like any strong market leader he has pushed his *weight* around & sent them back to their smaller, less profitable, niches. Marketing is putting your brand into the brain of the consumer. You sell a brand, not a product. Car companies & fashion designers are great at this – *really Burberry, is plaid always in style?* Let’s look at just a few of the rules for branding & the *Claus & Co.* approach:

First to the market – Jolly Old St. Nick has been doing this since time immemorial!

Keep it Simple – A man in a red suit delivers presents, *check!*

Your employees must understand the brand – The elves & reindeer are totally bought in & it ain’t the 401K or healthcare package!

The perception of quality – This guy always delivers what you asked for -- *FedEx* & *UPS* should be embarrassed!

Demonstrate a difference – Did we mention the red suit, elves, reindeer, sleigh, chimneys, etc.?

Create a brand lifecycle – *Claus & Co.* locks the consumer in at an early age to create demand & then turns them into distributors as adults! Did you think *Amway* was an original idea?

Word-of-mouth is the best promotion – *Claus & Co.* has never paid a dime on marketing! The man has songs, TV shows & movies, free front lawn displays, store advertising & volunteers in red suits ringing bells! And a ton of goodwill on the balance sheet from pending *copyright infringement lawsuits!!* Why, when the Dutch children in the New World told their English

counterparts of their patron saint, *Sinder Klaus*, the English children were so excited they mispronounced the name to...*well, you get it!*

Clearly the Jolly Old Elf has the best brand ever!

Movie Trip: Sunday night at the movies! In our much-less-than-modest urban duplex in the early '60s it was a holiday tradition to gather about the round-tube black & white Crosley TV & watch *'der Bingo'* & his troupe of merry makers in Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*. For us kids, the best part of the night was a rare treat, fresh popped corn, which we both ate & strung for the Christmas tree. Definitely *pure nostalgia* for my Depression/WWII generation parents, for whom Mr. Berlin's song meant so much, & grew up when trees were decorated with fruit & nuts to be eaten on Christmas day! Perhaps they were *Counting their Blessings!*

Watching Christmas movies is still a *Litchfield Fund* tradition. Popcorn & hot cocoa under a blanket with your Christmas Angel! So many movies, so many beautiful songs! *Der Bingo* crooning *White Christmas* or Judy wishing all a *Merry Little Christmas!* They soothed the fears & troubles of an entire generation at war! We, of course, like those old classic movies! Some enjoy the newer more irreverent movies! Others enjoy those sappy *Hallmark & Lifetime* Christmas movies. So grab some popcorn & join *All Ears!!* as we take a Christmas trip through the movies.

Everyone has **A Christmas Story** of their own! You decide to take **A Christmas Vacation**. You plan to spend **Christmas in Connecticut** & stay at a **Holiday Inn**. Hoping for a **White Christmas**, the weather & traffic turn your drive into **The Nightmare Before Christmas**. A harried driver wearing a Santa cap cuts you off on an icy road! You don't like being a **Scrooge**, but you shout "**Bad Santa!**" You **Remember the Night** you spent in **The Apartment** of a friend in Manhattan last yule season, the bad accident you had. **It Happened on 5th Avenue!** No one was hurt, a true **Miracle on 34th Street!** This trip is stressing you out! You just want to **Jingle all the Way** there! To calm down you try to recall the nice conversation you had just before you left with **The Bishop's Wife**. Stuck in traffic, your phone rings. Your mother tells you, your sister is in tears, her husband had **A Holiday Affair**. You ask yourself why you did not say yes when a friend said **Meet Me in St. Louis!** Or why didn't you just stay **Home Alone?** Suddenly you remember you need a gift for Uncle Joe! Wait, you see **The Shop Around the Corner!** You are such a good little **Elf!** You finally get there, now you know what it must have felt like when **Santa Claus Conquers the Martians!** Yes, **It's a Wonderful Life**, but why isn't Christmas **In The Good Old Summertime?**

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays from The Litchfield Fund!

Seeds, Sprouts, Grow, Harvest!

The Litchfield Fund

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