

# Marketing: is there really no such thing as bad news?

Despite the best efforts of the media to whoop up global despair at the death of Michael Jackson, the reality is that outside the media the mourning has been something of a non-event. But that hasn't stopped one particularly crass "expert" from cashing in.

The fascinating thing about Michael Jackson's last gig (at which he was present in a gold coffin) was that the crowds outside did not come. The world's media has misjudged the extent that he would be grieved, almost hoping for some global equivalent of the UK's media-generated hysterical reaction to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

And it has not happened.

Around the world, TV channels aborted their planned schedules to broadcast his "memorial concert" live - in which a skinny black man dressed up in a spangly suit and walked backwards across the stage, lifting his heels but not his toes, and pulling a hat down over his eyes. Unlike the real Michael Jackson, he didn't squeal and grab his testicles from time to time.

For many, the Michael Jackson they knew and loved has been AWOL for a long time. From dangling his child over a balcony, through years of increasing madness first with the "melting face" and then the face masks and the constant rumours that he was here, there and everywhere simultaneously, from the monkey to the children at his playground, from the financial deals that kept him - according to so many reports - on the edge of bankruptcy, Jackson has become almost a fable.

Even in recent weeks, his will-he, won't-he and if he does how many series of concerts in London was so stage managed as to be irritating.

There is no doubt, Jackson had some huge hits, man and boy. But nothing of merit for a long time.

But the media attention on his death has brought out some pathetic people who want to jump on the bandwagon; people who will use anything to sell.

The most blatant is cringe-making.

" FINANCE: SUDDEN DEATH OF MICHAEL JACKSON: REMINDER OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTATE PLANNING," screams the headline on one press release. It's from a lawyer who is promoting his will writing and asset protection business."

No matter how tacky and overdone the media's response to Jackson's death, using it for self-promotion is just sad.