

PALUSZEK NOMINATES PR PROS
AS CORPORATE BOARD MEMBERS

Senior public relations professionals should be considered for membership on corporate boards of directors, advocates NY counselor John Paluszek. In letter

to NYTimes Mar. 4 he writes:

"Most articles dealing with the new pressures on corporate boards invariably cite "public" problems (such as activist groups, media relations, government) and yet fail to suggest that those who are best trained and experienced in dealing with such problems -- public relations executives -- be considered board candidates."

PR, MEDIA COME OFF BADLY AT
CREDIBILITY IN AMERICA SEMINAR,
BUT SO DO LAW, MEDICINE, GOV'T ETC.

"Most of the speakers agreed that most Americans no longer trust nor believe politicians, corporations, doctors, lawyers, broadcasters, reporters or pr people," reported St. Peters-

burg Times of PRSA Southeast Dist. conference. All-star lineup of speakers drew nearly 300 attenders, attesting to continued practitioner interest in credibility theme. Some statements show problems to be faced:

"As I was writing my speech in my office overlooking Madison Avenue, I got a lot of vibes about credibility in the pr profession -- none good. It's tough to blend credibility with the hard hype our job requires." Richard Truitt, exec vp, Carl Byoir, on credibility in pr.

"Organized criticism of television is a growth industry. That is why we implemented a public relations program -- to deal with the Gray Panthers, PTA etc." Pam Warford, dir. comty affrs, ABC, on credibility in tv.

"Investors don't want information filtered thru pr men. They usually overstate the strengths of a company and way understate its weaknesses. The vast majority of investors want honest information, not puffery. In other words, companies should reveal their warts." Ardith Rivel, sr vp, Yankelovich, Skelley & White, on credibility for investors.

QUOTE

"We in public relations have skills which today's troubled world needs, badly. It is we who can effect reconciliation among disparate elements of society. It is we who can interpret the expectations of one group to another. It is we who can fill the silence of hostility with a dialogue of trust.

Things will never be perfect. We're always going to find ourselves involved in issues which have escaped our notice -- until a packet of sales cancellations arrives in the mail to alert us. We're always going to find ourselves involved in complex issues for which there is no solution pleasing to everybody.

By admitting our imperfections, we as public relations practitioners make ourselves more credible. By taking pains to represent the public fairly to our clients, to our management, to our organizations, we make ourselves more credible. And in that way, we can increase public trust in -- and credibility of -- all our institutions."

PRSA Pres. Kerry King at Credibility in America Conference

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RELIGIOUS PUBLIC RELATIONS BOOMING AS PEOPLE SEEK NEW VALUES:
SUCCESS, INCOME OF "ELECTRONIC PULPIT" PROMPTS MAINLINE FAITHS
TO INCREASE EVANGELISM -- WHICH MEANS COMMUNICATIONS & PR

That dirty word propaganda was coined not by Himmler but Pope Gregory XV. In 1622 he formed congregatio de propaganda fide, congregation for propagating the faith. Its presentday counterparts use sophisticated techniques of public relations & communications to reach target audiences. Religious pr is possibly biggest boom area.

Churches "are turning to marketing instead of miracles to fill their pews," observes UPI of minister running successful ad campaign. All areas of pr are embraced by churches: public affairs, internal communications, fund-raising, public communications, training, organizational development, opinion research. They were already masters at use of personal media.

Catholics Pass The Hat
...For Public Relations

U. S. Catholic Conf. began series of public participation hearings last week to determine how recently approved "annual national collection to support communications efforts" will be spent. 100 people testified at Washington, D.C. session. Each diocese will take special collection May 27 for "The Catholic Communication Campaign." Russell Shaw, assoc sec'y pa, told pr there's "definitely a desire for more communications -- we're not just churning it out for a disinterested audience." Bishops' poll calls for more primetime radio & tv, dramatic presentations, cable, service to press, a/v.

Sophisticated outreach is highlighted by fact West Coast hearing will be beamed to 12 other states via satellite. Communications committee will make recommendations based on testimony to bishops in June.

RPRC is 50 in '79,
Faces "Electronic Pulpit"

Religious Publicity Council was formed in 1929 -- decades before PRSA, CPRS, IABC and other general professional organizations. Now Religious PR Council, it "represents one of the broadest religious cross-sections in America" -- from Unification Church (Moonies) to Roman Catholic. To stimulate "thinking in future tense" RPRC will publish history tracing rise of pr activities on behalf of churches. But one new-era problem looms.

"The electronic pulpit," says exec sec'y Marvin Wilbur, "knows how to use the media to attract large audiences and huge amounts of money." Whether mainline denominations should emulate the Billy Grahams, Oral Roberts, et al is pertinent question among religious practitioners.

Another of their problems is universal: getting management to understand & utilize pr principles more effectively. He finds media doing "much better job" covering religion, often thru in-depth reporting. But Wilbur doesn't feel religious practitioners

are yet on level with corporate peers. "They need to know good pr for campaigns like going after Nestle's on the baby formula issue."

Other Trends in Religious PR

¶James Carty, first ordained minister of journalism (Disciples of Christ), co-authors manual on religious communication in Spanish for Hispanic congregations of US, Caribbean, Latin America. He is comms prof, Bethany College (W.Va.). Chapters cover religious pr, adv, publicity, sermons, a/v, pub opin polls, direct mail.

¶Pope John Paul II's obvious relish for using media makes religion front page & prime-time news worldwide. For first time, this pope mingles with reporters personally instead of issuing stuffy statements thru his press office.

¶Church of Scientology, controversial group founded by L. Ron Hubbard, publishes colorful tabloid "Freedom." Takes strongly defensive stance against gov't attacks. Copies from 5930 Franklin Ave., Hollywood, Calif. 90028.

¶Communications Commission, Nat'l Council of Churches, issues statement on "Editorial Freedom & Responsibility in the Church" which calls pr people to "honesty, fairness, courage and openness." This means, it continues, they must "serve the whole people of God, not solely the institutional structures that employ them."

¶Bob Adams, since '70 adv dir of PRSA & its Public Relations Journal, becomes assoc publisher of The Tablet, Brooklyn Catholic diocesan weekly.

UNIVERSITIES TRY FINANCIAL REPORTING
A LA BUSINESSES TO FIGHT RISING COSTS,
GOV'T REGS; PRINCETON'S "FINANCIAL PRIMER"

Because "education is a 'handicraft' industry, it doesn't lend itself to 'automated' production methods." Gov't regs hit education hard, too. Result

is higher rising costs than most other industries, so universities are stepping up economic reporting to their constituencies. 8-page enclosure in Feb. 5 issue of Princeton Weekly Bulletin states: "This primer has been prepared so that every member of the Princeton community can be aware of the actions that have been taken already and those which still need to be taken to cope with the financial pressures besetting Princeton."

Universities' costs have risen 90% over past decade, compared with 80% rise of prices in general. At same time, Princeton is affected by same cost pressures facing business: "Retirement legislation, regulations governing equal opportunity in athletics and access for the handicapped, and many other federal actions all have the potential of increasing costs or reducing real income. Although the intent of these actions is admirable, the financial implications are considerable." Reduced federal and state educational appropriations, especially in sciences & engineering, have hurt Princeton's financial situation, primer reports.

To increase income, Princeton is renting facilities and becoming real estate developer. New Events Office makes dormitories, other facilities available to educational & other nonprofit groups, particularly in summer. Another effort to obtain new income -- and to encourage attractive, compatible development of neighboring areas -- is Princeton Forrestal Center. 1,600-acre multiple-use real estate development includes provision for research and office facilities, conference center, housing and shopping area as well as permanent open space.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSES SHOW PROFESSION DIVIDED
ON THANKING MEDIA

OK In Emergency Situations. "When I was on the media side, I sure appreciated it when someone called my boss..." recalls John Ulrich, div dir ext affrs, U.S. Dep't of Energy (S.F.). As practitioner for Bonneville Power Admin., he recites media's role in '73 power shortage caused by lack of rain for hydro units. After energy conservation project succeeded, public statements noted "it wouldn't have worked without the great media cooperation we got." Ulrich concludes that "media was our major tool, due in part to the emergency nature of the situation, and thanking them seemed the natural thing to do."

Have CEO Do It. "Most effective way to register appreciation for a solid journalistic job is for the CEO to write the publisher or editor, with carbon copy showing to person who handled assignment," thinks John Spano, dir pr & adv, Monsanto (St. Louis). Letter may get into reporter's personnel file.

Canadian Pro Says No. Neither practitioners nor clients should thank media for good coverage," feels David Turnbull, med rels ofcr, Atomic Energy of Canada (Mississauga). Further, "no public relations benefits would result from such

a letter to the editor." Stories must stand on merit so special thanks "are not in order." Personally spoken appreciation is acceptable, however: "Next time you're chatting with the reporter, a casual mention of his good work would likely be appreciated."

If Do It, Be Brief. Judging from personal practice, some well-known figures feel brevity is the rule, if you do thank editors. Since prr's 2/12 piece on subject, Carroll Bateman, Jack O'Dwyer and Ray Bergstrom sent letters expressing thanks for certain items. In length, they were 5, 3 and 2 typewritten lines, respectively.

We Take Credit for Clips, So Give Writer Credit, Too. Ellen Kovak of Creamer Dickson Basford (NYC) gently chides: "I have always felt that media people should be aware their work is appreciated. After all, we sure don't waste any time zipping off great clips to our clients...." Letter from her thanking us for an article was quoted in previous story. She gets in last word: "I'd like to thank you, but I'm no longer sure whether I should...."

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GOV'T DROPS CHARGES AGAINST
ITT PUBLIC RELATIONS CHIEF GERRITY

Justice Dep't filed motion March 7 to dismiss charges against Edward Gerrity of lying to the Senate about ITT's Chilean activities.

Justice spokesman Robert Stevenson, asst dpi, told prr reason was "to protect classified nat'l security information from public disclosure." Gerrity is sr vp in charge of corp rels & adv.

Each of three persons indicted for ITT-CIA involvement in 1970 Chilean election has now been released from prosecution. Charges against ITT pr exec Robert Berrellez were dropped in February. CIA chief Richard Helms was allowed to plead no contest to misdemeanor. National security was also cited in their cases.

Despite reputation for personally supervising all operations at ITT, CEO Hal Geneen was never chaged with criminal activity. That fate befell only the two public relations men. Jack Fitzpatrick of ITT said gov't case is "finally closed." Unknown is whether PRSA grievance board will file complaint under ethics code.