

WOMEN MORE CREDIBLE THAN MEN AS SPOKESPERSONS, STUDY FINDS

Women are more trusted by public than men, making them better public spokespersons, finds recent Boston Univ study. Most dramatic difference was found in public trust of gov't spokeswomen compared with men in same position.

Sample of 576 college undergraduates assessed the extent of trust accorded male and female spokespersons of large corporations, nonprofits & gov't agencies. Study also investigated whether spokesperson's label made a difference in level of trust ascribed them. Found "Public Relations," "Public Affairs" & "Public Information" labels rated equally. "Communication" received significantly less trust.

Overall, nonprofits were accorded highest public trust with large corporations & gov't following. Study also found women trusted others more than did men. (For more info: George Gitter, BU School of Pub Comm, 640 Commonwealth Ave, Boston, 02215; 617/353-3472.)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

87,000 PR PRACTITIONERS --
A BELIEVABLE NUMBER

ELECTED. 1981-82 CASE board of trustees ofcrs: chair, Colette Seiple (ass't chancellor, Univ of Calif, Santa Cruz); chair-elect, H. Sargent Whittier (vp dev'l, St. Lawrence Univ, Canton, NY); chair-elect-designate, M. Fredric Volkman (dpr, Washington Univ, St. Louis); sec'y, Ann Bennett (pub'ns dir, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Ore.); treas, Robert Manthe (assoc vp alumni & dev'l, Colorado State Univ, Ft. Collins) continues in 2nd yr of term.

At last a solid number of pr practitioners has been determined by Bureau of Labor Statistics. Their Occupational Outlook Handbook records 87,000 pr practitioners in 1980. Previous Handbook listed 131,000. Change came when "household" survey was replaced with "business" survey -- resulting in more accurate determination of what positions are really public relations. The old figure included clerical and other non-professionals.

NEW FIRMS. Lisa Borman & Dan Williams open Borman/Williams, 222 Park Ave So, NYC 10003; 212/254-5400...Melissa Moore opens Moore Public Relations, 2024 N. 7th St, Ste. 200, Phoenix 85006; 602/252-0895 (after 10/12)...PRM/Communications, 11900 Ventura Blvd, Studio City, Calif 91604; 213/506-1177.

Kielar comms dir...Robert Rader joins Pioneer Screw & Nut (Elk Grove Village, Ill) as comms dir...Donald Dougherty named vp-pr, Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp (NYC)...Rebecca Blum joins Kresser & Robbins (L.A.) as dpr.

VISITING PROFS. Laurence Sewell Jr. (mpr, Aluminum Co. of Amer, Pittsburgh) named Alcoa Visiting Professor at Boston Univ for '81-'82 academic year.

VICE PRESIDENTS. William Campbell, Bozell & Jacobs (NYC)...Robert Rexroad, Beaumont, Heller & Sperling (Reading, Pa.)...Jan Sneed, Benton & Bowles (NYC)...Joyce Fitzpatrick Hartley, Peabody Communications (DC)...Patricia Butterfield, sr vp, Creamer Dickson Basford (Providence)...Mark Weiss, The Rowland Co. (NYC)...John Avitabile, exec vp, Dunwoodie Communications (NYC)...Sarah Wright Kimball, Barkin, Herman, Solochek & Paulsen (Milwaukee).

PEOPLE. Ruth Sarfaty joins Choices (Forest Hills, NY) as dpa...Miller Brewing (Milwaukee) promotes Robert Bertini Jr. to comty rels mgr & Benjamin Banta to mpr - Lite brand...Tishman Realty & Construction (NYC) appoints Richard

Vol.24 No.37
September 28, 1981

WIDER HORIZONS: MANAGEMENT EXPERTS TELL PRSA INSTITUTE PR, LIKE OD, AIMS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS & CHANGE, MUST UNDERSTAND ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR & STRUCTURE

Change is today recognized as a constant. Organizations can either manage it, or they will be managed by it. Richard Beckhard, leading organization development (OD) theorist, believes changes in organizations for the next 50 years will come from outside not inside forces. This puts public relations practitioners -- with their responsibility for external relations -- squarely in the role of change agents.

OD offers practitioners change-agent skills, PRSA's annual Institute learned last week. OD is "the application of behavioral science to improving the management of corporations and organizations themselves," according to Warner Burke, OD consultant & Columbia psyc prof. Management means "getting things done through people." Thirty years of research data show two essential & interrelated tasks for managers:
1. productivity (task behavior), 2. worker satisfaction (socio-emotional behavior).

OD applies a "law" of psychology to this challenge: involvement leads to commitment or "people will carry out decisions they're involved in making." Burke calls this the cardinal principle of OD. But such public participation is also basic pr practice. OD consultant Barbara West of Omega Management (Monterrey, Mexico) feels the similarity goes further. "PR and OD do lots of the same things, using many of the same tools." Even their key objective is the same, "finding ways to make organizations effective." Doing so means having a number of conceptual frameworks through which to view & diagnose organizations.

A BASIC BOOK

OD consultants are familiar with all the management frameworks. Burke & West think pr pros should be also. To learn from a single source the sum of accepted organizational theory, Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources by Hersey & Blanchard. For a bibliography on OD techniques, write pr.

Applying Social Science Theory

One framework West uses is "strategic management." It differs from strategic planning by including socio-political as well as the usual technical & financial factors. Thus it is relevant to public relations as well. This concept sees the organization poised in relation to its environment, with the action taking place where the two collide ... at the "interactive boundary." There are two possible strategies for organizational behavior as it interacts with the environment. One, called "competitive," is short term, profit-maximizing, eager to keep the status quo while upping market share or cash flow -- a "more of the same" outlook. In contrast, "entrepreneurial" behavior is long range, aims to replace obsolete products/services/markets with new ones, requires investment -- a "change to keep up" philosophy.



But work at this boundary is what pr does. As PRSA's Emerging Issues report of '78 put it, the public relations practitioner is "always in the middle" between the organization & its publics, interpreting each to the other. West emphasizes the opportunity for practitioners by learning OD techniques for use here. "No other position within the organization deals with as many publics as public relations." Become the boundary managers, she urges.

OD Offers Tool For Evaluation A new way for pr to prove its importance is to develop key operating indicators (KOIs) by which its impact on goals can be measured. This "keeps management happy by using their language." The stockholder public, for example, needs 1) information, 2) growth, 3) dividends. West suggests setting up an evaluation method that relates to such KOIs. Management can then review progress as it relates to these corporate necessities -- which is different than judging the annual report in a vacuum.

OD's Approach To Counseling OD's consultants follow these or similar steps: 1) Entry, getting permission to explore the problem; 2) Contract, selecting & getting agreement on methods to be used; 3) Data Collection; 4) Feedback, or presenting the data for management discussion; 5) Diagnosis, or jointly evaluating the data to understand the situation. Action, Evaluation, Exit/Recycle phases follow.

OD lets clients identify the problems from the data rather than diagnosing for them. Rule is you can't effect change unless there is a felt need for it. If consultant diagnoses, result is coerced change. This method gains client commitment. It avoids problem of "working uphill," trying to do things in clients' interest but against their will. It also requires consultants to prove need beyond question. Even then, clients may not own up to problem. Role of consultant is as facilitator.

NEW PR PROS READY FOR WIDE SCOPE, STUDY FINDS Younger public relations people on the whole bring a more professional perspective to their departments with greater emphasis on public issues, research and preventive communications programs, says survey by Thorndike Deland Assocs (NYC). But their writing skills are not as crisp and professional as their superiors. Many senior pr execs developed their writing skills while working on a newspaper early in their careers. Survey of 60 industrial/packaged goods companies examines differences in pr functions of companies over & under \$1 billion. Among the results:

Under \$1 Billion

1. Views pr in a general manner, often combining it with public affairs & advertising. PR typically reports to an exec in a non-public relations dep't, e.g., administration, personnel.
2. Middle management salaries range between \$40-45,000 (probably due to responsibility for several functions).
3. Public Relations person often is non-professional e.g., from sales promotion, marketing.

Over \$1 Billion

1. Separates communications into external & internal functions. Public relations distinct from public affairs, with directors of both reporting to a senior public affairs exec.
2. Middle management salaries range between \$40-45,000.

----- MANAGING YOUR BOSS -----

If you report to a senior exec, does managing up require an extra ingredient? Is socializing on the golf course or at the theater a requisite for maintaining an effective relationship? Opinions differed among Institute conferees.

Proponents of socializing say professional competency is taken for granted at this level. Being a good practitioner isn't enough. Sharing social activities allows informal exchange of information & decision making.

Opponents of socializing maintain the counseling element inherent in public relations requires a distance between counselor & client. This is the psychiatric model. Opinions split on socializing vs. distancing did not follow staff or counseling employment.

What do you think? Share your experience for a pr symposium.

ADVICE FROM A FOUNDER Edward L. Bernays, 90 in November, spent 2 days at the PRSA Institute as oracle-in-residence. Among the insights shared from 62 yrs of practice (Bernays opened his office in 1919):

"One proof public relations is a profession, not a business, is its educational seminars. "Professionals share with their fellows what they have learned. Businesses try hard to keep trade secrets."

"I would never undertake to reach an audience larger than one without research."

"Public relations is not the skillful use of words but adjustment between an organization and the public on which it depends." Bernays' many classic campaigns -- from "torches of freedom" for American Tobacco to soap sculpture for Procter & Gamble -- use actions, not words. Words are used only to publicize the events afterwards.

"Never deny a rumor. More people will hear of your denial than heard the rumor in the first place. Blanket it instead with an action that proves the rumor is false."

"Unlike most other disciplines, "the public relations professional both gives advice and carries it out."

"PUBLIC POLICY PR" SEEN BY EDELMAN AS THE GROWTH AREA Public policy pr may grow 100% faster than any other facet of pr says Dan Edelman (Chi). Responsibilities involved in public policy include: 1) problem analysis & problem solving; 2) establishing bridges to key interest groups & building coalitions; 3) communicating with legislators; 4) disseminating information & winning support for client's viewpoint.

Assignments can be handled more effectively, Edelman feels, by hiring specialists in a variety of disciplines, e.g., law, business, home economics, social sciences.

"There will be no greater opportunity to demonstrate the overall professional capabilities of public relations personnel than by handling public policy assignments. It's my experience that these kinds of situations usually represent major problems for companies, associations or institutions. If we can perform extremely well on such challenges, we will make substantial progress in our continuing effort to achieve greater professional recognition."