

Sense Of Commitment

1. 91% believe they have an obligation to meet the needs of the community.

2. About 1/3 say their obligations to the community are best met by being good businessmen & good employers, not by spending time on other people's boards or donating money.

3. 2/3 feel there is an inherent conflict between obligation to be profitable and obligation to be responsive to community needs.

Meaning Of Commitment

4. 64% describe their obligation in terms of giving money; only 30% thru employee volunteer activities or loaned execs.

5. Money is given primarily to the same groups supported thru the 60s & 70s: arts, education, United Way, traditional biz groups (Jaycees, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce).

"Public relations may be defined as those aspects of our personal & corporate behavior which have a social rather than a purely private & personal significance."  
 -- Harwood Childs,  
 famed political scientist

6. Corporations do not go out of their way to seek out new groups, especially those providing pure social services.

7. 70% encourage employees to volunteer, tho many do not have a program for doing so.

Level Of Commitment

8. 39% say they have increased their support of volunteer activities during the past 2 yrs; 26% plan to increase it in the coming year. Support has remained the same in the past 2 yrs for 55%, will in the coming year for 66%.

Benefits Of Involvement

9. 74% perceive some benefit to the corporation from employee involvement in volunteerism.

10. 45% say corporations benefit from improved image; 41% list employee morale.

11. 45% say it's very important company be seen as socially responsible; 37% say somewhat important.

12. 46% feel volunteerism increases productivity.

HOW CORPORATIONS BENEFIT FROM VOLUNTEERISM

	All Companies	Fortune 500	Over \$100 mm sales	Under \$100 mm sales	Under \$5 mm sales
Improved company image	45%	44%	48%	29%	53%
Healthier community = Better business environment	6%	9%	7%	6%	2%
Improved employee morale	41%	30%	41%	56%	33%
Direct business benefits	8%	—	7%	10%	15%
Improved employee skills	6%	16%	5%	5%	—

BECAUSE THEIR IMPACT ON INTERNAL & EXTERNAL PUBLICS IS PROFOUND, PRACTITIONERS MUST MASTER & COUNSEL ON PERSONAL TASKS; FIRST IN A 3-PART SERIES ON HIRING, EVALUATING, FIRING

Because they are the building blocks of internal & external relationships, hiring, evaluating & firing cannot be left to the personnel office. Practitioners have an inescapable interest -- & responsibility. Poorly handled, these critical managerial tasks breed low morale, discontent & friction internally, which inevitably find their way to external publics.

But before pr people can advise others, we must develop our own skills in these areas. "When you have a job opening, it's the most exciting time from a manager's point of view. It's an opportunity to upgrade the quality of people in your department, to find the best person there is," explains Jean Cardwell, pres, Cardwell Consultants (Evanston, Ill.). She recommends practitioners "plug into a networking system" even before an opening exists.

"Network can include suppliers, press, counselors, people with similar responsibility in other companies.

9 DO'S & DON'TS OF HIRING

1. Don't favor friends or relatives. Friends are slow to recognize faults of each other.
2. Don't overhire. Person who will take any position is probably desperate and may be looking for a temporary position.
3. Don't let the personnel office do your hiring. They are useful in identifying applicants, screening resumes & interpreting hiring policies. You know better than they the flair factors needed to get your job done.
4. Do practice listening. The less talking you do, the more the candidate will reveal.
5. Do interview carefully. Don't interview in an area where you might be overheard. Informality helps. Try sitting on the same side of the desk with the applicant. You may have to carry the conversation to get the answers you need. Avoid questions that elicit yes or no replies. After interview, make notes about your findings & reaction to applicant. Documentation on each interview is a must.
6. Don't hire applicants who talk too much. I side with Ben Franklin who once said, "Big talkers are little doers." Time mgmt experts will tell you that talking is 2nd biggest time waster, telephone is 1st.
7. Do look for flair factors. Star qualities -- the thing that sets a person apart from the rest of the crowd.
8. Don't rely on references. When checking references, be sure to ask: What are the candidate's strengths? Weaknesses? Is the person a self-starter? Does he/she manage time well? Productive? Then ask yourself: Is this person qualified to do the work?
9. Don't place too much faith in credentials. Watch for things in resumes like typos, time-voids in jobs, misspelled words, lots of academic degrees.

-- Art Ciervo, dpi & rels, Penn State Univ.



Ask them, 'who are the people you know or have seen that might be good for this position?' It's necessary background information. When you're ready to move, you'll have an idea who's out there."

Counselor Peter Hollister, who has managed divisions with up to 500 employees, cites 6 fundamental parts to the hiring process:

Writing The Job Description "This is the foundation document" and should include a) general description -- duties, to whom the position answers, role in context of org'n; b) specific responsibilities; c) qualifications -- both minimum required & additional desired. "This description seems to be difficult for a lot of pr people to write. Maybe because there are open parameters in what they look for," adds Cardwell.

Advertising Copy should be an edited-down summary of the job description.

"Personnel will suggest putting an ad in the local Sunday paper &/or the Wall Street Journal. You'll get 579 resumes, which they'll narrow down to 12. I say 12 because I don't think most personnel people have the understanding of pr that's needed. You want to make sure they don't eliminate good candidates," explains Cardwell.

Reviewing Resumes Narrow them down to those with background & experience that truly fit the job description. A review panel familiar with the position can further reduce the number to be interviewed.

Checking References Get at least 3 from each finalist. Don't hesitate to contact others you feel might have insight. Telephoning is preferable because it allows for elaboration.

"One thing sadly overlooked is references. The trick is to not only check the ones given, but those not given -- a pr firm that worked with the person, a supplier, the press. Most former employers don't want to give a bad reference, they'd rather stick you with a bad person for your job. They don't want this nice person not to get hired. It's a reflection on their ability as the candidate's previous employer," says Cardwell.

TRAITS TO LOOK FOR

1. Good judgment. A disciplined mind that looks at all angles & reaches sound conclusions, not wishful ones.
2. Discipline in life & work. Considers work satisfaction -- not perks & time off -- as major job benefit.
3. Strong desire to be respected as a professional, and indications that he/she is respected by co-workers at all levels.
4. Self-confidence combined with enough humility to work harmoniously with people at all levels.
5. Absolute integrity -- no deviousness, logrolling, backstabbing.
6. Strong basic job skills needed for the position.
7. Broad interest & approach -- a universal person.
8. Knowledge of the field & ability to judge others' work in it.
9. Creativity -- originality, seeking fresh insights & ideas, avoiding formulas, readiness to try new ideas & techniques.
10. Ability to recognize need for expert help & the courage to get the best.
11. Other advantages -- contacts, special knowledge, etc.

-- Phil Lesly (Chi)

Interviewing Even among communicators, the job interview is not an easy, comfortable exercise. Make every effort to let it "flow." a) See if they did their homework on your org'n. b) Determine if resume is a true reflection of experience. c) Make your expectations clear. d) Encourage candidate to express expectations, aspirations, strengths & concerns. e) Have candidate spend time with those he/she would work with, then solicit feedback from those people. f) If a test is to be given, make sure candidate knows about it before visit & has quiet environment in which to take it. g) Close interview with firm understanding when candidate will hear from you, and how.

"Assuming the background experience is there, I look for overachievers, people with flexibility, patience, consistency, understanding of interpersonal relationships, instincts for public relations, broad-gauged understanding of business, sense of timing, intelligence, judgment, good appearance, articulateness. I also look for someone who has guts.

"You can tell a lot by the questions they ask. Also by the consistency of their answers to your questions. In some cases you have to ask the same question 5 times in 5 different ways. When you see a red flag, if something bothers you about an individual, ask. Pursue that path in a variety of ways to see what & why. You'll decide whether you want to pursue that individual within 10 minutes. And you'll spend the rest of your time justifying why you came to that conclusion.

"Listen to the patterns of answers. That'll give you a clue as to what to ask next. Two questions I come prepared to ask are 1) give me an idea of the program you're most proud of and 2) give me an idea of the program that you messed up on. The quality of the answer in both cases is what I'm looking for." And Cardwell sums up with this comment: "First class managers hire first class people. Second class managers hire third class people."

Phil Lesly suggests, "Try to assess how someone thinks -- how they approach a situation, how their mind works. That's probably the most revealing single aspect that comes out in discussions with people." Key questions Lesly asks include: What is candidate interested in? What do they do with their own time? What do they get the most satisfaction out of in the work they do? What are their ambitions?

Orientation The tone set in the first week on the job influences the entire relationship. Introduce co-workers. Familiarize employee with physical work environment. Conduct benefits/working conditions briefing. Have employee's work space set up as completely as possible and give him/her an hour or so to simply become familiar and enjoy it. How about some fresh flowers & a note of welcome on the corner of the desk? Brief employee on professional colleagues' activities and how jobs interrelate. Provide copy of company policies, organizational materials, etc. Give new employee "open door" access to supervisor for 2 wks because more questions usually come up in the 2nd week than the 1st.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY STILL AN OPEN QUESTION, SURVEY OF CORPORATE CEOs FINDS; MOST FAVOR DONATIONS OVER VOLUNTEERING

Most corporations accept responsibility to meet community needs but view their support in terms of philanthropy, not volunteerism, finds a study by Mutual Benefit Life (Newark). National survey involved in-depth telephone interviews with 600 CEOs from large & small corporations. Study's purpose was to "ascertain attitudes of CEOs toward increasing support of the volunteer sector." Other findings include: