

To open people's minds, quiz asks questions such as: 1) What percentage of public school teachers strike each year? A. 18% B. less than 1% C. 10%; 2) What percentage of school students are discipline problems: A. 9.5% B. 16.7% C. 4.6%; 3) The school lunch program for low-income children gets by on \$1.20 per meal. The US subsidizes top military officials at the Pentagon for meals in the amount of A. \$7 B. \$11 C. \$14. True answers, printed upside down below the quiz (underlined here), gives taker the information NEA wants known and also has the benefit of comparison. Quiz's appeal is key factor in its ability to inform.

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶Encouraging employers to train workers 55 & over for active volunteer work in their community is suggested as an aid to preparing for retirement. Program created by the Ass'n of Junior Leagues (NYC) and Amer. Council of Life Insurance (Washington) calls it an insurance policy for employees since it builds useful interests for application after retirement.

¶"There shall be no press or media conference" was the agreement in a recent court settlement. Class action suit against Dun & Bradstreet was settled out of court to avoid "lengthy, costly & time consuming litigation." Unusual aspect of the agreement specified: "There shall be no press or media conference regarding this agreement. Plaintiffs and defendants and their respective counsel further agree to direct all inquiries ... to the court file."

¶Even professional communicators sometimes have difficulty explaining pr plans & programs to their CEOs and others who need to know. Diagrams, matrices and PERT charts are helpful. Robert Ristino, dir comty rels at Mercy Hospital, has developed a series of graphics to outline & describe pr activities: 1) diagram showing the pr planning process, 2) career planning matrix, and 3) graph for analyzing pr plans. Ristino will share these graphics with interested colleagues. Write to him at Mercy Hospital, Carew St, Springfield, Mass. 01104; 413/781-9100.

¶"Checklist of Shareholder Concerns -- 1983" is a working document of subjects & issues which may be raised by shareholders this year. It's intended to be used by corporations as an aid in planning annual meetings. Increasing sophistication of investors parallels the quality & quantity of issues they are raising. Interest is no longer limited to financial performance & forecasts. Shareholders are placing greater emphasis on reviewing company activities such as mgmt policies, corporate conduct and ethical concerns of doing business.

Among the concerns listed are: 1) Vulnerability to a tender offer -- what is your company's position; 2) Plans for increasing productivity, including human resource auditing; 3) Policy on director & officer compensation, including existence of "Golden Parachutes"; 4) Frequency of women/minorities on boards of directors; 5) Corporate involvement in Political Action Committees. (Copy from Georgeson & Co., Wall St. Plaza, NYC 10005)

DRAMATIC STATISTICS = MEMORABILITY

¶A gov't study shows that \$5 billion more per year is spent on pensions for 1.9 million retired civil servants than is spent on basic welfare programs for the more than 25 million needy Americans. (From "Washington Whispers" syndicated column)

¶By the year 2000, 4 of every 5 Americans over the age of 60 will have a living parent. (Newspaper article from Council of Senior Citizens)

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DOING IT: REYNOLDS METALS PR DEPARTMENT TAKES LEAD IN CREATING PROACTIVE QUALITY/PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAM TO IMPROVE MORALE, PRODUCTS, SHAREHOLDER SUPPORT, COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Public relations dep't at Reynolds Metals (Richmond, Va.) is mounting a proactive "quality" program. "Concept came one year ago from our president & chairman. They called our pr dep't, told us what they wanted to do and asked us to put together a program," gen'l dir of pr Joe Awad told prr. Objectives are: 1) to improve productivity; 2) to gain an edge in the marketplace; & 3) "We got weary of all the talk about American industry losing status as makers of quality products."

PR dep't began by doing some benchmark research among employees. "We sent a questionnaire to a random sampling of employees to get a feel for the level of quality awareness because we want to measure it again after this program has been going for a while. Then we put together a program for more than just increasing awareness of quality -- tho that was the initial thrust." Along with motivating all employees from production to management, program will reach 1) customers, 2) plant communities, 3) investors, & 4) suppliers.

"Important part was getting complete support from senior & middle management. Before program was set in cement, we asked for their input & ideas." After approval, each vp was asked to carry program into his division and given tools for introducing it: 1) videotape on quality, 2) brochure enunciating program philosophy, and 3) packet of info explaining how program works. "We designed the program so individual divisions can take our building blocks and do their own thing." Now 3 months into the program, plants are getting involved & generating original ideas.

Two pr techniques employed were 1) semantics & 2) raising visibility. Quality control dep't was reorganized giving it more teeth, authority to move anywhere within company and take steps necessary to improve quality. A vp was elected

To make clear its views on quality, Reynolds has developed a corporate policy. It is the frontispiece on all quality control manuals and is displayed on the wall in offices & plants thruout the company:

"Quality is the fulfillment of a commitment to produce a product that meets the user's specifications, as expressed in a specification with measurable values. Such a product must be free of material defects and exemplify pride in workmanship. It must be offered at a reasonable cost and delivered on time. Finally, it must be supported with reliable and reputable service.

"The company that best satisfies these expectations builds a reputation for quality, prospers and grows, assures the security of its employees and benefits society."

to oversee entire function. Dept's name was changed to "quality assurance" (QA). "Quality control has the connotation of controlling after the product is already made. We want to build quality into the process from the beginning."

Initial emphasis is being placed on reaching internal publics. "We want to be sure we have the quality level we want thruout the company before we reach our external publics." Some techniques being used to promote quality internally are:

1. Slogan -- "Our quality shines through" -- and logo (see box) that are "tremendously well received." Used on all company literature -- e.g. internal phone directory, execs' daily news summary -- even letterhead.



2. Annual Chairman's Award for Quality, presented by the chrm to the plant & division achieving the highest quality. First award will be given January '84. "Quality assurance dep't has developed tough criteria for this award."

3. Ongoing merit award -- huge banner displaying logo. Given quarterly to plants meeting the standards set by its QA mgr. Banner can hang inside or fly from flagpole outside for as long as plant maintains the standards. Checking will be done quarterly. "We're just now coming to the end of our first competitive period."

4. Monthly posters featuring an employee. Each poster has theme related to quality, photograph of & statement by featured employee, and is displayed in all the plants. Publicity program informs local media for feature story, carrying program externally into the community.

5. Quarterly brochure linked to that month's poster. It's tied in graphically and explains poster's theme.

6. Award to suppliers who meet criteria set by QA, pr & purchasing dep'ts. Logo on their awards will read "Your quality shines through."

"Our employees are really enthusiastic. Many are taking this quality theme and putting it on signs all over their plants. We're including articles in every issue of the company magazine on some aspect of the program & how it's going. And we're providing materials to all our plant publications, encouraging them to do articles on programs they've got going in their plants. It's moving forward well."

"Other steps practitioners can take to move into the key topics of productivity are spelled out in prr's 100-pg special report, Improving Productivity: A Public Relations Opportunity. \$20 from prr's reader service dep't.

A STEP BACKWARD: INVESTOR RELATIONS EXECS SAY PR SKILLS SECONDARY FOR THEIR JOB; NEWS SURVEY RAISES ISSUES

tions is losing importance in this area. "Increasingly there has been a shift toward

A survey of IR execs highlights current issues in investor relations -- and public relations generally. According to its findings, public rela-

using fewer public relations people and more financially-oriented specialists," says Wes Poriotis whose recruiting firm, Wesley-Brown Ltd., did the survey. Of 300 senior IR officers polled, 202 respondents say broad financial background along with "marketing communications skills" is more important than pr background. PR skills were ranked fourth in the list of desirable qualifications.

Issue #1. Financial relations officers must act "as a financial pulse for the top executive," says Poriotis. This implies that financial data are all that move management, analysts, shareholders, public. It's the old idea that people somehow behave differently about money matters. Today, organizations communicate more than one-dimensional dollars-&-cents data. They project human concern, social responsibility, sensitivity to the psychology of economics. And that's public relations.

Issue #2. Strong financial background is considered most important by 31%, writing & marketing skills second (26%), security analyst background third (20%), public relations background fourth (17.4%). Legal background is considered important by only 12%. Clearly pr is equated with media relations here ... because "writing & marketing skills" are critical to all practitioners.

Issue #3. "The financial community wants to talk to people who talk its language," concludes Poriotis but learning the jargon is one of the first things a pr professional does in order to effectively communicate. Good example of this is healthcare practitioners who have extremely complicated financial data to translate to their publics. "It's wiser to hire a communicator and have him add financial training later because it is harder to teach a financial person to communicate," advises IR expert Bill Chatlos in 3/16 NYTimes article.

Issue #4. "The growth of investor relations as a specialty stems from the increasing competition for the investment dollar, coupled with the growing sophistication of the financial community in analyzing companies." But the issue of specialist vs. generalist can be applied to every area of public relations today.

"POP QUIZ" IS TECHNIQUE FOR OPENING PEOPLE'S MINDS; ASK FOR A WILLING SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF

Misunderstandings abound. Once they solidify into a pervading attitude, opinions are formed and minds closed. How can people be persuaded to change an opinion? One way is to ask for a willing suspension of disbelief: "I know you all believe such & such, but just listen to this...."

National Education Association is asking the public for a willing suspension of disbelief with their "pop quiz" on some of public schools' myths & key issues. "Certainly there are problems in the schools, but nowhere on the scale that many people believe," NEA pres Willard McGuire explains. Quiz makes taker aware of any misinformed opinions and opens his/her mind to new information. NEA suggests those with more than 2 wrong answers visit a local school to learn first hand about its problems & opportunities.

Other findings: 1) corporate background is considered primary by 59%, financial community experience by 28%, public relations experience by 11%; 2) reporting to CEO considered crucial by 63%, to CFO by 29%, to dpr by 8%; 3) 92% feel IR pros are better at their work than they were 5 yrs ago; 4) 83% feel investor relations is more effective than it was 5 yrs ago.