

BECAUSE ISSUES KNOW NO BOUNDARIES,
MORE & MORE MULTINATIONALS
EMPLOY PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALISTS

They keep watch on political & socio-economic developments around the world, reports a Conference Board study. More than 40% of the 82 multinationals surveyed have specialists who devote most of their time to international public affairs. More than half of these positions were created in the last 10 years.

Assignments include: 1) attempts to influence positions taken by governments, 2) seeking gov't help to deal with foreign gov'ts, 3) maintaining contacts with ambassadors & diplomatic staffs. 4) Global mind-set of many companies has caused them to become increasingly active in a variety of intergovernmental bodies -- United Nations, European Economic Community, General Agreement on Tariffs & Trade.

Study finds that companies with global public affairs professionals tend to have larger worldwide sales, operate in more countries than those that do not employ these specialists. They are most heavily clustered in the petroleum, auto, electrical engineering and electronic products sectors. And in companies making health products & consumer chemicals. More US based multinationals than those headquartered elsewhere have international public affairs specialists.

Far from being fully effective, 60% of the surveyed execs rate their current efforts as less than adequate. Primary defects are staffing inadequacies and failure to develop effective planning systems. Many also say their firms have yet to come to grips with a variety of issues springing from decentralization.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. Florida Public Relations Assn's 1985 officers: pres, Bob Gernert Jr (dir comty rels, Lakeland Regional Medical Ctr); pres-elect, David McMullen (sr vp & gen'l mgr, Cohn & Wolfe, Tampa); vp's, Robert Davis (assoc prof/comms, Univ of Central Florida, Orlando), Gerald Gee (assoc prof, pr sequence head, Florida A & M Univ, Tallahassee), Carolyn Kirkland-Webb (Carolyn Kirkland-Webb & Assocs, Jacksonville), Cathlean Coleman (dir comty rels, Palm Beach Regional Visiting Nurse Ass'n, West Palm Beach); treas, Mary O'Reilly (dir comty rels, Sun Coast Hospital, Largo); past pres, Patricia Trubow (dir corp comms, Santa Fe Health Care Systems, Gainesville).

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Explains one CEO of a multinational: "Like it or not, we do live in a single world with instant communications and increasingly rapid transfer of issues across national boundaries and continents. Social legislation in Britain is as influenced by what is happening in Sweden, in Holland & Germany as by local pressure groups. It would be a brave person who, today, would deny that developments in industrial democracies in Europe will not have an increasing influence on management-labor thinking in North America in the next 2 to 5 years."

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IS PRIORITY

"Most businesses are autocracies or bureaucracies. Electronics Arts is perhaps the first business ever to be founded as a 'culture.' It's working well but we only have 70 employees. My goal is to see it succeed when there is an organization of a thousand people. That's a real big human challenge," says Trip Hawkins, founder of Electronics Arts.

He defines an orgn's culture as people with like values working together to promote them, with decisions & company ownership largely collective.

pr reporter

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CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE REMAINS THE MASTER ATTENTION-GETTER;
IT IGNITES THE PUBLIC ONCE THE GROUNDWORK OF LATENT READINESS
HAS BEEN GAINED -- AS THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA CAMPAIGN DEMONSTRATES

Expect more civil disobedience...because it works. Just take a look at the public involvement in protesting South Africa's apartheid policies.

For a long time the public's consciousness has been raised regarding the inequities in South Africa. Supporters of the "Free South Africa Movement" have been working in communities building awareness as have many organizations.

Last Thanksgiving -- a time specifically chosen because news is slow -- 4 American black leaders walked into the South African Embassy in DC for a meeting with Ambassador Fourie. When they refused to leave (see box), they were arrested, taken to jail, and received front-page headlines. The movement burst onto the public's agenda and took off.

According to reporter Barbara McIntosh, every weekday afternoon since, a crowd has arrived to picket the South African Embassy. So many people want to be arrested there is a waiting list -- including congressmen & celebrities. Across the nation, similar protests are taking place in front of consulates, federal buildings, businesses that invest in South Africa and banks that sell Krugerrands. Those jailed are released without bail within a few hours, and charges are rarely pressed, partly because officials wish to avoid a "show trial" on the issue.

The impact is clear. The public is paying close attention. And de-

"The delegation, which included Randall Robinson, exec dir of Trans-Africa, a black foreign-affairs lobbying group based in Washington; Walter Fauntroy, the District of Columbia's non-voting congressional delegate; Mary Frances Berry, a member of the US Civil Rights Commission; and Eleanor Holmes Norton, former head of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, spoke with Fourie for about an hour.

"At that point, Norton excused herself on the pretext of another engagement. The conversation resumed until the embassy's information officer entered and asked to speak to the ambassador privately. They left the room.

"Fourie returned, chuckling. 'It's really amusing the kind of nonsense the press puts out,' he said. 'Some reporter called thinking you have refused to leave my office.'

"That's exactly it,' Robinson replied, without smiling. He then disclosed that Norton had left to announce to the media and a group of protesters outside that her colleagues were not leaving until the ambassador called Pretoria to request the release of several South African labor leaders, who recently had been detained in a gov't crackdown on trade unions." -- Barbara McIntosh
San Jose Mercury News



cisionmakers are responding. 1) Reagan has denounced apartheid as "morally repugnant" and met with Bishop Desmond Tutu. 2) 36 conservative GOP congressmen sent Fourie a 2-pg letter criticizing South Africa's campaign of repression against black activists. 3) Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind. and chrm of Senate Foreign Relations Cmte) & Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kan) wrote to Reagan urging him to re-examine his South Africa policy. 4) Many states are considering legislation to ban investment of their pension funds in companies that conduct business with South Africa. San Francisco voters passed such a proposition following Boston & NYC. 5) Even universities are withdrawing investments.

6) In South Africa, the gov't released 11 of the jailed labor leaders and officially charged the remaining 5. President Botha has offered conditional releases to some political prisoners and indicated that blacks may, for the first time, be given the right to own property.

This is happening because of a carefully planned campaign by TransAfrica which used the sit-in in the ambassador's office as the kick-off. Its high publicity quotient captured the latent readiness of thousands to start doing something.

ONCE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IS SPRUNG ON YOU, WHAT CAN A PRACTITIONER DO?

Is the die cast, inevitably leading to a hot issue debate? What might the South African ambassador have

done? Here are some suggestions -- most of them, unfortunately, dependent on the situation and the practitioner's judgment:

1. Leave the sitters-in in the office; don't call the police to arrest them -- because that is the bigger part of the story. There may still be a story, even pickets outside, but you're seen as willing to talk, reasonable, and you may put them in the light of being unreasonable.

2. Leave them in the office but move any papers out so they can't destroy them. Maybe even move the furniture so they can't bash it -- which makes an interesting photo opportunity. Of course, if they do that you might turn it to your advantage by showing their destructiveness. This could become a metaphor for destructiveness of the law & the orderly social system.

3. Call the police to monitor the situation, to protect the sitters-in. Or, in the present case, the ambassador might have prevailed upon state dep't officials (who are mandated to protect embassies) to just come and stand by as witnesses.

4. Don't take the lead in alerting the press. But if stories develop, try this theme: "We may be persuaded by sound argument, but we will not be forced or blackmailed." Make the point that you're leaving the sitters in the building because you're willing to talk, not that you're willing to let them practice civil disobedience. After all, if you don't arrest them, they aren't really getting what they want.

5. Should you feed them? This does show a caring attitude. Of course, they could claim that you were poisoning them (very possible with zealots). Or do you use their hunger to get them to leave? Might they go on a hunger strike inside your building? If so, call doctors & caterers and photograph it. This may look better on television....

6. How about forcible ejection? Have strong security guards simply pick them up and deposit them on the sidewalk, without causing them any harm. These guards must be so well trained that they can't strike back even if they're hit or bit by the protesters. But it does get them out of the building. Yes, there'll be media coverage and probably reaction -- but in the current case, that seems preferable to the ultimate result.

7. One caution. You must meet with adversaries, because not to do so invariably earns public ire and shows you as unwilling to talk. But how about doing it on neutral ground? Or in large open areas where sit-ins would require thousands? This kind of security planning is becoming a subject practitioners, however reluctantly, must learn.

¶Note how even the judicial system falls before civil disobedience. In the South African case, the prosecutor wanted to avoid "show trials." This is why critics of civil disobedience rightly say it could tear down the system. But, as history shows, it is also the only orderly way to change an unfeeling system.

CHAIRMAN? MADAM CHAIR? PARLIAMENTARIANS SAY NAY

The word "chairman" offers no controversy to the National Association of Parliamentarians, says Elaine Fulton, exec sec'y. (See pr 2/18.) "It's our belief

that like the words 'secretary' or 'president,' 'chairman' is only a title. It has nothing to do with gender," she told pr. Use of the word "chairman" was originally adopted by the Parliamentarians in 1975 and reaffirmed in 1979. Its resolution states:

"WHEREAS, Parliamentary Law has a language all its own, and WHEREAS, In olden times the one presiding was the only person provided with a chair, while others sat on benches, hence he was called the chairman, and WHEREAS, No parliamentary law authority or dictionary recognizes the word chairperson, and WHEREAS, Further effort toward sex differentiation is redundant and contrived, now therefore be it RESOLVED that all National Association of Parliamentarians' members should habitually stress the principle that the word chairman belongs to the TITLE of the office the same as the title of president or secretary."

HOME PHONE NUMBERS, YES BUT BRING BACK COURTESY TITLES

pr's article on the barriers erected by business cards (2/11) drew these responses. Realizing the need for rapid & direct communication, Bradley Carr (dir, comms & pa, NY State Bar Ass'n) writes: "I had considered an answering machine but a busy reporter on deadline doesn't want to leave his 'name and number at the tone....' By having home numbers, a reporter has a better than even chance of catching us."

Taking exception to using the familiar first name, Patricia Trubow (dir, corp comms, Santa Fe Healthcare Systems) writes: "I believe strongly in the use of courtesy titles, particularly between strangers. Courtesy titles bring with them a degree of formality and a measure of politeness. Most of the time, after a few brief conversations with a person, I will ask them to call me by my first name. But it's my right to give that as a gift, not for someone to snatch it away." The giving of the gift increases the warmth of the meeting, she explains.