

Bust: an insult, as in "Bust you out."

Chief: term of address, used for practically everyone

Chill out: be cool, take it easy

Crib: home

Flake: fail to keep an appointment

Full-on, fully: best possible

Gnarly: gross, raunchy, disgusting. May mean "good" in some regions.

Kick back: relax

Kill: really good, "That's so kill."

Mellow up: calm down

Neat whistle: person wearing weird clothes

Pop: be in trouble

Rents: parents

Rouge: steal

When used in reference to people, should "black" be capitalized? Connie Seals, PRSA's Minority Affairs Committee chairperson, gave prr this answer:

"Whether or not black is capitalized has nothing to do with 'since white isn't.' Since all nationality names are capitalized, when an article refers to Black Americans as an ethnic group, black is capitalized. Black need not be capitalized if it is made clear the article refers to black peoples generally: Haitians, Jamaicans, Nigerians, native Black Americans, et al."

S'up: a greeting meaning "what's up?"

Squid: someone who's out of it; synonyms: dork, geek, narc, juice box, stud

Stoked: really excited; synonym: siked (or psyched)

Tamale time: expression connoting embarrassment

#### ITEMS PRACTITIONERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

New award for corporate social responsibility, from Harvard, shows vitality of the subject. Harvard Dively Award for Leadership in Corporate Social Responsibility derives from a grant by George S. Dively Foundation to Center for Business & Gov't at Harvard's JFK Sch1 of Gov't. CEOs are being asked to nominate the first winner. Must have "been innovative in its approach to public problem solving, and made an outstanding contribution to the solution of important social needs." Award was created because "corporations are now assuming new, more active roles in helping to solve problems which historically have belonged to the public sector." (Info from Michael Castine at 617/495-1446)

Corporations have to know who their voters are in order to achieve a corp democracy. It's a "right and a need of every publicly held corporation," says J. Roger Beidler, National Investor Relations Institute's chrm & CEO. A 1983 SEC amendment (Rule 14b-1(c)) will enable publicly owned companies -- beginning January 1, 1986 -- to obtain the names, addresses & number of shares held by non-objecting shareholders registered in "street name" with brokerage firms. SEC is now proposing new legislation that would bring banks & other institutional holders under this rule also. Legislation is important, says NIRI, because banks hold about 70% of securities held in nominee name. Surveys of people holding stock thru brokers/dealers or banks show a majority wish to be identified and receive mailings directly from the company.

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PROVIDED YOU HAVE A PLAN, CRISES ARE NOT PROBLEMS BUT OPPORTUNITIES: TO WIN MANAGEMENT'S RESPECT & A BIGGER ROLE IN DECISIONMAKING, TO GAIN OR ENHANCE TRUST, TO SERVE THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Tank car spills, misuse of its products & a climate of chemophobia have provided "Learning thru rugged experience" for Dow Chemical Canada (Sarnia, Ont.). Donald Stephenson, dir corp comns, finds a positive attitude -- which results in a proactive posture -- is the first ingredient to finding opportunities in crises.

"When an organization is put into a negative frame of mind, it's virtually certain to be seen as arrogant & unsympathetic to others' concerns. Instead, when you position yourself to deal with not only the issue but also the inherent opportunities, you can establish a proactive posture, and that leads to a venturesome point of view ... a positive attitude instead of a siege mentality. It's critical to success in handling a crisis." Dow's strategy includes:

1. Prepare well in advance. Identify long-term & near-term potential problems or events. Prepare files of factual background material on every probable topic.

2. Educate management at all levels on the most effective ways of dealing with issues and the consequences of mishandling them. Conduct frequent media & public speaking training courses. Rate execs toughly & repeatedly.

3. Assign & prepare knowledgeable spokespeople in every area where an issue or crisis is likely to arise.

4. Recruit 3rd party experts with impeccable credentials & credibility to be available to discuss a situation dispassionately whenever needed. Ask them only to tell the truth as they see it.

5. Fill the information pipelines in advance. If you wait until a crisis arrives, anything you say

will get little credence. Provide info in advance, when gov't, media & opinion leaders' attitudes on the subject are being formed.

"Every issue is a problem...but it's also likely to have another side -- an opportunity. If you concentrate just on the problem you can at best expect to soften a negative result. But if you look for the opportunity, you can usually turn it into a plus. That simple principle sets the tone for a company's entire posture -- and the policies & practices that carry it forward."

6. Prepare complete information kits. "We have 'suitcase newsrooms' complete with all the paraphernalia necessary to service media needs almost anywhere. Our pr people -- members of our highly trained emergency response crews -- can pick one up and be on their way to an emergency site immediately. They have first priority on company aircraft, and can (& have)



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bump the president! On arrival at the scene, they immediately brief reporters on all the characteristics of the chemical involved. Many media people have confessed amazement at our openness & the quality of the information we provide. Respect for our honesty is reflected in favorable coverage."

7. Emergency vans. Dow has two specially equipped 40-foot truck

**STEPHENSON'S PHILOSOPHY FOR CONVERTING CRISES INTO CHEERS**

A. Perception of an impending disaster can create more public alarm than an actual catastrophe. So never underestimate the potential for damage in any situation ... real or perceived.

B. The media often have a vested interest in catastrophes because they make news. Reporters don't necessarily wish for one, but they are looking for signs of one in many situations.

C. People's perception of a situation is more potent than facts. Management of public perceptions is what public relations is really all about. Perception is made up of emotion plus facts. Together they lead to motion -- what moves people.

D. You must fill information gaps fast. Remember Clopton's Law: "For every information gap there is a gullibility fill." If you don't pre-fill the information pipelines, information vacuums will develop to be filled by rumors and the allegations of attention seekers ... advocates,

**NEW CORPORATE MAGAZINE PROMOTES DRIVE FOR UNITY, ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE CORPORATE CULTURE**

among its 60,000 employees? That's the objective of Gulf+Western's new quarterly,

trailers that can be piggybacked on flatbed rail cars or hauled by semi-trailer to a chemical spill site.

8. Have pr & emergency response staffs trained & alert for meeting any need at any time. "Everyone is, in effect, on 24-hour call, 365 days a year. It's an honor to be a member of those teams, and some have become community folk heroes."

dissidents, zealots. And you become the target.

E. In today's world, silence in the midst of crisis implies guilt -- whether justified or not. There are no low profiles. Today's instant news media are "smart bombs" that can seek out hidden targets.

F. All consideration of opposition should start with knowing the nature & purposes of the opponents. In the great majority of cases, the best approach is to try to work out mutual agreements, without an adversarial tone. As Dow's chairman says: "Above all, it makes sense for 'us' to take the initiative in solving perceived problems rather than being forced by 'them' to take action."

G. To improve the climate for a company it is first necessary to change the climate in the company. A history of exemplary performance in tune with legitimate public expectations underlies everything.

*Employee Relations*

Can a highly diversified, decentralized company create a corporate sense of oneness

Gulf+Western's new quarterly,

9x12", glossy, corporate mag -- "One Gulf+Western." Its name is symbolic: showing employees that G+W is "one company, not many parts," explains Jerry Sherman, vp-corp comms.

"We're unifying the company in a way that hasn't been done before -- a changed corporate culture. It's important for employees to feel they're part of a larger company and that management is eager to share information with them about what their sister & brother companies are doing," he told prr.

G+W doesn't fear communication overkill since this is the only direct communication, other than occasional memos, with all its employees. Operating companies have their own newsletters or mags but they only cover division matters.

Goal is to prepare mag in a way that will be attractive & meaningful to employees at all levels -- mgmt as well as factory workers. "It's a thin line to walk," says Sherman, remembering G+W's previous corp mag that drifted away from its mandate by publishing articles too technical for the average employee. But new mag's first issue in early March is receiving kudos from readers.

Of the 275 reader response cards already returned, 240 show employees brought the mag home for family members to see. "Readers are extremely complimentary, using words like 'family of companies,' 'sister companies,' 'great morale builder.' This publication will go a long way toward helping to achieve our drive for unity."

**S'UP? LANGUAGE IS CHANGING,  
BE STOKED OR... IT'S TAMALE TIME**

Practitioners who try to keep language in a safe but static box will find themselves out of touch with many publics who are using an evolving English. National Education Assn's newspaper, NEA Today, drives this point home in its article, "Awesome Is Out, Stoked Is In."

The use of slang is one facet of language's evolution. A recent study shows more & more blacks reverting to black English. Teens, according to NEA Today, also have their own language.

"People use slang to achieve an arresting or startling effect; show they belong; show others they don't belong; and avoid being understood by those not in one's group," explained the late, noted lexicographer Eric Partridge. Simply, it's a way of separating & identifying. Some words from NEA's "Glossary For Rents And Other Squids":

Bail: cut a class. Also a put-down meaning to forget or ignore someone or something, as in "Bail that."

Book'n: going very fast

Buff: muscular, tough

Bump'n: sounds good, in reference to music; crush'n, looks good, in reference to clothes; hit'n, tastes good

*Language*