

USEFUL ITEMS FOR PRACTITIONERS

"The American workforce has a tool -- laughter -- which it can use to help employees become healthier & more productive," believes C. W. Metcalf of Body-English (Fort Collins, Colo.). This health expert & workshop leader is spreading the message that laughter may be the best form of preventive medicine. He believes it can help employees deal with stress, do better work, remain flexible & creative, reports Employee Services Management magazine. But it must be cultivated. And anyone can do it. There are obstacles to bringing it into the workplace, however, because often it's not considered "professional." "We feel that to be professional means to be critical or 'dead serious.'" Not so, he says. "One of the marks of the most creative minds is the ability to laugh. A creative mind is able to see unexpected ambiguities and similarities," notes Metcalf. This doesn't mean you have to tell jokes at work. Humor, says Metcalf, "is a sense of perspective. It's a sense of joy in being alive." (Copy of article from Nat'l Employee Svcs & Recreation Ass'n, 2400 S. Downing, Westchester, Ill. 60153)

"Computerized placement service matches pr pros with employers. New service by PRSA's San Francisco chapter matches best-suited applicants for each job opening. Employers receive names, addresses & phone numbers of all appropriate candidates. "To our knowledge, this is the first service of its kind in the US," says Howard Kalt, chapter pres. Free to employers in the Bay Area and PRSA members; non-mbrs are charged \$10. To register, obtain computerized forms from Ketchum Public Relations, 55 Union St, San Francisco 94111.

"Is the term 'marketing communications' preferred over public relations? It has less of a perception problem, believes counselor Bob Clay (Lake Forest, Calif.). "It really was a surprise two weeks ago when we received a catalog from the University of California (Irvine) Extension announcing a marketing communications program. We called the university to find out about it and were told that it replaces a program leading to a certificate in public relations because 'pr is no longer a popular term.' A little research revealed that last year the University of California at San Diego introduced a similar program," reports Clay. He sees a favorable future for the term because "most business people realize they need marketing help and many also admit they have communications problems."

"Call For Papers on Persuasion. This year's PRSA national conference is going to focus tightly on a specific subject -- persuasion. Conference planners report that all sessions of every type will deal with an aspect of persuasion. Of particular value for practitioners is the Education Section's call for papers on 1) instructional efforts in persuasion & 2) research in the area of persuasion. Authors selected must attend conference (in Detroit, November 10-13) to present their papers. Deadline is August 1. Send 4 copies of your paper to Elizabeth Lance, ass't prof, Center for Comm Arts, McFarlin West, SMU, Dallas 75275.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. Stephen Lawrence (dir, COMPAR Communications, CIGNA Corp, Phila) inducted into the Philadelphia PR Ass'n Hall of Fame in recognition of excellence in pr & comty service.

Antonio Navarro (sr vp, W.R. Grace & Co., NYC) nominated by Pres. Reagan to the Board of Advisors that will oversee Radio Marti -- a US sponsored network providing radio broadcasting to Cuba.

pr reporter

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DELPHI TECHNIQUE PROVES IDEAL FOR BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE BY PERMITTING PARTICIPATIVE DECISIONMAKING ON MISSION, GOALS

In its own "search for excellence," Human Resources Center for Mental Health (Daytona Beach) is undergoing an internal Delphi study. Administered by its public relations counsel, Einhorn & Lewis, Delphi surveys opinions of Center's 240 employees plus its board of directors. Anonymity is guaranteed. "They figure federal funds aren't going to last forever. If the Center is going to grow, it has to have some entrepreneurial endeavors. So this is part of its planning process," Dottie Lewis told prr. Findings will also be used to make changes within the organization and to restructure the board's functions.

Here's how their Delphi worked:

First round asked for opinions -- "they could write anything they wanted" -- on major 1) strengths & 2) weaknesses in Center's services to the community; its major 3) strengths & 4) weaknesses internally; 5) needs in the county which the Center should serve; 6) needs within the org'n that should be addressed; and 7) what the functions of the board should be.

This generated 834 statements. "We fed all the statements back -- even dumb ones like 'the assistant director needs to take a year off for psychotherapy' -- so employees wouldn't say, 'Ha! They're not listening to what I said.'"

Second round asked everyone to indicate if they "agree," "disagree" or "don't know" for each of the 834 statements. Results weeded out about half the statements. Those remaining were agreed on by at least 60% of respondents.

Third round asked everyone to prioritize the remaining statements. They were asked to pick the top 20 in each of 3 categories: 1) needs within the county that the Center should serve; 2) needs that should be addressed within the org'n; and 3) functions of the Center's board.

Fourth, and final, round asked employees & board members to narrow the priority lists for both the Center's internal needs and the functions of the board. Of top 20 needs within the county, participants were asked to choose 5 that offer the greatest chance of success and then to describe what the services would include. "We want to begin with one of these because we want to start with a winner."

"We're asking the employees -- because they're the ones who will have to do it -- where they think the Center ought to go, and where they think it's most likely to succeed. Then they will have bought into it because they have shaped direction. It's a tremendous use of the Delphi. It also takes a lot of guts to do this because people might say 'fire the executive director.'"



Response to Delphi was good, even among a very busy staff. To make the study valid, Lewis wanted at least a 30% response. They received better than that: 38% on the 1st round; 43% on the 2nd & 3rd rounds; 40% on the 4th. Lewis believes the good return was helped by the introductory process: "I went in and explained the study to the employees during two separate meetings. No one from management was there except one who introduced me and then left."

Delphi's results will be tied into 2 other studies the pr firm did for the Center: 1) a 500 unit study of community attitudes toward mental health and the mental health facilities; 2) Delphi study done for the chamber of commerce, using a panel of 44 experts to predict what the Daytona Beach area will be like in the year 2004 in all aspects that affect the quality of human life.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION: WHERE DOES IT STAND NOW?
IABC/TPFC STUDY FINDS SUPERVISORY ROLE IMPROVED,
COMPANY ATTITUDE, MEDIA ON DOWNWARD SPIRAL

Ongoing survey measuring US & Canadian employees' views of communication within their organizations has been done

by International Ass'n of Business Communicators & Towers, Perrin, Forster & Crosby since 1980. 1984 survey tabulations are in. Ratings for companywide publications are generally more negative than they were in 1980 -- particularly in the areas of newsworthiness (from 67.7% in '80 to 55.8% in '84), timeliness, family readership, even-handed reporting, attractiveness & regular receipt. This medium also dropped as both a current & preferred source of info. Here are some findings:

Subjects Of Interest To Employees Change Little			
Subject	"Very interested in receiving further info" responses		
	'84	'82	'80
Organizational plans for the future	79.8%	78.4%	77.4%
Job advancement opportunities	72.5%	72.9%	75.2%
Job-related "how-to" information	68.0%	69.8%	70.8%
Productivity improvement	63.0%	63.6%	62.2%
Personnel policies & practices	62.8%	66.4%	67.6%
How we're doing vs. the competition	62.7%	60.2%	60.6%
How my job fits into the organization	62.1%	62.9%	63.0%
How external events affect my job	52.9%	57.8%	58.2%
How profits are used	48.6%	44.5%	48.7%
Financial results	44.1%	39.0%	41.8%
Advertising & promotional plans	43.4%	40.4%	39.3%
Operations outside of my dep't or division	43.3%	41.3%	43.8%
Organizational stand on current issues	42.7%	44.1%	50.1%
Personnel changes & promotions	41.1%	41.7%	43.1%
Organizational community involvement	39.3%	42.4%	45.4%
Human interest stories about other employees	21.6%	24.8%	27.8%
Personal news (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.)	16.0%	18.4%	19.5%

General Communication Climate			
	Percent Agreeing		
	'84	'82	'80
<u>Downward Communication</u>			
Org'n tries to keep employees well informed (down trend)	68.5	70.9	74.1
I'm given the info I need to do my job (no change)	65.9	65.3	65.6
Compared to others, this org'n has good comm (down)	57.0	59.2	61.4
Comm here is candid & accurate (down)	48.9	51.1	54.4
Official comm doesn't tell the full story (down trend)	68.2	67.8	64.6
<u>Upward Communication</u>			
Comm here is a 2-way street (down)	52.3	53.4	55.2
Mgmt here acts on employees' ideas (down)	48.4	49.7	51.0
<u>Supervisory Communication</u>			
My supervisor:			
¶keeps me well informed (up)	67.5	64.9	63.9
¶is kept well informed by higher mgmt (up)	63.5	63.3	62.4
¶discusses my job performance once a year (way up)	76.1	70.1	65.1
¶Lets me know when I do a good job (up)	61.8	59.2	56.9

Major Sources Of Organizational Information		
Preferred Sources	Sources	Actual Sources
1	Immediate supervisor	1
2	Small group meetings	3
3	Top executives	10
4	Annual business report to employees	8
5	Employee handbook/ other booklets	5
6	Orientation program	11
7	Regular local employee publication	7
8	Regular general employee publication	6
9	Bulletin board(s)	4
10	Upward communication programs	15
11	Mass meetings	9
12	Audio-visual programs	14
13	Union	12
14	Grapevine	2
15	Mass media	13

-- More info from IABC, 870 Market Street, San Francisco 94102