

and hang themselves. Let them watch San Francisco wither, and then we can be sensible."

Will the city really wither? Just because a few more highrises can't be added to the dozens already in place (many of which have high vacancy rates)? Such hyperbole positions the anti-highrise theme as reasonable: "We think it is in (the developers) self interest & is good for them."

Similarly counter-productive language is frequently heard when airline pilots get on the PA system to chat with passengers. (This attempt to personalize relationships with customers is almost overdone, say many frequent fliers.) The pilots -- 99.999% male -- often refer to "our lovely flight attendants" or similar sexist language. Gratuitousness becomes ridiculousness when one of the attendants is male, as many are nowadays.

#### ITEMS OF CONCERN TO PROFESSIONALS

¶Is there always a politician to cheap-shot every promotion or public relations activity? In Colorado, the state parks unit is using a full-color poster with a park guide on the back as its sales tool this year. For impact & visibility, 200 VIPs got hand-delivered copies. One legislator among them called it "upsetting. At a time when the legislature is desperately seeking funds for the yearly budget, I am appalled at the waste of money by your office at hand delivering, in expensive tubes, material that could have been provided in a small envelope and tied with a rubber band." The posters cost 11¢, tubes 22¢. Half the parks' budget comes from admission -- so they must be promoted. Visits to parks are up, as much as 68% in one case. "We've had to reorganize our phone system the response is so good," said a spokesperson. Pennywise, pound foolish again.

¶Holograph signatures (in the pre-hi tech meaning of the hand written) add the ultimate touch -- to products or anything. Many manufacturers tuck in printed slips identifying "inspector no. 228" or print on the carton "Joe's shipping crew." A Saville Row haberdasher's shirts are neatly folded around cardboard backing -- which is hand signed "Hazel" and "Shirley."

¶6% of workers suffer from substance abuse, including alcohol, says Conference Board. Despite some get-tough policies, there is no company-wide consensus on how to deal with the dilemma. Widespread availability of drugs makes effective treatment tough. CB's report, "The Corporate Strategies for Controlling Substance Abuse," is the outgrowth of a series of seminars it conducted. Includes views of over 20 prominent drug & alcohol experts from biz, gov't, education and medical & legal professions. "Efforts to control the spreading influence of these psychoactive substances seem dwarfed by their apparently overwhelming abundance, ease of purchase and variety. Although statistics are far from complete, the evidence suggests that the presence and use of all kinds of psychoactive substances in industry are considerably greater than reported," says Helen Axel, dir of CB's Work & Family Information Center. 2-day conference -- "Drug Trafficking: The Risk to Business" -- will be held Oct 30-31 in Miami. (For more info or copy of report, contact CB, 845 3rd Ave, NYC 10022; 212/759-0900)

¶Community-relations minded shopping malls have begun to court walkers. It's the preferred exercise of many and malls offer climate-controlled & security-patrolled sites. In league with hospitals or local health organizations, some malls are establishing walkers' clubs that offer t-shirts & buttons, merchants' discounts, free breakfasts, mileage logs for members.

# pr reporter

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COMPANY IN TRANSITION USES LETTERS, BROCHURES, REPRINTS, ETC. TO GET INSTANTANEOUS COMMUNICATION; WITH FUTURE DIRECTION KNOWN, SWITCHES TO NEWSLETTER LINKED TO MANAGERS' ONE-ON-ONE FOLLOW THRU

From the late 70s till the end of '85, Koppers (Pittsburgh) went without an employee newsletter. "Those were difficult years. Not just from a communication standpoint, but from every standpoint in the company. We were in a rapid state of flux and were transformed. We sold or are selling 30% of the business, including the business on which the company was founded. 3 years ago, we began referring to ourselves as 'the new Koppers Company,'" Bob O'Gara, dpr, told prr.

Tho without a formal newsletter, employees still received monthly communications about what was going on -- letters, news releases, brochures, reprints of major mag articles. "We sent out a lot of topical news extremely fast, so employees found out what was going on in the company as quickly as the outside world. We didn't have the luxury of time to produce a well-thought-out, well-designed newsletter."

Informal Survey During those  
Of Employee Needs years of flux,  
O'Gara informally

surveyed employees he knew personally. One by one, he queried a broad cross section of mgrs & nonmgrs asking how each thought & felt about the way Koppers was or was not communicating, what was needed & how it should be done. "People thought it thru very carefully, some coming back a second time to talk. From this we came up with a communications plan -- set of objectives, means of obtaining those objectives, methods of evaluation, etc."

Elements 1. Koppers' chrm visits  
In Plan plant locations speaking

to small groups of employees. "It's just him, the plant manager, one person from the pr dep't and 5 to 50 employees. It's as informal as we can make it. This is not the chairman giving a lecture. He makes a couple comments and then answers questions from employees. There's a real commitment from him to do this.

"The minute you start to think of your employees as a monolithic group you get yourself into trouble. They're not all alike. They have their own goals & aspirations. In terms of employee communications, you have to give a wide variety of stimulation to get the best from them.

"Most effective employee communication is done interpersonally. That's why we've drawn our managers into the process. We spend a tremendous amount of time trying to personalize relationships to avoid situations where people are guarding information or holding back feelings that are important to job performance. Building trust is a strong objective. No public relations program has been as exciting for us as this one!" says O'Gara.



It stems from his philosophy -- 'I think every employee has the right to look the boss in the eye, ask him a question and then decide what kind of guy he is,'"

2. Quarterly employee newsletter along with 4-6 updates yearly. "It's only a beginning. We're not naive enough to think that a printed publication can do more than scratch the surface in employee communications."

3. Koppers' philosophy: Major responsibility for communication rests with managers. Newsletter is used to bring mgrs into the process. They receive advance copies along with a cover letter suggesting how to use them to stimulate employee meetings & conversations.

4. Training programs for managers. "We're still exploring, trying to determine what will be the best approach. We want to build up a case where they see the benefits of communication themselves rather than making it a senior management edict."

5. Employees' guide to annual report. Newsletter walks employees thru the AR. Begins with message from chrm: "A part of my past year was spent in what, I hope, were very useful conversations with many of you. I discussed, as openly as I could, the many tough issues facing us. I listened to you even harder.... I plan to keep up the dialogue and am urging all of you to do the same. We can't prosper unless we share our best thoughts & ideas and our deepest concerns. Our annual report is a good beginning."

Next article, "Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Koppers...And Then Some," takes employees section by section thru the AR. Explains who gets it, the importance of the cover, what to look for first, picks out important details, goes thru the financial statements, balance sheet, etc. A real service for employees who might otherwise get lose in the numbers & jargon, or not venture into the pages.

6. "My Perspective" -- a permanent section of the newsletter -- asks for employee feedback. Previously it required employees to cut, staple & mail it. "We're experimenting with this forum. In the next issue, we're making it a separate card. So employees won't have to cut or fold anything or lick a stamp. All they'll have to do is put pen in hand, comment or ask a question and drop it in a mailbox."

"We now have a very clear perspective on our company, what it is & where it's headed. It's far too early to say we've achieved our goals, but I think we're well on our way to improving the dialogue in the company and, most importantly, restoring spirit & morale to our people," O'Gara believes.

ATTORNEY'S STRUCTURED APPROACH ALSO FITS PUBLIC RELATIONS PLANNING

Pynn Public Relations Management (Orlando). "An effective pr plan requires careful development & planned implementation that closely parallels an attorney's actions required to prepare for and carry a case thru trial." To dilute the perception that pr people use "seat-of-the-pants" approach, he offers this analogy:

"A public relations counselor receives a call from an automobile manufacturer currently getting bad press resulting from a quality control problem -- complicated

by an alleged management cover-up attempt to avoid a costly vehicle recall.

"An attorney receives a call from a man who is at the police station, charged with drunken driving & leaving the scene of an accident.

Beginning with initial contact from the client, neither the public relations counselor nor attorney can give on-the-spot answers to the two most common client questions -- What action is necessary? How much will it cost?

Both questions require research into the details surrounding how the client's problem was created, past behavior pattern by the client, opposition from special interest groups, case studies from similar situations, and the client's anticipated future behavior.

The only logical immediate counsel in both scenarios is to caution & educate the client on what statement they should or should not make to specific audiences.

Following research, both public relations & legal counselors formulate the message, select a target audience and identify opinion leaders within the audience (the jury & perhaps the jury foreman in the attorney's case).

We both then communicate a specific message to the audience using facts, evidence & client qualities to reinforce our statement.

Next we monitor audience feedback (the jury verdict in the attorney's case) and if our message was not perceived properly, we evaluate, modify & repeat our plan (the attorney appeals).

Each of the steps in the due process of law relates closely to proper public relations planning & implementation. Just as the lawyer must follow the structured steps in the judicial system, we must follow a defined & organized plan. The attorney or public relations counselor who tries to ignore any of the basic chronological steps of research, planning, implementation or evaluation will not serve the client justly.

LANGUAGE IS LIKE MEDICINE: AN OVERDOSE CAN DO SERIOUS HARM

Many San Franciscans feel their city is being spoiled by too many skyscrapers. Business has bankrolled opposition to past anti-highrise initiatives, calling them anti-growth measures. As another fight looms for the fall ballot, a development lawyer's polemic provides an example of overstatements that make an otherwise legitimate position appear foolish. "Let the voters go out

MONITORING OPERATIONS

...remains the first line of pr research & of issues anticipation: When PRSA's Counselor's Academy checked out of the Carefree Inn last spring, there was a snafu in scheduling vans to the airport. But management took pains to find out which guests had been involved. They received a personal letter from the general manager on return home. It reads:

"I truly apologize for the inconvenience & anxiety caused by your late departure to the airport yesterday. The dispatcher for transportation made a major error in judgment which resulted in the van not arriving at the hotel as scheduled. I am pleased that our bell captain, Gary Oien, was able to transport you to the airport in time for your flight. Again, my apologies for the inconvenience & poor service."