

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PRACTITIONERS

National computer network conference will address applications of technology to the profession, May 21, 9-10:30pm (EDT). Conducted by PRSIG with Foundation for Public Relations Research & Education. Focus is "New Technology and Public Relations," recently published study (see pr 12/8/86) covering latest developments in computers, satellites & other technology -- with case histories of their application in the field. Merton Fiur, study editor, is guest "speaker." Ideas will be exchanged for subsequent editions of the study. (Info from Ron Solberg at 312/923-5182)

Task force to study PRSA/IABC merger has been named. 5 PRSA members are 1) Joe Awad (Reynolds Metals), 2) Judith Bogart (Diversified Communications), 3) Jerry Dalton (LTV Corporation), 4) Isobel Parke (Jackson Jackson & Wagner), 5) Jackie Schaar (Jacqueline Schaar Assocs). Representing IABC are 6) Richard Charlton (Parker Hannifin Corp), 7) George McGrath (Hill & Knowlton), 8) Sharon Paul (Abitibi-Price), 9) Lynda Stewart (Cox Enterprises), 10) Lou Williams Jr (L.C. Williams & Assocs). Chet Burger will chair. CPRS pres. Don Hoskins will also join the talks.

Time joins Newsweek, WSJ in misinterpreting pr. Review of movie about a call girl (4/27) says, "One can imagine her succeeding as well in a more lawful form of shadiness -- public relations, perhaps." WSJ profile of John Scanlon (5/4) portrayed an off-the-wall wheeler-dealer successful because of his contacts. Newsweek reinterred the old story of a firm placing publicity on commission, said pr is 1) damage control, 2) alerting media to availability of celebrities.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

PLEADS GUILTY. Richard Miller, pres, International Business Communications, to conspiring to defraud the gov't as part of a scheme to aid the Nicaraguan rebels.

ELECTED. National School Public Relations Ass'n newly elected officers: pres, Dawn McDowell (comms coord, St. Louis Park Public Schools, Minn); pres elect, Jeanne Magner (pub info dir,

— IS USE OF "PR" REALLY DAMAGING? —

"Public relations" as the generic identifier (see 4/20 t&t) makes a convincing case, Rick Johnson, dpr, National Bank of Detroit, writes pr. "I wonder, however, about insistence that we avoid the term 'P.R.' as denigrating slang. A major argument, if not the crux of the case for 'public relations' as the umbrella term, is that it is 'already widely imbedded as a generic term in public use around the free world.' Well, so is 'P.R.,' and in no more (or less) derogatory a sense than the words it stands for. Research & development engineers don't bristle at 'R&D,' nor do management information systems folks eschew 'MIS.' If we accept the term 'public relations' proudly, don't we look a little silly getting defensive about its common abbreviation?"

Oregon School Board Ass'n, Salem); No. Central vp, Peg Speed (info dir, Burlington Public Schools, Iowa); So. Central vp, Stephen Knagg (comms dir, Garland Independent School Dist, Texas); Mid East vp, Randolph Black (dir info svcs, Lake Park High School Dist #108, Roselle, Ill); vp at large, Bernadine Moss Anderson (comms dir, Caddo Parish School Board, Shreveport, La.).

**pr reporter**

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HOW TO MANAGE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE? WITH FAMILIAR PR TECHNIQUES SUCH AS STAGED EVENTS, PARTICIPATION, FORMAL COMMUNICATIONS, GROUP ACTIVITIES, WORD-OF-MOUTH, FOCUSING DEVICES LIKE VALUE STATEMENTS

The consequences of change are being felt first hand, because the public relations job market is changing, reports recruiter Bill Cantor in April Cantor Commentary. Cutbacks, layoffs, retrenchment are affecting many. The "good news," he says, is that there are jobs out there -- ground floor opportunities to build public relations units from scratch. But these usually mean relocation or entrepreneuring -- as the lead Wall Street Journal article May 4 made clear. It told what happened when Owens-Corning Fiberglass reduced its pr dep't from 31 to 2, now uses services of x-staff who set up firms.

For personal reasons as well as maintaining the health of organizations, practitioners need to understand -- & know how to deal with -- change. pr asked guidance from OD consultant Chuck Phillips (Wilton, NH) who focuses on the psycho-social dynamics of change:

The Barriers A. Change within an organization is complex, long-term, systemic. Mechanisms or rituals are needed to aid the process. Otherwise change may leave stuck, angry people in its wake.

B. Change brings "a tremendous amount of ambiguity." Key is helping people live with it rather than providing quick resolutions which only coverup the real dynamics. For example, while acknowledging the ambiguity, communicate a basic set of managing principles, or a philosophy, or a set of values, or a vision that says where we're going."

C. "Many organizations believe emotions or feelings have no place in business, so they're ignored."

Change Model 1) Unfreezing: preparatory stage that creates a climate for change.  
2) The change itself: may be the easiest & most straightforward step.  
3) Refreezing: where you need to create anchors or hooks to hold the change in place. Avoids a return to the pre-change state and/or change in a new direction you didn't intend.

A recently merged org'n held a funeral to mark its passage from old to new. Explains Phillips: "A coffin was brought into the office accompanied by a New Orleans style jazz band. It was marched around for people to dump in their old letterheads, business cards, brochures, all the symbols identifying the old organization. Everyone followed it down the street, where they burned it while verbalizing how they'd miss the old organization. The ritual allowed them to make the passage.



Unfreezing An axiom says, "change occurs when the pain of what is exceeds the perceived pain of change." People need to focus on the distress or dis-ease of what is, at the same time that they are being presented with the potential for greener grass.

How to do this? Get them involved in a) gathering data on the current state & b) making diagnosis that leads to decision. "People support what they help create, so you've got to give them a stake in the creation of change." c) Everyone in the org'n needs involvement in how the change takes place, giving them a sense of control over their own destiny.

Dealing With Resistance a) "Eulogizing is one important process, valuing the past and realizing that moving to something new does not mean giving up everything. It allows choosing what gets carried forward."

b) "Another key is offering support -- emotional & informational. Support groups, counseling help, communications giving people as much info as possible" are some mechanisms.

Predictable Stages Managers of change must realize that "five stages are going on at some level, even tho they may not be obvious."

1. Denial: First reaction to announced change is "Oh no! Can't be!" There's a tremendous amount of energy at this stage.

"In '76 I was gathering information about the state of an organization's health. People I talked to in the organization used language like 'They can't do this' or 'There's no way we can operate an organization this way.' Lots of emotion. They were talking about a layoff that cut the organization in half back in '72 as if it had happened yesterday. And almost all were talking about it in the stage of denial or anger. They were stuck there. This organization was sick because it hadn't had the chance to talk about the change and therefore people couldn't help each other move thru the stages."

2. Anger: When move far enough out of denial to plug into first emotional reaction, it's usually anger -- "Why me? It's not fair. They can't do this to me." Phillips warns, "There's a tendency to skip over denial & anger stages because they aren't nice."

3. Bargaining: When move beyond anger, then it's, "Okay, if we're going to do this, then I want some say in it."

4. Acceptance: "Okay, I'm going to have to deal with this."

5. Reconstruction: "Let's get on with it."

Change managers must provide "time & mechanisms to periodically take stock of what phases people are in & how to help them move from where they are."

2 Keys To Refreezing 1. Make sure the formal organization is truly aligned with the change -- roles, responsibilities, levels of approval, policies, procedures, practices, rules that govern what is done, office or factory layouts, equipment, etc.

2. Check the informal organization, which is often overlooked, to see that it allows for the changes made. Does it concur with values, managing principles, philosophy, the norms (behaviors a group expects of its members)?

LEARNING TO SEE THE "NUGGETS" IN WHICH WE PACKAGE OUR WORLD IS THEME OF NEW LESLY BOOK

"This is not specifically a public relations book, but it has a lot of material that applies to public relations thinking and should be valuable for people in the field," writes Phil Lesly about

his latest, Bonanzas and Fool's Gold: Treasures and Dross from the Nuggetizing of Our Lives.

In 135 nuggets, Lesly looks at trends in North American life -- social forces, science & technology, culture, entertainment, lifestyle, values & motivation, living, personal affairs, public affairs, biz & economics -- and writes about the value & perils of nuggetizing.

"Nuggetizing is now so common it pervades almost everything we do. That is shown in the terminology we use in everyday life to cope with its challenges: striving for the 'bottom line'; 'getting at the heart of the matter'; 'wrapping things up'; 'pinning things down'; 'getting something to put your finger on'; 'separating the wheat from the chaff'; 'pulling something out of thin air'; 'boiling things down'; 'examining things under the microscope'; 'finding the core of the matter.' Politics and selling rely on the wrap-up slogan or phrase; news is increasingly merely headlines and 30-second tv briefs."

"Nuggetizing is our way to cut through the morass and come up with graspable concepts and meanings. But it is also the resource of limited minds, which cannot cope with complex bodies of information and must latch onto simplistic 'answers' to everything. That, in essence, is the basis for most of the world's problems today -- just as brilliant and constructive nuggetizing is the basis for our phenomenal advances."

This insightful work will help practitioners understand how ideas & messages will be nuggetized -- as surely as if you name a girl Samantha, she'll be called Sam. It's also an easy book to pick up when you have a minute -- for which the nuggetizing phrase must be "great bathroom reading."

EXEC SURVEY RATES STATE OF MEDIA RELATIONS; 54% FEEL "BIZ LEADERS NOT EFFECTIVE WITH PRESS"

72% disagree with the notion that "reporters are inherently antagonistic." Identified as

sources of tension are: a) accuracy, "If I talk to the press, I almost invariably get misquoted" say 59%; b) law, 63% agree that "legal restraints make it difficult to be forthcoming."

What is the press' greatest weakness? 39% say journalists' ignorance; 25%, overemphasis on the negative; 22%, sensationalist tendencies; 12%, bias.

Turning the microscope on themselves, they rate a "C" in each of 3 areas: 1) openness when meeting with the press, 2) facility with which they communicate, 3) general accessibility; and a "C-" for knowledge of the way the press works. Non-CEOs assigned a "D+" to their chief executives on the knowledge issue; CEOs gave themselves a "C+." (Copy of survey from Egon Zehnder International, 645 Fifth Ave, Olympic Tower, NYC 10022)

Which pub'ns present the most accurate & fair business-related info? 74% say The Wall Street Journal; 25%, Business Week; 23%, Fortune; 21%, Forbes; 19%, The NYTimes. Earning most mentions for least-fair pub'ns are Forbes, 25%; The Washington Post, 9%; The NYTimes, 9%; The Wall Street Journal, 9%.