

BOSTON GAS MOTIVATES EMPLOYEES  
BY EXTERNAL & INTERNAL PROGRAM

"We can't always compete with price or product, but we can with service," Frank Arricale, dpi, told prr. "I'll be there" is theme of advertising campaign featuring employees, also of internal program of posters. Concept is that a) all employees are 'there' either directly or indirectly for customers, b) employees are also there for one another -- working together & taking pride in accomplishments of fellow employees.

Post-campaign telephone survey showed most positive response research firm had ever found. Employees chosen for the posters are nominated by managers and don't have to have done anything heroic. Part of the idea is that just by doing his or her job, the employee is there for others. Poster photos, which fit into a plastic holder in poster center, are changed every 2 weeks.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR PRACTITIONERS

¶Are you one of 54,000 who attended DINFOS? Defense Information School will mark its 25th year in June '89. Since WWII it & 3 predecessors have trained pa ofcers, print & broadcast journalists for all 5 services, at both enlisted & officer level. Many have risen thru the ranks, others now hold top spots in the private sector or other gov't agencies. Commandant Ed McDonald (Col, USA) is compiling an alumni list for anniversary observances. Send name, service, course & school attended, graduation date, present occupation & address to PA Ofc, DINFOS, Bldg 400, Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Ind 46216-6200. Predecessor schools are 1) Armed Forces Information Schl @ Ft. Slocum, NY; 2) Air Force Information Schl @ Craig AFB, Ala; 3) Navy Journalist Schl @ Great Lakes, Ill. Tho fact is often unrecognized, the services are a major training ground for public relations practitioners.

¶Issue Management Ass'n will rebuild. Board of directors' decision is based on confidence being shown by the continuing flow of new & renewed memberships, even after a period of almost no member services. Board elected W. Howard Chase chairman, William Renfro (Policy Analysis, DC) president. IMA's first goal will be "expansion of senior management's appreciation of the issue process; to explain, by words & models, that companies & institutions do not have 'relations' or 'affairs.' Instead, they have problems, opportunities, crises & challenges -- in short, issues. Professional competence in disciplines of issue management is hallmark to 'new management' facing today's societal & economic challenges," explains Chase. A separate Issue Management Ass'n is forming in Canada with which IMA is cooperating closely.

¶Semantics power. Very word "terrorist" bestows power on that misfit, contends Henry Burger, editor, The Word Tree. Since behavioral science studies show the person who attacks innocent civilians really seeks to gain the aura of power, he suggests renaming the terrorist with some new slang word meaning "Hell-Bound Savage." "It gratifies the scofflaw when the media publicize that he is generating terror. Instead, we should appropriate some Near Eastern language to coin a term that means 'condemned barbarian.' Then each mention of that term in the world press would re-image the glamour-boy into an outcast." Burger's dictionary, The Word-Tree, directs users from concept to word. Has quarter-million listings. It reveals journalism's blunder in terming "a puny misfit as a Great Terrorist." (10876 Bradshaw W80, Overland Park, Kansas 66210; 913/469-1010)

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"TOXIC" SUPPLANTING "NUCLEAR" AS MAJOR FEAR WORD;  
NEW GROUNDSWELL OF SOPHISTICATED ACTIVISTS WILL AFFECT  
THE WAY MANY ORGANIZATIONS DO BUSINESS, HANDLE INFORMATION

The Future Society's "Think Globally, Act Locally" slogan is more than words. Grass-roots involvement is springing from people feeling a) personally involved, b) they can do something about it on a local level, as Jim Grunig's research predicts (see t&t 2/7/83).

Today's theme is "toxic." Activists from a broad spectrum of society are responding to these issues:

1. Protection of groundwater. No longer a "conservationist" issue. Now a family/safety issue. Drives zoning regulations formerly condemned as anti-growth, big-brother interference. Conservative movers like W.K.Kellogg Foundation are funding programs, a sure sign the pressure is on.

2. Powerful political movement against nuclear waste dump sites. Senators, congressmen speak against dumps even tho they may favor nuclear power in their home states.

3. SARA Title III -- Superfund amendment on community right-to-know regulations for use of toxic or potentially toxic chemicals, and how they are disposed of. This affects manufacturers, processors & users of over 300 chemicals. Anyone may bring suit under the act for any violation. Susan Stone of Stone-Sheridan Group (Portland, O.), who has made a specialty of Title III, told prr the public relations dangers of the law are greater than the legal or technical ones. "People are going to be scared by this."

4. Food labelling act in California (Prop 65), elsewhere on all potentially harmful elements naturally occurring in or added to foodstuffs, in the soil in which they were grown, used in handling or processing.

5. Continuing attempts to sue tobacco industry for toxic effects of cigarettes. Focus in current N.J. trial is on public relations activities, allegedly part of a cover up.

6. Uproar in community after community over proposals to locate trash-to-energy plants in their towns or to allow disposal of the hazardous waste produced.

"Toxic" movement unites 1) the new-age, with 2) the upscale, with 3) professionals, and 4) conservatives; adds 5) family-oriented women (because of dioxin which causes birth defects); also 6) radical environmental groups (e.g. Greenpeace) & 7) localized conservation organizations; plus 8) local nay-sayer groups of populist conservatives. Such strange-bedfellow coalitions have power thru enhanced credibility: it's hard to believe they agree on an issue.



Overriding Issue Is Corporate Credibility An organization's actions must match public expectations of its responsibilities. Any gap gives rise to activist pressure, prohibitive regs. Worrisome is recent survey by PRSA & ORC which shows business performance on social issues faltered last year, compared to '86, in opinion of 609 accredited pr pros & 505 senior biz mgrs. They gave biz the same or lower scores for all but 2 (out of 20) issues -- 1) paying a fair share of the public tax (58%, up 8 percentage points over '86), 2) preventing the flow of proprietary technology to foreign countries (only 27% say biz is doing a good or excellent job, but it's up 3 percentage points).

Biggest degree of disagreement is in "living up to professional ethical standards." Only 32% of pr execs give biz an "excellent" or "good" rating. Execs are twice as generous in rating themselves, 63% saying biz does an "excellent" or "good" job. "Ensuring product safety" is the next largest gap. 55% of pr execs give biz an "excellent" or "good" rating compared to 77% of execs. (Study available from PRSA, 33 Irving Place, NYC 10003; 212/995-2230)

RIGHT-TO-KNOW LAWS DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD;  
STRATEGY NEEDED TO MINIMIZE FEARS, OPPOSITION

The public will benefit from more access to information about chemicals in use, misunderstanding can

breed vulnerability, fear, big pr problems. To prepare practitioners representing clients or companies involved with hazardous materials affected by Title III, Indianapolis Center for Advanced Research, assisted by pr counsel David Shank, has developed training.

Daylong seminar covers technical aspects of EPA requirements as well as pr impact:

1. How to discuss & report chemical risks and hazards in non-alarmist manner with management, employees, media, the community. Advice: don't talk technical; deal with perception of risk in terms people can relate to.

2. In an emergency situation, crisis communications principles apply. "We tell them to recognize that people may be in a near-panic state of mind. Empathize and let them know you understand their concerns. Assure them you are doing the most you can," Shank told prr.

3. Develop a framework of understanding in the community. Shank advises not to wait for July 1 implementation date, but to develop rapport with community, neighborhoods now. Let them know your plant is well-managed, concerned about people. (More from: Shank Public Relations Counselors, 7029 Buick Drive, Indianapolis 46214; 317/244-7063)

ASHLAND'S OIL SPILL FOLLOW-UP INCLUDES  
PUBLIC EDUCATION ON LONG-RANGE IMPACT

To answer public & industry questions rising from oil spill affecting Monongahela & Ohio Rivers, company

awarded \$250,000 no-strings-attached grant to U.Pittsburg's Center for Hazardous Materials Research (CHMR). 3-part study includes:

1. Public Education and Communications Effort to provide communities, governments & media downstream from spill site with understanding of the spill's impacts, issues surrounding it. Objective is to minimize misconceptions arising from the spill.

2. Assess Short- & Long-Term Health & Environmental Impact with focus on ground-water, surface water, drinking water quality; analysis of ecological impact on flora & fauna; study toxicological & exposure effects on people living or working near affected area.

3. Review & Analyze Incident to Identify Lessons Learned & implications for similar types of facilities. In connection with School of Urban & Social Research, project will include psychological/sociological study of how people respond in crisis -- info that will improve emergency preparedness of communities (as well as to crises in general).

Idea originated from CHMR which seeks to establish itself as a source of information & U.Pittsburgh as a major research center. Ashland had no input into plan and has no control over the methodology or results, but even if it emerges with a black eye, responsiveness demonstrates keen understanding of corporate social responsibility.

GAMES, PUZZLES, PLANNED ADVENTURES  
ADD INSIGHT TO GROUP LEARNING

To help organizations attain such goals as team building, creative problem-solving, removal of tension, risk-taking, ethics,

Odysseum, a spin-off of Polaroid, offers 6 participatory experiences -- which can be tailored to meet specific needs:

1. Photo Odyssee requires teams to take photographs illustrating their interpretations of concepts. Presentation featuring different solutions illustrates group accomplishment, how individual creative abilities are expanded through teamwork.

2. Private Eye features teams of players using persuasion, deduction, negotiation & cooperation to solve a mystery puzzle. Variety of solutions & methods of investigation highlight process of teamwork, provide way to try out different teamwork styles.

3. Scrutiny for the Bounty, a contemporary treasure hunt, stimulates innovation, creativity, problem-solving.

4. PowerVision series for managers emphasizes skills of observation, perspective and focus in solving problems; helps participants learn to see things in new ways -- important for developing understanding of corporate culture changes, new marketing opportunities.

5. Mask process involves participants in creating lightweight masks on their own faces, gives new insights about themselves.

6. Giant Croquet requires blindfolded players to make their way through a course of giant wickets, relying on directions of teammates. Stimulates trust, teamwork, resourcefulness, exploration.

Some programs last 90 minutes; others are broken into modules that extend over 2- or 3-day periods. Cost ranges between \$5,000 and \$10,000 for groups of under 100 to 500. (More from them at 119 Windsor Street, Cambridge, Mass 02139; 617/577-3553)