

have the resources to set up the accounting processes, the escrow accounts, etc." McCarthy predicts some may change their title from "pr firm" to "advertising agency" because the latter will be exempt from the tax.

PRSA Counselors Academy Mobilizes To Fight Such Taxes with emergency response fund to help local counselors wage immediate & aggressive campaigns when state legislative crisis breaks. It also formed a special task force dedicated to defeating any proposal that would single out pr counselors for professional service taxes and urges members to pay attention to warning signs by monitoring local politics. This is in addition to PRSA's task force on the subject.

Interest in taxing services is to be expected in a service economy. Gov't asks why merchandise should have a sales tax & services shouldn't. Maine Tax Assessor John LeFaver points out that service business volume accounts for 74% of the private economy. Question is whether, with so many jurisdictions thinking of taxing pr services, a valid case can be made to avoid it -- valid to the taxpaying public, that is.

#### WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**ELECTED.** Barbara Sheffield (The Arthritis Soc, Toronto) first woman to head CPRS. Other officers: pres-elect, Peter Harvey (BC Tel, Vancouver); vp, Jim Osborne (SaskTel, Regina); treas, Dominique Ferrand (Le Group NRJ, Montreal);

sec'y, Brian Leyden (OEB Int'l, St.Catherines, Ont).

**ELECTED.** IABC's 1990-91 officers: chrm, Ron Martin (vp employee comn, American Express, NYC); vice chrm, Lester Potter (dir corp comn, Century Tele Enterprises, Monroe, La).

#### ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

"The Process of Decisionmaking is as Important as the Decision" concludes Saskatchewan premier Grant Devine. After undergoing Canada's constitutional negotiations earlier this month, plus attempting to deal with economic issues in his province, he finds "people want to be part of decisionmaking, they are demanding a partnership in solutions." Tho some executives still resist, he feels the participative process works "because people convince themselves what to do, rather than being convinced by authorities."

"Gap Research Techniques are among the most potent -- because they are geared to stimulating behaviors identified as needed by the research. Techniques useful in getting management to internalize the need: 1) have them predict, based on their experience & perceptions, what the survey results will be in advance. The gap between what they feel is going on out there & the reality is usually significant, which stimulates action; 2) use questions which compare how things are now & how they could be -- a gap self-identified by the publics surveyed; 3) the Stands For/Known For study, in which an organization's statements of its values & actions is tested against its publics' perceptions of them.

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#### FOCUSED VIEW OF 90s REALITIES FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS AT CPRS CONFERENCE: MANAGEMENT & INTERNAL ISSUES PLUS MANAGING TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE TOP LIST

Four featured speakers at CPRS' "Toward 2000" National Conference in Regina last week were OD specialists -- as their program biographies stated. Their topics included "Communication & Leadership," "Peak Performance" & "Managing for Excellence." More evidence that -- long before the century turns -- OD will be a standard tool in the pr kit.

Ten other speakers joined them in demonstrating that internal relations is now topic No. 1, whether it be employee communications, the glass ceiling, quality teams, or the need for One Clear Voice. Mike Sullivan, counselor & management consultant to pr firms, summed it up in his presentation title: "Training, Re-Training & Cross-Training to Meet the Challenges of the 90s."

But organizations must "struggle for attention" from employees who are bombarded with communications from many other sources, noted Jeff Roach, svp-pa, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. This is particularly true as the move from hierarchies & bureaucracies toward individual responsibility progresses. "Investors & customers don't do business with organizations they don't understand, so employees must know what's happening in order to serve them."

#### "DR. TOMORROW" SHOWS NEED -- & DIFFICULTY -- OF MANAGING TECHNOLOGY ON A HUMAN SCALE

PR's most potent contribution to employing organizations & society may be to accommodate mankind to the unbelievable technological changes about to appear. Getting simple devices like computers & ATMs used is a public relations task involving managing change, handling misperceptions, demonstrating benefits, motivating opinion leaders to become role models. So far, practitioners haven't acknowledged the responsibility.

One way to get to the senior management table, advises Roach, is to develop communication strategies for potential new business directions of your organization. This involves sophisticated planning & strategic thinking, as well as issue anticipation -- major management tools and among the techniques pr brings to organizations. Ergo, practitioners who demonstrate these skills show they are senior managers.

Now, says Vancouver futurist Frank Ogden, get set for real technology shock. Like ceramic knives, which never need sharpening, are guaranteed forever. Whole cities built on steel cutlery industries, like Sheffield & Solingen, could go out of business overnight. Is the razor blade industry next? Stereolithography for design of products obsoletes a good portion of the tool industry.

"Most people don't have cellular phones yet, but London's Zone Fone is making it obsolete already. Weighs 4 oz., fits in pocket, works anywhere. Costs \$200 outright purchase, \$15/month user fee, 20% lower costs per call. Keeps you constantly in communication.

"Translation need no longer impede communication with Fujitsu's Universal Translator. A hand-held unit the size of a tv channel flipper, it translates 1000 words/minute between any 4 languages it's programmed for. Will be on Japanese telephone service in a few years. It talks to you -- in your choice of a male, female or robotic voice. Has implications for the blind, even the deaf. Bilingualism won't be necessary.

"With knowledge now in databases, objective is no longer to remember information -- just know where to find it. Ogden urges us to become "knowledge navigators," moving from a teaching environment to a learning environment. As evidence, he cites Japanese move to reduce number of students in teacher training colleges.

"But our schools are behind the curve: 181 nations transmit by tv, all can be picked up by satellite (note: Ogden runs a service that does this) yet there are no satellite dishes on schools. (Opportunity for corporate or foundation donors to add real impact to education, the ability to see live what's happening in Senegal, Russia or wherever.) New Japanese dish weighs 8 oz., size of cafeteria tray, picks up high definition tv.

""Dull, dry, static print" is on the way out. Can't compete with colorful moving pictures, or incredible computer technology -- like all 29 volumes of Britannica on the head of a pin with room left over, achieved at Cambridge U last year. Ogden publishes his books on 3 1/2" computer discs, which cost 39 cents at volume discount. "The literati of the future will absorb words, color, pictures & sound simultaneously."

"We must drop our Industrial Age prejudices" and stop being the modern equivalent of flat world believers, says Ogden. Otherwise the Japanese or someone will achieve "technopoly" -- technical monopoly. Far East already

Technology respects no borders so it makes gov't increasingly irrelevant. Because it was useful in the Agricultural & Industrial ages, we cling to it in an Information era -- despite evidence all around us that it cannot accomplish basic needs. Like manage its currency, stop violence in the streets or protect jobs. Even labor is now "imported" electronically. American Express processes transactions in Jamaica, where it pays \$2/hr & gets fewer errors in the work. New York Life does likewise in Ireland. Canadian income tax can be done in Madras by Canadian-trained accountants earning \$700/month vs. \$5,000/month back home.

has a better service philosophy, as shown in their airlines & hotels, so North America can't out-compete them there.

But it all begins with humanizing technology, adding high touch to high tech so people will not resist it -- and lose the competitive struggle. "We must escape our preconditioning."

**HEALTHCARE IS EVERY ORGANIZATION'S ISSUE:  
PRACTITIONERS WILL HAVE TO DO EDUCATION  
INSIDE THEIR ORGANIZATIONS**

Because of its impact on employee benefit costs & worker wellness healthcare has

become every-organization issue -- just as education has because of its implications for workforce & civic strength. Given its role of creating a hospitable environment in which organizations can prosper, public relations in non-healthcare settings must learn about the field. For example:

"In a decade of predictable shortages of trained workers, 6 of the 10 fastest growing occupations will be in healthcare, reports US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Will competition to get these people raise costs further? Can employer wellness programs have an impact on need?

"The health education challenge may be pr's biggest. New genetic technology is making it possible for people to find out what diseases they are likely to get. Advance treatment can save lives & funds. But will people want to know -- especially if they are latent sufferers from some frightening illness? Those at risk for Huntington's disease said they wanted a test developed. When one was, few would take it. Compare AIDS tests. Simple awareness -- first step in the pr process -- is a massive undertaking. Can employee communications take a lead role?

"Gov'ts are being forced to enact policy -- especially for who gets treatment when resources are limited. Oregon's approach, as it becomes more common, will engender major public debate. State used participative process to compile priority list of who & which treatments get funding -- triage is here. Senate president, an emergency room physician, masterminded the plan because "We don't have enough money to do everything." Can your organization avoid involvement while policies of this impact are debated?

**MAINE, MASSACHUSETTS MULL SERVICES TAX  
WHICH COULD INCLUDE PR AMONG OTHERS**

"It's a potential nightmare," Boston counselor Terry Mc Carthy told prr.

"And resolution isn't foreseeable yet." Massachusetts is considering taxing a medley of industries, e.g. pr, fin'l, engineering, management consulting & law. Results could be disastrous if major companies, e.g. Fidelity Investments and Stone & Webster Engineering, decide to leave state. (Are such threats effective?)

McCarthy says pr doesn't carry the same weight it does in NYC, where similar tax was evaded. "PR in Mass is basically a cottage industry with a few large players." But similar to what would've occurred in NY, the bigger firms would survive, the smaller ones would suffer. "They wouldn't