

office," vp Tom Edwards told prr. Also, they are willing to pay their dues, but not for long. "They used to ask, 'How long will it take me to learn enough to move up to the next rung? Now they say, 'I'll do this, but only for a year.'"

#### INTERNAL RELATIONS ITEMS OF INTEREST

**Wellness Program Strives To Curtail #1 Cause Of Employee Death.** It isn't falls, electrocution or choking. The leading cause of employee morbidity -- while working -- is car accidents, and the risks can be controlled. Startling stats show car crashes: 1) take the lives of 48,000 Americans a year; 2) cost American businesses \$40 billion yearly. Southeastern Bell Telephone had 35,000 lost workdays in one year from crashes, and a study of Control Data employees shows the 41% who did not buckle up generated more than 80% of the claim payments for vehicle crashes. So Wellness Councils of America (Omaha) is sponsoring an educational program for employers to present at the workplace. "Dare to be Safe" includes a manual with step-by-step instructions on how to organize, promote & implement a "safety safari" in 4 sessions. (More info from WELCOA, 1823 Harney Street, Ste 201, Omaha, Nebraska 68102 402/444-1711.)

**Alvie Smith's Book On Employee Communication Is Now Available.** Smith, who was in charge of corp communication at GM for 32 years, details several aspects of employee communication, including the impact of recent societal changes, decentralization, employee role in strategic planning, use of management videotapes & more. (For preview, see prr 4/30.) Innovative Employee Communication: New Approaches To Improving Trust is \$21.95 from Prentice Hall, 201/767-5994.

**ASSOCIATION FORMS FOR THOSE INVOLVED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION** The newly formed Nat'l Assn for Professional Environmental Communicators (Chi) is looking for new members. "There are 85 of us now, but I predict there will be at least 250 of us by the year's end," chr Stephanie Reith told prr. NAPEC incorporated early this year.

**NAPEC's PURPOSE** To involve everyone in a forum for idea exchange, environmental issues debate. It encourages membership to anyone with a stake in the environment. "We have scientists, government officials, professors, utility representatives, members of grassroots organizations. We have people who are in direct disagreement with each other on the issues. Our goal is to open up dialogue and involve the public, which is an integral part of environmental decisionmaking." Also, to:

- 1) **examine** & improve methods of communicating;
- 2) **evaluate** effectiveness of existing communication programs, how they can be incorporated into the process of environmental decisionmaking;
- 3) **recognize** outstanding contributions to the profession. (More info from pres Timothy Brown at 312/781-1505)

#### Labor Day Considerations:

**AS GOOD WORKERS BECOME HARDER TO FIND, EMPLOYEE PUBLICS WILL GET EVER MORE OF PR'S ATTENTION. A CONCIERGE AT THE OFFICE? REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS AS LEADERS IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM?**

Our modern dilemma: a society in which nearly every adult must work, in which most women no longer have the option of being full-time housewives & mothers. Results: 1) latchkey kids; 2) infants in daycare; 3) babysitting conundra; 4) household chores & errands left undone, 5) more pressure on schools to be social, as well as educational, institutions.

All adding up to stressed parents, i.e. stressed employees, equaling poor productivity, low morale, hostility in the ranks.

Many major employers are yet to face the facts. Many small & mid-size ones would like to help but can't. Workplace daycare sounds nice but is not feasible with a tight budget or a few employees requiring the service. Flextime is not always possible, nor always a remedy. But the impact is here -- already quality is an issue. Clamoring to achieve it is the present management fad, a la TQM. Other countries are reputedly more responsive to employees, again superseding North American management.

#### LEADING EDGE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS AS THE MODEL?

Coop programs may be the answer, and real estate developers may hold the key. Dick Lewis, pres Lewis & Assoc (LA) says societal trends compounded by a competitive real estate market are starting to force developers to a) consider the needs of the worker who will use their buildings, b) build accordingly. "Developers will have to think of themselves as partners of those to whom they lease."

**REMOVING THE STRESS FACTORS** Lewis outlines possible resolutions by developers to workplace problems -- forcing all employers to follow:

1. **Parenthood aids.** Building owners can provide nanny services, daycare centers & nurseries.

Shared receptionists & lunchrooms have been around since the 70s, but developers will soon help to solve personal problems. As this occurs, pr firms may find more developers on their client rosters -- and may seek out offices with state-of-the-art services for their own personnel. Despite an industry slowdown, developers may be hiring more pr staff. **Questions to ponder:** What impact will this have on the role of pr counsel? Will the much-maligned developer become the workplace hero? **Another idea:** convince clients or organizations to consider coop services with neighbor employers.

2. **Reducing cultural lag** behind technology. Once, when employees learned their jobs, they could be comfortable & confident. Now, ever-changing technology forces them to learn it over & over again. Employees are stressed, always trying to catch up. On-site trainers or centers can keep tenants state-of-the-art.

3. **Resident director of education.** Gov't studies show administrative employees are not as learned as those of a generation ago. To prevent the workplace from going soft, employers have had to pick up the ball on education. Large org'ns can a) teach employees who can't speak English or b) require further schooling. "Owners of complexes may consider having a resident director of education to attract smaller organizations that do not have resources to handle workplace education."

The Northeast is overbuilt, faces slow-to-no growth, idea is catching on even there. "We work with a group that constructed an office complex for nonprofit org'ns," Carol Herzberg of Agnew Carter McCarthy (Boston) told prr. "Tenants share amenities they would have a hard time finding & paying for on their own." She knows another developer who employs a concierge for tenants. "He knows everyone in the building, brings candy & cards on special occasions, runs errands for them. It gives them a good feeling" -- and maintains excellent public relations.

4. **Personal services** to accomplish simple errands. The "wife" era is out. Most wives work, they themselves need "wives." "Concierge services can go to drycleaners or shoe repair, bring cars to service stations, buy gifts for spouses, etc.," Lewis told prr. They can pick up children from school & bring them to the on-site daycare centers.

5. **Health** = productivity. Employers are realizing they are intertwined, but many can't do much about it. Developers can offer a pool, workout room, tennis courts (& coach), masseuse, aerobics class, a cafe offering healthy fare.

6. **Crime prevention.** Everyone is concerned, some fearful. Working late in an empty building, being the last to leave the lot or parking garage can be scary. Guard service can offer late-night security, escort service can accompany people to their cars, etc.

7. **Transportation.** A harried commuter is a distressed employee. Why not offer a shuttle bus to the office complex?

#### IS EMPLOYEE LOYALTY DEAD? DATA REVEALS TROUBLESOME TREND

Recent scholarship may differ in minutiae but seems to indicate there is cause for concern: 1) workplace loyalty is in shreds; 2) era of corporate loyalty & single company/career worker is over.

Study by Wyatt (Boston) shows only 36% of American workers feel committed to their companies -- a drop of 8% in just 2 years. Bruce Katcher, org'l psychologist & senior assoc, says decrease is due to: a) shrinking pool of skilled employees; 2) high cost of recruiting replacements; 3) increased importance of maintaining high productivity. "The days of completing an education, joining an organization & then staying there until retirement are long gone," he told prr. "Economic conditions, demographic changes, and shifts in values are deteriorating employee commitment."

Wyatt surveyed 3500 employees nationwide from a variety of industries, first by phone, then by questionnaire. Half were surveyed in a similar study 2 years ago, validating the trend. 43% begin their jobs with zeal, but enthusiasm abates by year 2, and by year 4, most (2/3rds) think of their workplace as "just a job." Loyalty is no higher on the management level, where only 46% report high levels of commitment. Subordinates thus have no role models. (Free copy from Katcher at 617/237-3222, ext. 713)

Katcher notes a shift from organizational to professional identity. Formerly limited to physicians, scientists, engineers, many other professions now identify with associations, e.g. PRSA, AMA, IABC, than with the goals of their current employer. "For many, one's organization has thus become merely a place to pursue one's commitment to professional identity."

HR expert & author Carol Kinsey Goman says situation is grave but salvageable -- and the blind spot is at the top. "The higher up in the corporate ladder, the more management is out of touch with the reality of what employees are feeling." Goman surveyed over 1000 employees nationwide, found people no longer think of their jobs as the "end all," i.e. paramount interest. Her words to the '90 IABC convention in Vancouver are key: "Many organizations are great at explaining philosophy, but not at translating it into action. The communications function has to go deeper, otherwise, you've lost it."

#### TREND WILL INTENSIFY WITH INCOMING WORKFORCE

David Birch, dir MIT's Program on Jobs, Enterprises & Markets, predicts that college grads will be switching jobs and careers at a rate unsurpassed by any workforce before them. Birch notes that the job growth rate will decline to less than 1% by 2000, a third of what it was in the late 80s. Drop will not be caused by organizations not wanting to grow, but by lack of workers. "During the coming decade, college-educated employees will be able to just about name their own employment terms.... The real challenge will be in keeping them on the payroll for 5 years; keeping them beyond 10 will border on the impossible."

Employees are seeking the "dream job." To survive, org'ns will have to offer: a) stock options; b) performance-based bonuses; c) rapid advancement; d) early responsibility; e) entrepreneurship; f) the ability to fail. "Corporations which do not offer such amenities will wither and die."

¶Supporting research comes from Dante Personnel Svcs (NYC). "The current crop of college grads are asking us more lifestyle than career track questions: Will I get a health club membership? Will I have my own