

A CALL TO ACTION

Calling the problem a national emergency, commission recommended 4 measures -- which could be a list of social responsibility opportunities for practitioners:

1. Develop **neighborhood health corps** of outreach people to serve as links between teens, families, agencies;
2. Strengthen schools' role by creating smaller, more personal schools & **upgrade health education** to provide honest, relevant info;
3. Establish guaranteed & easy access to health services for teens, regardless of ability to pay. This means restructuring insurance & **establishing health centers**.
4. **Establish coordinating councils** to develop local solutions to neighborhood problems. This will **make communities frontline** in the battle for healthier teens.

Code Blue: "The mobility of American families, the need for second incomes, a faster-paced society & increases in poverty have stretched many families to the limit.... Young people are less healthy & less prepared to take their places in society than were their parents."

Report coincides with other data indicating teens comprise a powerful consumer market (pr 7/16/90). "In some way, that phenomenon exacerbates the problem," says Callahan. He says their fractured values & materialistic mindset give rise to incidents like killing for jackets or sneakers. PR & advertising hype may have had an unintended causal role. "We need involvement on community, state, & national levels to turn things around."

3 AREAS OF RISK FOR ORGANIZATIONS IF PROBLEM UNSOLVED

Conventional wisdom says today's teens are tomorrow's 1) consumers, 2) voters & officeholders, 3) employees. But issue anticipators recognize teens are **already** a major market, can vote (now or within a year or two), and **already** have their first jobs. The danger is here. What public could pr more profitably tend to?

ITEM OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

"**Health Interest Is So Strong Many Issues Can Use It For Positioning**, as new approach of Coalition to Stop Gun Violence shows. Its strategy for the 90s is to "bring attention to gun violence as a public health issue." With this strategy goes an appeal to powerful potential allies. CSGV aims to "mobilize the medical community to demand that both the US Center for Disease Control & the Surgeon General speak out on the root causes -- and crushing costs -- of gun violence." Psychologists call this "usurping existing positive attitudes" or the "association method" of persuasion.

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TO POSITION & PERSUADE YOUR CEO, OR GO FOR THE TITLE YOURSELF, STUDY SCOPES THEIR "MOBILITY" PATTERNS, EXPLODES MYTHS

CEOs as a class are getting ambushed: a) not as important to organizational success as they think they are, b) vastly overpaid, c) afraid to take the risks needed to compete. Whether or not this is a bum rap, CEOs are the personification of the organization -- and pr must position them so they can lead, or at least set the tone.

Management prof Eugene Jennings, Mich. State U, says his "Mobility Studies" dispel popular myths about CEOs & how they get there, such as:

1. **The Organization-Hopping CEO.** Now more than ever, most CEOs start as subordinates & work their way up. "Natives" outpace "migrants" in every age group.

[Big plus, since this confronts many of the deeply felt organizational needs, role modeling a) deep knowledge, b) loyalty, c) continuity.]

2. **The Youthful CEO.** Age & experience are still extremely important. Since the 60s, **average age** of CEO appointments **has risen to 58** while the number of younger CEOs has declined.

[In a society seeking stability, this is invaluable if properly handled.]

3. **The Global CEO.** A popular notion is that the more international experience a CEO has, the better equipped s/he is to deal with a global economy. Jennings finds few CEOs have worked abroad. Most ran foreign operations from home.

[PR's job: get 'em on the road (to overseas locations or, if you're not multinational, to visit other organizations) because this is a narrowing factor. Consultants call this "removing executive isolation."]

4. **The Out-To-Pasture CEO.** Tenures have risen -- chiefs remain in the job much longer than they did (9 years plus, compared to under 7 in the 60s) as boards waive compulsory retirement.

[Positive: experience, continuity. Negative: locked in, mind closed, avoid risk.]

5. **The Staff-Position CEO.** This isn't really a myth yet but, driven by foreign competition, companies are again appointing CEOs from line positions (sales & manufacturing) rather than staff positions like finance,



pr, hr, marketing. Hands-on experience on a day-to-day basis factors heavily in a potential CEO's candidacy. This reversion to the 50s, when knowledge was paramount, has a lot of yuppies running into a glass ceiling. "It's driven by foreign competition. If you look at Japanese industrial companies, the CEOs all came from line positions."

[Danger: may believe dollars alone are the bottomline, no matter which publics get trampled to obtain them this quarter.]

MYTHS ABOUT BECAUSE...

Your CEO may feel "different from the breed" because:
A) other studies erroneously include bank- or bankruptcy appointed CEOs & nepotism in family-owned companies.

"People are confused because researchers lump everyone together, making it seem that the way you get to the top is to be born with a gold spoon."

B) Some perceptions about CEOs are left over from the 60s, a time of radical change when more & more chiefs were being brought in from outside until the ratio became 50-50. "In the 80s, the ratios shifted back to the pre-60s and now, 3 times as many CEOs are appointed from within than those coming from other organizations."

Jennings has been compiling data on all US public industrials since 1949 & studying related research since '39, making his the largest bank of info on executive mobility. He does not include service industries, but data is probably applicable to all sectors since industrials have traditionally set the pace. (For more, write him at 2216 Lagoon Dr, Okemos, MI 48864)

Jennings says pr practitioners moving into CEO spots is less than 3%, down from 6-7% -- never a strong showing. He advises pr aspirants to stay close to:
a) product development;
b) manufacturing; c) consumers, whom he calls the "front-line public." Assuming practitioners want to be CEOs, rather than pursue a career in their discipline.

¶ **Related Problem:** in a world where women own over half the wealth & are the largest population group, white males still hold 95+% of the top management spots at large corporations, according to a UCLA study. Except for business-to-business markets, purchase decisions are most often made by females. Work forces are increasingly female. Public policy & political decisions are deeply influenced by females. And -- many of the top male execs are World War II vintage, or at best Korean War (see # 2 above).

How do you position your CEO to link these value systems?

COLLEGES' WARTIME STRATEGY RE PERSIAN GULF STUDENTS: BE COOL & DON'T TALK TO MEDIA

Kuwaiti students. Universal strategy seems to be "lay low." Some didn't

pr talked with colleges nationwide to find out how they were ameliorating -- or avoiding -- tensions stemming from the presence of Iraqi or

respond to inquiries, others said outright they wouldn't disclose such information. The ones that would talk to us said they advised students to **avoid media**. In general, students took the advice and few incidents occurred, unlike the situation in the early 80s when some Iranian students denounced the US on national news.

U OF MINN, MINNEAPOLIS "We have tried to protect these students by sealing files," Bob Kvavick, international rels, told prr. "We also sent letters to members of the university community about everyone's rights and responsibilities." Kvavick says they're referred to collectively as "**students of the Gulf States**."

Iraqi students were contacted, told what type of services they can expect. Many have money from home tied up. Other dark-skinned students have been affected, for instance Indian nationals.

FLORIDA STATE, GAINSVILLE "I have kept in very close touch with these students thru periodic meetings," says Margaretha Micha. "We have kept them away from reporters. One agreed to give an interview, then he was hounded continually by media." She says tho there have been no problems or hostilities, police have been told who the students are and where they live in case of an emergency. "The biggest problem is that they are worried about their families, who were right in the war zone."

U OF TENN, KNOXVILLE School is sponsoring seminars and panel discussions, open to the public, as a way of avoiding tensions and creating some understanding, Gene Fleischer, International House, told prr. "We have an ongoing series of lectures on the Gulf War: new political alignments, Jordan's perspective, regional & international ramifications." And advisors have been staying in close touch with Persian Gulf students since the start of the hostilities. "People are advised to keep a low profile, and told that if they need any help to come to International House. It's sort of a **gathering place** for them to meet and talk."

REPORT FINDS YOUTH BESIEGED BY SOCIAL & HEALTH PROBLEMS; SIGNALS NEED & OPPORTUNITY FOR PROGRAMS

Commission organized by Nat'l Ass'n of State Boards of Education & American Medical Ass'n set out to study the health status of teens and turned up startling findings. "We wanted to find out the impact of health & health services on teens' education," NASBE's Tim Callahan told prr. "We found that you can't separate them, they are intertwined. Their **personal lives, social patterns, physical fitness & learning habits are tied in**." Report was named "Code Blue" because it outlines the dire status of teens:

- a) nearly 1 of 10 get pregnant yearly;
- b) 39% of highschoolers say they've been drunk within the past 2 weeks;
- c) alcohol-related accidents are #1 cause of death for teens;
- d) teen suicide has doubled, making it 2nd leading cause of death;
- e) teen arrests are up 30-fold since '50;
- f) homicide is leading cause of death among 15-19 year old minority youths; 135,000 students bring guns to school daily.