

End to long waits for out-patient appointments;

Shake up of school, police & social services inspectors to force better standards;

Cutback in number of traffic cones littering highways;

Tough controls on water, gas, electricity & phone industries with faster response to complaints & compensation if repair work is poor;

Rights for individuals to sue unions seeking to disrupt vital services.

There will be a taxpayers' charter later this year designed to ensure they understand their rights & obligations. In US, a Patients Bill of Rights in hospitals is about as far as the movement has gone, officially. Major may not pull it off politically -- but the effort touches a wellspring of current public opinion.

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

PR is Everyone's Job Because It's Like a Political Campaign says Gary Lavine, a lawyer who assumed pr responsibility for Niagara Mohawk Power. Here's his conceptual thinking about pr from a non-classical pr exec: "The major function of pr professionals has to be that of analyst & interpreter, interlocutor & intermediary. My CEO is the chief political officer of our company -- our candidate, the corporate philosopher who helps employees & public alike to understand corporate policies & action with the least possible distortion. And I -- as his chief pr officer -- function somewhat like a campaign manager. In these roles, we are responsible for the perception of our company held by our stakeholders. For us to succeed, all 11,000 employees have to be engaged in our company's public relations effort, in one way or another, but fully committed to keeping our promises -- explicit & implicit -- to our customers, to our investors & to our regulators. It is a job too important to leave out anyone."

Is Ad Agency PR Unique? New 4-As work-book, How To Handle Public Relations For Your Ad Agency, claims press relations should be the "primary focus." Booklet briefly mentions that publicity is not the only element of pr, but for ad agencies "what gets printed gets read -- by your clients, your prospects, your employees and the ad community, and even the consumer. And that's just newspapers!" The manual does good job for non-trained person on the basics of publicity, it does disservice by passing off internal communications as a matter of memos, newsletters & magazines. Other elements aren't mentioned. Most ad agencies already denigrate pr. If approached with broader perspective, booklet might have been able to build awareness for greater role of pr; and assisted agencies in building true public relationships, beyond their 1-way message mode. (\$10 members, \$25 non-members, 666 3rd Ave, NY, 10017)

MULTI-CULTURAL DIVERSITY PROVING A TOUGH IDEAL TO MEET; SOME DISCUSSION POINTS THAT MAY HELP PRACTITIONERS TO TAKE THE LEAD IN ACHIEVING IT IN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS [PART 1]

Blacks & browns, traditionally political allies as "minorities," now find themselves often to be competitors -- and sometimes emotional enemies. Native Americans, picking up on The United Negro College Fund, have started The American Indian College Fund because they want in on society's opportunities. Asian Americans are feared both for their academic prowess and as members of brutal gangs. And neo-conservatives are arguing that no special treatment should be given anyone just because their group suffered disadvantages in the past.

Critics of the lifestyle approach to diversity argue that it keeps those who have been disadvantaged in any way from getting a boost up the ladder. Some special treatment is fair, they say, to balance past unfairness.

Now, Ms. or Mr. Practitioner, please proceed to build solid relationships with each of these constituencies -- and with sociopolitical & employee publics that contain a mixture of them all.

PR societies had a taste of the difficulty early this year when controversy arose over conferences scheduled for Arizona -- which failed to approve a Martin Luther King holiday. PRSA invoked a participative process that kept its Nov. session in Phoenix but added a major diversity theme to the program. NSPRA decided to go elsewhere for its July '93 meeting.

TAKE A WIDE VIEW OF "DIVERSITY" Seeing it as traditional or numerical minorities muddles the problem. Diversities arise from lifestyle differences, which may be chosen or enforced. This broadens the scope to include 1) age range, 2) sexual preference plus biological sex difference, 3) physical & mental disadvantage, 4) education, 5) social network, 6) regional or nationality background et al.

The lifestyle approach aims to be objective. It moves past the cause of a person's differentness toward realizing we are all unique, or at least have our ways & quirks. The mode therefore is to respect everyone as an individual, not a group member -- accepting them as they are, without questioning why, and without apologizing for or attempting to change them.

SURVEY FINDS PRACTITIONERS UNAWARE OF PROBLEM -- OR HAS IT BEEN OVERSTATED? Asked to name the "3 most important pr problems" they face, only 5% of respondents to prr's 27th Annual Survey of the Profession

listed a diversity issue. Given their constant debate in legislative halls, public forums & the media, is this insensitivity? Are practitioners not involved in the issue -- at heart one of relationships, & thus their arena? Or are other issues simply more pressing? **Issues that were listed** are toughies & wide ranging, including:

- "Acceptance of people of color in positions & authority at major client"
- "Racial/ethnic diversity in student population"
- "Diversity in the workforce & in society" (several mentions)
- "Racism & other preconceived notions about people"
- "Severe 'euphemizing' of the language affecting all disabilities"
- "Multi-cultural profile of the city"
- "Political correctness"
- "Lack of trust between women's groups & federal government"
- "Getting women into more positions of authority"
- "Image building with minority groups"
- "Racial unrest e.g. job opportunities"
- "Diversity -- the world is changing"
- "Adhering to Community Reinvestment Act in providing products and services to low-to-moderate income people"
- "Americans with Disability Act implementation"
- "Native group issues raised at every level, nationally, religiously, locally"
- "Integration of disadvantaged students in the classroom"
- "Managing diversity without quotas"
- "Desire to increase number of minorities & women on faculty hampered by limited supply, great competition and fewer resources"
- "Equal compensation and opportunity for women"
- "The velvet ghetto issue; 85% of resumes received are from women"
- "Minority subgroups wanting control"
- "Problems related to building a multi-culturally diverse university"
- "Affirmative action"

Here's a self-test some use: Introducing your spouse, would you say, "This is my wife Mary;" or "This is Joe, my husband?" Putting the description before the name posits the person as an appendage of you; the latter suggests an independent person who happens to be married to you.

ROLE OF PRACTITIONERS IN HANDLING DIVERSITY

1. **Sensitivity Programs.** The difficulty is in not viewing as dubious or inferior those different from ourselves. Both communications & interpersonal vehicles are needed.
2. **Organizational Conscience.** Programs fail when no one can be expected to cry foul if contrary behavior occurs. PR staff ought to be the ones.
3. **Training.** Managers need specific techniques to use, e.g. mentoring, negotiating, conflict management.
4. **Policy & Strategy.** Legal requirements are bare bones. Organizations can give lip service to them & still be known as anti-diversity. In fact it takes extraordinary efforts to be seen as pro-diversity.

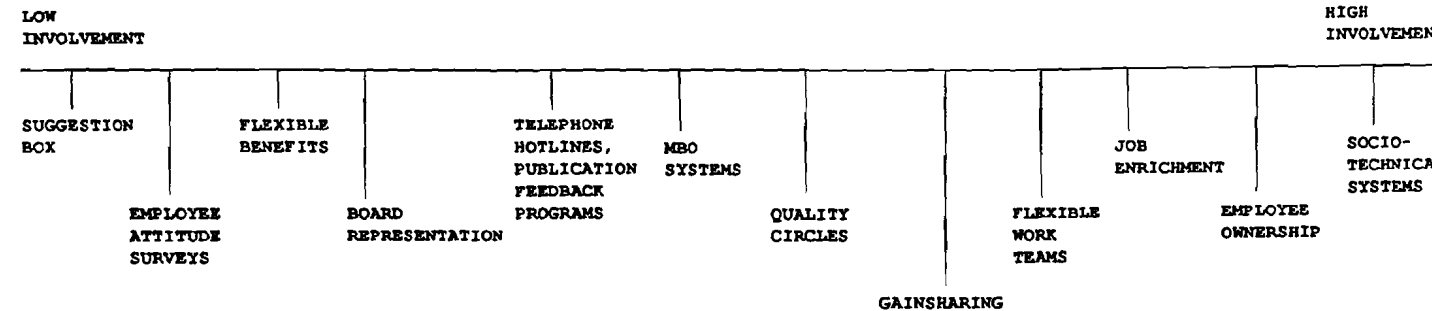
PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: A SERIES OF STEPS ALONG A CONTINUUM

Basing analysis on the extent to which employee involvement in decision-making is incorporated in the organization, David Pincus & Nick DeBonis (Cal State, Fullerton) delineate the **hierarchy of options available** for achieving participative management.

In their upcoming book, TOP DOG: The Influence of the CEO's Internal Communication Role on Corporate Leadership, they examine participative strategies in place at a number of leading organizations.

Preliminary conclusion: tho change will occur very slowly -- glacially so -- only **"open, trusting, regular, two-way communication between managers and employees"** will bring "fundamental changes to employee-management relationships and employee productivity & loyalty."

PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT CONTINUUM



FROM UK, PROOF PEOPLE WANT EMPOWERMENT, PARTICIPATION IN POLICY SETTING

And are angry about feeling disconnected from the process (pr 9/2). Prime Minister John Major's "Citizen's Charter" hooks into this momentum by addressing "shoddy service and uncaring bureaucratic monopolies," explains the US British newspaper Union Jack. Says Major: "The Citizen's Charter is about giving more power to the citizen. It is a testament to our belief in people's right to be informed and to choose for themselves."

Immediately targeted are British Rail and the Post Office. BR, facing privatization, will make **clear pledges** to passengers with info on what to do if things go wrong & what compensation is available. Its employees will be paid according to **performance**, docked for lateness or absenteeism. Season ticket holders will be **compensated** with discounts when services fall below standard. The PO monopoly is to be broken by allowing **competition** to deliver lower cost mail. It has also been ordered to improve its dealings with customers & offer better compensation for people whose letters are lost. A new independent regulator will be appointed. Also in line for changes:

Guaranteed maximum waiting times for operations, in national health service, with private treatment when hospitals fail to meet deadlines;