

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **CORPORATIONS SEND MESSAGE TO FUTURE CEOs ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.** Are offering \$5000 cash award for the best paper written by an MBA student in the area of corporate social responsibility. Providing funding & support are: Coca-Cola, Ford, GenCorp, IBM, Pitney-Bowes, Prudential, Tandem Computers, Texaco, Sprint, Xerox. In addition, winner will present paper at the nat'l meeting of the Academy of Mgmt & at a nat'l meeting of Center for Corporate Comty Rels, with all expenses paid. Papers must be submitted by a sponsoring faculty member, who gets \$1000 if the entry wins. April 1 '94 deadline. (More from Ctr for Corp Comty Rels, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Mass. (1267; 617/552-4545)

¶ **NEW QUARTERLY MAG "WILL DO FOR THE 4TH ESTATE WHAT DRAMA CRITICS DO FOR THE STAGE,"** claims Malcolm Forbes about "MediaCritic." Mag's purpose is "to help you think critically about the media," writes editor Terry Eastland. "Recent polls...have reported substantial erosion in public confidence in the news media. Given current perception, journalists can ill afford to ignore reasoned criticism. These pages will include constructive examinations of the methods & practices of print & broadcast journalism." One feature, by Fred Barnes of *The New Republic*, identifies 8 myths in the news media's coverage of the healthcare debate -- one of which is that there is a healthcare crisis. By calling it a crisis, "the media fuels the political drive for a drastic remodeling of the medical system. That may be needed, but it shouldn't be abetted by use of the loaded word 'crisis.'" (Subscription \$29.95; Forbes MediaCritic, PO Box 6615, Syracuse 13217-7991)

¶ **FAX FROM JOHN STAUBER, PR WATCH:** "On 11/29 you printed a letter from Joe Epley of Epley Assocs, the Charlotte pr firm that has represented Philip Morris USA. Mr. Epley, referring to my publication says that 'truth, accuracy & objectivity should be uncompromised.' I really couldn't agree more. However, Mr. Epley should share with his tobacco industry clients his insights about the virtues of truth & accuracy. For instance, I note that on November 7, Reuter news service in Miami reported that top Philip Morris executives 'testified in court depositions that smoking is not addictive and has not been conclusively proved to cause cancer....' Get busy, Mr. Epley!" [Well, this critic said he would hold our feet to the fire....]

¶ **AFFORDABLE VIDEOS TRAIN EMPLOYEES & MANAGERS IN PR TACTICS.** Communication Briefings' 12- to 17-min videos are \$59, offer ideas you can put to use right away, presented by top communication/mgmt experts, using lively scenes to illustrate points. Topics include: meetings, communicating with customers, being creative, listening, solving people-problems, telephone tactics, making presentations, mastering memos, communicating with employees. For example, in "Everyone's Public Relations Role" (15 mins) Ann Barkelew, vp-corp pr at Dayton Hudson, explains how all employees contribute to their orgn's public relations effort. "You are the organization," she says & illustrates using dramatic scenes to show both negative & positive ways of representing your org'n. (More from: 700 Black Horse Pike, Blackwood, NJ 08012; 609/232-6380)

TOTAL RELATIONSHIP MGMT: A SEAMLESS ONE CLEAR VOICE SYSTEM

As it becomes clear that public relations activity cannot be successfully Balkanized into community relations, public affairs, marketing support & other "separated" entities, the search is on for integrating methods.

- **Integrated marketing comms** is mainly a coordination of 1-way messages unlikely to meet the challenges of publics demanding personal, service-oriented, face-to-face exchanges. Worse, it appears to be more about bailing out a failing but still arrogant ad agency industry -- by usurping pr techniques -- than about helping clients.
- **Integrated comms** turns out to be the same as IMC but employing a euphemism to satisfy pr complaints that IMC leaves out too much -- e.g. internal communications, community relations, etc.
- **Coordinated work teams & in-house pr firms** come closer to bringing together all necessary functions. This is achieved thru a body of generalists able to achieve synergy by doing whatever is needed, "beyond the boxes." But the learning curve to change a glut of narrow specialists to capable generalists is a problem widely reported.

So, what might a single...coordinated...truly integrated...total pr program look like, then. One able to deliver One Clear Voice presentation, using techniques that fit the 90s' environment, achieving the synergy a "right-sized" pr operation must have in an era of dwindling resources?

A PROPOSED DESIGN FOR TOTAL RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (TRM)

1. Start with **community relations** (pr 7/19).
2. Link to it the natural fit of **social responsibility, philanthropy** or whatever you call it including volunteers, in-kind or expert assistance, contributions. These 2 have the same goals but are artificially separated in most structures (pr 10/26/92).
3. Tie in **employee relations**, since volunteer & ambassador programs are among its key components now, but often run by community relations or another unit (pr 1/25 & 5/10).
4. Include **public affairs/gov't relations**, since ambassador & more organized grassroots/opinion leader systems like constituency relations are the most powerful tools available here -- yet may be run by community relations or some other unit (pr 5/19/86 & 3/2/92).



5. Add **marketing pr** since both relationship marketing & database marketing -- today's hot programs -- use the previously enumerated tactics (pr 5/3 & 9/26/88).
6. In corporations, include **investor relations** since effective relationships with the local & national communities, demonstrated social responsibility, sound employee relations, ability to participate meaningfully in public policy debates & snappy marketing support are the main ingredients analysts & investors look for -- because *they are the road to profitability*.
7. In NPOs, include **fundraising** since all of the above create the climate for contributions.

THE NET RESULT IS ENERGY INTO OUTCOMES

In other words, reengineer pr to eliminate dep'ts & boxes. Emphasize instead programming & strategy -- what we do & why we do it.

- A. **As an example**, take a simple ambassador program. Regardless of who has responsibility, it impacts a) relationships with the employees who man it, b) communities & opinion leaders targeted by it, c) the outcome of issues the organization is concerned with, d) markets for its products/services etc etc etc.
- B. **The same applies to** targeted speakers bureaus, membership networks, strategic philanthropy, focused publications -- just about every program that works in today's environment.
- C. The energy ought to go into perfectly & energetically mounting a collection of integrated programs that will synergistically meet all these objectives -- not into turfing, duplication, unnecessary consultation & "coordination" and the other bureaucratic time wasters. They can be eliminated to **"get the work out of the system."**
- D. More importantly, looking holistically at programming allows focus on achieving **behavioral goals**, thru personalized relationship building.
- E. Opinion leaders targeted & feedback generated by each program can go into **a single database** -- an inclusive networking resource and the most timely, trustworthy & **actionable research** imaginable.
- F. **Research supports** the seamless, reinforcing nature of this approach (which the pr issues cited in this article refer to, in part).

HOW THEN TO ORGANIZE & DIVIDE THE WORKLOAD?

Does TRM demand work teams of generalists? A collection of specialists who begin by cross-training each other? Is it better

to have loosely defined dep'ts which focus on interpreting these encompassing, synergistic programs to designated publics; or to one of the 3 arenas (sales support, public policy, organizational effectiveness)?

Is a better approach to organize around the programs themselves, with each program team responsible for its impact on all affected publics? These are the unanswered questions, but the direction seems to be right on.

EQUIFAX USES ISSUE MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO INTEGRATE PR

Equifax (Atlanta) provides info services & automated systems that help its customers grant credit, insure lives & property, authorize checks at point of sale, process credit card transactions, market products, control healthcare costs etc. Winning the W. Howard Chase Award for excellence in issue management, company revealed how it uses issue mgmt -- issue identification, research, analysis, action & evaluation -- for these overarching pr & organizational goals:

1. To bridge the gap between Equifax privacy practices and consumer & stakeholder groups' expectations [risk mgmt or issue anticipation]
2. To continue to provide information solutions to customers while maintaining & improving consumer privacy [managing public policy]
3. To ensure fair info practices are known & practiced thruout the company & industry [awareness & behavior reinforcement]
4. To become the preferred steward of consumer info [market share support]

This is another integrating strategy -- as Howard Chase proposed when he launched issue management -- in which one powerful framework drives the entire relationship building effort. Other examples include programs driven by community rels (pr 7/19), constituency rels (pr 3/2/92) & focused philanthropy (pr 10/26/92). Shows how central is quest for integration.

AIRLINE'S SUIT VS. PR FIRM ATTEMPT TO INTIMIDATE PRACTITIONERS?

Or a damage control publicity tactic? In the flight attendants' strike against American Airlines, American accused the union of misleading & harassing its members to pressure them into the walkout. It has filed a \$10 million defamation lawsuit against the union *and its public relations firm* -- Abernathy & Mitchell (DC).

"It's just a tactic they took to try to put a chill in our campaign to expose the motives of the company -- what they were trying to do to their workers. Such suits aren't very commonplace, but they're also not unheard of. The suit's pretty specious, there's no basis for it. It's just a pr lawsuit," Ray Abernathy told pr. Suit was filed in state court in Dallas. "Our lawyers are taking a look at it. No action has been taken yet."

"It didn't impact our tactics. We represent labor unions & left-of-center non-profits; have for 20 years. We depend on the ultimate defense -- we tell the truth. As long as we do that, we feel good about what we do. We've never had anyone sue us successfully."

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORED. By The Issue Exchange for contributions to issue management:
1) W. Howard Chase, who coined the term in '76 & founded the dis-

cipline; 2) John Mahon (BU prof);
3) Bruce Smart (sr counselor, World Resources Institute).