

- **Identify the pages.** Yes, your fax machine numbers the pages automatically. But you may decide to include other items with the brochure. So it's best if the pages of each piece are clearly identified. (More from Greber, 233 32nd st, #6J. NYC 10016; 212/684-6744)

PR FIRM SURVEY SUGGESTS CLIENTS DEVALUING TOP SKILLS

Changes that reduce pr's critical role in strategy & counseling mark 2nd annual survey by Thomas L. Harris & Co (Highland Park, Ill). Services clients feel are most important, according to responding firms:

Considered extremely important	1994	1993
1. Meets deadlines/keeps promises	84%	78%
2. Client service	81	83
3. Thorough/attention to detail	67	52
4. Honest, accurate billing	59	51
5. Quality of writing	56	42 (up 14%!)
6. Experienced staff	48	39
7. Creativity	47	na
8. Strategic counsel	45	58 (down 13%!)
9. Quality of management	43	45
10. Quality/quantity of media coverage	42	na
11. Media contacts	40	39
12. Chemistry	40	na
13. Knowledge of my industry	36	43
14. Fee structure (wording change from '93)	35	60
15. Involve sr management in my acct	30	15
16. Access to influential people	29	19
17. Respected	28	24
18. Specialized services we need	27	na
19. Measures results	26	44 (down 18%!)
20. Full service capabilities	13	na
21. Research capability	11	na (low value?)
22. International capabilities	7	7
23. Graphic/design capabilities	6	na
24. Ethnic communication capabilities	2	4

(More from Harris, 600 Central av, Highland Park, Ill 60035; 708/266-1020)

ITEM FOR PRACTITIONERS TO PONDER

IF YOU WRITE OR EDIT ANYTHING (from memos to manuscripts) watch those misplaced modifiers. They can be elusive, but when caught can conjure unwittingly funny images. Try this one from a release about a new beer: [The beer] "will be marketed to American beer lovers & to over one million Vietnamese emigres now living in the US in 12-ounce bottles, 24 to the case."

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. Howard Blankman (CEO, Howard Blankman Inc, Jericho, NY) named "Man of the Year" by National Kidney Foundation.

"INFORMATION MAPPING" IMPROVES INFO TRANSFER & MEMORABILITY

In the desperate quest to break thru overcommunication, here's a writing method (reports, memos, e-mail, manuals, training materials) that is:

- easier & faster to read
- more precise & complete
- quicker to prepare
- reduces questions, ambiguities & misunderstandings
- orients readers quickly to the content
- helps find & understand the main points
- speeds up decisionmaking

Bottomline: saves time & money. It's based on "how the human mind processes & stores information to learn," Mark Pramuk of Information Mapping (Waltham, Mass) told prr. To apply it, follow a 3-phase process:

1. ANALYZE THE AUDIENCE & THE INFORMATION

Consider: What is the document for? How will it be used? Who is the audience? What do they know/need to know? Key to analyzing information is understanding the 7 information types. Each piece of information can be defined according to its purpose -- how the reader will use it. Understanding these lets writers determine what the reader needs to know.

KNOW THE 7 TYPES OF INFORMATION

- **procedure:** set of steps that a person performs in order to obtain a specified outcome.
- **process:** series of events or phases, taking place over time, that has an identified purpose or result.
- **structure:** physical object or something that can be divided into parts & has boundaries.
- **concept:** class or group of items which share a unique combination of critical attributes not shared by other groups & which can be referred to by the same generic name or symbol.
- **principle:** statement that provides what should or should not be done, what seems to be true in light of evidence, or what is unprovable but implied by other statements.
- **fact:** statement asserted without supporting evidence.
- **classification:** sorting a group of items or things into classes or categories by one or more attributes.



2. ORGANIZE THE INFORMATION INTO A USER-FOCUSED DOCUMENT

The most important step in communicating. Document's purpose guides the main point of information to be included; audience guides the amount of supporting detail to use. Include only information that has a single purpose or function for the reader; exclude all information irrelevant to that purpose or function. This reduces information overload.

3. CONSIDER 7 PRINCIPLES OF PRESENTATION WHILE ORGANIZING THE DOCUMENT

- **chunking:** group information into manageable chunks.
- **relevance:** place "like things" together; exclude unrelated items from each chunk.
- **labeling:** provide the reader with a label for each chunk of information.
- **consistency:** use consistent terms, organization & formats.
- **integrated graphics:** use tables, illustrations & diagrams as an integral part of the writing.
- **accessible detail:** write at the level of detail that will make the documents usable for all readers.
- **hierarchy:** group small chunks around a single topic; provide the group with a label.

USING THIS PROCESS PRODUCES A VISIBLE STRUCTURE OF INFORMATION

The structure allows readers to easily grasp the subject matter by scanning the labels to find the relevant chunks of information. These modular units are also easy to revise -- or add to if more than one person is contributing to a document. (More info from Information Mapping, 300 Third av, Waltham, Mass. 02154; 800/MAP-4544; fax 617/890-1339)

"It's called 'mapping' because by breaking down the information & the audience, you get a road map for the document. When you do the writing you're just filling in the blanks," explains Pramuk.

STUDY SHOWS POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT MORE VITAL THAN EVER

Praise & recognition still outrank money as motivators. 150 execs from the 1000 largest companies were asked to identify the most common reasons employees leave a company. Their responses:

Limited recognition & praise	34%
Compensation	29%
Limited authority	13%
Personality conflicts	8%
Other	16%

"Managers should combine informal rewards, such as verbal praise or hand-written notes, with a more structured system, such as performance-based bonuses or an internal awards program. Monetary compensation, while it remains important, is most effective when an employee can see a direct relationship to his or her performance," explains Bob Half of Robert Half International (NYC), survey sponsor.

REWARDS MUST TIE TO PERFORMANCE

Wyatt Company recently surveyed 2,253 companies' pay practices. Says Jim Hudner, "The typical employee today is far more likely to be eligible for rewards tied to company, division or department performance," e.g.:

- **Annual incentive or bonus plans:** 66% have them in place.
- **Small group incentives:** Reward work teams or special project groups for meeting specified goals. 11% report these programs; 10% expect to implement within the next 2 yrs. This is needed to make teaming "real."
- **Gainsharing plans:** Employees share in improvement in financial or operational performance. 7% have these in place; 6% expect to in the next 2 yrs.
- **Spot awards/technical achievement awards:** Distributed to employees on an ad hoc basis to recognize some contribution to the success of a business or completion of a project. 25% currently use these; 6% intend to in the next 2 yrs.

RAMIFICATIONS

In practitioners' counseling role, organizational policies are a primary concern -- like incentives & evaluation systems that reflect goals & values. This **symbolic communication** either supports or else destroys **words** from any source or medium.

DO YOU HAVE A FAXABLE BROCHURE?

Simple enough, but has it been done? "The trouble is, when you ask people to fax information about their company or product, you usually get stuff that's hard to read. The pages are printed horizontally, some parts are chopped off or illegible, and it's hard to figure out how the sections connect with each other. That's what happens when they fax an opened multi-panel brochure," explains Thomas Greber, marketing consultant. He offers these tips for creating a faxable brochure:

- Use **standard letter-size format** (8.5 x 11") leaving 0.5-1" margins on top, bottom & both sides to avoid having info cut off.
- **Fonts** should be wide (not tight, condensed) & consist of clean, solid letters. For a serif font, use Palatino; sans serif, use Helvetica. Type size should be at least 10 points. [12 or 14 faxes better. Ed.]
- **Avoid delicate designs.** They fax as unidentifiable blotches. Adapt or simplify them for faxing.
- **Print only black on white.** Makes for the clearest, sharpest faxes.