

heading for once spurned in-house counsel positions. WashPost chronicled these comments from well-known attorneys:

- One felt "an inherent conflict" between the large number of billable hours that law firms want and the cost-effective legal advice clients demand. She wanted to control costs, but that "met with unhappiness" at the firm, "where the name of the game was revenues."
- Collegiality & pure law have lost out to competition among partners & hustling for business.
- Senior partners used to be counselors to CEOs. Now they answer to in-house lawyers on narrow, mundane projects or bickering over some picayune portion of their bills.

TREND IS ALSO EVIDENT IN PR FIRMS

a) Project work, b) reporting to in-house staff rather than CEOs, c) strict cost control, d) counselors jumping to corporate & other staff positions. Will firms' insatiable demand for "more billing" make them just the way-station to organizational positions -- instead of the practice & professional leaders they once were?

Or is this a description only of larger firms -- with leadership in the field shifting to smaller, more focused, perhaps still more collegial firms?

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

Good Analogy To Use When Management Doesn't Want To Get The Bad News Out Immediately, or similar timing situations: It's like pulling off a band-aid; it hurts so much less with one quick zip, rather than pulling it off slowly. Used by counselor Lois Hogan.

Summaries Of Over 100 Gold Quill Winning Programs are featured in '95 edition of *No Secrets*. Each 2-4 pg. summary covers issues identification, goal-setting, implementation, troubleshooting & evaluation. Table of contents provides a short paragraph describing each winning project. (\$60, nonmbrs \$80. Contact Andrea Masotti at IABC, 415/433-3400, ext 131)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. NSPRA's new exec bd mbrs: pres, Jackie Price (San Juan Capistrano, Calif); pres elect, Burnadine Moss Anderson (Shreveport, La); SW region vp, Karen Kleinz (Phoenix); NE region vp, Amy Fisher (East Brunswick, NJ); Mideast region vp (interim), John Lyday (Elgin, Ill).

HONORS. IABC's Chairman's Award to Pixie Malherbe (Pixie Malherbe Business Communication, South Africa) & Mary Lou Van Shik (Springheart Resources, Toronto) for their leadership & contribution to IABC & the profession.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: SUPERVISOR-AS-COMMUNICATOR CASCADES

Realizing that effective employee communication is key to becoming a successful competitor -- in a utility industry that never had to compete before -- Entergy (New Orleans) began a Key Communicator Program.

About to acquire another utility, it needed a way to get information to employees quickly. Internal surveys & focus groups showed employees prefer hearing company news from their immediate supervisor. **They trust the messenger & believe the message more when delivered by first-line supervisors.**

Entergy had neglected using supervisors as communicators & employee communication was suffering. Key Communicator Project Team & an advisory board -- cross section of mgmt with emphasis on frontline supervisors -- began developing the program (it took 10 months) in April '93. Introduced to the entire mgmt team in Jan '94, "It's still in the developmental stages & people are getting used to this way of communicating. However, we feel it's working," Elaine Coleman, mgr employee comms, told pr.

GOALS

- Provide resources & training for first-line supervisors to become "key communicators" thruout the Entergy System
- Enhance trust, understanding & communication
- Have a cascading briefing process to enhance face-to-face communication
- Promote a feeling of unity & partnership

TEAM BRIEFINGS

Get messages to all employees in 24 hrs using a series of face-to-face, cascading briefing sessions. Supports first-line supervisors & managers by ensuring they have advance notice & in-depth information to share with employees. Subject-matter experts are available to immediately answer questions. Process is used when:

- Subject affects every employee -- tho sometimes used only within strategic business units (SBUs) where info affects those employees
- Importance is high in relation to company goals, mission, operations

Key Communicator process "moves information to frontline supervisors & has them relay it to employees. They get it first so they aren't caught off guard when an employee asks questions. It also helps relationship building within the management team. Supervisors get information in a more timely manner & feel more plugged in to what's going on," explains Coleman.

- Information is relatively simple & straightforward -- can be easily understood & transmitted to direct reports by mgmt who are not subject-matter experts
- Face-to-face transmission is preferable to print or electronic mail
- Info is timely & there is a need for rapid transmission

Depending on urgency & sensitivity, team briefing strategies are:

- **Code Red:** used when a) message is highly sensitive & must be delivered to all employees at approximately the same time; b) outside media or others may have access to info before team briefing participants. (Goal is to beat both the media & the grapevine.)
- **Code Blue:** used when a) message is moderately sensitive & fairly urgent, can be delivered in a face-to-face cascade thruout the organization within 24 hrs; b) low concern the outside media or others may have access to the info before team briefing participants; c) there is time for info to cascade thruout the supervisory levels within 24 hrs.

TEAM BRIEFING PROCESS FLOW CHART

1. **Event occurs:** decision is made whether it's Code Red or Blue.
2. **Briefing paper prepared:** by corp comms & subject-matter experts.
3. **Announcement sent to mgmt team to schedule briefing.** E-mail & faxed announcements are issued within 24-48 hrs of briefing date, asking mgmt team to schedule team briefings with direct reports on scheduled briefing day. (Code Red calls for a single, simultaneous briefing. Code Blue calls for face-to-face cascading briefings thruout the day.)
4. **Mgmt team schedules briefings** with direct reports.
5. **SBU heads receive & review briefing paper on briefing day.**
6. **SBU heads give briefings** to direct reports who get a copy of briefing paper & can call or e-mail subject-matter experts with questions.
7. **Direct reports prepare** to give briefings.
8. **Direct reports give briefings** to employees & process cascades until all employees have received briefings.

All questions are answered immediately by the experts. Recurring questions are gathered to identify areas of greatest concern & responses are sent to supervisors & above. When necessary, hard copies of questions & responses are provided. Additional info is provided in the weekly employee newsletter. Key Communicator program "does not replace the employee newsletter, it supplements it." Program won a Gold Quill from IABC.

If you're thinking of developing a similar program, Coleman recommends:

- 1) "Do baseline research to determine employee feelings about how they're presently getting their information.
- 2) "Make sure the program is developed with buy-in from supervisors. Our advisory group gave oversight & advice as we developed this program, as it was rolled out & as it's being administered."
- 3) "Get information to frontline supervisors as soon as possible so they have information they can use & that is of real benefit to employees."

IT'S SO SIMPLE: WHY DON'T MORE ORGANIZATIONS GET IT?

Wal-Mart has "a very simple philosophy," says CEO David Glass on being named CEO of the year by Chief Executive magazine. Given this unparalleled role model -- who, in such a hyper-competitive industry, ever came so far so fast? -- why don't other organizations emulate such wisdom:

1. "The customer is boss and you have to work really hard to respect that.
2. "If you take everyone who's involved in the company & make him or her a partner in the business, rather than having any employee-employer relationships, you solve a big problem.
3. "Then if you empower the people to actually make decisions and act in serving the customer, then it all works.

"Then, it's just a matter of execution," he adds -- masking perhaps the reason so few have pulled it off. What are the barriers? Managerial ego? Desire for power? Certainly it's not unwillingness to copy, since that is today's major trait in businesses.

This is a strategy & a case study for practitioners to cite -- again & again & again -- as the quintessential embodiment of pr's message about how to forge relationships: between the organization & customers, then within the organization. If what your client is doing contradicts it -- whether in big policies or little details -- scream loudly!

FEDERAL CUTS PLACE HUGE BURDEN ON CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY

NPOs in the US face a \$254 billion cumulative "gap" during fiscal years 1996-2002. This is the finding of a national study of 100 charitable org'ns by Independent Sector. Study's purpose is to estimate the impact of current congressional budget cutting on NPOs' ability to service community needs at the local level. To illustrate, study cites specifics:

- Family Resources of Houston will serve 12% fewer persons (20,172) in its child abuse prevention & treatment program.
- Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles will provide 5% fewer meals (83,961) in its meals to the elderly program.
- The Studio Museum in Harlem will serve 54% fewer persons (222,582) in its curatorial & research program about the arts.

"In 2002, if participating organizations had to make up program revenue with private giving, contributions would have to increase by 124% from the previous year, over & above expected increases," explains svp Bob Smucker.

Now NPOs will predictably be even more eager partners in community relations programs. (More from IS, 1828 L st. NW, DC 20036; 202/223-8100)

CHANGES UNDERWAY IN SOME LAWYERS' THINKING RELEVANT TO PR

Anyone counseling law firms knows what inhumane billing factories they've become. High flyers who once sought spots at big name firms now are