

on average, add 5.4% more to the purchase price for every positive story printed; a \$54 million deal can wind up being a \$1 billion one. (Another case of the damage from bragging publicity.) When it doesn't pan out, the CEO, recent events show, exercises his golden parachute. Are we often the architects of flattering CEO commentary, giving others the means of our destruction?

ENVIRONMENTAL RELATIONSHIP - BUILDING IN "TREMENDOUS SURGE"

We are seeing a "tremendous surge in specialized environmental publications, such as environmental annual reports, brochures & newsletters that provide feedback opportunities," notes Bruce Harrison, founding mbr of EnviroComm International -- a global environmental comm consultancy. Its recent survey gathered responses from 293 execs in 7 countries -- US, Mexico, Italy, Switzerland, Finland, The Netherlands & New Zealand. Some findings:

- **Environmental auditing** tops the list of "environmental trends affecting business" over the next 3-5 yrs. Its high ranking "reflects the increasing importance of green performance & the corresponding role of reputation management in business planning."

-- "While companies are concerned about the potential liabilities associated with eco-auditing, it also offers potential competitive advantage & creates opportunities to communicate about environmental performance."

- **Challenges from stakeholders will increase** (55%), believe execs worldwide, or remain the same (37%). In contrast, only 29% from the US believe stakeholder challenges will increase & 68% believe they will remain the same.
- **Business is reducing its impact on the environment**, feel 68%. This position was consistent among all countries surveyed except Finland, where 69% believe business has not reduced its impact.
- How execs perceive 5 key stakeholder groups might respond to the questions of whether business has reduced its impact on the environment: their own employees (70%) & gov't regulators (67%) would agree that business has reduced its impact on the environment; environmental groups (75%), the general public (65%) & the news media (64%) would not agree.

-- Of these 5 groups, execs rank gov't regulators & company employees first & second as having the greatest impact on business.
(More from 202/638-1200)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. PRSA Foundation '96 ofcra: Belleville, NJ); treas, John Beardsley (Padilla Speer Beardsley, Mpls); sec'y, Denise Gray-Felder (Rockefeller Fdn, NYC).

pres, Joe Epley (Epley Assocs, Charlotte, NC); pres-elect, Joseph Vecchione (retired from Prudential,

LEVI'S CITs ARE PURE PHILANTHROPY, BUT ADD REAL VALUE

Since the 60s, Levi Strauss & Co (San Francisco) has been an active participant in community volunteerism. Currently 100 Community Involvement Teams (CITs) operate at its locations worldwide. "Volunteering is ingrained in our company culture. We feel it contributes to our corporate reputation & it's important -- from attracting better employees to helping our community, which helps business.

"We believe it's all tied to our company's mission of **responsible commercial success**," Myra Chow, mgr of comty afrcs, told prr. These beliefs are strongly held & supported, even tho LS&Co has done no formal tracking or evaluation of its volunteerism.

CITs are not focused philanthropy, where subjects or target publics are selected that will provide a strategic payback while at the same time helping the community (pr 10/26/92).

ITS ORIGIN: MANDATE FROM THE TOP

Then CEO Walter Haas Jr was appointed by President Johnson to serve on the National Alliance for Business -- a public/private partnership that advocated generating training & jobs for the unemployed. From this involvement came LS&Co's first CIT -- originally called community relations teams. At the first regional gathering -- a group meeting of 7-8 different teams -- Haas showed up, unexpectedly. People were stunned by his presence. Up till then, mgmt support had not been forthcoming. After Haas' visit, mgmt interest grew. Today, senior officers adopt CITs to offer their advice & time as volunteers.

Note name change from community relations teams to community involvement teams, paralleling change from public participation to stakeholder involvement.

CITs ADD VALUE Why Levi Strauss stresses the activity:

1. Adds to corporate **reputation**.
2. Working together, volunteers **learn & sharpen leadership**, communication & other skills.
3. **Empowers** the workforce -- the eyes & ears for the company. In '95 they directed \$3 million to support community services
4. Employees feel the **company is very supportive** of their volunteer & community commitments.
5. Builds **team spirit**.
6. Builds company **pride**.
7. Helps engender **trust**, with internal & external stakeholders.



HOW IT WORKS It's employee driven. Employees decide what issues they want to address (e.g., AIDS, elderly, environment, education, substance abuse, the homeless, youth, cancer, etc.). They organize themselves into teams & do the volunteering. LS&Co gives them 1 hour/month of work time to meet, everything else is negotiable with their managers. "But I'd say a majority of the volunteering is done after work."

Community Affairs has responsibility for the program. The company provides technical assistance to the volunteers & will help shape company policy if necessary. Funds are provided to facilitate volunteering -- eg, transportation, supplies, etc.

FUTURE CHALLENGES: VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERING? What will volunteering in the year 2000 look like?
"With the changing work environment, people working at home & with the internet -- we could have virtual volunteering. Who knows what nonprofits will need?"

"Many agencies are saying 'come to us with your expertise.' But frequently volunteers want to be another pair of hands to help out, like at a soup kitchen. They want to volunteer in ways other than their expertise, to feel good doing something different. There will be many future challenges."

If eroding trust continues to be every organization's underlying issue, we could find even nonprofits themselves needing CITs! (More from Chow at 415/544-6961)

SIMPLE DEVICE SYMBOLIZES STARBUCKS' VALUES TO EVERYONE

With the search on for ways to symbolically communicate to key publics, the coffee people have found a very simple way that can reach all publics. Titles of Starbucks employees are all done lower case.

Graphic technique reflects the corporate culture. "It's a style we started when we first became Starbucks. It actively promotes an egalitarian environment & discourages any bureaucracy associated with titles," spokesperson Cheri Libby told pr.

Company walks the talk: everyone (part- & fulltime) is a partner in the company, has stock options & gets health benefits.

E.U. STUDY OF ITS U.S. COMMUNICATIONS GIVES OUTSIDE VIEW

An audit of the European Union's communications in the US revealed these trends:

1. **The modem has changed the way info is disseminated** -- faster than experts predicted. Thus most written communications should include an on-line address where more info is available.
2. **Anyone who cares can voice an opinion in the US** (not true everywhere). Modem, fax/phone, overnight surveys & talk shows have replaced the

New England-style town meeting. Thus just communicating with the old elites isn't enough to reach all individuals influencing decisionmaking.

3. **European nations being shouldered aside.** The 90s are likely to be the last decade when their names dominate the left side of the hyphen in hyphenated-Americans. African-American Colin Powell is one of the most respected Americans today. A Cuban-American heads Coca-Cola. African-, Asian- & Latin-Americans are prominent in local & state politics and will be more prominent in Washington soon. It is necessary to communicate with customers & constituents in terms that are relevant to *their* lives, not just in terms relevant to our lives.

CONCLUSION "Even as numerous surveys show that Americans seem to be increasingly less interested in the world around them, events & trends abroad are more important than ever to their daily lives. And a lot of what happens abroad is good for us."

"It is clear, for example, that overall relationships between the people & governments of the US & the 15 nations that make up the European Union are strong & positive. This is good, since the EU & US are each other's largest trading partners & together account for 30% of world trade," explains George Kroloff, sr vp, Selz/Seabolt Communications, who headed the audit. Audit included a mail & phone survey, face-to-face interviews & discussion groups in 4 cities. (More from 202/775-8070)

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ *Where Shall I Go To Study Advertising & Public Relations?* (1996 edition) shows slight decline in ad/pr education. Currently 186 institutions have ad, pr or joint programs, 5 less than the previous year. Decrease in individual ad & pr programs was offset by 9% increase in joint degree programs. Since '92, there has been a 61% increase in combined ad/pr programs & a 68% increase in degrees awarded from them. Compilers (Billy Ross, Manship School of Mass Comm at Louisiana State & Keith Johnson, School of Mass Comm at Texas Tech) speculate this is a move by many institutions to seek economy in education administration. Industry interest in integrated mktg comms also may be a factor. Booklet provides a state-by-state listing of schools that offer ad &/or pr prgms. (\$5 from Advertising Education Publications, P.O. Box 4164, Lubbock, TX 79409-4164)

¶ **Foreign Language Help From Language News & Notes**, a new web site edited by Dick Weltz, multilanguage communications pro. Will provide info (updated monthly) for pr, adv'g & mktg practitioners who communicate in foreign languages. Will also provide links to other info sources & addresses for requesting free materials on international marketing communication, translation & foreign language graphic production. (<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/SpectrumLang>)

¶ **Do Practitioners Help CEOs Deceive Themselves?** CEO hubris tempts some to overpay for acquisitions, say two Columbia U profs (Matthew Hayward & Donald Hambrick). Cocky execs think their mgmt style will bring unforeseen values to the target company, the profs say. Over confidence will,