

- Where congressional, gubernatorial & presidential candidates stand on issues is available on Congressional Quarterly's home page -- American Voter '96. Interactive, multifaceted site also features background on current members of Congress. "CQ was founded over 50 years ago to help make public opinion the only effective pressure group by providing unbiased information on Congress. American Voter '96 continues that tradition by making available the information -- in a customizable, engaging format -- that allows individuals to make informed political choices," explains editor Neil Skene. (<http://voter96.cqalert.com>)

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **Post-It scam continues to strike.** Georgetown Publishing House sends out what looks like a mag tearsheet praising one of its books, with a Post-It attached that reads, "Try this, it works. J." (See [pr](#) 8/21/95). Not knowing a "J" that would send such a note, the tack didn't work in this office. But in some places the deception must be working. James Durham, dir of biz dev'l for the law firm Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris & Glovsky, sent his 2nd e-mail in 2 yrs to members of the firm explaining he is not the "J" on the Post-It notes, according to the Boston Globe. Durham has had friends call from as far away as Atlanta asking if he really thought they should buy the book. One member of the firm did. Better Business Bureau of DC has asked Georgetown to cease & desist, "so far with no success."

¶ **Nominations for strategic employee volunteer programs** are sought by The Points of Light Foundation. Businesses of all kinds & sizes that are addressing a serious community need thru a company-wide & company-supported program are eligible. Self-nominations are ok. Programs must 1) have active encouragement & support of CEO, 2) demonstrate linkage between doing good in the community & doing well in business. Winning programs will be recognized in business forums & publications around the country, including a special Fortune supplement in Nov. '95 winners were: Allstate (Northbrook, Ill); Fannie Mae (DC); Bonneville Int'l (Salt Lake City); Memphis Light, Gas & Power; Miller Freeman (San Francisco); Ames Rubber (Hamburg, NJ). (Nomination form from Fdn at 1737 H St, NW, Wash, DC 20006; 202/223-9186 x123)

¶ **Robert Redford says he's sorry he played Bob Woodward in All the President's Men**, film about Watergate, because it helped recruit a new generation of journalists for the wrong reason -- "less of truth-getting & more about getting exposure" & sensationalism.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

DIED. W.W. "Bill" Marsh (Rockey/Marsh Public Relations, Portland, Ore) at 81 of a heart attack. Longtime PRSA leader was one of its first accredited members; received Paul M. Lund Public Service Award in '82. Susanne Roschwalb (assoc prof of comm & dir of pr

weekend grad prgm, American Univ, DC) at 56 of cancer. Co-author of *Litigation Public Relations: Court-ing Public Opinion*. Was conducting research & writing what was to be a biography of Edward L. Bernays. Named "PR Woman of the Year" in '93 by Washington Women in PR.

BOEING'S CONSUMER CREED: TECHNOLOGY MUST BE FRIENDLY

After a spate of product problems in the 80s, Frank Condit felt Boeing's mistake was thinking of itself as a technology outfit -- rather than a maker of consumer products. This error was -- is -- commonplace. Perhaps understandably, since a 747 or the 777 (whose development Condit was leading at the time) is an incredibly complex technological undertaking.

WIDESPREAD MISUNDERSTANDING BY MANAGEMENT EVERYWHERE

Translate this to **healthcare**.

Hospitals & other providers lost the public's trust by emphasizing technology over customer care. It was more important to have the newest gadget than invest in customer-friendly spaces, staff training or procedures.

- Or **schools**, even, where the technology or task -- teaching & efficient handling of the students -- often means not greeting visitors properly, brusque telephone manners, not caring sufficiently about how the entrances or halls appear to visitors & daily users.
- **Colleges** were, and some are, notorious for putting technological or process "efficiency" ahead of customers. Standing in long lines to register for classes was commonplace, while the clerk may have had to handle the phones at the same time as registering students.
- One need not mention **computer & software** suppliers. They meet the Tacoma News-Tribune's description of Condit's conundrum:

If you're a technology company, you come up with some whiz-bang product & then go out & see whether there's a market for it. There are disastrous consequences when you misjudge.

But if you're the manufacturer of a consumer product, then the customer's needs become paramount. By meeting the customer's needs, you hedge against a catastrophic misjudgment.

LEADS TO CEO JOB

Named Boeing's new CEO last week, Condit's 1992 explanation of his customer creed resurfaced:

The customer doesn't carry the responsibility to be concise & tell you exactly what they need. They may not even know it. Your job is to find it out. What are they going to need 5 years from now? Ten? How will their markets develop & what will be important in their markets?



THE FAMOUS EXAMPLE RECALLED

Applying his beliefs to the 777, Condit invited customers to actually help design the plane (pr 6/6/94). One result symbolizes the impact:

For 40 years the button that opens the refueling latch had been carefully crafted to fit *the designer's* ungloved finger. Customers told the company this meant when it's 20 below at O'Hare, *the mechanic* has to take off his glove to operate the latch. Fingers froze to the button & the mechanic lost skin.

400 similar changes that customers wanted were designed into the 777. Result: The plane has won nearly 80% of the orders in its size range.

ANOTHER REVOLUTIONARY CONDIT IDEA

"The CEO's responsibility fundamentally is to think beyond their own tenure."

Wow! If that catches on ...

EFFECTIVE HI TECH USE DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN DATA & INFO

The *information superhighway* is really a *data superhighway*. Unless these data can be converted into info on which sound decisions can be made, these data are almost totally useless, writes A. Coskun Samli in his book *Information-Driven Marketing Decisions: Development of Strategic Information Systems* (Greenwood Publishing Group). Key points for pr:

1. **"The term 'information overload' is, I believe, a total misnomer.** Today's US Business environment & the decisionmakers in it are not suffering from an information overload. On the contrary, they are suffering from a data overload & an information underload." Book looks at the "art & science" of information generation & its use for marketing.
2. **He disparages the American orientation to downsize & turn over employees.** This does not allow "the generation of knowledge based on using information for prolonged periods of time." A learning curve exists between information generation & knowledge conversion -- which requires experience. "If the experience is not acquired & used properly, in the long run, the life & well-being of the firm will clearly be put in jeopardy." [Compare pr 1/1] (\$59.95; 216 pgs; 800/225-5800)

AT&T RESPONDS TO SUSTAINED CRITICISM WITH EMPLOYEE LETTER

Will it work -- 4 rather packed pages, with large subheads, but all written in paragraphs? Recipients' interest level is probably high. Communication from the CEO, who signed it, may help keep morale from going lower (several insiders have publicly described it as very low -- not unexpected under the circumstances of a huge downsizing & splitting the company in 3).

Company's use of 20+ web pages for each stakeholder group at time of breakup announcement was a first & successful. Message strategy of this letter may be equally compelling:

1. **Intro sentence:** "AT&T has always made news, but I can't remember when the coverage of our business has been as unfavorable & relentless as in the past few weeks."
2. **Move immediately to employee interest:** "I know how much pride you have in AT&T. And I know what it means to your ability to do your job when our business is represented negatively & inaccurately."
3. **Deal with criticisms one-by-one:** And link each to employee interest. Earnings, for example. After explaining outsiders' "interpretations of our financial performance" -- nicely throwing doubt on them -- move to "There's more at stake here than pride. After all, a high percentage of us own stock in the company. In fact, together we own 11% of AT&T's stock, so we have a vested interest in real shareholder value, too." Other topics:
 - "If we're so successful, why are we restructuring & downsizing?"
 - "Act while you're strong"
 - "Ramifications of restructuring"
 - "Still anchored in the community"
 - "Executive compensation" (attempting to get ahead of expected negative response to the next day's announcement of CEO's annual remuneration & a special stock option for selected execs intended to keep them around thru the transition)
4. **Close with an irrefutable point:** "Three years ago, *Fortune* asked: 'Will AT&T rule the world.' And my photograph appeared shortly afterwards on a *Business Week* cover headlined '1-800-GUTS.' Media coverage often swings like a pendulum ... what matters in the end is how well AT&T performs for customers ... there's no one better able than you (to do this)."
5. **Down-to-earth portrayal of CEO:** Letter is signed simply "Bob Allen" in the friendly manner he uses. No title, or full name or other ego-sign so characteristic of some execs.

TECHNOLOGY USE IN ISSUES & PUBLIC AFFAIRS CAMPAIGNS

1. **Imagine an internet based grassroots campaign.** Not one piece of mail is sent thru the post office. CyberRoots is APCO Associates' client service that uses the internet as an advocacy tool.
 - "Since activists generally are college educated adults & over 90% of those currently connected to cyberspace are college educated adults, the internet provides fertile ground for recruiting activists to clients' issues," notes APCO.
 - Service develops home pages that provide info & action steps to engage visitors. Example: a home page to organize a grassroots campaign, Superfund Reform '95, provides info about the movement, encourages activism, allows users to e-mail letters to Congress directly from the home page. Chat rooms & newsgroups are also used to engage interest in an issue. (Info: <http://www.apcoassoc.com> or call them at 202/778-1000)