

## ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

Melding of classic literature, 4-star hotel & charity is high class promo. 6 years ago the original handwritten manuscript of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was discovered in an attic, making it possible to see Mark Twain's original intent before publishers' edits for political correctness of the day. "Startling differences" are revealed, according to Twain expert Justin Kaplan (incidentally, Ed Bernays' son-in-law). Twain intended a much darker portrayal of slavery & argued far more aggressively for abolition. At Loews Hotels & Resorts a copy is in the rooms. It can be purchased for \$25 added to the bill -- and proceeds go to local literacy groups & Literacy Partners. Quality features include a surprising discovery, a hardbound version of a title known to everyone, a pleasant read while at the hotel, a chance to own the book and to help others easily.

Longtime pr leader Ed Block reminds of the centrality of counseling to pr. It is what links the field to policymaking & thus to top management. It got us into top mgmt &, if done right, will keep us there. "What started public relations down the slippery slope was when pr people allowed themselves to be called 'communicators.'" The term is far too limiting, and certainly not all -- or the most important thing -- we do, he feels.

Another joint venture of multiple organizations (pr 2/26), this time in the Chicago area. The venture is a job bank. Monthly publication lists positions, professionals & freelancers available. Participating org's include Ill Chap/Nat'l School PR Ass'n, Independent Writers of Chicago, IABC, PRSA/Chi & Greater O'Hare chapters, Publicity Club of Chi, Women's Adv'g Club of Chi, WICI/Chi & North Shore chapters. Group may go further and "pursue the roundtable idea," notes Sharon Henderson, dir comty info, Elementary Schl Dist 181 (Hinsdale, Ill) & a member of INSPRA.

Outsourcing is heavily used. 65% of corp pr pros in NYC & PRSA's Tri-State region report outsourcing as much as 25% of their work, reveals a survey by PRSA/NY. For respondents reporting an increased budget, 27% plan to outsource more. 72% will outsource up to 25% of their work. 16% outsource 25-50%; 9% outsource 50-65%; 3% outsource more than 80%.

## WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

RETIRES, BUT: Luis Morales (Robert Morris Assocs, Phila) after 26 yrs. He will now devote full time to his PRSA presidency & then build his own consulting practice. "This is a unique opportunity to give more time & attention rarely open to my predecessors who've had to balance 2 roles, wear 2 hats & try to be in 2 places simultaneously."

HONORS. Brad Whitworth (internat'l comms & pa mgr, Hewlett-Packard, San Francisco) to receive IABC's top member honor, the Fellow Award, during conference June 16-19.

HONORS. Patrick Jackson (pr's editor, & principal, Jackson Jackson & Wagner) is the first inductee of the Rowan College PR Hall of Fame, recognizing 46 yrs of contributions to pr practice & professionalism.

## IDEAL: EMPLOYEE COM'N SO INGRAINED MANAGERS JUST DO IT

Many once specialized functions have become part of every manager's portfolio -- strategic planning & HR activities come quickly to mind. PR is moving into the same category, for good reason:

"Communications people have to give up ownership of their knowledge, transfer it to the managers. They should not latch onto their stuff and say, 'I do publications,' or 'I do videos,' or 'I do programs.' These things will all go away or change. Practitioners must be integrated into the organization and have a continual, changing role that involves training, hr, communications, planning & strategizing. They should be asking not what to communicate, but 'What are the organization's issues? How can I help it address them?'"

Dean Landeche of PMI Food Equipment Group & Hobart Corp (Troy, Ohio) said this in pr 5 years ago (3/25/91). His title then was mgr internal comms. He has since lived his words.

- A. When he left PMI in '91, it did away with the internal communications function as it had existed. What remained was reassigned to HR. It operated "thru the product lines & HR efforts and primarily focused on face-to-face." The person in charge of internal communication also left the company & has not been replaced.
- B. "Based on the programs that were established & the inroads that were made with face-to-face communications, focusing on opening lines of communications between managers & employees and specifically communicating about the business challenges that we were facing & getting employees involved, the real need for an ongoing employee communication function with a person dedicated to it was gone."
- C. In '93, Landeche returned to PMI "to run our sales training, service training & marketing communication program."

FROM CENTRALIZED TO  
DECENTRALIZED COMMUNICATIONS

1. From '87 to '91 "we invested heavily in centralized employee communication to launch a process. And we were very much process oriented, making sure that face-to-face personal communication was happening."
2. We did a lot of training, teaching managers how to communicate, especially in the manufacturing area. It's one of the things that led to the decision to decentralize & let the local level handle it."



3. Business conditions in '91 drove some restructuring & the decision to **decentralize internal communications**. "What happened was the process took hold, the responsibility for the process was transferred thru the HR dep't into the managerial ranks & they now carry that responsibility. There was no need for a dedicated communicator to support programs because we eliminated most programs -- eg, quarterly video program, managerial newsletter have all gone away." Some details:

- **All employee print communications have been eliminated.** But informal printed communications for local levels do continue, in varying forms -- electronic bulletin boards, regular bulletin boards, informal newsletters.
- **Not centrally resourced.** Instead you'll find a human resources person serving 2 major product divisions. That HR person works with a mgmt team, is responsible for employee comms & drives the process of conducting employee meetings, conducting the Q&A period & any written comms.
- "With the **proliferation of communication media** -- whether it's face-to-face or electronic (eg, e-mail, bulletin boards, phone mail) -- some of the more formal programs have gone away. We tend to reserve phone mail, e-mail & other electronic, faster things for more specific, urgent business issues."
- Landeche's position also supports communications:
  - 1) The marketing function supports local newsletters with design & editing. Also "before communicating to the marketplace we do some internal pieces saying 'here's what's going to our customers, here's what we're saying & why.'" A lot of these are directed to sales & operations -- 2000 people spread across the country. "Written is the best way to get info to them that they can read at their convenience."
  - 2) Mgmt training is part of sales training & "we invest quite a bit of time in it. Part of that mgmt training is employee communication -- how to conduct an employee meeting, how to talk about topics of importance, how to plan communications -- everything from formal business announcements to open Q&A sessions."

"So the internal communication process lives on, altho the dep't itself is gone."

## MERGERS AGAIN TESTBED FOR STUDY SHOWING VALUE PR ADDS

"The single most important key to success [of mergers & acquisitions] is not the price paid or even the underlying strategy, but rather the way the merger is managed **after the deal is consummated**," finds a study by Mercer Management Consulting. 300 large acquisitions completed between '84 & '94 were studied.

Of the deals worth \$500+ million, only 41% have succeeded in generating a total return exceeding industry averages. But success rates are improving: in the 80s, 37% of the deals achieved returns exceeding industry averages; in the 90s, 49%. Why the improvement? Culture & relationships.

## WHAT LEADS TO SUCCESS?

1) Moving quickly & boldly; 2) Thinking & operating outside the usual boundaries to engineer a new company; 3) Managing the new orgn's culture & values with sensitivity; 4) Making sure high-value customers win too; 5) Creating & securing commitment to a shared vision while knowing that, tho future options may differ from near-term operating realities, they are not in competition with each other.

## INTEGRATING CULTURES

"Culture matters. It can make a merger or break it," write Kenneth Smith & James Quella of MMC in an article in Mergers & Acquisitions mag. They recommend 4 program elements for post-merger situations -- and **all are pr activities**:

1. **Identity.** It needs to be managed at least as attentively internally as it is externally.
2. **Attention to the "soft stuff."** Listen to employees & managers. Encourage them to articulate issues & concerns. Create forums & response mechanisms so small problems do not go unattended.
3. **Human resources management.** Merge human resources systems quickly to identify the best people, regardless of former allegiance, & to set new standards.
4. **Overcommunicate.** Communicate frequently -- up, down & sideways. Repeat key messages over & over, using every available media. Listen & respond, but with a clear purpose in mind. Control the agenda of the hall talk.

Findings dovetail with Ogilvy Adams & Rinehart study of mergers (pr 4/15). (More from Susan Hershman, MMC, P.O. Box 501, Toronto, Ontario M5J 2S5; 416/868-2200, fax 416/868-2208)

## IABC's *Communication World Online* LAUNCHED MAY 1 IS TEST

The new magazine (on its homepage: <http://www.iabc.com>) differs significantly from IABC's previous electronic version of *Communication World*. That was simply a selection of content that appeared in the print version.

"We've learned to take better advantage of electronic communication, as more of our membership goes online. *CWO* offers many interactive opportunities to engage viewers in ways print cannot," notes ed. Gloria Gordon.

**Pilot issue is a test case for *CWO* & electronic mag publishing.** Viewers will be surveyed. Responses will be reflected & reported in the 2nd edition of *CWO* in August. "This is an opportunity for communication professionals to help build a model, set the standards & influence the direction of *CWO* & electronic magazine publishing."

To help financially, *Communication World* will not be printed in May or August; tho selected *CWO* features will be available via fax on demand to IABC mbrs not online by calling 415/433-4814. Advantages of publishing online, notes Gordon, are speed, accessibility & the opportunity for interaction, clarification & rebuttal.