

ITEMS FOR PROFESSIONALS TO PONDER

New tool for corporate reputation management. Corporate Equity Performance System (CEPS) measures the strength of a company's reputation, compares it to its competitors, & develops practical action plans for enhancing the company's reputation. One of the results of the research is an "equity score," which can be measured against other companies & competitors & can be tracked over time. It provides insight for the development & refinement of communications plans to improve the equity score. CEPS is designed to cover key stakeholders audiences -- including customers, financial analysts, portfolio mgrs, employees, media, regulators, academia, opinion leaders & the public at large. Sr mgmt for the company is also surveyed as part of the fact-finding process. The research identifies those attributes or clusters of attributes that have an impact on behavior on an audience-by-audience basis, which then becomes the basis for com'ns planning. This new tool is developed by Hill & Knowlton and Yankelovich Partners. (Info: 212/885-0300)

Online success will go to organizations that build community, notes Lighthouse View, a fax newsletter. How can you transform your Web site from resembling a company manual into a "community"? "Eliminate the downward communication. The most significant thing you can do is introduce opportunities for the site's members to talk with one another & with your staff." This need transcends technology. Any organization that builds community (with internal &/or external publics) is fulfilling an essential human need & harvesting an opportunity, according to the newsletter.

DC chapter of Black Public Relations Society (BPRS) & Nat'l Public Radio (NPR) launch the "PR Institute" -- a series of monthly professional development seminars for pr students & experienced practitioners. Mission is to enhance knowledge & help increase the number of people of color working in the pr profession, says the press release. 9 monthly workshops began Sat, Sept 27, from 9-noon at NPR HQ (635 Mass Ave, NW). Curriculum includes: marketing yourself; the art of writing; strategic planning; "new" media relations; graphic design/photography; how to plan, execute & staff special events; billable hours/time is money; training your spokesperson; pr networking & prospecting in Wash DC. (To register, call Shana Brown at 202/414-2312; fees, \$5 students, \$10 BPRS mbrs, \$15 others)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS**TAKING IT A LITTLE BIT EASIER.**

Harold Burson becomes Founding Chmn of Burson-Marsteller Nov. 1. He'll remain active. New chmn is adman Graham Phillips, ex-CEO of B-M owner, the Ogilvy & Mather ad agcy. B-M calls itself a "global perception mgmt firm" -- which pleases prr since the newsletter introduced the concept & phrase in the early 80s. Nearing its 50th yr, B-M employs 2200 pros in 35 countries.

NOMINATED. PRSA Assembly delegates-at-large: Judi Borgo (NW Ga. Girl Scout Council, Atlanta) & Art Stevens (Lobsenz-Stevens, NYC). Canadian delegate-at-large, Jean Valin (Canadian Envir. Assessment Agcy, Ottawa)

HONORS. Counselor Vicky Hastings receives the 1997 Wm. Marsh Award from Portland (Ore) PRSA for "landmark achievements in public relations."

OLD BERNAYS TACTIC TURNS UP IN INHALER PR FIGHT

Getting folks at the grassroots to communicate to officials using their own words & handwriting was one of Eddie's standards. Often he'd tear pages out of *Who's Who* & pass them out to clients' members, employees or supporters, provide a guide on points to make, then ask them to write in their own language to create awareness of a position or cause.

Drug firm Glaxo Wellcome got asthma patients to do this by funding the Committee to Protect MDIs (metered dose inhalers). Target was the FDA, which is considering phasing out MDIs since they use CFC (chlorofluorocarbon) propellants -- already banned in hair spray & air conditioners under a 1987 treaty to protect earth's ozone layer. 9,000 letters were delivered to FDA -- the tactic is powerful.

Tear-jerking letters -- used on Capitol Hill by Glaxo lobbyists -- helped persuade 2 Congressmen to sponsor legislation to halt FDA rulemaking on MDIs. The bill is pending.

ETHICS COMES INTO PLAY

Unfortunately, the Committee was a shell, AP found, with a suburban Newark P.O. box & a phone answered by a machine. "Public relations consultant Gail Safian," who also lobbied the cause, turned out newsletters, mailings & a web site to spur the US' 15 million asthmatics to write the FDA.

She told AP she "couldn't remember how she became involved" in the case -- not a very good euphemism for "no comment." She also declined to discuss the Committee's membership or finances. AP discovered, however, that the funding source was Glaxo.

Legitimate asthma groups said she used scare tactics and was "being too frightening" -- making it appear inhalers were going to be banned. Instead, FDA wants to switch to new ozone-friendly replacements. That's the rub.

\$3/4 BILLION MARKET AT STAKE

Glaxo's MDI now has a major share -- but 3M has licensed new propellant technology to Schering-Plough. Their ethics also appear questionable, however.

3M asked a recognized asthma association to endorse a \$40,000 focus group effort asking asthmatics about willingness to switch to the new inhalers. But that group's leader said 3M wanted to ask leading questions so she refused.



But then she asked Glaxo to fund her group's own survey of 20,000 patients on the same subject. When giants fight over a market, anything goes -- including pr ethics, which sometimes go out the window.

WHY THE TECHNIQUE WORKS

"Most of the letters are handwritten and make poignant personal pitches that a corporate lobbyist could not," as the AP reporter phrased it.

EDELMAN SEES FIELD DIMINISHED BY NOT USING TERM PR

Public relations today is marked by 1) globalization, 2) communications that are direct & targeted in this "interactive era," & 3) young professionals entering the field who are "highly-educated, bright, enthusiastic & committed to a career in public relations," Daniel Edelman told Arthur Page Society members upon his recent induction into the Society's Hall of Fame. His reflections:

- **PR IS IN SR. MGMT ROLE** Regarding being present at the table with the CEO & other senior corporate officers & having our counsel respected, "we've arrived." But he points to the infrequent use of the words "public relations" in titles & in names of the top firms: Only 6 of the top 50 pr firms carry *public relations* in their title, & only 2 of the top 10, according to O'Dwyer's Directory. Only 2 of the Arthur Page Society trustees refer to pr in their title.
- **BUT NEEDS TO USE THE RIGHT NAME** "How can we reinforce, defend, advance & project the importance & major role of public relations if the leadership...doesn't carry the term *public relations* on its business card, its letterhead & in any public references?.... I am convinced our mission is to perform in such a way that we bring honor & respect to the term *public relations* rather than discarding it."

"This technological revolution clearly represents the most important new opportunity for pr to assume leadership in dissemination of valued information. It positions us in the forefront in the news business enabling us for the first time to deal directly with out target audiences."
- **CAN NOW GO DIRECT** "We have the advantage of flexibility, rapidity of delivery &, for the first time, an opportunity to go directly to consumers & other publics without the screen of the 3rd party reporter. The public now has a customized newspaper delivered via PC. PR people serve as news creators providing end product. We post information on treatment of disease on a pharmaceutical company home page. We create promotions that track directly to sales. We sail by advertising, direct mail & phone marketers. We take the story directly to an interested audience. Now pr people are the new reporters & editors. The consumer constructs his/her own newspaper & is able to stay up to the minute with sports news in the *LATimes*, editorials in the *WSJ* & op-eds from the *Washington Post* & the *NYTimes*.... And it's a worldwide phenomenon."

- **OUTSOURCING IN** Large & mid-sized companies will continue to have a pr dep't headed by a sr experienced exec. But staffs will be smaller, he predicts. Special needs will be met by pr firms. "We've already seen there are more project assignments than retainers in Asia. And that's increasingly happening in Europe. It's beginning to be more of a factor in the US as well. I foresee pr firms operating more or less like law firms with retainers but an increased number of special assignments."
- **ETHICS ESSENTIAL** Commitment to the highest standards of ethical practice is critical "in these times of cynicism about politics & morality in general. We want to make sure we & our clients are doing the right things & we're telling the truth. We have to be bold in insisting on immediate & thorough disclosure on the part of our clients. **We have to constantly emphasize that it's what you do rather than what you say about what you do that really counts.**"
- **EDUCATING MGRS & JOURNALISTS RE PR** "Let's commit to meeting with deans of journalism schools & business schools to see if we can get public relations included in their curricula.... It's a very important responsibility of the school to prepare students for the possibility of a career in pr if not in journalism where there are fewer job openings every year. Beyond that, I feel it's important to educate *all* students on the values & the role of public relations."

PERCEPTIONS & PSYCHOLOGY OF HEALTHCARE EXAMINED BY JOURNAL

Healthcare is like the stock market -- not what it seems. Wall Street & the economy aren't driven by statistical data & research but by perceptions, often misperceptions. Fed chmn Alan Greenspan makes a remark & the market falls: ridiculous, but true. It's pr, not econometrics.

Healthcare is the same. Since so little *definitive* knowledge exists about human health -- not even the cause or cure of the common cold -- and that changes monthly with new research findings, hunches & perception rule. "Health hype" can exist only in such a setting of uncertainty. Ditto the great interest in mind-body issues. A rich area of inquiry for pr pros.

Now a new medical journal will scientifically evaluate the claims of increasingly popular alternative medicine. *The Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine* officially debuts October 14, is endorsed by the Council for Scientific Medicine. Other journals do deal with alternative medicine, but they only advocate treatments, rarely assess them objectively, notes the Council.

The *Review's* purpose, however, is to apply the tools of science & reason to determine the validity of hypotheses & the effectiveness of treatments -- answering the questions "is it true?" & "does it work?" First issue covers:

- homeopathy
- anti-cancer "cure" hydrazine sulfate
- chelation therapy
- therapeutic touch
- Deepak Chopra's claims regarding quantum healing
- alternative medicine proponent Andrew Weil (Info: 716/636-7571)