

is the only NJ com'ns firm with a pa practitioner who holds this degree. Only 20 people in NJ have earned it, according to Rutgers. As a former NJ assemblyman & a recognized expert in municipal affairs & comty rels, Warsh is instrumental in building the firm's pub afrs practice -- providing strategic counsel for org'ns that interact with county & local gov'ts.

Be aware of the symbols you use & the message they connote before trying to usurp them to fit your plan. Here's one that backfired. A poster/New Year's card arrived at prr's office with an attention-grabbing symbol filling 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the poster -- a milk carton with the picture of a baby & beneath it the words "Missing Child Alert." This symbol is instantly recognizable & says, "Here's a devastated parent's plea for their missing child." But in this case it's a light-hearted triviality about a "missing baby" -- 1997. The juxtaposition of frivolity instead of the expected anguish left this reader incensed at the designer's (& the entire firm's) insensitivity.

"Of all the functions we oversee in the name of pr, media relations is the one we are held solely responsible for," contends Ed Block, responding to Alice Collingwood (pr 1/12) who took issue with his statement (in 12/1/97 plain talk) that media rels is pr's first priority. "On the basis of my experience as a chief pr officer I stand on what I said. If we don't do that job consistently well it will be assumed by the CEO & others in top management that the pr shop can't do anything else competently either and, as a consequence, you lose your credibility & lose your leverage as counselors. That may be unfair but it is a fact. I am not alone in my contention. Too many chief pr officers have learned this lesson the hard way & will agree. With respect to internal communications & in the context of how budget dollars are allocated, the function we referred to as employee information always, always commanded the lion's share of our resources & that remains true today in AT&T's pr shop. So, to the extent that a commitment of budget dollars & personnel reflect organizational priorities, internal communications is & always was number one. Even so, media relations is where you can earn or lose the franchise in a blink & woe to the chief pr officer who doesn't understand this reality."

US org'ns almost always send their press releases to Japanese, Chinese & Korean media outlets in English, according to an informal survey of Asian pub'ns by InterLingua Linguistic Services. "Have you ever received a press release in Japanese or Chinese? If you have, did you pay to have it translated into English so you can decide if there's anything in it worthwhile to report? Obviously the answer is 'no.' Most likely, it just went into the garbage," says David Andrews, InterLingua's CEO. "It's amazing to me that US firms are willing to gamble their Asian publicity efforts on the notion that all editors in Japan, Korea & China read English well enough to understand the contents of a press release." According to the survey, most English language releases end up in the trash, unread. (More from them at 423 S. Pacific Coast Highway, Redondo Beach, Calif 90277; 310/792-3636)

Related thought: How many big city publicists send stuff to smaller cities & rural areas that assume the residents there are up on the latest fads & lingo of Big Town? All issues are local, all language is local -- and it may have reached the point that all effective com'n is local.

## VISION STATEMENTS: DO THEY HOLD MOTIVATIONAL POWER?

Perhaps because many organizations have lifeless vision/mission/value statements -- that sit there in framed neatness on everyone's wall but are never used as drivers of actions or policies -- the concept is regularly denigrated. They are valuable only when they truly are the Guidestar against which all planning & behavior are tested.

Responsibility for an underlying motif so encompassing must at least be shared by pr -- if not 100% in pr's bailiwick. How pr helps create & frame the vision, & why it must be deeply involved, are set forth in Robert Miles' book, *Corporate Comeback* (pr 8/11/97) -- the best volume yet on transforming organizations (from Jossey-Bass Publishers, 415/433-1740).

### MILES' RESEARCH FINDS 3 FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTES ARE NECESSARY:

- 1. Vision led; it is the First Step.** Transformational change, as contrasted with incremental change, requires creation of a clear but compelling vision of a desirable future state, one that can only be fully defined if the organization makes a sustained movement to it.
  - Therefore, visionary leadership (simply put, leaders with a vision that is totally communicated) is the essence of successful organizational transformation.
- 2. Total-system perspective.** The organization must move from its present state to a vision state, not piecemeal but by simultaneously articulating all the major elements of the whole organization.
- 3. Vision must be embedded in a comprehensive implementation process** -- a sustained process of organizational learning & an orderly orchestration (thru direct intervention) of all the pieces in order to reach the vision state.

Leaders at all levels in the org'n must perform 4 major tasks. If leadership falls short on any one of these tasks, the transformation process will fail:

- 1. GENERATE ENERGY TO LAUNCH & SUSTAIN THE PROCESS** To get people to invest their energy, they must first be dissatisfied with the status quo, then informed about the magnitude & direction of possible change. Leaders must therefore create opportunities for employees at all levels to confront reality. This can be done by:
  - a) external benchmarking
  - b) analyzing industry & other trends
  - c) diagnosing internal strengths & weaknesses



**2. DEVELOP THE VISION**

A compelling vision "can help people release their hold on the status quo so as to experiment with new approaches & behaviors."

- A vision worth pursuing is one that "fundamentally alters the traditional rules of engagement of competitive rivalries in an industry, redraws the boundaries between industries, or creates new competitive space"
- "It appeals to customers, stockholders & employees. Even in the direst of situations, effective visions tend to include new possibilities for growth & fair treatment of employees"
- "An effective vision is strategically sound & evocative enough to generate widespread emotional appeal"
- "Ultimately it must be translated into expectations & behaviors for every component, group & individual in the organization"
- A **business success model** is an essential companion to a vision. It is grounded in solid external benchmarking data & reveals in strategic & financial terms what needs to be transformed as the change process unfolds. It is both an articulation of strategic intent & a projection of business results for the whole org'n.

**3. ALIGN THE ORGANIZATION TO THE VISION**

The internal org'n consists of structure, infrastructure, culture, competencies & people, & process. All these elements need to be deliberately *orchestrated* to maintain dynamic alignment.

- **Structure & infrastructure** are generally used first to align the org'n to support a new vision -- because they usually are changed most quickly.
- **People, culture & core competencies** generally take more time to bring into alignment. By resetting the more formal & tangible elements of org'n design, transformational leaders can provide early & relatively unambiguous signals about what kinds of people, culture & competencies will be needed. In the process, they can also encourage the development & alignment of these softer, more subjective elements of organization design.

**4. COMMUNICATE THE VISION CEASELESSLY**

But it all starts with, & hinges on, a credible & understandable vision.

**STARBUCKS SHOWS HOW THIS THEORY WORKS**

Last summer, 3 employees were murdered in the Starbucks store in Georgetown (DC). As the crisis unfolded, Starbucks' response was incredibly sensitive, based on the company's totally communicated mission statement -- a model for others to emulate.

- CEO flew out, held a press conference expressing dismay, compassion
- Closed the shop
- Paid for the funerals; held a memorial service for families & friends
- Offered reward for finding perpetrator(s)
- Store is currently being remodeled. Upon reopening, all future net proceeds will go to a foundation that works to stop violent crime

- Continues to work closely with police to find perpetrator(s)
- In a recent interview with Larry King, CEO expressed his dismay that the crime remains unsolved.

**STARBUCKS' MISSION STATEMENT**

"It's a key component of everything we do & all decisions we make as a company," spokesperson Chris Gimbl told prr. Its mission:

*"Establish Starbucks as the premier purveyor of the finest coffee in the world while maintaining our uncompromising principles as we grow. The following 6 guiding principles will help us measure the appropriateness of our decisions:*

1. *Provide a great work environment & treat each other with respect & dignity*
2. *Embrace diversity as an essential component in the way we do business*
3. *Apply the highest standards of excellence to the purchasing, roasting & fresh delivery of our coffee*
4. *Develop enthusiastically satisfied customers all of the time*
5. *Contribute positively to our communities and our environment*
6. *Recognize that profitability is essential to our future success"*

**RESEARCH DEMONSTRATES HOW HARD IT IS TO REACH AUDIENCES NOW**

Americans know more about eating right & staying healthy but nearly half are still confused, according to a survey by Creamer Dickson Basford. "There's a general confusion from news stories about what to eat & how to avoid serious illnesses," says Jean Farinelli, CDB's CEO. Findings:

- 44% are confused by news stories discussing what foods to **avoid** eating
- 42% are confused over stories about ways to minimize risk of serious illness
- Overall, people feel more knowledgeable about nutrition & trends in preventive medicine than they did in '94. Women & the better educated report being more knowledgeable, but neither age nor income are factors.

<u>Feel Knowledgeable about:</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1994</u>
Nutrition	80%	80%	61%
Preventive Medicine	64	65	48

Most Americans read labels to find out the nutritional content of food, contents & implications of prescription & non-prescription medicines. Women & those who are better educated are more likely to read labels on food.

Women are more likely than men to be confused by news stories concerning how to minimize risk of serious illness -- as are adults over 55, people who did not attend college & those with modest incomes, according to the survey. (More from CDB, 350 Hudson St, NYC 10014; 212/367-6800)

**ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS:**

¶ **Trend:** pr/pa pros with backgrounds outside of pr. MWW Group's svp Jeffrey Warsh has earned the Diplomate in Municipal Law certification from Rutgers U & the Institute for Municipal Attorneys. According to MWW, it