

¶ **Non-financial indicators are seen at work** in interview with prominent fund manager Fred Kobrick. Longtime star in the Boston fund constellation (Fidelity, Putnam, Wellington et al), he was shadowed by a *Globe* reporter when he met with CFO of hot Internet firm Lycos. "Now, 15 minutes (before the interview) he is tackling *intangibles*. How he perceives the Lycos culture will influence" whether he invests. Questions he asks include (1) most fun part of CFO's job, & worst nightmares; (2) how company handles cultural differences between E.Coast & W.Coast offices. Reporter finds Kobrick "alternates between *psychologist & cultural anthropologist*." Clinchers: "Kobrick wants not projector slides but a window onto the corporate soul;" & "Executives with no sense of humor are probably going to make bad decisions because of stress, which makes me more cautious about investing in their companies." (Emphases added; copy from pr)

¶ **PRSA Counselors Academy goes on-line with new Web site** (www.prsa-counselors.org). Site includes 5 sections: 1) about the Counselors Academy; 2) pr news & info; 3) industry research & directories; 4) new products & resources; 5) ask-a-counselor -- where veteran pr pros answer questions submitted electronically. "This is a way for these seasoned practitioners to 'give back' to their profession as well as for visitors to our site to benefit from their knowledge," explains Amanda Brown-Olmstead, '98 chair of the Academy. First panel of experts features past chairs of the Academy: Gary Myers, Joe Epley & Sue Bohle. As members generate links & submit new content, site will evolve. To be added this fall: 6) classified ads for pr org'ns & org'ns that serve the profession; & 7) password-accessed "members only" section that will contain member newsletters, monographs & professional development opportunities.

¶ **The quarterly journal *Simulation & Gaming*** explores new ways to teach, train, consult & do research. It includes articles on simulation, computerized simulation, gaming, modeling, play, role-play, debriefing, game design, experiential learning, toys & related methodologies. Topic areas include sociology, psychology, cognition, management, negotiation, economics, communication, organization studies, education, multiculturalism, international studies, decision making, peace & conflict studies, language training, learning theory, educational technologies, policy & planning, political science, environmental issues, research methodology. (More from Sage Pub'ns, Box 5084, Thousand Oaks, CA 91359; 805/499-9774; <http://www.unice.fr/sg>)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. Mitch Kozikowski, exec dir-pa, U Pittsburgh, receives 1998 Amelia Lobsenz/Pinnacle Worldwide Legends of PR Award. It recognizes "an individual who has contributed to the growth & professionalism of pr counseling."

Larry Foster (State College, Pa) receives the Atlas Award for Lifetime Achievement in International

Public Relations from PRSA Int'l Section.

ELECTED. Exxon USA's (Houston) gov't afrs mgr, Woody Madden, named chair of Public Affairs Council; S.M. Henry Brown, Jr., vp-gov't afrs, Entergy Corp, DC, is chrmmn-elect; William Birteil, vp-gov't afrs, Pillsbury Co, Mpls, elected vice-chair.

INFORMATION LITERACY PICKS UP WHERE FUNCTIONAL LITERACY ENDS; CHANCE FOR PR TO DEAL WITH DEBILITATING INFO OVERLOAD

Literacy First we had the problem of people who couldn't read -- and pr social responsibility programs are helping solve it.

Functional illiteracy Then it was found even literate folk face a daunting situation -- they can read, but cannot make sense of the jargon used by various industries, professions & gov't agencies (among others).

- What exactly are "sunk costs," "stranded assets" or the "genome"?
- Can you understand most product assembly & instruction booklets?

PR helped cause this one, but has responded with Plain Language efforts.

Information literacy Now the publics we want to reach suffer from the information explosion & overcommunication. PR played a major role in causing this nightmare -- and still does. It threatens our ability to be effective. The info literacy movement may be a way to clean it up.

An American Library Assn (ALA) cmte report mainly urged more study -- by everyone from educators to librarians -- demonstrating the difficulty of getting a grip on the problem. At least they're trying to deal with it.

IMPORTANT FOR PR TO GET INVOLVED SO INFORMATION OVERLOAD GETS CURED

Information literacy skills are:
(1) knowing when there is a need for info, (2) identifying info

for that need, (3) being able to locate, evaluate & effectively use that info. Nothing new, just exacerbated by today's staggering quantity of info. Surprisingly, the movement started in the 70s when libraries noticed the danger. **What practitioners can do now:**

1. The movement focuses on teaching students, at all levels. Little progress is mentioned in **workforce or adult training** -- opportunities for leadership in employee rels, volunteerism & community rels projects
2. **Assisting schools & colleges** in teaching the topic can be a major addition to adopt-a-school & other educational outreach
3. **Join the Nat'l Forum on Information Literacy.** (c/o Assn of College & Research Libraries, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; 800/545-3433 ext 3248)
4. **Help the Forum with Recommendation 4:** "identifying ways to illustrate to business leaders the benefits of fostering an info literate workforce"



5. Get "A Progress Report on Information Literacy" from 800/545-2433 ext 3248, or www.ala.org/acrl.html

6. Urge PRSA, IABC, CPRS, NSPRA, CASE, PAC & sister societies to get involved -- thru programming, by joining the Forum etc.

ALA's cmte report foresees threats to "student achievement, quality of life, businesses & org'ns, & citizenship in a democracy." It is serious!

INFORMATION LITERACY & TODAY'S BUSINESSES

"The workplace of the present & future demands a new kind of worker. In a global marketplace, data is dispatched in picoseconds & gigabits, & this deluge of information must be sorted, evaluated & applied. When confronted by such an overload of information, most workers tend to take the first or most easily accessed information -- without any concern for the quality of that information.

"As a result, such poorly trained workers are costing businesses billions of dollars annually in low productivity, accidents, absenteeism & poor product quality. There is no question about it: for today's & tomorrow's workers, the workplace is going thru cataclysmic changes that very few will be prepared to participate in successfully & productively unless they are information literate."

-- National Forum on Information Literacy (which apparently could itself use some lessons on pithy writing & info mapping)

PR PROS MUST BE DIALOGUE EXPERTS TO INFLUENCE CHANGE

Practitioners must be "change able" in business today, says Joseph Goodman of New Directions Consulting (Plymouth, Mass). His hypothesis is that "Change happens in org'ns thru the agency of dialogue and conversation. If we are to be change agents & maintain our expertise as com'ns professionals, we have to be experts at dialogue."

People are scared of change; dialogue helps them work thru their feelings and be heard by mgmt.

THERE ARE 3 KINDS OF CHANGE COM'NS:

1. **Communicating about change** -- Basic info about the change -- who, what, where, why. Creating a vision statement. Getting out info via media
2. **Communicating to change** -- com'n that influences change. The most common form of com'n in meetings. We try to get agreement from others. Can be one-sided, doesn't create commitment to change

Change occurs rapidly in org'ns. Using media to communicate organizational change is not enough. Talking 1-on-1 with employees & key audiences is the best way to influence behavior. PR pros "are the experts in this field & should be sitting at the big table with the grown-ups," says Goodman.

3. **Communicating for change** -- discussing the undiscussable. The best way to engineer change. Creates climate conducive to change because discussion is open and honest

3 WAYS TO TRANSFORM DIALOGUE (THE A-I-D CYCLE):

1. **Attending** -- attend to what's being said. Pay attention to what people say and determine how they think.
2. **Inquiring** -- explore what's being said. Get past pr's role as advocate & ask questions. Pursue a point to get your audience's frame of reference. Ask others to explain their thinking, e.g. "I'm really trying to understand what you're thinking."
3. **Disclosing** -- disclose what you're thinking and why. An effective way to influence behavior & explore an issue, e.g. "I have a problem with what you said...but let me check that out with you. Is that what you really wanted to say?"

3 BUSINESSES SUCCESSFULLY INTEGRATING DIALOGUE WITH EMPLOYEES:

- **General Electric** -- CEO Jack Welch institutionalized employee dialogues & conversations
- **BellSouth** -- communicated structural changes in 10-state region thru live video broadcast by CEO. Immediately after broadcast, employees organized into dialogue groups with facilitators
- **Ernst & Young** -- organized "design shops," intensive, structured, 3-day dialogues to participatively discuss hardcore biz strategies

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

- ¶ **Preliminary findings from PRSA Foundation's National Issues Credibility Index** -- established to reassert the importance of strategic counseling as a priority before any communications implementations -- include people Americans consider credible & not credible sources of information. Most credible -- Supreme Court Justices, teachers, nationally recognized experts & members of the armed services. Not credible are pollsters, political party leaders, **pr specialists**, famous entertainers & talk show hosts.
- ¶ **Misapplication of NJ tax on pr & ad services rectified.** Coalition of firms & ass'ns led by adman Joe Dietz (Union) got legislation, signed by Gov. Whitman last week, clarifying the term "advertising services" in the Sales & Use Tax to apply only to "direct-mail advertising processing services." PR, ad & mktg services, when properly invoiced, are no longer subject to the 6% tax. But tax still applies to tangible personal property, which includes photos & illustrations. Advertising & Communication Sales Tax Coalition is preparing a tax manual to assist firms in complying with the changes. (next week's issue describes role of PR professionals and problems still remaining) (More from Dietz, 908/686-2220)