

IN ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH CLIENT COMPLAINT, NO JR's. AT NEW FIRM

Well-known LA counselors Paul Spindler & Don Reynolds have established Spindler & Reynolds, offering strategic com'ns services with a twist:

- They will emphasize "high quality service" by offering the "exclusive involvement" of the agency's principals -- no associates or junior account staff

Does this reflect a trend among megafirms to "bait & switch" clients by having junior staff work on business initially won by firm heavyweights? Spindler responds:

1. "This is a very standard complaint by clients. The person who sells the account is the number 1 or 2 person in the firm & he or she's a great salesperson. He's not going to tell the client he's not going to work on the account. He'll say anything to sell the account."
2. Firms can't charge higher fees to have principals work on all account business. So "you have to send out less experienced staff & the client is disappointed because they want the person who sold the business."

Only way to eliminate this problem, firm believes, is to have principals handle all client business -- including investor rels, corp positioning, crisis mgmt, other strategic services. Plans are to keep the firm small -- necessary to live up to this principle. (More from 310/557-9112)

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **Latest compensation survey from Fdn for Public Affairs** shows heads of corp pa dep'ts in the US earn an average base salary of \$160,388, up 6.4% from last year. Survey also reveals importance of bonuses as part of a total compensation package. Of top pa ofc's who are bonus-eligible, average bonus is nearly 44% of base salary. Survey reflects data from 122 corps, 80% of them Fortune 1000 companies. Other base salaries (mean): top fed gov't rels position (non-Washington ofc), \$138,963; top comty rels job, \$103,496; top corp contributions position \$88,557; top state gov't rels position \$113,388; regional mgr of state gov't rels, \$100,600; state gov't rels rep, \$82,643. (Copy from LaTanya Clemencia at 202/721-0911; \$100 for participants; \$250 nonparticipants)

¶ **Maryland pr sequence will now get its accreditation from PRSA's certification program.** Leaving the j-schl, it won't be covered by Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism & Mass Com'n. ACEJMC presents a growing issue for pr anyway. In almost every j-schl, pr has the most students, the fewest teachers & least resources. PR's representation on the Council is limited to 1 seat held by PRSA (currently ex-nat'l secty Isobel Parke of Jackson Jackson & Wagner) & sometimes a pr educator or 2. Most members are from journalism, thus have a hard time evaluating pr curricula. At a time of significant change in pr, educators can't keep up if they have to satisfy accreditors with insufficient understanding of the field.

EMPLOYEE COM'NS IS INFLUENCED BY GENDER DIFFERENCES & BEHAVIORAL GOALS; PRESENTING THIS TO TEAM LEADERS HELPS

Much has been written about it -- some of it playful or extreme -- but gender *does* play a key role in employee-team leader communications, finds Jeff Rennie of American Electric Power (Lancaster, O). Helping team leaders apply this knowledge helps motivate workforce behavior.

He uses a **face-to-face employee com'n presentation** to persuade middle managers of these workplace realities. His goal: influencing behavior among 1800 mostly male workers in AEP's fuel supply system.

"When I read Deborah Tannen's work (You Just Don't Understand: Women & Men In Communication -- on the differences between men & women), it just made sense," says Rennie. Tannen theorizes that men want to achieve/maintain status. "I looked at our predominately male work environment & knew that's what these guys were after. It started the ball rolling."

RENNIE'S PRESENTATION COVERS THE TOPIC FULLY TO INVOLVE TEAM LEADERS

1. **Objectives:** 1) Communicate *specific* performance info 2) to influence employee behavior 3) in context of supervisor/employee relationship
2. **Research presentation & discussion** focuses on 3 key points:
 - Info alone doesn't influence behavior -- relationships do
 - Employees prefer to receive info from immediate supervisors/team leaders
 - These team leaders have most influence over behavior of employees
3. **Team leaders are urged** to use the influence of their positions to direct/lead employees to deliver positive behaviors
4. **Gender-affect presentation**, in this case for a male audience:
 - Men speak language of status. Men are knowledgeable in specific areas. Demonstrate a particular skill (e.g. comedy, mechanical skills). Possess certain things (guns, cars, trucks). Hold certain positions. All of these have status in men's minds. (Other Tannen findings apply to women)
 - Men therefore communicate to achieve/maintain status, since every man seeks & needs status in his life
 - Jobs give men status. Affiliation with a good, successful company or org'n equals status
 - Thus, info that helps men do a better job helps achieve/maintain status



- Men request & need company & work unit performance info to determine status

5. Employee com'n needs

- Consistent info
- Info delivered face-to-face by team leaders with interpretation ("What does this mean to me/us?")
- Info should be relevant to levels & categories of workers' info needs

6. Info levels/categories

- Job performance (how am I doing?)
- Work unit performance (how are we doing?)
- Status, issues etc re plant/division, company, industry

7. Behavioral model of com'ns is presented -- more theory, but important for team leaders to understand the why-to as well as the how-to

- Awareness • Understanding • Readiness • Triggering event

Rennie says all parts of this model are important, but where most org'ns fail is step 3 (Readiness). They don't listen to employees & solicit feedback on how to improve performance. This affects worker's status, individually & as a group -- with obvious damage to men, who seek status.

When barriers to desired behaviors are removed in step 3, thru listening and responding to employees, positive performance takes place thru a triggering event created or allowed to happen by team leader.

IF MEN NEED STATUS, THEN USE THIS FACT TO INFLUENCE BEHAVIOR

Men fight for status (on football fields, on production floor), so helping them achieve what they perceive as status (keeping their jobs, performing well as work unit) makes both employees and company successful.

"As communicators, it's our best interest to recognize com'n and behavior drivers & use them to give our employees what they need," says Rennie. "In a predominately male work environment, I believe status has been a significant behavior driver."

Program will be implemented more widely in AEP system in future. As the electric industry heads for de-regulation, Rennie predicts face-to-face employee com'n's will be critical for the company to stay competitive.

NOTE: Rennie uses research by Pat Jackson, Roger D'Aprix, The Larkins (pr 3/27/95) as well as Tannen to support his techniques & presentation points. (More from him at 740/687-3027; or jjrennie@aep.com)

WHY PRESENTATION ENGAGING TEAM LEADERS WORKS

Major barrier to enhancing worker/team leader relationships & making this the key com'n point is belief by sr mgrs that team leaders are not up to the task. Research refutes this -- but going to them directly is vital.

GRASSROOTS PR DOES WORK, & SOMETIMES THE WINNER IS PR

Before recent changes in NJ's sales tax on pr & ad services (pr 11/23), the law was vague. Result: state's pr firms were open to significant tax consequences -- a competitive disadvantage with firms in other states.

Anne Klein & Assocs (Marlton) was audited under the old tax law. "We created a lot of noise" about the legislation, says Klein. Starting in late '95, she contacted other NJ pr pros, asking them in turn to contact state officials about the sales tax. Klein also placed articles in state biz publications, underscoring the tax law's problems. PR used for pr!

"Most NJ pr firms are small. This tax law would have put us out of business. We're pr firms, not ad agencies. If the state says (& taxes us like) we're ad agencies, then we're in trouble. We can't compete."

Immediate result: NJ Division of Taxation dropped the investigation of Klein's firm, as well as others. Lesson: pr must be united on the issue.

Overall success. Meanwhile, the Advertising and Communications Sales Tax Coalition, a group of ad & mktg firms & assn's, successfully lobbied for revision of the sales tax. (For more info about ACSTC's ongoing efforts, & its guidance on this issue, see their Website at adtax.org)

GLOBALISM INCHES TOWARD U.S. PR IN NYC / S.AFRICAN EXCHANGE

Sandra Sankar (Johannesburg) is the first practitioner in the New York/South African Professional Development Program, created to develop South Africa's future biz leaders. For 5 mos, Sankar has been assigned to NYC's Dilenschneider Group. (Dilenschneider was the only US pr firm selected for the program. Sankar was 1 of 7 SA professionals invited to participate. Globalism still has a way to go.)

Her work included a variety of counseling activities including investor relations, CEO support, corp com'ns. She also attended classes at The New School for Social Research.

WHAT SHE GOT

"The insight into US organizational structure will remain one of the most critical developmental stages of my career," Sankar says. "South Africa's isolation from the global arena has increased my insight into the danger of narrow-minded viewpoints." Hopefully her visit opened some eyes here as well.

Sankar also met US policymakers, politicians & lobbyists for African aid & development in Washington. "I'm aware of the need to market South African developing countries to stimulate economic growth to world markets and challenge & change misperceptions of the region." (And vice versa)

WHAT'S U.S. BENEFIT?

PRSA's global initiative simply wasn't deemed relevant at the recent Assembly meeting. But Gold Anvil winner was an international leader. Can practitioners learn by working with colleagues from other nations -- even underdeveloped countries? Meanwhile, Sankar returns to her job at Rose Francis Com'ns in Johannesburg 12/16.