

Final 30th Survey of the Profession findings (Part III)

PR TACTICS CHANGE WITH NEW STRATEGIES & REALIGNED DUTIES

Amid a torrent of talk & rumor, what is really happening to pr dep'ts? According to respondents to the Survey, more is being added than taken away -- 49% having added new functions. Only 15% lost functions.

1. **MAJOR ADDITIONS ARE TECHNOLOGY-RELATED:** Web site mgmt; intranet/internet development; database mgr; online media relations; global fax functions

2. **MORE (19%) REPORT ADDING STAFF THEN LOSING STAFF (15%).** 4% do report outsourcing functions now. And while another 4% listed "consolidation/realignment of the dep't" as a loss, 3% marked it as a gain -- citing such changes as "changed reporting structure to CEO" & "consolidated adv'g, pr, trade shows & internal com'ns"

3. **OTHER AREAS WHERE SHIFTS WENT IN BOTH DIRECTIONS:**

■ *Marketing/advertising* -- 7% report adding assignments, 4% losing. Cited among the additions are "more direct involvement with mktg plans & budgets" & "localized mktg-oriented pr counsel"

While percentages aren't great -- excepting technology -- it's clear realignment of pr responsibilities is underway. For the most part, these constitute additions to the public relations portfolio.

■ *Internal relations/employee com'ns* -- 3% report additions & the same percentage report losses. Added responsibilities include "internal newspaper to members", taking over what was a shared responsibility & "employee recognition"

■ *Video/tv production* -- 4% report adding tasks, 3% losing them

4. **AREAS WHERE PR DEP'T ADDED RESPONSIBILITIES:**

■ *Publications/writing* -- 7% added tasks here including "more targeted newsletters," speechwriting, annual report writing & increased number of publications. Another 4% added graphics or desktop publishing responsibilities.

■ *Strategic planning* -- 4% saw such changes as "more focus on strategy than paper," "greater commitment to strategic thinking," new position to "coordinate community-based strategic planning"

■ *Customer service* responsibilities were added by 3% -- a vital trend



- *Research* -- 3% cite adding such assignments as vertical market research, ethnic research & "in-house research rather than outsourcing"

SITUATIONAL MEDIA USAGE REPLACING NEWS RELEASE BOMBARDMENT

What comes across clearly is that practitioners no longer feel duty-bound to send announcements to all media -- or to use media at all (especially *today's* media). A situational approach is used by nearly all respondents.

TABLE 1: MEDIA TACTICS USED TODAY

Surgically choose media we want to reach	69%
Go around media, direct to stakeholders, as much as possible	30
Send releases to all media hoping for as much publicity as possible	23
<i>Total does not equal 100% due to multiple responses</i>	

Even among the 23% for whom mass releases are the top choice, 37% of them also use surgical techniques & 24% sometimes go around the media. But those using surgical or go-around tactics seldom send mass releases -- only 13% & 19% respectively.

- **Surgical selection is "the only way we do it for clients -- and we produce!"** says the CEO of a pr firm specializing in mktg & strategic planning
 - "Depends on client," reports an ad agency mpr
 - "Depends greatly on the message," notes an NPO dpr
 - "Do some of all 3" says a local gov't dpr who usually sends news releases
 - "Especially analysts & fund managers," comments a go-around pr firm CEO
 - Those going around the media often report using letters & phone
 - "There's far more to 'placements' than thru press releases, which by definition are aimed broadly," comments a pr firm head
 - "Any can be useful depending on many variables: media environment, message, client's sophistication, urgency of situation," notes pr firm svp
 - "Whichever seems most appropriate," explains a school dpr
 - "We should (go around the media) but CEO wants **big numbers & major media** -- doesn't understand impact values," says a trade ass'n mpr
 - An environmental engineering firm dpr notes it must send releases to all "due to openness policy," but he actually goes around the media "**when info delivery a must**"
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IMPROVING MEETINGS REMAINS AN AREA OF OPPORTUNITY

Preparing an agenda in advance & then following it is the most mentioned action to ensure productive meetings, noted by 39% of respondents. For example:

- "Precise agendas focused on action items," advises exec vp of ind'l co
- "All meetings have a tight agenda & decision points," notes a pr firm CEO

ON THE FLIP SIDE, 13% are doing nothing about their meeting problems & continue to be frustrated about them. Some of their comments:

- "We have monthly 1-on-1 meetings to discuss activities & plans but these meetings are ineffective & a waste of time" (sr ae, pr unit of ad agency)
- "Nothing, sadly; it's the same people talking to each other" (dpr, univ)
- "We're NOT doing anything to make them better; internal meetings have no focus" (vp, trade or prof'l ass'n)
- "None -- still unproductive" (supvr/mgr of unit, federal gov't)
- "Nothing, absolutely nothing. But I wish we were" (vp, trade ass'n)

TABLE 2: ACTIONS TAKEN TO ENSURE PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Prepare & follow agenda	39%
Set time limits/stick to schedule	29
Meet only when necessary/limit number of meetings	19
Doing nothing to improve	13
Identify goals/objectives of meeting	10
Use e-mail	8
Use teleconference/conference calls	5
Use facilitator/leader/recorder	5
List follow-up/action items	5
Limit involvement to only relevant people	5
Training/TQM	4
Don't have or attend meetings	3
Evaluate after the meeting	3
Limit committee work/done elsewhere	2
Have stand-up meetings	1
Cut short irrelevant discussion	1
Delegate	1
Require quick decisions	1
Leave if not productive	1
Not a problem here	1

Total does not equal 100% due to multiple responses

SOME MEETING IMPROVEMENT TACTICS YOU MAY WANT TO TRY

1. "Meetings planned for end of work day to ensure brevity" (sr counsel, pr firm)
2. "As an organization we're doing nothing. Some managers, including me, are setting tight agendas, time limits & enforcing them. We use a 5-minute egg timer to keep talkers under control (really!)" (dir, electronic media)
3. "Agree on time to adjourn at beginning of meeting" (dep't head, univ)
4. "Nothing can be discussed that is not put on the agenda ahead of time" (head of dep't, trade/prof'l ass'n)
5. "Conference calls in place of meetings to save time & client money" (head of dep't, pr firm)
6. "The amount of meeting time is tracked & distributed so we all know what percentage of time is spent at meetings" (head of dep't, local gov't)
7. "1 hour limit on all meetings. At the 1-hour point, meeting breaks up even if we are not all the way thru the agenda" (dir/head of dep't, hospital)
8. "Use of 'meet-me' phone conferences & e-mail communication that's agenda-driven" (supvr/mgr of unit, state gov't)
9. "Use meetings to solve problems, decide actions, not share what we're doing" (dir/head of dep't, hospital)
10. "All meetings include delegated action items with responsibility" (ass't vp, higher education)
11. "We stand up around the table thruout the meeting. The quicker the meeting, the quicker we can return to our desks to sit down" (sr pr counsel, ad agency)

TACTICS USED FOR OUTREACH / CONTRIBUTIONS PROGRAMS: TABLE 3

Conduct workplace giving campaigns	52%
Giving done strategically (based on organizational goals & objectives)	43
Conduct organized employee volunteer prgms	39
Employee committee helps plan & manage prgms	30
Evaluate impact on business goals	24
Always (29%) often (34%) sometimes (37%)	
Offer matching gift program	20
Use employee surveys to define campaigns	9
None	5
NR	15

RISING NUMBERS USE READER-FRIENDLY TECHNIQUES

The almost unbelievable overcommunication (& underinterpretation of the info) is having an effect on com'ns products -- especially print, e-mail & Web sites. Long paragraphs -- or any paragraphic matter, almost -- seems to invite today's readers to skip on to something else. The technique best known to date for breaking thru this clutter is information mapping.

Survey respondents are in 3 camps on the subject at the moment:

1. SOME RESPONDENTS ARE NOT FAMILIAR with the term "information mapping" (only jargon anyway) but do use the process:

- "We've used this concept in Web sites & in publications, but didn't realize it had this name.

We just know that **readers don't want all that extraneous eye candy & unbroken text**" (independent pr consultant)

- "Use this approach on our Web site ... **another name for good design content**" (supvr/mgr of unit, industrial company)
- "Sounds like another pr buzzword for **common-sense communications**" (supvr/mgr unit, local gov't)

2. SOME ARE NOT SURE IT'S THE BEST APPROACH & OFFER THESE REASONS:

- "Approach **doesn't allow for analysis**" (mgr of unit, prof'l ass'n)
- Some audiences require less info mapping than others. It's imperative to provide what audiences need. Too often, **critical info/explanations are lost** in the attempt to info map" (vp/sr counsel, pr firm)
- "This theory focuses too much on info & not enough on total effect. **Neglects emotional impact**. We use in modified form" (vp, ins. co)

3. THOSE WHO VALUE THE APPROACH EXPLAIN WHY:

- "Don't use it enough! Mapping is a skill -- I'm working on it" (dir/head of dep't, school)
- "We try. Some clients think we're being stingy with their story (the greatest story on earth, of course)" (sr/exec vp, pr firm)

TABLE 4: FAMILIARITY WITH & USE OF INFORMATION MAPPING

Familiar with information mapping	45%
Heard of it, don't really know about it	28
Not familiar with it	25
NR	2
Use it in my communications	41
Do not use it	37
NR	22

- "It's absolutely **the only way to communicate** with groups such as legislators & opinion leaders. Works well with all groups" (ass't vp/dir, higher education)
- "Love it. Allows me to **get much more info across** & encourages dialogue for those who want more" (com'ns consultant, financial services)
- "Our weekly newsletter used to be a tome. Now it's issues precise, with key contacts' **phone & e-mail numbers if readers want more**" (vp, trade/professional ass'n)

CEO'S APPRECIATION OF & INVOLVEMENT IN PR: TABLE 5

6 of 10 respondents meet with their CEOs at least weekly. This may not constitute being on his or her cabinet or "at the table" -- but it does reflect an enormous opportunity for influence.

<u>Amount of appreciation</u>		<u>Frequency discuss pr matters with CEO</u>	
A lot	45%	More than once/week	33%
Average	32	Weekly	26
Some	18	Biweekly	9
Very little	4	Monthly	12
		Few times/year	13
		Never	3

STILL NO DEFINITIVE DATA ON PR BUDGETS AS % OF SALES

To ferret out perhaps the most sought data that has never been available, the '98 Survey asked a question about what percentage of gross sales is the pr budget. Responses may not have much value -- 44% didn't answer, 8% don't know & 5% gave figures requiring more interpretation. Here's the breakdown for the 43% who did answer:

TABLE 6: BUDGETS AS % OF SALES

Miniscule	2%	
Less than 1%	13	
At least 1% but less than 2%	8	* For NPOs & ass'ns this is conceivable since it includes work on issues & fundraising
At least 2% but less than 3%	5	
At least 3% but less than 4%	2	
At least 4% but less than 5%	1	
At least 5% but less than 6%	4	
At least 6% but less than 10%	2	
10% or more *	7	

¶ Subscribers who want additional info on data provided in the Survey of the Profession -- including additional crosstabs -- should contact Janet Barker at 603/778-0514

