

5. **Plans for future development?** "For most, continuing to read was probably the most consistent & immediate plan."

(More from her at Box 44109, Southcentre P.O., Calgary AB, Canada T2J 7C5; 403/271-6729)

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **An array of global business info** is offered on PRN International's new Web site found at the URL www.prninternational.com : 1) country-by-country holiday calendar (www.prninternational.com/holidays.html). Listed are 2,700 holidays the world will celebrate in '98 within 230 countries. "Knowing what is happening in a country at any given time is essential if one wants to show respect & communicate effectively," notes Shari Ford, PRNI pres; 2) Links to major financial markets, monthly economic analyses, explanation of the news-gathering & pr process inside & outside the US & commentary on different regions; 3) Info about clipping services (www.prninternational.com/clipping.html), agencies & other professional services in different parts of the world.

¶ **National Directory of Corporate Public Affairs** lists: 1) corp individuals involved in public & community affairs, gov't rels & lobbying, pr/com'ns, policy planning & regulation; 2) contact info on 1,900 major US corp'ns & accurate descriptions of their foundations & charitable trusts, political action committees, pub'ns & related personnel; 3) major recipients of corp philanthropy & political action funding; 4) corporate state & federal lobbyists. E-mail addresses & fax numbers are included whenever possible. (\$95, Columbia Books, 1212 New York Ave NW, Suite 330, DC 20005; 888/265-0600; fax 202/898-0775)

¶ **"Putting Relationships Back into Public Relations"** is the subject of Terrie Williams' Schranz Lecture at Ball State U, just published. Fearing the field is "moving away from being a relationship-based business," she offers several value-adding elements from reversing the trend: 1) "People are starved for recognition; 2) When creating business relationships, keep your humanity at the fore. Think person first & contact second; 3) Pick up the phone & make voice-to-voice contact...don't rely on e-mail...or better yet, send a handwritten note. Your handwriting is part of you; it expresses a part of you that is totally unique." (Copy from Schranz Lecturship, Jrnlsm Dep't, Ball State, Muncie, Ind 47306-0485)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

DIED. Lois Lusky, pres of her own firm since '86, prior to that was sr vp, gen'l mgr, Hill & Knowlton/Denver, died Jan. 25, at age 66.

HONORS. Edwin Neuger (Neuger Henry Bartkowski PR, Mpls) receives Donald G. Padilla Community Classic Award from Minn/PRSA for volun-

teering his time & talents toward improving the comty thru com'ns.

Mary Ann Pires (The Pires Group, Chappaqua, NY) chosen 1 of 7 honorees to receive Boston U College of Com'n '98 Distinguished Alumni Award.

PROFESSOR: 2-WAY, SYMMETRICAL PR DOESN'T ALWAYS WORK

"It's time to question the canon of our field that 2-way symmetrical communications (pr 9/6/93) is widespread, feasible, effective & inherently the most ethical approach. I want to argue for a **contingency theory**," says Glen Cameron (U Ga, Athens) -- one that acknowledges the value of 2-way symmetry but understands conditions may qualify this approach.

HOW IT WORKS Cameron proposes a theory based on a continuum from

Pure _____ Pure
Advocacy Accommodation

1. **Accommodation is not capitulation**, but willingness to give some ground to a particular public under certain circumstances. "Underlying the concept of 2-way symmetrical pr is the willingness to reach out & accommodate, to be prepared to meet part-way, or to entertain the other side's position. Accommodation is probably the link between the contingency theory & the 2-way symmetrical model."
2. **Contingency is a "dynamic model"** in 2 ways: 1) You can move across the continuum over time. 2) You can be on a different place on the continuum for different publics.

IT DEPENDS

Where an organization is on the continuum depends on many internal & external variables ("contingency factors"). Over 80 have been identified from the literature, the IABC Excellence Project, writers in the field & interviews with practitioners. Asked how they decide what stance or position to take with a public, practitioners kept answering "It depends." It depends on:

- "what my boss will let me do"
- "how much I like the people in the public we are dealing with"
- "how much of a threat they are" • "how powerful they are"
- "what kind of coverage in the media they have been getting."

Some contingency factors are proscriptive variables, which make accommodation impossible. These include:

- moral conviction that public is wrong
- moral neutrality in face of contending publics
- prohibition by sr mgmt against accommodative stance
- separate dep'ts for accommodations (issues mgmt, labor rels, etc).
- regulatory constraints
- legal constraints



"The concerns I have deal mainly with how you determine a stance for an organization. What are the pressures on it? What are the realities? Not necessarily that we shouldn't strive for some degree of accommodation but that we should recognize certain pressures."

TO ILLUSTRATE: CASE OF ATLANTA COMMITTEE FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES

1. **ACOG announced volleyball would be played in Cobb County.** But the Cobb County Commission (CCC) had condemned the gay lifestyle, so a day later a protest was mounted by a gay activist group, soon joined by civil & constitutional rights supporters. Flap heated up quickly. Within a week letters & stories were coming to ACOG from all over the country.
2. **CCC dug in its heels, said it would be flexible but wasn't.** County is Baptist-based with enormous, powerful churches. Community liked what CCC had done so commissioners felt comfortable sticking to their guns, quoting from the Bible. The activists were also having a hey-day because CCC & ACOG were handing them "the world's largest bull horn" so everyone everywhere could hear & see this issue & debate it.
3. **Dick Yarbrough (ACOG dir com'ns) attempted to soften the hard edges of each public by finding moderates to deal with.** For over a year he tried to work with them. Eventually, even Congressmen were saying "get out of Cobb County." But ACOG was concerned about setting a precedent -- an important contingency factor. ACOG didn't want to make the Olympics a venue for debating ethical or moral questions -- & then have the ACOG Board decide what is right & true. It simply wanted to put on the best Games ever -- while remaining neutral on these issues.
4. **Then a 3rd public emerged: the dominant coalition, the decisionmakers, i.e. management.** ACOG had invested \$4 million in Cobb County. Schedules & transportation plans were already in place. ACOG's COO told Yarbrough "fix it." A resolution was finally brought forward between the contenders that softened the hard lines. But the night before it was to be announced, a daily in Cobb County came out with a vicious attack on the head of CCC for being spineless. He called Yarbrough & said "It's off, the hell with them, I'm not changing the resolution."
5. **Yarbrough had to advocate moving out of Cobb County.** ACOG agreed. He went to the scheduled news conference, announced the move, said he would take 5 minutes of questions & then not talk about Cobb County again. Viewing media as a public, he adopted advocacy as a stance toward them.

ANALYSIS ON THE CONTINGENCY THEORY SCALE:

- **Commissioners, gay activists & ACOG began with full-blown accommodation,** holding meetings, talking, being reasonable, trying to come to some accord. Problem is, with diametric views, how do you accommodate to any extent one public, when this is then viewed as adversarial to the other?

- **Over 20 contingency factors were at work** (powerful members; societal base; negative publicity; source credibility; previous success, extremism; media coverage; moral ambiguity; high stakes; setting precedent).
- **Moral neutrality is a related factor.** ACOG felt it was not in the business of taking an issue that somebody might want to focus thru the Olympic Games & coming up with a position. It is not the "Supreme Court of Human Values." So when asked, "What do you think: What's your position?" Yarbrough kept saying "It doesn't matter what we think." "We all have some discomfort with that," notes Cameron, "where you have to say you are up to something else, whether it is measurable objectives, knowledge, attitude or behavior. But on the other hand, what is he supposed to say?"

(More from Cameron, College of Jrnls & Mass Com'n, U Ga, Athens 30602-3018)

HOW DO PR PROS LEARN WHAT THEY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MANAGING?

How do we prepare ourselves to be "at the table" with senior managers? As part of her Master's project, Elaine Dixon, pres of Key Concepts Ltd (Calgary) interviewed 9 com'n mgrs from large & small org'ns who have varying academic & experiential backgrounds. Among her key findings:

1. **Learning the knowledge & skills associated with mgmt is almost entirely a self-directed process.** Unless the org'n requires participation in certain courses, once individuals reach a certain level in their careers, the development decision & the choice of development activities is determined by the individual.
2. **Informal rather than formal learning methods are perceived to be most valuable.** And modelling, as opposed to mentoring, is a discreet, low-risk way to learn. By reflecting on the behavior & experiences of others, a person can choose which behaviors to emulate, & can mentally rehearse performing those behaviors before actually doing so publicly.
3. **Neither formal post-secondary education nor professional development programs offered thru professional societies -- including accreditation -- provide satisfactory preparation to practitioners seeking a seat at the mgmt table.** They remain focused on the practice of pr.
 - Tho all respondents hold membership in either CPRS or IABC & 7 of the 9 are accredited, there was "general lament for the fact that **professional societies have not played a major role in their development**" as managers.
 - Dixon asks, "How do we move our post-secondary institutions & professional societies to play more active & relevant roles in the preparation of communication managers?"
4. **As practitioners move into managerial roles, they find themselves leaving communication practice behind -- even if they continue to be "working managers."**