

- Don't forget to submit new pages when you add site content
- Consider using specialty search engines that are appropriate for your service or product

Laws also recommends establishing a press room on sites to post info on a daily or hourly basis in an emergency. Include mgmt bios, fact sheets & artwork. "You need to optimize your search engine placement, focus on content, build better links & drive traffic." (More from Laws, 303/755-4400)

STUDY: COMPETITION, OTHER PR ISSUES KEEP CEOS AWAKE AT NIGHT

CEOs & sr execs around the world are reaping the benefits of economic stability & trends towards globalization. But they are also worried about impacts of those trends, according to a corp issues study by Ketchum (NY).

"What keeps me awake at night is the tremendous pace of change," says one respondent. "A CEO must be able to predict consumer change in the years ahead. If he cannot do that, his company will not prosper."

TOP 3 CONCERNS ARE ALL INFLUENCED BY PR

- More (19%) are concerned about the need to stay competitive
- But workforce/human resources issues ranked 2nd (12%)
- Customer satisfaction/brand loyalty (11%) ranked 3rd

96 top executives from 13 countries participated, including U.S., Hong Kong, France, Germany, Argentina, Russia & India. Participants included CEOs, CFOs, managing directors or partners, as well as mktg & pr officers. (More from Linda Pasachnik, 718/965-0953, or Walt Lindenmann, 212/448-4213)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

TEMPORARY DUTY. Illustrating a trend in this era of teaming, double-hatting & borrowed execs, Dave Therkelsen is on special assignment to American Red Cross pres Steve Bullock in DC. As usual in these cases, colleagues back home in St. Paul think he's disappeared.

NAMED. Schenkein/Sherman PR named Small Business of the Year by Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce. One of the city's oldest pr firms, it was recognized for business

achievements but especially for efforts to retain employees -- such as mentors, a sabbatical program, half-day Fridays, leadership training & wellness benefits. (Details about these programs from them at 303/292-6655)

DIED. Phil Fried, 65, handled pr for Monsanto from 1970-86 & later worked for Hill and Knowlton, Fleishman-Hillard, Dilenschneider Group. Founded Chemical Communications Ass'n.

CASE STUDY: PR DRIVES CULTURE CHANGE AS USPS REACHES OUT TO CONSUMERS WITH "WE DELIVER FOR YOU" APPROACH

It's the federal agency consumers love to hate. But the US Postal Service (USPS) has started acting more like a biz than an arm of the gov't. Now, in addition to news about postal rate hikes, consumers are just as likely to hear (or see) promos about new stamps, the advantages of Priority Mail, or a stamp design competition. Positive pr is causing & reflecting change.

"The level of competition that faces us has made us raise the noise level to remind people that we're here & we'll be there to serve them," says Roy Betts, media rels mgr.

Some credit the changes to recently retired Postmaster Marvin Runyon, who "worked hard to change the internal mentality to get us acting more like a business," says Lesley Corban, nat'l com'ns coord for "Celebrate the Century" program. "There were no regional pr positions until '92, just corp rels & employee com'ns on a nat'l level. That's helped change our image." (Runyon is married to Sue Atkinson, head of Atkinson PR, Nashville).

USPS BECOMES CUSTOMER-FOCUSED

In '94, USPS created a mgmt quality system called "customerperfect!" patterned on the Baldrige Awards assessment. Program was created to focus employees on customer service. Altho financial performance & service have improved thru customerperfect!, USPS admits in its *Leadership* magazine that improvement is ongoing. One finding: ambiguity among execs about USPS' role as a government service vs. a competitive entity.

UPS STRIKE PROVES USPS' METTLE

16-day UPS strike did more for USPS' reputation than any pr campaign could, Betts notes. USPS developed contingency plans to handle increased demand & took on new customers while maintaining its current biz. Some of those customers were impressed enough to stay after UPS strike ended -- including Nordstrom & Victoria's Secret.

- After the strike, USPS launched an aggressive advg campaign for Priority Mail, its 2-3-day service, & created a tactical mktg & sales dept -- a dedicated sales force to generate more customers. Result is a 30% increase in Priority Mail volume since '96.

A CEO WHO UNDERSTOOD PR & WANTED TO LEARN MORE

When prr's editor put on a seminar for USPS, up drove a USPS vehicle carrying Runyon. "I want to hear your session," he said, & sat thru it all -- asking several clarifying questions afterwards.



COM'NS PROGRAMS TAKE ONE-ON-ONE APPROACH

Altho USPS has pr pros at the nat'l level, local & regional offices are empowered to develop their own com'ns initiatives.

- **One is the "good news team."** E.g. in Manchester, NH, a pr specialist is charged with communicating local accomplishments -- or "good news." This includes hosting special events honoring new stamps -- a "first day of issue" ceremony -- & generating news coverage of programs such as WEE deliver, a nat'l literacy program in local schools.
- **Local branches are also getting more creative about reaching out to customers.** E.g. when a stamp honoring hospice services was introduced in Feb., hospice representatives were at post offices distributing hospice literature. The hospice reps drew additional attention to the new stamp.

PROGRAM BUILDS NEW AUDIENCE FOR USPS THRU STAMP COLLECTING

USPS invited the public to become directly involved in choosing stamp subjects for its stamp col-

lecting program, "Celebrate the Century" (CTC). Program ties stamp collecting into the millenium craze & into education -- targeting the general public, not traditional stamp collectors. "We're looking at new customers who'd never thought of collecting stamps," Corban told prr. "People like these stamps because they're colorful & relate to people's lives."

- **CTC stamps represent each decade of the 20th century.** Altho subjects for 1900-49 were selected by a citizens' advisory cmte, those for 1950-99 are voted on by the public. These have included Lucille Ball, Superman, Rosie the Riveter, Dr. Seuss, desegregation & the peace symbol. Ballots are available at POs, CTC events & its Web site.
- **USPS is working with the Dep't of Education & 12 education ass'ns** on a cross-curricular program for grades 3-6 in conjunction with stamp voting. Currently taught in 300,000 classrooms across the US, the CTC Education Series includes a) in-school balloting for stamps & b) take-home projects tied to subjects featured on CTC stamps. Children will participate in a stamp design contest depicting their images of the future. Winning stamp designs will be issued in summer 2000, when the CTC program ends.
- **Local PO employees are key to carrying out events** to promote new CTC stamps in their communities, tho a core group of national staff coordinate CTC events. To generate interest in CTC, Corban publishes an on-line newsletter & uses employee pubs. She even dressed up as a secret agent at an employee meeting to help retail clerks remember the CTC stamps' special audit code.
- **The latest event: the CTC Express**, a national rail tour of 4 Amtrak cars. Train features a multi-media tour of the 20th century (using CTC stamps), a history of USPS & historical displays. The Express left Tampa in early March & will travel across the country.

"We (the USPS) need to tell our story," Corban says. "We want to be so good that people can't make fun of us anymore." (More from Betts at 202/268-2155; Corban at 941/688-2132)

WALL STREET & MEDIA PROVE THIS IS THE "UNFORGIVING DECADE"

No one in the media or on the Street has been heard to comment on what seems an unbelievable occurrence:

- The Dow Jones fell 44 points Tues. because -- this is what the analysts said, and the media dutifully reported it without comment -- because Gillette announced that "weakness in its Latin American business" will cause it to miss analysts expectations by (get this) **a penny per share!!**

Company's stock tumbled 7¼ also on this earthshaking news. A dollar short, maybe even 10 cents -- but 1 cent?

Are Latin American shaving products buyers now the weathervane for the health of the economy? Is this an idiotic, and dangerous, way to run an economy that affects the nation's, the world's & everyone's wellbeing?

- **Is this also a warning to practitioners** about how extremely fragile the sensibilities of today's stakeholders can be -- & how concrete & unyielding their expectations? People are seeking certainty, even in the dealings of Las Vegas East.

BRIEFING ABOUT ONLINE COM'NS HELPS ORG'NS BUILD WEB TRAFFIC

A one-on-one briefing developed by LawsComm PR (Aurora, Colo) helps clients develop an Internet strategy & enhance their online presentation. Session is for those who already have Websites & want to build traffic. It covers:

- who's online & why
- the future of cyberspace reporting
- a review of competitors' Websites
- building an orgn's image on the Net
- reputation mgmt

HOW TO INCREASE TRAFFIC

To improve ranking, Laws recommends:

- **Create 10 keywords & a sentence describing your site.** Insures that search engines & directories can define your site's pages
- **Put keywords & site description in the <Meta> tags.** The tags are used by several search engines to index sites & determine what info about your site appears when someone types in a keyword search
- **Use keywords & site description** at beginning of your web page
- **Choose a title** for every main page on your site
- **Search engines & directories have procedures for submitting/improving ranking.** Look for the "submit URL" hypertext link on the search engine's home page. Site www.searchenginewatch.com has updated info on working with search engines & directories
- **Follow up** to make sure your site is listed