

- Demonstrates to stakeholders the org'n is not a 1-person show by the CEO or chair but a collection of skilled pros – thus able to carry on to a bright future even when star leaders leave
  - Demands One Clear Voice outward com'n, which can often heal split mgmt or board groups (Has been used by divided school boards, e.g., to end ego posturing or factional outbursts)
2. **Time Com'ns According To the 3 Rules of Effectiveness.** Don't try to achieve everything in one shot – it rarely works. Instead, go step-by-step: a) get 'em to *recognize* the problem/opportunity; b) then *personalize* it for them, i.e. this affects you; c) finally, show 'em they can do something about it (“restraint removal,” scholars call it). Audiences can't accept one step until they've internalized the previous one – yet often we try to do all 3 steps in a single com'n
  3. **Relationships Open the Door.** Don't start by communicating but by building relationships. Once those are established, the vital corollary is that folks *will* pay attention to your e-mails, calls, etc. Com'ns from strangers can be ignored – but not from those with whom we have relationships
  4. **Go Direct.** Stop expecting others, e.g. media, to carry your messages. Chances are they'll be skewed – and may not reach your targets. There is inherently more interest & credibility in messages from the horse's mouth
  5. **3<sup>rd</sup> Party Advocates** – are far more persuasive & believable than official com'ns from org'ns, & especially from pr people (they know our job is to put the best foot forward). Motivate customers, neighbors, community leaders, analysts, shareholders, vendors et al to be your ambassadors
  6. **FedEx over E-mail** – Busy people may not check their e-mail for hours, but an express package – even a fax – is usually handed to them immediately. Don't fall so in love with the ease of cybermessaging that you lose sight of the goal: reaching the intended recipient!

For more, see our original list of 15 break-thru tactics, [pr 11/22/99](#)

## ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE FOR PRACTITIONERS

- ¶ **Cynicism About Organizational Loyalty Extends Itself To Pop Humor.** Consider a current “Dilbert” cartoon, which parallels employees' role at work to traditional Western vs. Eastern philosophies. “Businesses used to be like Christianity; if you were faithful and obedient, you could obtain bliss in the afterlife of retirement.... Now it's more of a reincarnation model. If the worker learns enough in his current job, he can progress to a higher level of employment elsewhere.”
- ¶ **More Unionization Of Professionals – In This Case Medical Interns & Residents.** Doctors-in-training across the US have won the right to unionize & to strike. American Medical Assn's new doctors union feels this will boost its cause in organizing practicing physicians. Nat'l Labor Relations Board approval – by narrow 3-2 vote – could impact costs & patient care in hospitals, creating a big pr issue. Vote was prompted by the usual cause: mgmt that doesn't listen. Med school deans & hospital administrators ignored years of complaints about long hours, low pay, concerns about patient care, cuts in nursing & other staff & similar. A quick sample of the gripes can be obtained by speaking with an intern or resident next time you're near any hospital.
- ¶ **Praise In A Backhanded Manner For Social Responsibility Programs** is this statement by an anti-tobacco exec: “Philip Morris has a long pattern of success in buying the support & acquiescence of good people & org'ns by contributing to worthy causes.” The ethics remain open to debate, but obviously the strategy works.

## STUDY POINTS TO SHIFTING ATTITUDES AS PUBLIC RECONCILES ENVIRO, HEALTH & COMFORT – I.E. THESE DAYS WE WANT IT ALL!

When it comes to environmental issues, as with many others in our 8 yrs of boomtimes, it seems people want to have their granola bar & eat it, too. A study by Wirthlin Worldwide (Grand Rapids) suggests the public is not quite as pro-environment as a decade ago. The sentiment is still strong but balanced against economic comfort. But specific findings are confusing & sometimes contradict others' findings.

- “**Environment is always at the back of people's minds**, but it's not always at the top of their list,” Bryce Bassett, vp of mktg support, told [pr](#). “There is a suggestion from the data that they want to have a clean environment, but a strong economy as well.” (See also [pr 11/8/99](#) & [11/15/99](#))
- **Environmentalists say the economy v. enviro approach is false**, that in the majority of cases better enviro practice equals better economy – for the company & for society

Wirthlin annually tracks attitudes toward the environment, a harbinger of direction on current issues. This October National Quorum study is based on phone interviews of 1,023 adults. Key findings:

1. 64% currently believe in “**environmental protection at any cost.**” But this figure was 80% in '92 & hovered in the 70s from '94 – '97. In '93, it was down to 58%. Bassett interprets this to mean that when the economy is going well, people demonstrate a higher level of concern about the environment. “It's a luxury they can afford.”
  - Yet the economy is even better now than in the prior years cited, so the bouncing figures – between 58% & 80% over 8 yrs – may be from another cause, or the vagaries of research
2. Majority feel gov't should **not take additional regulatory action.** 57% believe we have the right amount (28%) or too much (29%), while 42% say there's too little. “Resistance to additional regulation is as high as we have measured in the past decade.” In '91, for example, 63% felt there was too little pro-green regulation
3. **Fewer than 1 in 4 want to sacrifice economic growth** for the sake of preserving enviro quality
4. **Enviro-health connection a strong one.** “People now connect environment to their personal health.” Until the early '90s, health concerns were a footnote in the enviro survey. Now they show up in a strong way. “On our list of concerns, Americans consistently rate ‘the air I breathe’ & ‘the water I drink’ as higher priorities than saving the rainforests or protecting an endangered species.”
  - The disparity between what people list as priorities, however, & their behavior (i.e., diet) makes the issue tricky. “Most people want to believe they can have it both ways.”
5. **Industry still the bad guy.** The chemical industry was consistently rated as the most harmful to the environment. And people tie its impact directly to health. 81% say chemicals present in our society



pose a serious public health threat. "Significantly, people don't just see this as a vague threat, but a very personal one"

- Irony is that this industry has the strongest pr program of any. And has been the testbed for proving that sensible enviro practices actually save money

6. **People don't give much credence to business or media.** "In general, the public is skeptical about big business; they are paranoid that industry is out to get them." On a sliding scale, people believe:

- |                                    |                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Independent scientist or doctor | 7) Hearsay from friends & neighbors                                                  |
| 2) EPA                             | 8) Statements from doctors/scientists working in the company or industry in question |
| 3) Watchdog group                  | 9) Websites                                                                          |
| 4) Independently published article | 10) Company spokespeople                                                             |
| 5) News media                      |                                                                                      |
| 6) Local gov't                     |                                                                                      |

"The public can be swayed by simplistic arguments. They're very vulnerable to scare tactics."

#### THE GOOD NEWS FOR INDUSTRY

Importantly, the public seems to realize that **we're not living in a risk free world.** A split sample

showed that 83% agree "we have to accept the fact that we will always have to live with some level of potential health risk."

Bassett says the findings may indicate people believe **industry is becoming more environmentally responsible.** "Maybe the data suggest people are acknowledging industry is making progress. (Environmentally speaking,) they're better than they were. They think there are still issues, global warming & other things, but there is some acknowledgement we're moving in the right direction."

#### BUT THIS IS OPINION & ATTITUDE RESEARCH

As Bassett asks, will people behave in line with what they say? If the stock market has a correction, or the boom ends, will they adopt an enviro vs. economy approach – even if experience shows it's flawed? Can opponents, or violators, of enviro standards sell this "false dichotomy"? And how will those who say we have enough or too much regulation act when the landfill is planned for their neighborhood? All of which raises the question: To what extent can practitioners still rely on this style of research?

#### NEW TECHNIQUE HELPS ORG'NS BRAND, STRATEGIZE

A new branding technique developed by the GCI Group (NYC) and Berrier Assocs types brands into different segments, allowing counselors & org'ns to identify what they need to do to increase market appeal & recognition. "The basic approach of DynaBranding is a scientific one," Brandan Borrmann, mgr, firm development, told prr.

- **Research is based on quantifiable measurements of the key components of brand equity.** "Because it provides a way for pr messages to be empirically tested against what motivates a brand's target consumers to purchase, it eliminates the guess work," researcher Robert Berrier says

**First step involves determining the strength of brand reputation** – factors include a) relevance, b) distinction & c) uniformity – as well as d) level of awareness among its audiences. "We conduct a series of interviews with the public, potential customers, corporate leaders, pr firms & the media," says Borrmann. The company then types the brand into one of four categories:

1. **DynaBrand**, short for "dynamic brand." "These are right out there, recognized by everyone, brands that carry a lot of weight." They are powerful and have relevant & distinct images and high levels of awareness: Coca-Cola and McDonald's are DynaBrands
2. **Sleeping Giants.** Not quite there yet, but enjoy a strong niche following. Example: Krispy Kreme. Many people know about & love the donuts, but "the company could take it to the next step and be the next McDonald's"
3. **Ho Hum** brands. "It's not clear what they're doing. People aren't sure where the brand is going." An example, says Borrmann, is Kellogg's. "At one point it was an exciting brand. Now it's past its peak & can either go up or down"
4. **Do or Die** brands. Negative awareness & confusion are against them. "JC Penney – people aren't sure what they are. Are they competing with Wal-Mart? Are they trying to go upscale?" He said Sears had the same problem but seems to be redefining itself. K-Mart is also making progress, but has a long way to go

#### HOPE SPRINGS INTERNAL

Step 2 of DynaBranding involves revealing what the core message of the brand is, and communicating it. "We consider 3 key uncontrolled market factors that pr must influence in order to be effective: a) target media, b) target consumer, c) brand category." Then, targeted strategies are used to raise brands up to the DynaBrand level. If a brand is already at the top, maintenance programs are key.

Borrmann notes that for the Do or Die brands, the fix is often internal. "There may be a low level of enthusiasm & morale among employees. If they're not behind the brand, the public won't be."

- He says **improvements may involve changing how the org'n is structured** – using another key element of pr capability; and how messages are communicating internally – a longstanding pr skill
- Next, org'ns have to **figure out their core message & which public they want to target:** consumers, media, financial analysts, etc. Each group can play an important role in how the brand stands up.

"The goal is to find the best investments to make in the brand & the best public relations strategy to build brand value."

#### 6 ADDITIONAL TACTICS FOR BREAKING THRU THE CLUTTER

1. **Spokesperson Policy** – a formal policy setting forth *who* is the official spokesperson on *which* topics. This multi-voice strategy:
  - Assigns several board members or sr execs to be out front on their areas of expertise
  - Builds closer relationships & more unified approaches between them & internal staff experts, who are needed to assist them in data collection or verification