- **Measurement**. Org'n establishes an ongoing process for evaluating community involvement strategies, activities & programs & their impact on the org'n & community

BENEFITS   According to CCCR data, community involvement pays off because it helps:

1. Attract and retain employees in a tight job market

2. Boost attractiveness as a social investment

3. Enhance license to operate in the community

4. Improve customer relations & attraction

5. Fuel market innovation & new product or service development

Companies which have adopted standards include Compaq, IBM, Chase Manhattan, Merck, Eli Lilly & others. They receive diagnostic tools, custom training, literature, etc. to help them evaluate programs & develop a plan. (More from Cheryl Kiser @ 617/552-8948 or www.bc.edu/cccr)

MAJOR IMPACT OF GLOBAL AGING WILL BE ON RELATIONSHIPS

The known & indisputable fact that people of normal working age are declining as a percentage of the population, especially the 20-39 group, coupled with a sharp increase in senior citizens (prr 10/9), signals several needs for org'ns & practitioners:

1. **This will greatly intensify the need for employers to focus on worker satisfaction**. With labor in short supply, workers can pick & choose. Hard-nosed hr policies, lack of work/life balance, failure to provide job enrichment & job enlargement will push workers out the door. This will require attention to *both* elements of Herzberg's hygiene/motivation model as employee *relations* reigns

2. **Customer satisfaction/delight can also be expected to become more critical**, on 2 counts: 1) because labor shortage intensifies the difficulty of sensitizing employees to delivering it – as we're witnessing in today's tight job market; 2) because retired folks tend to demand satisfying relationships, quality, service, satisfaction & have the time to find those who deliver them

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. IPR's Hamilton Award for lifetime achievement & contributions to the field, to Betsy Ann Plank – first female pres of PRSA, a founder of PRSSA & its funding arm Friends of PRSSA, advisor to everybody whether student or senior practitioner & member of "nearly every important task force & committee of the profession." Linda Hon (U. Fla) receives IPR's Pathfinder Award for scholarly research that has made a significant contribution to the profession.

ANNIVERSARY. US' longest established independent pr firm, Edward Howard & Co, headquartered in Cleveland, celebrates its 75th anniversary. Employee owned, firm today has a staff of 52, $6 million in revenue & offices in 4 Ohio cities.

STATUS REPORT: HOW PR IS DOING ON 3 HOT TOPIC AREAS

1. TRUST IS *THE* PROBLEM, BUT ARE WE DEFINING IT CORRECTLY?

Practitioners are finding that trust has a large emotional component, of a very personal nature, reflective of the "chemistry" of the situation, the environment in which trust is sought & individual psyches. Also, it is linked to motives & value systems, which are not always apparent & often disguised or misunderstood (why org'ns need Value Statements).

As such, it may be asking too much to expect trust – meaning the trust inherent in clichés like "I'd trust her with my life" or "I'd trust him with my wallet." Particularly in an era as rightly skeptical & distrusting as the present:

- The clashing combination of rapid change, overbusyness, overcommunication, seeming inability to control such keenly felt topics as work/life balance & healthcare (to mention only 2), morbid fear of pollution, terrorism, crime – this makes a little paranoia a sensible quality

- In organizations, The Unforgiving Decade continues, in which every decision – no matter how "right" & how fully approved by many – will be attacked loudly by someone, who can usually get the ear of politicians, media & activists

A WORKABLE ALTERNATIVE: SEEK CONFIDENCE IN COMPETENCE   With mistrust & downright distrust rife, org'ns may do better to work on gaining stakeholders' *confidence*. This is more than semantics; consider the human nature evidence. Employees may have confidence in senior mgmt, based on their demonstrated *competence*. But do they trust them to be fair & unselfish, or to avoid ego or power tendencies in decisions? These possibilities can deeply annoy, but do not destroy workers' experience of managers' underlying competence.

Asking trust questions in research may be a major error. Querying respondents about an orgn's competence, then asking whether their rating of it is sufficiently strong to engender confidence – this is a more behavioral, less emotional line of questioning, apt to provide more actionable data.

WHAT CURRENT RESEARCH FINDS   The Grunig-Hon Relationship Measurement scale defines trust as "One party's level of confidence in & willingness to open oneself to the other party." Note the word "confidence" & the emotional state reflected in the latter part of the description. The scale cites 3 dimensions to "trust":

a) **Integrity**: the belief an org'n is *fair & just*
b) **Dependability**: the belief an org'n *will do* what it says it will do
c) **Competence**: the belief an org'n has *the ability to do* what it says it will do

That trust & competence must be differentiated is self-evident: each of us knows org'ns whose competence we will grant, but yet we do not trust them. The quality we assign to them is confidence, because it is related to their capability. What we don't trust is their *motives*. We're confident they *can* do the job … *if they want to.*

2. RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE BOTTOM LINE, BUT TO WHAT PURPOSES?

Org'ns build relationships in order to earn trust/confidence (see above) & motivate behavior. But exactly what behaviors should be sought from those with whom relationships have been created?

There appear to be 4 desirable behaviors made possible thru relationship-building:

Access >	**Exchange** >	**Communal interests** >	**Supportive activity**

Access is the ability relationships provide to be in touch when necessary or desired. If the org'n needs info about a group or topic, or wants to impart information, access is a valuable quality – especially as a way to surmount the walls of overcommunication. It is also an invaluable feedback device when they contact the org'n

Exchange is what marketers seek: we exchange our product or service for your dollars. This is the shallowest element of relationship – because the exchange may be so impersonal there is no real relationship. This can also be the first step in the process, when stakeholders self-identify thru an exchange – then we get their names & attempt to build a relationship that will provide mutual access

Communal interests are those in which the parties develop care & concern for one another beyond the exchange level. Customers become loyal not just because they're well served but because they appreciate an orgn's policies, social responsibility efforts, leadership on an issue they care about & other qualities pr programs can provide that add emotional, reputational or perceived value to the org'n

Supportive activity – again, beyond just exchange support, even at the loyal customer level – means a relationship so well developed that an org'n can ask & probably receive support on an issue, endorsement & other extremely valuable 3rd party advocacy

3. NEW SKILLS: HAVE WE IDENTIFIED & ARE WE MASTERING THEM?

Prr will go out on a limb & suggest the 3 most important skills for present & future practice:

A. **Triggering Events (TE)**. Ability to motivate, modify or reinforce behavior by realizing awareness, understanding, even acceptance or longing for something still does not motivate behavior in most cases. People today are too busy, otherwise preoccupied or unable for other reasons to undertake the behavior spontaneously. They require a TE to move them to it.

■ Thorough understanding of the 4 types of TEs, & skill at applying them, will be a hallmark as practitioners increasingly are evaluated on their ability to motivate behavior (prr 11/4/96, or copy from prr)

B. **Opinion Leaders (OL)**. Ability to identify, make effective contact, & engage OLs in sharing what they know, see, feel & in accepting messages puts pr directly in touch with the early adopters, the movers & shakers who indeed drive decisions, attitudes & behavior in the groups who follow their lead. Sociology 101 had long made this clear, & over the past decade practitioners have created many exemplary programs to provide their org'ns/clients this valuable constituency relations.

■ The key is realizing that OLs are doing this anyway, all the time. Now practitioners can accept the challenge of attempting to influence this natural social process. The alternative is to hope somehow they'll come to your aid on their own – highly improbable!

C. **Symbolic Communication**. Words, rhetoric – almost no one pays any attention now. Stakeholders don't read, view, listen – with research showing 90% of any target group is indifferent, even when vital interests are at stake. What gets their *attention* & can also prove *intentions* beyond doubt are actions that symbolize your messages. Symbolic communication can take many forms. It may be nothing more than adopting a policy that pleases key stakeholders or disarms opponents. It may be dramatic action like IBM's then-new CEO appearing in a blue shirt before employees who until then were required to wear only white shirts/blouses – which said quicker & more powerfully than any words could that change was the order of the day there.

■ Words can be, & usually are, dissected & analyzed to the point of meaninglessness. Doubters are experts at this, & can spread disbelief. Symbolic actions overcome or avoid this. Ability to communicate at least the critical points in this way is the key creative outlet for pr today

NEW STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Center for Corporate Community Relations (CCCR) has revised its standards for excellence to reflect new sophistication on the part of org'ns. The standards "are a roadmap for achieving excellence in how org'ns deliver on their community involvement goals," says Clorox CEO Craig Sullivan.

Standards are intended to be mgmt principles – practices for creating excellence. Whereas original standards targeted practitioners, new standards are broader, encompassing the mgmt practices of the entire org'n. "To be successful, org'ns must view community involvement in a business context, which requires the involvement & commitment of the entire org'n." This applies to *all* org'ns. Standards are:

● **Leadership**. Senior execs demonstrate support, commitment & participation in community involvement efforts

● **Issues Identification**. The org'n identifies & monitors issues important to its operations & reputation

● **Relationship Building**. Management recognizes that building & maintaining relationships of trust (sic) with the community is a critical component of strategy & operations

● **Strategy**. Org'n develops & implements a strategic plan for community programs that is based on mutual issues, goals & concerns of the org'n & community

● **Infrastructure**. Org'n incorporates systems & policies to support, communicate & institutionalize community involvement objectives