

- **Theme: drinking milk is tantamount to theft.** “We shouldn’t be raising animals for food & we shouldn’t be stealing away their milk,” says a spokesperson. Cows produce milk to feed their young, so keeping them in lactation by continual breeding is bovine slavery
- **But wait a minute.** Without such husbandry practices, cows would disappear. If they’re not raised to provide food, leather & milk, plus ancillary products, why would anyone lay out the high cost of feeding them & keeping them around? Sheep are better lawnmowers – & anyone who’s ever been face-to-face with a cow for long knows they don’t make very good pets. Besides, their male counterparts can be absolutely nasty & dangerous

Is PETA using extremely sophisticated strategy here, presenting such a ridiculous case we won’t be able to forget it? And it will get talked about? Or did someone’s zealotry get ahead of rationality?

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

- ¶ **Values, Disenchantment With Schools Fuel Growing Home School Movement.** Herman Group (Greensboro) reports trend is growing at 7-15% a year. In ‘99-‘00, between 1.3 & 1.7 million US kids are being home schooled, up from 1.2 million in ‘96. “This means collectively, home-schooled children outnumber the public school enrollments of 41 states.” Motivations include desire to a) teach specific values, often of religious nature; b) control social interactions of kids; c) develop close-knit family structure. While voucher plans were defeated in November elections – despite big financial support from conservative businesses, e.g. Amway’s DeVos family in Michigan – those opposed to public schools are taking the matter into their own hands. This chips away at what historians cite as single most important factor in American democratic unity – the fabled melting pot. With legal & illegal immigration pouring millions of new residents into N. America (ditto Europe & even Japan), strengthening unifying cultural icons is critical. Key opportunity for community rels programs.
- ¶ **Nearly All Radio Stations Now Use Net as Info Source,** finds a survey of the top 100 in top 50 markets. 93% do so, with 2/3rds going to the web 10x or more/week. Most expect to greatly increase their Net usage. However, 59% still prefer receiving pitches by fax, 26% by e-mail, 17% by phone. Inference of this & similar studies is that journalists want to go to the Net on their own initiative, while receiving story ideas by other media. (More from www.newsgeneration.com or 404/812-5390)
- ¶ **With the Elian Phenom Brought Back to Mind by the Florida Vote Show,** overlooked wisdom of a pr pro in that earlier flap deserves repeating. Fear was the mob scenes & defiance of law would harm the state, in that case its giant tourism industry. Officials stuck to reassuring via facts, noting only a tiny faction of Miami’s Cubanos were involved. But Bill Adams (see Who’s Who below) put it differently: “It’s not what Miami is about. It’s what an impassioned group feels on a weekend. If we were suddenly to lose the sun & the warmth & the water, then we’d worry.” He noted visitors kept coming even when 18 died in a riot in ‘80. Understanding behavior motivators is important, especially the difference between entertainment & desire.

WHO’S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. PRSA’s top awards: Gold Anvil to Tom Harris (Thomas L. Harris & Co, Highland Park, Ill); Paul M. Lund Award to Scott Shirai (Visual Perspectives, Westminster, Col);

Outstanding Educator to Bill Adams (Fla Int’l U); PR Professional of the Year to Rick Kaufman Jefferson County Public Schools, Golden, Col).

PR PRACTITIONERS AS OWNERSHIP PARTNERS IN LAW FIRMS?

Opportunity? Danger? While the American Bar Ass’n turned down the idea of non-attorneys becoming partners last summer (pr 6/14/99), state bars are now considering it. Called “multidisciplinary practices,” the firms can offer a variety of services they are now barred from giving by partnering with accountants, stockbrokers, financial planners, doctors, social workers, pr pros & others.

Lawyers in some types of practices label it a survival issue, for these reasons:

- The big accounting firms, e.g., have large legal dep’ts in order to offer 1-stop shopping
- Brokerages & financial planning firms do, too, ditto banks & tax firms
- In addition, legal forms are available on the Net or in software packages
- But the real threat is the huge consulting businesses spun off from, or still affiliated with, the \$multi-billion accounting firms – the ones who say they can do just about everything & have hundreds, even thousands of lawyers on staff. “They want to have it all & they’re not going to be happy until they have it all” says one observer

Some law firms already have pr counseling/service units. To attract & keep the best talent, they must be able to offer them a piece of the action. Further, senior pr pros today command higher or as high fees as senior attorneys – so cannot be treated as second class staffers.

- DRAWBACKS**
1. **Ethical issues** worry some critics, who fear loss of client confidentiality if lawyers practice with other professionals who are not bound by the same standards. Clients might meet with accountants, lawyers & others at the same time & – sounds like attorney arrogance – some fear these non-lawyers would not keep confidences
 2. **Loss of lawyers’ confidentiality privilege in court proceedings** is a legitimate fear, since firms majority-owned & controlled by non-lawyers sacrifice it under current rules. This augurs lawyers would always retain control – which may demotivate other professionals from joining

Common in Europe, only DC allows it in the US. It’s another move toward consolidating all professional services – which practitioners & the profession must now put on their agendas to decide whether to embrace or resist.

WILL BE AN ISSUE IN EVERY STATE

Every state is studying the issue, ABA dpr Sabrina Butler told pr. SC Bar Ass’n will consider it at its annual meeting in January, others are not so close to action. She terms it a very complex issue from the lawyer’s viewpoint. One indication of the building pressure: Pricewaterhouse Coopers has 1700 lawyers, making the *accounting* firm world’s 3rd largest *law* firm. **PR beware??**



IN CHANGING CULTURAL CLIMATE, INCLUSIVITY HELPS ORG'NS THRIVE, SAYS REPORT; IT'S NOT "DOING GOOD" BUT STRATEGIC

Workplace diversity – the new & better term is “inclusivity” – is a key strategy that allows org'ns to remain competitive in the face of changing demographics & rapid globalization. Report by Global Business Responsibility Resource Center finds org'ns that take proactive approaches are thriving.

Center tracks issues, compiles reports on such topics as family social responsibility, corporate environmental responsibility, etc. Amassing recent scholarship on what thriving companies are doing, it found those that go beyond “traditional” diversity practices (addressing legislative & regulatory issues of equal employment opportunity/affirmative action related only to race & gender) by adopting *novel approaches are increasing financial performance & employee retention.*

- “Today, employers have expanded their definition of diversity to include such categories as economic background, sexual orientation, religion, workstyle & other differences,” says report. “They are also becoming more inclusive by *welcoming former welfare recipients, legal immigrants, older workers and other underutilized employees* into the workforce”
- Key is a) **to incorporate diversity into the strategic planning process** & b) **include diversity performance** as part of performance evaluation & compensation review

ORGANIZATIONAL TRENDS IDENTIFIED IN THE STUDY

Need for diversity is buttressed by the following trends. Many are worldwide, but impact even local org'ns:

1. **Workforce Issues:** Employers need to understand a range of complex issues, e.g. reflecting their consumer or issue marketplace, social inclusion, immigration (especially in Europe, but also strong again in US & Canada), integration of women, seniors (strong in Asia/Pacific as in N. America)
2. **Population.** Growth is in people of color, seniors, generation.com, gay & lesbian etc
3. **Glass ceiling** for minorities & women continues to be largely impenetrable. When women in some countries, like Japan, are beginning to be recognized in workforce, pressure grows everywhere
4. **Litigation** IS on the rise, especially since Americans with Disabilities Act, which accounts for 20%+ of cases filed at US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Private sector trends underscore the growing role of inclusivity in org'l strategy:

1. **Expanded definitions** of diversity/inclusivity, creation of policy statements on the topic
2. **Expanded commitment.** Many org'ns have begun initiatives to address the full range of issues including composition of boards of directors, supplier relations, procurement & marketing. Also, partnering with minority/women owned firms to form joint ventures & outsource. Defense contractor Lockheed Martin, e.g., spends over \$1B/yr with such suppliers, as do others
3. **Recognition of the issue.** '98 survey by Society for Human Resources Mgmt reports 8 of 10 Fortune 500 respondents say top levels execs at their organizations think diversity mgmt is very important (26%), important (34%) or somewhat important (24%) – totaling 84% recognition

4. **Domestic Partner Benefits.** Reasons include needing to respond to diverse workforce, attracting & retaining employees, staying competitive. Some are Apple Computer, Charles Schwab, Lotus Development, Levi Strauss – & first to offer them was conservative Coors Brewing

Center finds org'ns that take inclusivity to heart enjoy huge benefits: a) reduced turnover; b) improved productivity; c) increased job satisfaction & morale; d) decreased vulnerability to legal challenges. This is 30 yr old stuff – but too few did take it to heart. (More from www.bsr.org)

MESSAGE STRATEGY CASE: SCOUTS TRY FLAG WAVING IN FUNDRAISING TO DEFLECT ANTI-GAY ISSUE. WILL IT WORK?

“Our holiday wish for you is a simple one,” reads the fundraising letter: “God bless America!” This sentence appears after an opening that urges recipients to “remember the freedom & blessings you & I enjoy ... because we live in the United States of America.” Pitch goes on to note scouting teaches such values as integrity, kindness to others, character etc. Insert shows scouts around a campfire with theme repeated, “God Bless America!”

- **Targeted to those who support Boy Scouts' homophobic policy**, message will predictably be very effective
- **Those who oppose the policy will find it hypocritical** – but since they probably wouldn't be giving to Scouts anyway, the sooner they self-identify & can be removed from mailing lists, the more cost effective. Every com'n turns some on, some off. Sound practice is to know who is affected in which way
- **On the other hand**, might this message in wrong mailboxes fuel the opposition now building to the policy – and to scouting? If so, how to clean the list immediately becomes the problem. Several school districts have barred Scouts from premises & recruiting, some United Ways have cut them from donee lists, many have made public statements to the effect that in an era of inclusivity Scouts are out of tune

Flagwaving is what Lee Iacocca employed after he got Congress to bail out Chrysler with \$600M in loans & had to start selling cars. “Buy American” was his plea – some chutzpah since at the time Chrysler was largely owned by Mitsubishi! But – it worked. At least, the company roared back.

CONTRASTING CASE: ANIMAL RIGHTS MESSAGE NOT SENSIBLE?

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has been purposely, provokingly extremist from its beginnings – letting valuable research animals out of their cages in mid-experiment, linked to letter bombs, making far-out claims. Presently they're running parodies of the “Got Milk” campaign, with its milk mustaches. Under the heading “Got Prostate Cancer” appears copy claiming drinking milk contributes to the disease. Ad promotes website MilkSucks.com.

All in good fun & perhaps effective with some audiences. But another current tactic is ludicrous & should have been thought thru – unless, perhaps, PETA means it to be odd enough to provoke thought, & possibly gain memorability: