

Both these cases are overripe with historical implications. As Brazil violently put down peaceful Indian protesters during its 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary, according to press reports, the visiting President of Portugal summed up the only possible strategy in a speech at the celebration:

*“There is no longer room for resentments over the historical past, which had moments of greatness & misery, freedom & subjugation. We are all responsible for the time we were given to live. We inherited the past, and it is our duty to understand it, to transform the present & not reject it with belated guilt.”*

## ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **The Trouble With ESOPs: Turbulent Market Can Create Low Employee Morale.** An employee relations issue is emerging from the volatile stock market: low motivation. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, down markets mean morale problems, & water cooler talk may be about whether or not to cash out. “It is a question facing chief executives at many tech companies now that their stock charts, & their employees’ morale, resemble a blueprint for a high speed roller coaster.” But all types of stock holdings are impacted as the market gyrates. Case: many employees of Human Genome Services who didn’t sell when the getting was good have to watch suddenly wealthy colleagues retire early to sail around the world or write novels. Pres. William Haseltine says the company is trying to get employees to take the long view, focus on the company mission – making better drugs – rather than on stock market gyrations. To remind them of this, art reproductions line company hallways. “While what we do is technical, our goals, like those of artists, are humanistic.”

¶ **Market Demand Does Not Rule Over Everything,** finds judge in the case involving Web sites that let users pull down music without regard to copyright protections. Opinion states: “Defendants’ ‘consumer protection’ argument amounts to nothing more than a bald claim that defendants should be able to misappropriate plaintiffs’ property *simply because there is a consumer demand for it.*” If you listen to CDs on MP3.com while battling out a strategy document, you may have different rules or costs now. This decision, Microsoft monopoly trial, argument over e-commerce not being taxed while local stores are, & other issues show a coming to terms with the new-tech era. Seems likely practitioners may be impacted by far more of this now, so keeping abreast of the cans & can’ts as they evolve is a necessity.

¶ **As Breaking Thru & Reaching Target Individuals Becomes Tougher, Nonverbal Clues** become important. Help is coming as more scholars research & write about the subject – most notably in *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*. Current issue has a piece, titled “The importance of nonverbal clues in judging rapport,” in which 2 researchers test the hypothesis that “rapport (between 2 people) can be perceived quickly” by observation. Clearly a priceless skill for practitioners – who do it now in an unscientific way & may be helped by such studies. Coming studies investigate what is gained & lost by blushing, how nasal voices influence sex-stereotyping, how youth & older people differ in use of hand gestures & more. Like it or not, tools like this, pheromone & olfactory influence research, & other “nonsense” will play an ever larger part as pr increasingly focuses in on individuals as well as groups. Journal uses lots of chi squares et al, so prr will review it for you. (To see for yourself, call 212/620-8468 or 8470; subscriptions for personal use are \$62)

## ARE ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS ANALOGOUS TO PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS? BETWEEN FIRMS & CLIENTS, STUDY SAYS YES

Stephen Bruning & John Ledingham, Capital U (Columbus, O), conducted a study involving 25 account managers from mid-sized pr firms to examine whether relationships between organizations develop, change & deteriorate in a manner similar to interpersonal relationships. prr has postulated they are different, as does the Grunig-Hon study on measuring relationships (prr 10/11/99). This new study finds there are distinct phases to the pr-client relationship that follow the phases of 1-on-1 relationships.

- **Model can also be used for** internal pr dep’t relationships with client units – or partnering units such as hr or legal. For relationships with vendors. Or relationships between org’ns, e.g. coalition members or industry ass’n partners. Or lobbying allies etc etc

Second focus of the research was to figure out how best to manage a relationship to a more desirable phase. Recognizing patterns allows pr managers to maneuver through the phases in the most beneficial ways. So the researchers presented the mgrs with an in-depth explanation of **Knapp and Vangelisti’s 10 phases of relationships – building up & breaking down:**

1. **initiating:** both parties try to present themselves as pleasant, warm, friendly, socially adept
2. **experimenting:** parties discern areas of common interest & experience, engage in relaxed com’n
3. **intensifying:** both demonstrate greater commitment to the relationship, increase self disclosure
4. **integrating:** parties blend, fuse, coalesce, have fairly consonant views
5. **bonding:** they institutionalize the relationship thru private &/or public ceremony
6. **differentiating:** participants begin to notice difference between themselves & partner
7. **circumscribing:** amount of info exchanged decreases, discussions steer to “safe” areas
8. **stagnating:** remain inactive, communication is stylized, rigid
9. **avoiding:** attempt to remove themselves from same physical environment because unfriendliness & antagonism accompany com’n
10. **termination:** marked by public announcement of final separation

### BUILDING CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS FOR A PR FIRM FOLLOWS PATTERNS

“Just as individuals experience relationship phases, account reps indicated they feel organizations and key publics experience

identifiable phases.” After the presentation, mgrs met in small groups to come to a consensus and draw up examples illustrating the stages.

**CTP1: (Coming Together, Phase 1) Agency introduces itself.** Both parties follow a set protocol, and the focus is creating a positive impression

**CTP2:** Both parties explore benefits of relationship & **exchange substantive info usually in a face-to-face forum.** Ambiguity is reduced; better definition of relationship expectations is established. Economic, social, political & cultural issues can be freely communicated. Everyone is more relaxed and unwritten agreements emerge



**CTP3:** Participants indicate firm & clients feel they “know” the other’s attitudes, opinions, expectations, etc. Phrases such as “off the record” or “just between you & me” & the use of “we” when discussing future ventures is common

**CTP4:** High levels of satisfaction and commitment. Orientation becomes more personal. Attitudes, opinions, interests are harmonic. **High degree of predictability of each other’s behavior as well as loyalty to the other party** is exhibited. “I took the liberty” & “I figured you would prefer this” are often used

“Assuming pr is the management of relationships, we have taken an inter-personal approach using interpersonal principles,” Bruning told prr. (Copy of paper from him @ 614/236-6323)

**CTP5:** Relationship is marked by **pubic expressions of loyalty**, e.g., hosting appreciation dinner for targeted key public members or wearing shirt/cap emblazoned with the other’s logo. There are public expressions of gratitude & benefits available only to reps of the client. Interactions are frequent, ongoing, highly developed & complex

**DISMANTLING THE RELATIONSHIP**

Sometimes what builds up will break down. “There are times when firms come to the

realization a client relationship isn’t mutually beneficial.” This can occur say, over a reputation issue, such as a client involved with dubious schemes or activities, or when a client won’t be happy. “You sometimes may have a client that is not very profitable & you find yourself spending all kinds of time & money on them. As with a personal relationship, it may be better to have the thing end.”

**CAP1: (Coming Apart Phase I)** Marked by one or both **recognizing the differences**. Often is the result of a conflict, dilemma, change brought on by organizational shift or management etc. It can be amplified by the fact that solution to the dilemma or change adversely affects interests of one of the participants. “My interests” replace “our interests”

- Altho differences are magnified, participants say the firm still can rebuild the relationship by providing client an explanation & justification of its actions. Important for an organization not to rationalize actions or misrepresent itself here

**CAP2: Further diminution in the frequency & quality of com’n.** Relationship can still be recovered – but if nothing is done, it will continue negative spiral. One earmark is lack of open, honest com’n at this phase. Discussions become shallow and superficial

**CAP3:** Motionless & without direction. Frequency of interaction decreases, lack of common interest abounds. **Both entities become highly judgmental & assign motives to the actions of the other.** Com’n becomes awkward

**CAP4:** Parties avoid communicating, craft strategies to evade rather than interact. Behaviors can include **screening messages, discarding promo materials, canceling appointments, etc.** Firm will begin to rationalize how “little” they need the client & how “much” the client needs them

**CAP5:** Com’n becomes task-focused, rigid & difficult. **Barriers are erected (contracts end), both parties pursue relationships with others.** Sometimes legal documents signify the termination

**IS COMPROMISE STILL POSSIBLE ON ISSUES? IN CURRENT CROP, EMOTIONAL, POLITICAL, OTHER PRESSURES MITIGATE AGAINST IT**

When one party is less interested in resolving the issue than in collecting money, repaying a score, becoming known, raising funds thru the issue, encouraging outsiders to stick their noses in, or just plain being “right,” the chance to compromise & get the debate behind you is slimmer than ever. Nothing new here. It’s just that today’s issues *always* seem to be infected with one or more of these fatal viruses. Examples:

**S.C. STATEHOUSE FLAG DEBACLE**

The issue is flying the Confederate flag atop the statehouse & in legislative chambers. Some

African-Americans see it as a mark of slavery & racist. Others see it as an undeniable part of history – tho the flag was put there defiantly during the civil rights struggles. Finally, the state senate compromised – with black senators leading the way, including Sen. Darrell Jackson, a pr practitioner & minister. All flags inside or atop the bldg would come down & a smaller flag would be placed in a Confederate soldier memorial on statehouse grounds. The flag wouldn’t disappear – but be far less prominent & in a historical context.

Sorry. Hard core pro- & anti-flag forces are actually working together to kill any compromise – even tho the governor & a solid majority of voters favor some resolution.

- NAACP feels so strongly it has mounted a boycott of SC – primarily for tourists & conventions. Some impact has been reported. But – if the state’s large tourist industry suffers, doesn’t that harm many blacks employed by it? What price symbolic gestures?
- Outsiders like Jesse Jackson, John McCain & media everywhere have leapt in – often with inaccurate or incomplete information – which harms perceptions of the state elsewhere

Another compromise is a sculpted tableau featuring both Union & Confederate soldiers & 8 flags from both sides. Flowing in the middle would be a stream of “healing waters” – the name given the memorial. Again, each side wants total victory. Sen. Jackson says what’s needed is reconciliation.

- **Lessons for practitioners:** 1) Younger folks are the radicals here. E.g. among African-Americans, the 60s civil rights veterans reportedly understand the political wisdom of “half a loaf,” taking what you can get at the moment. A group of younger “whippersnappers” wants the whole loaf now, or else – i.e. no compromises. 2) Hard core pro-flag forces – based on their public utterances at rallies & in legislative debate – illustrate how far US is from achieving inclusivity, even in a boom economy. This makes inclusivity programs in organizations essential – an opportunity for practitioners & their clients/employers to lead the way

**ELIAN-A-THON**

This case shows both the difficulty of compromise & the damage when gov’t goes too far in seeking it. If you flouted a court order as the Miami relatives did, would you get the tender treatment they got – or be rammed in the slammer ASAP? When the non-compromisers are outside the law, intransigence begets reduced trust in the system.

- **Lesson for practitioners:** Today, political minorities – like Miami’s Cuban-Americans, who may be dominant there but are a tiny fraction of US citizenry – can have the power of majorities if they tough it out & shout loudly. What matters now is critical mass, not majority rule

