

- **This helps the region compete in the New Economy** with skills like advanced conceptualizing & ability to respond to rapid change – a vital differentiator

THE CREATIVE COMMUNITY

An area with a concentration of creative workers, creative businesses & cultural org'sns:

- **Has a quality of life that attracts & retains** businesses, workers, resident & visitors – & additional arts & culture org'sns
- **Inspires downtown revitalization** as municipalities integrate culture into their planning – thus raising real estate values, tax revenues for schools & improvements & the overall economy
- **Can occur in communities of any size**, as the numerous New England small towns with famed arts or cultural attractions attest (Copies of report from pr.org; info from 617/723-4009)

A PR OPPORTUNITY FOR MANY TYPES OF ORG'SNS

Businesses can sponsor a local study like this landmark effort, to aid their community
Arts & culture org'sns can amass & publicize similar data to gain economic as well as aesthetic respect
Schools & educational institutions can show leadership in the community by stimulating businesses & arts org'sns into this effort – & scoring community relations points
Gov't agencies can build relationships with an important cluster of opinion leaders

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

- ¶ **Finally, an Accurate Depiction of Careers in PR for Students** has been produced by Fla Int'l U's PRSSA chapter. *A Student's Guide to Public Relations Education* was underwritten by Council of PR Firms, PRSA & Institute for PR. It features info from the '99 report by Commission on PR Education. Its 40 pgs concisely cover pr's history, elements of pr curricula, internships, types of org'sns using pr, future outlook & more. Good pr for pr opportunity by supplying college faculty advisors & school guidance counselors, as well as parents & students. (Copies from prssa@prsa.org; more info from www.prssa.org)
- ¶ **Incredible Overcommunication Is Mostly Unwanted.** No wonder so few take our calls, respond to researchers or appear eager to build relationships. Data from the telemarketing industry claims the top 10 t-mktg firms have, together, the capacity to make 560 calls per second. That translates to 33,600 calls/minute; 2,016,000 calls/hour; 16,128,000 calls/8-hr day; 80,640,000 calls/5-day week. Or **322,560,000 t-mktg calls each & every month** – enough to dial every phone number in the US & some several times. Their undeniable technical genius is somehow being able to squeeze all these calls into the dinner hour!
- ¶ **There's Benefit to Companies & Org'sns In Limiting Campaign Finances**, says comedian Jimmy Tingle. With the election over, but congressional struggles over campaign reform about to begin, Tingle's joke before the Sept. primaries makes sense: "Public financing of political campaigns, free media coverage, a move to a more democratic direction. This would allow businesses, unions & other org'sns to save zillions of dollars in campaign contributions, which could go back into their coffers for wages, health & retirement benefits ... or to hire someone to answer the phone."

CAUTION: BIZ RELATIONSHIPS ARE DIFFERENT FROM PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, SO REQUIRE A DIFFERENT APPROACH

In one way, they operate almost backwards. Even in an incipient personal relationship, concern for the other person's interests ("mutuality") is there from the start – even if there's nothing in it for you. But there *is* something: you care about your friend & don't expect any real, honest relationship to "pay off." Except in your enjoyment of each other's company.

Biz relationships at the beginning, & often for some time or even forever, harbor latent *mistrust*. The other person is trying to sell us something, get our support or vote or donation. We remain at arm's length & move thru a series of growth stages – *provided* the mistrust proves unfounded (pr.org 10/16/00):

1. Access
2. Exchange
3. Mutuality
4. Supportive behaviors

Getting to stage 4 asap is the goal of the relationship-building programs now in use by nearly all org'sns. But the definition of asap is likely to be rather long term – certainly several months or a year at minimum. Much longer if 1-on-1 contact isn't part of the equation, or if contact is infrequent.

WHY THEY'RE DIFFERENT

1. **People who know each other under business auspices usually have no desire to be friends.** And in those cases when friendship develops, a 2-tier relationship comes into being. How often when they're together as pals they agree "not to talk business tonight"
2. Customers want friendly relationships & service that delivers delight. But they're leery of org'sns that go over the line & **intrude in their lives**
 - They decide when to invoke the relationship. The waiter who's too talkative & chummy irritates. The bellman who obsequiously asks if this is your first visit or where you're from makes most folks cringe
3. There's a reason tony shops & top dining establishments keep their help dressed to the 9s – and *silently* observant. "**Always dress one step above your audience**" is the rule. And never appear intrusive
4. Employees, community neighbors, public officials & other stakeholders – for the most part – feel the same way. Serve me exquisitely, but on my terms – & **until summoned, keep your distance**

STRATEGIES FOR THE STANDOFFISH

Org'sns wanting to build relationships with opinion leaders in key stakeholder groups are advised to treat these programs much like Websites. Remember they're pull, not push, media. You need to keep *offering* opportunities to interact while knowing you won't get individual targets to take you up on them very often.



THIS SUGGESTS A SET OF OBVIOUS, ALMOST SHOPWORN, STRATEGIES:

1. **The invitations must be heartfelt.** Show you really want to see them, symbolically if possible
2. **Events or opportunities must have great appeal to them** – not something that benefits you. If a stage 4 relationship occurs thanks to your patience, the payoff will be ample. WIIFM rules. Research to know absolutely what will appeal is vital ... but must also be done subtly & with taste
3. **Let them know they're in charge.** You want to please them without intruding. This puts them at ease as the relationship ripens
4. **Do communicate useful or fun info** when they miss a chance to be together. Adopt the value-added marketing philosophy: valuable info of this kind is one thing they can get only from you

Friends like to hear from one another often. Business "friends" have limits. The success factor for org'ns today – when every company, NPO, gov't agency & other org'n is competing with every other one for "share of mind" & "share of heart" – is devising the correct method to build vital relationships with folks who didn't know you were interested, & never thought they would be.

GOOD NEWS FOR COMMUNICATORS? STUDY FINDS INTERNET MORE A SOCIAL THAN A COMMERCIAL VEHICLE

During the recent holiday season, Pew Internet & American Life Project research respondents were:

- More than twice as likely to *e-mail* friends & family (53%) than to *shop* online (24%)
- Worse news for dot.coms is that those who do buy from them were equally as likely (24%) to stop an online purchase in mid-transaction as to complete it

ONE VITAL IMPLICATION The lesson for Web designers, e-mail protocol strategists & instant-on intranet managers is that – on line as in stores – *ease of use is the first principle*. Beside being easy to navigate, sites & systems can't be full of distracting eye candy, paragraphic matter or even in-house ads (we're seeing more of these).

Research shows material is not only harder to read & harder to remember on a pixel screen – but also less interesting (pr 9/25/00).

Study also reinforced previous finding that minorities are getting online in growing numbers (see pr last week).

Of related interest: Ads probably won't be sufficient to support the Net, many observers are saying. David Wessel explained why in a *Wall Street Journal* column: "Radio & tv are mass media. The Internet offers custom content." This means e-commerce companies must survive & profit from sales – just like brick-&-mortar stores – & not expect to be subsidized by advertising on their sites.

- **This is the old good news/bad news story for pr:** less competition for viewers ... but search engines & other Web services essential to operation depend now on ads

IF YOU HAVE ISSUE BLUES, READ THIS FOR CATHARSIS

Right after PG&E's generating company affiliate bought a Mass. power plant, Erin Brockovich was brought in by protesters of the plant's pollution record – albeit under previous ownership. The movie about & named after the law firm researcher was then a top grosser, thanks to Julia Roberts' portrayal of the suggestively-dressed Brockovich (pr 4/17/00).

- **Now the real life hero of another film about suing polluters, *A Civil Action* (pr 11/2/99),** has entered the case – but for a more dangerous reason. Jan Schlichtmann lives near the plant & claims his drinking water is unsafe because a site near a lake that supplies it was used to dump fly ash – again, by previous owners. The ash has migrated into the lake, say residents

It would seem PG&E has enough troubles struggling to avoid bankruptcy in the Calif power scandal – where regulators won't approve a rate hike even tho the power suppliers mandated by the state's dereg law are doing what can only be described as price gouging.

- **Danger: Brockovich has been adopted by Hollywood** & its large corps of environmental activists. To name a few, Meryl Streep was spokesperson in the Alar case, Alec Baldwin is prominent in a Long Island group opposed to all nuclear activities, Martin Sheen led a crowd of protesters at Los Alamos Nat'l Lab. She was a presenter at the recent Golden Globe Awards – with exposure to a large tv audience & all Hollywood

See, your issue challenge isn't so bad...

STUDY FINDS ART & CULTURE IMPACT AN AREA'S ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS; THERE'S A PAYBACK IN SUPPORTING THEM

Not only do arts org'ns provide jobs, pay taxes in some form even if tax exempt, & draw spending into their neighborhoods & communities, they also are a major lure for the hardest kind of employees to find – talented professional & creative workers.

Study was done for a *business group*, The New England Council – not an arts organization – & sponsored by prominent corporations like Raytheon, Northeast Utilities & Philip Morris. Some findings:

1. **Arts generate big bucks** – in the 6 New England states, \$3.9B/yr in revenue & 110,000 jobs
2. **Do even more as a Creative Cluster** – support 345,000 jobs or 3.5% of the region's employment – more than New England's vaunted software or medical technology sectors
3. **Must therefore be treated as an industry** – as financial svcs or technology or manufacturing are
4. **Growing faster than the rest of the economy** – 14% vs. 8% between '93 & '97 (latest data)
5. **Major importer of dollars from outside the region** – \$6.6B in cultural tourism alone

THE CREATIVE WORKFORCE

Beside attracting creative workers & execs, arts & culture participants (in various roles) are engineers, educators, biz svcs pros & other information & intellectual employees. These people tend to be highly innovative & entrepreneurial. Every org'n has important employees who sing, act, serve on boards, volunteer etc.