

2. Priorities: Often programs don't address the priorities of mgmt because counsel doesn't have the whole picture, or is inadvertently misled. The CEO may be personally concerned about a different set of problems, and have no substantive commitment to the program he's discussing with you. "Immerse yourself in the strategic planning of the company so you can be an element of implementation and not a discretionary tactical tool. Read the literature management reads. Go to the conferences they attend. Study the issues they give priority to. Think as a businessman. Then apply your special skills of analysis, objectivity and communication." Budd encourages one-on-one, informal contacts. "A third person sets off personal defense mechanisms. Conversation becomes cautious, the 'Not Invented Here' syndrome arises, candor & objectivity suffer."

3. Performance: "When management gets involved in a project, they literally get involved ... and they stay with it until it's completed. They also have other things to do, but they give the immediate, priority. The necessity of pr counsel to juggle many balls at once and to get as many things going as possible to create chargeable time, tends to brake the concentration on any one client's project and stretch out the gestation period unreasonably." Budd recommends "mature follow-up in a timely manner on any project or assignment with a decent batting average of successful accomplishment."

ITEM OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

"Research that is more explicitly public relations will be available when a new journal debuts next October. Public Relations Research & Education will appear twice yearly, carry 1) original research; 2) reviews of other, related research; 3) articles on teaching strategies. Research areas to be covered include marketing, org'l sociology, speech comn, other. Jim Grunig, UMaryland, is editor. Bill Ehling of Syracuse U, Todd Hunt of Rutgers, Frank Walsh of UTexas-Austin & Norm Nager of Cal State-Fullerton are assoc eds. Standard Oil of Indiana will underwrite printing of initial 4 issues. Foundation for PR Research & Education provided seed money. Adding to journal's utility should be Grunig's announcement that all research methodologies will be accepted, whether quantitative, qualitative, historical, legal or critical methods. The growing body of scholarly research -- & researchers -- are critical to public relations' acceptance & future practice. Public relations is a (social) science."

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

DIED. William Durbin, 66, former chrm of Hill & Knowlton.

ELECTED. Dwayne Summar (sr vp & mgr, H&K, Atlanta) elected vp-comms, United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta.

READER RESPONDS

"I disagree with No.2 of the 11 tests for whether to take a whistleblower seriously (pr 3/7). 'Motives are legitimate, not self-serving' seems out of place. If a whistleblower's information is correct in warning of a clear danger and all other tests are met, I see no reason a valid complaint should be dismissed if it is self-serving. Perhaps no one else has the motivation or nerve to blow the whistle." -- Lynn Cheatum, pr coordinator, United Telephone System (Overland Park, Ks.)

Eds. note: "Legitimate" motives need not preclude self-interest. But as the single motivating force, self-interest is a red-flag meaning proceed cautiously ... to carefully weigh the reputed danger against the whistleblower's motivation. But then, is any act not ultimately self-serving?

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PERFORMANCE EVALUATION IS ANOTHER PERSONNEL TECHNIQUE PRACTITIONERS MUST UNDERSTAND -- AND PRACTICE (PART II)

A myth in the public relations profession is that results are hard to measure -- and, therefore, so is the performance of practitioners. "The problem public relations people have is they don't do a very good job of communicating among themselves, face-to-face & interpersonally. But that's the secret. That's the way evaluations should be done," Roy Foltz, Towers, Perrin, Forster & Crosby (NYC) told prr.

Why are some communicators poor evaluators? Foltz explains: "Lots of communicators grew up as artists -- in the generic sense. They work best closed in a room with their typewriter. They wonder 'Why can't others work this way? Why do they have to have their shoulders patted or be told they're doing a good job?' But better interpersonal relationships need to be built. It's happening more & more. Primarily because younger people won't put up with conditions we used to put up with. It's short sighted in the long run anyway. When a person comes to work for me and I can help that person be successful, then myself, my company & the employee benefit. If the employee isn't successful, it's costly."

Evaluation in firms is different than in corporate, says Dwayne Summar, Hill & Knowlton (Atlanta). "In corporate, where I came from, there's a lot more structure & organizational support. It's easier. I find it much more difficult in a firm because the people by the very nature of the work are different. There's an entrepreneurial spirit that is essential for successful counselors. They have a certain independence about themselves. They're self-moti-

Helpful book on how to conduct evaluation interviews is Problem Employees: How To Improve Their Performance (pr 8/23/82). While book deals primarily with problem employees, techniques apply to all. Particularly helpful chapter explains how to get your employee to talk by using listening skills and identifies 3 types. 1) Attending behavior: non-verbal signals such as eye contact or body language that say you're paying attention & interested in what they have to say. 2) Requests for information: verbal techniques that get people talking & keep them talking. 3) Expressions of understanding: techniques to make sure you've heard the other person correctly and to assure employee that he/she is understood.

Book is a step-by-step guide to the performance interview. Answers questions such as: How do you handle the employee who makes critical remarks? The one who talks too much? How do you get the person who won't say boo in the office to open up at the interview? How do you ask an employee to meet with you? How do you get him/her to do a self-analysis? What if you disagree with his/her analysis? Book is full of illustrative dialogue to help the evaluator perform the task. (\$16.95 from Pitman Learning, 6 Davis Drive, Belmont, Calif. 94002)



vated, constantly operating in a decentralized mode. It's difficult to manage against that kind of background. You have to be flexible & innovative."

Hill & Knowlton handles this situation by using a peer system of evaluation. "We have a form for peers to rate an employee on certain characteristics considered essential to a counselor. Usually about 3 peers rate an employee. The forms are sent to our human resource dep't, compiled into a single report and sent back to the manager or head of the unit where the employee works. That's a different twist than I've ever experienced before. In corporate there's no input, as a rule, from peers."

HOW TO DO EVALUATIONS "Professional performance can be evaluated thru a series of participative techniques," explains counselor Peter Hollister. 3 basic documents are involved:

1. Statement of dept's goals & objectives;
2. Employee's goals & objectives;
3. Written performance evaluation.

Goals (broad statements of what should be accomplished) and objectives (specific tasks that directly support goals) are defined participatively by mgmt & staff. Employee's own list of goals & objectives is then compared with dept's, bringing together the expectations of both. A final list is then prepared and used as the basis for professional evaluations.

"Have regular performance appraisals with employees so they know how they're doing and there aren't any big surprises. Amazingly, there are lots of situations where employees don't know how they're doing because nobody tells them. It's

I'VE BEEN WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD, AND NOT GETTING ENOUGH COMMUNICATION: A CASE PROBLEM & SUGGESTED SOLUTION

is won or lost every day of the year in yards and terminals, not in board rooms or union headquarters. To the average operating employee, his trainmaster or his road foreman is the railroad. And the best intentions of people in top management are worthless if they are not transmitted to the people who must ultimately carry them out."

Employees are hungry for communication, shows IABC's '82 study of internal comms (pr 12/13/82). Employees are "more questioning than before and their expectations are higher." But study reports 2nd most active info source -- and least desired by

better now than it used to be because most organizations have formal performance appraisal programs. But there are still plenty of places where it's not done enough," says Foltz.

Evaluations should be ongoing -- ideally with each project. Supervisors shouldn't be judgmental, advises Foltz. "Sit down with your employee and say, 'Here's the way I would approach this assignment.' And tell why. The why dimension is so often missing when explaining decisions. Often because of pressure. But it's absolutely vital. If pressure is a problem, discussion after the project is just as relevant."

Most common timing for a formal evaluation is annually -- but no more than 1 yr should pass between evaluations -- suggests Hollister. "At least a few times during the year (more often during a person's first year) the supervisor & employee should conduct interim evaluations. The results of these meetings create the third document -- the written performance evaluation."

"I can now fully understand why management and labor have, and may always have, such a gulf between them," writes a railroad engineer after 6 yrs of service. "The battle

employees -- is the grapevine. People want to get the word from the horse's mouth, not the rumor mill.

Editorial in Railway Age responds to engineer's letter: "So, what might be done? For openers, top management might review its communications links with middle management and first-line supervision, because in too many cases it would appear that messages are being lost in the translation, and what comes out at the lower levels is not exactly what went into the pipe at the top. Too, top management might just as well recognize that if it allows a communications vacuum to develop, that vacuum is going to be quickly filled with what spews forth from the rumor mill.

"What it comes down to, perhaps, is simply that the internal communications practices in existence don't seem to be working as they should be. And nobody can change this except top management."

CONFESSIONS OF AN EX-COUNSELOR OFFER GUIDELINES FOR FIRMS & CLIENTS; READ THIS & SEE IF YOU AGREE

Public relations practiced from the outside -- counsel -- is different from public relations conducted on the inside, says the always quotable John Budd, Emhart vp-external relations (Hartford). "It's a different world than that in which I worked for nearly 30 years," at the Byoir firm. "It's not that I do things differently now -- I think differently -- and, perhaps most importantly, I have time to think!"

Budd sees the inside view as the "real world" -- public relations circumscribed by matters that concern management. "Looking back, I realize how generally superficial, or at least discretionary, were my activities on behalf of clients during the years as counsel. I never really got into the viscera of a client organization ... never really got underneath where the real problem solving lies ... I was never really part of what makes the company tick."

PR's low priority requires daily defense -- and "hand holding" -- that an outsider can never do, Budd believes. He feels logical counsel is immaterial to operating execs. "To them public relations is ethereal. What's real is the unit's return on assets. The bottom line is operating income, not publicity or public approbation."

3 Areas Illustrate Budd's Perspective

1. Programming: Frustrations arise because counsel's urgency to initiate a program isn't matched by company's appetite. Deadlines are painful to execs asked to take "unaccustomed initiatives." Approvals come grudgingly. And when counsel goes back to the office, a subtle counter-attack against "change" is waged behind the scenes, sabotaging the program. "It's difficult, if not impossible, to combat this unless one is on the scene. It takes a lot of psychological hand-holding, negotiating, conciliation, persuasion, and, sometimes, coercion."

"We are agents of change and interpreters of it. As such, we must:

- ¶Harness our professionalism as communicators
- ¶Apply our objectivity as event analysts
- ¶Use our sensitivity to external perceptions, and
- ¶Our predilection to be initiators, and
- ¶Function as catalysts for certain corporate responsiveness."