

For an example of how business feels about a state's problems & opportunities, request a copy of "Blueprint for Colorado." With economic competition seen more & more as a case of free (U.S., Canada) vs. managed (Japan, Europe) economies, the challenge is to find a middle position -- that protects economic freedom while combating the advantages of cooperative managed economies. This report attempts this goal on a statewide basis. It demonstrates again how schools, healthcare, higher education, environmental policies are linked in a non-linear system. You may not agree with the recommendations. For instance, social policies are part of the web but are not mentioned. But as an attempt by business to present an integrated policy, it is illuminating. Several local practitioners were involved. (Write Colo. Assn of Commerce & Industry Educational Foundation, 1860 Lincoln St., Denver 80295-0501; 303/831-7411)

Public relations ramifications of AIDS on the workforce is focus of AIDS/COMM Forum, April 13 & 14 at Waldorf-Astoria, NYC. Purpose is to help pr pros develop programs & policies that will serve employers, fellow employees, community & society at large, as well as the employee with AIDS. American Foundation for AIDS Research chairperson is keynote speaker. Socratic dialogue using a composite case history will explore problems presented when an employee has AIDS. Other sessions will examine legal, human resource & public relations issues. Concluding panel will look at policies currently in place. (Larimi Communications, 5 W. 37th St, NYC 10018; 212/819-9310)

More ad agencies broaden services to offer pr. As tightened budgets, accelerating media costs & audience segmentation flatten advertising expenditures, ad execs are discovering the power of pr. Applauding the growing acceptance of what he calls "coordinated communications planning," D'Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles CEO John Bowen notes that to shape consumer attitudes & influence buying decisions, businesses are using every tool at their disposal. He maintains advertising is "the most potent of these tools" (what's his evidence?) but adds, "there is also public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, and many others." To get the most out of its "communications dollar," Bowen says "a multi-front strategy mounted by a single diversified communications corporation" is needed. "It isn't enough to pick & choose services from a hodgepodge of disparate suppliers: advertising from company A, public relations from company B, and so on."

At Tyson Foods, people come first -- even in the annual report. First 8 pages introduce 16 employees who are also shareholders. They talk about their jobs, share views on the company's success -- which has made it the world's largest producer of poultry products & #1 in Fortune 500 rankings for average total return to investors over the decade. A "management dialogue" section features candid photos of the chairman & president -- each wearing the same tan Tyson workshirts employees sport on previous pages! Refreshing lack of pretentiousness. (Corporate Annual Reports of NYC helped produce.)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

MOVING. Jim Tolley, Chrysler vp-pa, taking early retirement 3/31 to open corporate affairs consulting firm. Lee Iacocca credits him with "pivotal role"

in winning recognition for company's turnaround. Chrysler will be a client of new firm.

pr reporter

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WORKPLACE POLICIES: THEIR INTERNAL RAMIFICATIONS & EXTERNAL FALLOUT

Substance abuse & drug testing. AIDS. Smoking policies. Wellness programs. Hazard notification. Daycare & eldercare. Workplace policies on these issues range from non-existent to highly formalized -- often most visible in missives from human resources & personnel dept's. But what about their public relations impact?

As increasing attention is given to employees -- how their needs & lifestyles affect productivity, quality & other goals -- workplace policies become crucial. At the least, a formal policy can reinforce or detract from employee relations. At the other end of the spectrum, potential risks of not establishing policies include product liability, skyrocketing healthcare costs, reputation, even organizational viability.

These are major public relations issues -- particularly in an era of unexpected crises, cautious investors, a litigious society. In this series of articles on workplace policies, pr will explore trends & programs that are developing to protect employees, customers & other publics -- as well as the organization.

WORKPLACE POLICIES, PART I -- SUBSTANCE ABUSE & DRUG TESTING: SOUTHERN PACIFIC, UNITED AIRLINES, NEW YORK TIMES, PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC SHARE PERSPECTIVES ON POLICIES, PREVENTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Motivators Are Safety, Economics, Confidence

Pressure is greatest where public or employee safety is at stake. But substance abuse policies are also fueled by economic consequences. Drug & alcohol abusers don't leave their problems at home; off-duty conduct also has its costs. Result: employers pick up the tab in reduced productivity, chronic absenteeism, accidents & injuries, increased medical & insurance costs, legal liability. Conservative estimate is that drug use costs American industry \$50 billion a year. U.S. Sec'y of Health & Human Services puts the costs at \$117 billion.

Maintaining public confidence also justifies policies -- especially for drug testing. To assure customers of reliability & dependability in its investment services, Kidder Peabody made headlines last year for not only pre-testing new hires but unannounced testing of employees. Tho drug testing puts teeth into a policy, it is highly charged with civil liberties & invasion of privacy.



Prevalence Of Policies On substance abuse, recent Training magazine survey found:

¶67% have formal policies. Highest in health services (88%) followed by transportation, utilities & communications (79%), public agencies (78%).

¶25% provide training for abusers; 38% have an Employee Assistance Program to handle it & other matters associated with these problems.

¶14% test job applicants; almost 25% do tests on employees with probable cause. Only 8.5% test without probable cause (highest in airlines, nuclear power plants, police & fire dept's).

"Our #1 objective is to encourage people to come out of the closet with their problem. A policy that threatens their job security or jeopardizes their career will only drive them into the closet. That's particularly dangerous in an area of public safety." -- Matt Gonring, dir extl coms, United Airlines

Alcohol & drug testing is up considerably from 3 years ago, according to research report by Christian Science Monitor. Study of Fortune 1,000 companies by U. Maryland's Judy Olian finds 49% test at least some job applicants or employees for drugs. Olian says screening is becoming so pervasive many college placement officials warn students to expect blood, polygraph and/or urine testing at some stage in the interview process.

Phases Of Development & Implementation

1. Advance Work involves planning by human resources, EAP staff, pr, legal dept, CEO to determine scope of policy. Considerations include: a) rationale, b) method & terms of enforcement, c) prevention/rehabilitation programs. Union participation is crucial. Contrary to the experience of some, unions supported New York Times decision to institute a policy, says Nancy Nielsen, dir corp rels & pa. "Union representatives were relieved to get a formal policy; no one likes to work with people whose judgment is impaired."

2. Supervisor Training is necessary to help a) identify employees under the influence (tricky with some drugs which have no apparent symptoms), b) become familiar with new policy rules & regs, c) know how to deal with impaired persons.

"The real argument today is what constitutes intrusion when it involves public safety. I frankly don't see any difference between drug testing in these instances and airport metal detectors. Or, for that matter, innoculations against contagious diseases that every kid has to have to attend public schools." -- Bob Taggart, vp-pa, Southern Pacific

3. Announcement. Key is by whom & by what means. Southern Pacific chose to announce a) in regularly scheduled safety briefings, b) article in employee magazine, c) bulletin board notices, d) verbally by supervisors. Pacific Gas & Electric had president make announcement in letter mailed to employees' homes. Q&As were handled in a series of lunchtime "Brown Baggers." NYTimes' announcement package (president's letter, EAP package, policy) was hand-delivered to employees

in the office by their managers. Top-down approach with person-to-person delivery helped demonstrate seriousness, gave opportunity for immediate feedback.

4. Support Programs. Extent depends on orgn's philosophy & structure. Most use EAPs to administer drug education & prevention programs. At PG&E, 1-hour program is presented in regional sites to groups of 50-100. It focuses on family, includes a

) videotape showing how to identify problems with spouses, teens. Because PG&E thinks of itself as a "family," message is transferrable -- subtly training employees how to identify drug-related behavior in colleagues.

At Southern Pacific, all testing & education is off premises. "We're not in the business of counseling or rehabilitation. We run a railroad. We refer our employees externally to experts in that particular field," Bob Taggart, vp-pa, told prr. Besides, 25,000 employees strung out over 14 states would make it logistically impossible.

5. Enforcement. Tho employees are given a strong incentive to seek assistance, violation results in dismissal at PG&E and Southern Pacific. NYTimes carefully spells out consequences of 1st 3 offenses with the 4th resulting in discharge. United Airlines, often touted as a model policy, encourages seeking help through a) anonymous telephone hotline; b) company-paid counseling & de-tox treatment; c) partially-paid leave policies.

6. Drug testing. Critics claim accuracy, ethics & impact on morale are problems. But there seems little doubt it works to improve workplace safety. Southern Pacific experienced 60% reduction in accidents. PG&E reports 25% reduction in accidents, 40% decrease in serious injuries.

CALGARY WINTER OLYMPICS: SUCCESS DESPITE TYPICAL MEDIA NEGATIVISM, PUBLIC SKEPTICISM; BUT PR POLICIES COULD HAVE AVOIDED THAT

Very successful, ultimately, in promoting the city, bringing in dollars, even making a profit, event faced problems during its 5 yrs of plan-

ning. John Francis, of Francis Williams & Johnson there, told prr: "Until about 2 months before the games, the organizing committee had a very negative reputation." Partly due to 1) failure in communicating with the public about the huge challenge; 2) muckraking reporting which front-paged every possible embarrassment or organizational difficulty.

This cast doubt on the leadership. 3) But they chose not to explain. Result was an accumulation of negatives over 5 years. And 4) there was a perception of unfairness over ticket distribution -- alleged favoritism to privileged organizations. This was front page day after day. "If you had asked Calgarians 3 months ago how they feel about the Olympics, you would have gotten too many negative responses.

"The overview of this is that performance can overcome negative media & negative public perception. But the weakness of the organizing committee's public relations caused them unnecessary grief & personal attacks."

"Today there's euphoria. All is forgotten. The same media that were so skeptical and had made personal attacks on the leadership are now praising them. The tickets eventually migrated and most people did get an opportunity to see some of the events if they made any effort. Ultimately people went & were happy."

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶Lest anyone doubt that 2-worker families are the norm, Fuller Brush is opening retail stores. Can't sell door-to-door to housekeepers who aren't there, they say.