

Bill Heard, O'Neal & Prella, explains:

Step 1. "We've set up a telephone hotline/partyline service to provide info & individual support to smokers who want to quit the habit. We commissioned an answering service & trained its operators -- many of whom are ex-smokers themselves. People are encouraged to call anytime between 7am - 11pm and talk to the counselors, who listen to smoking problems, provide useful information, or connect callers with Joe or Lucy on the other line, who are also trying to quit.

Step 2. "We have a strong daily paper & a local radio station that blows others away. Also, an AM sister station, plus local TV 26, with a strong following. And we've scheduled 7,000 newspaper, tv & radio ads. Thanks to a grant from the National Cancer Institute, we're using paid advertising instead of PSAs -- meaning we can pick any airtime we want."

SSP went on-line 5/4, will be in operation for a month. Benn: "Already, people in other towns are calling and saying 'why not us? Why can't we have a local smokers' number in our town?' We'll evaluate the program next month. If we find that it has been a success, we will take it statewide." Program is just one in a series of several anti-smoking campaigns planned for the state. "We have to keep in mind who is smoking, and who, with its 2-billion dollar per year advertising budget, the tobacco industry is targeting. From that direction we'll decide on other smoking prevention & cessation strategies. We want to especially work on the high schools, perhaps prohibiting smoking there. This is an environmental issue as well."

Partyline is a toll call outside New London area: 203/444-6733.

#### ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR PRACTITIONERS

Is President Bush A Better Strategist than he's given credit for? His selection of Dan Quayle as veep is cited to show he has little grasp of strategic thinking. But -- if you were running an election campaign knowing the Oliver North trial will commence immediately afterwards, and you know info released there is bound to draw you in, wouldn't you want Quayle as your v.p.? Result: no one is even thinking about pursuing the allegations that surfaced about Bush in the trial....

When Crisis Strikes, Beware Of Getting "Verbed." When Esso found out its name means "stalled car" in Japanese, it spent a lot of money to find one that was void of negative meaning in every major language. The result, Exxon, could now have problems of its own, suggests a letter to WashPost. The writer speculates on whether an organization's name can become a monument to many kinds of ineptitude. "Words always spring up to fill linguistic vacuums, particularly where the scope of existing words is inadequate to the occasion." So he forsees "Get this rust heap off the reef, mate, before you exxon the whole harbor"; and "I'm all thumbs. I tried to change the oil in my car, and I exxonated the driveway." DC consultant John Daly wonders whether writers on language -- e.g. Bill Safire & Jack Kilpatrick -- might be inspired by such creative suggestions from vox populi. Remember how boycott & quisling got into our dictionaries.

Vol.32 No.20  
May 15, 1989

#### OPPORTUNITY & CRITICAL AREA FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS GUIDANCE: PRACTITIONER SAYS CEOS GENERALLY ARE AN ETHICAL LOT BUT LACK OF QUALITATIVE TRAINING MAKES THEM SEEM GREEDY, UNCARING

The most CEOs are moral, their public image, as a group, is unsavory, finds John Budd, v chrm, Carl Byoir -- which specializes in counseling CEOs. "They are ethical, but the headlines they make say otherwise," he told prr. "They really are their own worst enemies." Because they spend their lives dealing with hard facts, not abstracts, they have no philosophical antennae. "Given a clear choice -- a black and white situation -- almost all businesspeople will make the right decision. But they have difficulty in the gray areas...those which seem to have tradeoffs!"

Budd told first Ethics Forum, Church Of The Incarnation (NYC), that CEOs are guilty of sins of omission, not commission. Help yours avoid these booby traps:

A. Inability to grasp the significance of perception. The real facts are often immaterial -- so a CEO must not rationalize an activity on the basis of legal acceptability if it seems wrong...because it will be wrong to the public.

B. Lack of a philosophical base to make qualitative decisions -- to support their role in the largest public sense.

C. Bad, intimidating counsel. At every turn advisors -- usually lawyers & investment bankers -- counsel against candor. Straight talk, CEOs are conditioned to believe, leads to lawsuits. So "corporate speak" -- mushy elocutions that dispense rhetorical conundrums by the page -- results.

D. "The litigious nature of our society makes being a CEO a perilous journey. But by denying simple public explanations of their actions, CEOs sabotage their own credibility -- which leads to sharp censure of their moral principles."

"Example: Takeovers. When a company is put into play, the common denominator becomes dollars, not people. CEOs are told, even threatened that they must maximize shareholder value. Intimidated by this fiduciary responsibility, they feel they have no choice but to sell out the company on behalf of shareholders. So they do, no doubt with some frustration but also a warm feeling of righteousness -- they've maximized shareholder value! The average CEO doesn't have the philosophical reserve upon which to draw to challenge the argument. He's really comfortable with the decision because it is a quantitative one. He can't cope with such abstractions as 'is it ethical or moral?' And when his motives are criticized, he's genuinely hurt."



E. "The only courses or seminars most of them attend are those on 'How To Compete With The European Market Of The 1990s' or other strictly-business topics." CEOs can develop qualitative skills, take courses, even weekend seminars, in philosophy, liberal arts -- with no talk of business at all. (This is why Aspen Institute et al have been successful.)

Budd says fighting WARA plant closing bill (pr 11/7/88) was wrong because it created the perception of cynical disregard for employee interests & community well being. Yet CEOs lined up to do this despite the fact most of them give ample notice anyway. The wrong issue, the wrong place to take a stand on principle -- universally viewed as an abuse of power. So they lost.

Advice for Practitioners: "We're concerned with the court of public opinion (perception) rather than the court of law (hard facts). If we in pr do our job of counseling, the real ethical violators -- and they certainly do exist -- will be seen more as exceptions to the rule rather than yet another example of moral decay & rot common to management overall."

Of Related Interest:

USE '87 DOCUMENTARY TO SHOW YOUR CEO HOW TV & CURRENT CULTURE PORTRAY HIM AS HEAVY

Television perpetuates negative image of business people, who are invariably depicted as calculating megalomaniacs, stopping at nothing to satisfy their lust for power & money. According to documentary "Hollywood's Favorite Heavy," the 80s produced a variation on the theme: the greedy, unethical but admirable bizperson who is ultimately rewarded for evil acts.

Film makes the point that it's bad enough bizpeople must endure such a rap, but worse still that young people form warped concepts about what being in business is all about. When students were asked if they would dump hazardous waste into city's sewer system & ultimately harm many people, they unanimously voted "yes" -- for the right amount of money or as a last resort to save their business.

Film interviews highschoolers who say they emulate characters like J.R. Ewing & Alexis Carrington because: a) they are glamorous; b) they control others; c) they get what they want.

NB: Average 18-yr old has seen tv bizpeople attempt over 10,000 murders. (To rent or purchase film, contact Helene Eisman, HFM Film Library, 1697 Broadway, Room 1212, New York, N.Y. 10019; 212/245-5885)

BURNED BY CRITICS' REPORT, CAN YOU GET AHEAD OF IT? WATER INDUSTRY TRIES

Upcoming report on the industry by former ally League of Women Voters, Crosscurrents: The Water We Drink, misinterprets its own data, says American Water Works Assn exec dir John

Mannion. "It's a very negatively written report which tars the water supply industry with very broad strokes." Study interviewed 572 local water utility officials in 49 states, & drinking water administrators in all 50 states. Findings claim industry is insufficiently monitoring contaminants.

The New Game Of Fear Statistics

For instance: report says 24% of utilities had trihalo-methane levels higher than the possible future regulated levels of 50 parts per billion (ppb). "The report shows that 98% of them had THM levels well below the current 100 ppb standard -- a very high degree of compliance. Reducing the levels to 50 will require careful planning to avoid disinfection problems that could produce greater health concerns, such as waterborne diseases. The industry is working cooperatively with the EPA to produce effective disinfectant regulations."

"We don't plan to do anything further. I think the brochure will suffice."

Background

Jim Hayes, dir pub info: "For a long time, our industry was reactive to everything. In recent years, however, there has been a plan, a concerted effort to speak out and be, for lack of a better word, 'proactive.' We had been involved with the League, funded some of its programs to the tune of \$20,000. They didn't ask us to fund this particular study. They started out against us & took that tone thruout the report. They presented it in such a way as to get publicity for themselves. They didn't educate people, they scared them instead."

Effort to Get Ahead of Onslaught of Public Criticism & Inquiry

AWWA is distributing an alert brochure to utility managers & press outlets, hoping: 1) "An environmental reporter, without knowing our side of the issue, would see the report & run with it. With our release, they may pick up the phone and do a little digging to find out our story," Hayes told prr. 2) "We wanted to prepare our industry with info that would help them speak responsibly to the press." 3) Brochure offers comments answering the key findings.

Success?

Hayes suspects April release caused the League to reconsider releasing report during National Drinking Water Week in early May. "They're releasing it in dribbles & drabs on a local level, rather than all at once thru AP in Washington."

ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGN PROVIDES ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF FULL-SPECTRUM PR TECHNOLOGY

Alarmed at the high cancer death rate in the New London area, Connecticut Dept of Health Services got together with a Hartford pr firm, devised the Stop Smoking Parityline. "State data shows out of all deaths in 1985, 4270 were directly attributable to smoking. And it's not all lung cancer, but also cervical, heart disease, cancers of the throat, larynx & esophagus." Suzanne Benn, Center For Chronic Disease told prr. "It cost the state \$700 million in that year alone! Yet people continue to smoke."

The Challenge

Program aims to reach" the publics which continually resist us -- blacks & hispanics, blue-collar workers, and teens, especially teen girls.

The Method

Mass media is used only to supplement the core of the program -- personal contact. Classic diffusion process.