

**ETHICS SURVEY COMPARES
VARIOUS PROFESSIONS**

The Pinnacle Group (a consortium of pr firms) surveyed 795 bizpeople & 1,093 highschoolers nationwide to find out how they ranked the ethical standards of various professions. Both groups used "honesty" & "integrity" as greatest determinant; students place more emphasis on loyalty (10%) than do the bizpeople (3%).

Accountants, doctors & dentists are deemed supreme by both groups. Used car salesmen & tv evangelists trail each list. Newspaper reporters, politicians & union leaders don't fare well, & students don't trust tv repairpeople. Business gave pr a good score, 5th out of 16, while the students ranked it 7th.

While bizpeople are more optimistic about the state of ethics today (60% consider it "good," compared to 47% of the students), both agree that standards have eroded steadily over the past 100 years -- a view which historians may find strays from the truth. (Copy of survey from Lynn McCarthy, The Pinnacle Group, 1335 TCF Tower, Minneapolis, MN 55402; 312/372-7090.)

Study validates earlier research re the perception of business held by youth (pr 5/15). Students are more inclined to take advantage of a situation for personal gain -- 59% say they would break the law to make a lot of money, compared with 24% of the bizpeople. Also, 66% of the students say they would lie to achieve a business objective, while 29% of businesspeople say they would distort the truth. Students expressed cynicism of businesspeople & business practices. Also, students are more heavily influenced by media than bizpeople.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR PRACTITIONERS

¶ Viable Way to get to know youth public is news service from Youth Communication. Youth News Service is written by, for & about teens, covers trends, issues, even legislation affecting them -- e.g. labor laws, smoking in schools, etc. Produced for highschool newspapers & major media subscribers, bi-weekly is 8 pages, \$90 per year. Also available on-line. Fascinating how youth view of youth issues differs -- often radically -- from same material gathered & reported by adults. Info from YNS, 2025 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Washington D.C. 20006; 202/429-5292.

¶ Chinese Gov't Launches "PR Campaign" to improve army's tainted image. While maintaining recent student massacre was a glorious victory, gov't is trying hard to win over citizens whose opinions soured after incident in Beijing last May. The program? Soldiers offer free acupuncture & blood pressure tests to passers-by, entertain crowds in the street with disco dance demonstrations!

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

DIED. Walter Belson, past PRSA pres of stroke at his Bethesda home. He served when licensing pr was at the top of the nat'l agenda -- in 1962!

HONORED. 2nd PRSSA chap is named for Frank Wylie, ex-Chrysler & PRSA pres '78, at CalState Long Beach, where he's prof & head of pr program. Other is at Dayton U.

Vol.32 No.32
August 14, 1989

**LAW & PUBLIC RELATIONS COACH CLIENTS FROM OPPOSITE VIEWS;
CAN THEY WORK TOWARD INTERDISCIPLINARY UNDERSTANDING?
PRACTITIONERS CLAIM COURTSHIP IS IN THE WORKS**

Those representing the court of law often contradict counsel for the court of public opinion -- & vice versa. Traditionally, a lawyer will discourage clients from commenting. The public relations person usually encourages candor.

But practitioners & lawyers are now forming viable relationships. Recent Detroit Bar Ass'n meeting assessed the case for pr in litigation, concluded that the climate is right for harmonic convergence. "Working together, attorneys & pr practitioners can make a better case for the client," panelist Jack Casey, Casey Comm Mgmt (Southfield, Mi) told pr. "Lawyers have enough to do. They welcome sound pr counsel for their clients."

Areas Of Growth 1. Environmental Issues. Public concern plus new wave of disclosure laws require law & pr to team up -- Casey says it's his firm's biggest growth area. Panelist Philip Grashoff of law firm Honigman Miller Schwartz: "Here we find an extremely valuable role for pr. The public is grabbing hold of environmental issues. Those of us in the environmental area are right in the center of this maelstrom of interest, which means there is a great need for pr."

Lawyer Donald Tucker, Tucker & Rolf: "It's essential, regardless of how good you feel about yourself as a spokesperson for your client, that you make sure you are the lawyer & that pr is handled by a pr professional."

2. Regulatory Committees. Includes anything involving gov'tl control. "One client was recommended to sponsor the state lottery. Competitors were upset, went to the politicians & press. Our job was to help our client show why they were recommended. It was a very involved process, included addressing the minority populations about their stake in the issue."
3. Employee Rels. Especially with reorganization, downsizing, new federal requirement for 60-days notice prior to plant closings (pr 11/7/88).
4. Community Rels. Not only communicating with public, but conducting attitudinal research -- often helpful in jury selection. Example: If a utility is on trial, its case may involve a rate increase. Should jurors be drawn from a community that will be affected? "It may be pr's job to give evidence that the trial should be moved to another region."



Which Side Uses PR The Most? "If you're under attack, you may more readily see the value of sound pr," says Casey. "But pr also works for the prosecution." Example: In R.P. Scherer case, major shareholder Karla Scherer attempted to sell company despite management opposition. "We had to persuade shareholders she had their interests in mind -- the greatest return on their investment during favorable market conditions." Complicating factor -- one of her biggest opponents on the mgmt team was her soon-to-be ex-husband. "We had to make sure she came across as a concerned shareholder, which she was, and not as vindictive."

Similarities Of Law & PR At last year's PRSA conference (Cleveland) lawyer Ron Isroff & practitioner Bill Koch, Tricil (Akron) compared views about the court of public opinion vs. the court of law. Determined both a) share fiduciary responsibility to the client; b) are expected to honor client/contractor confidentiality; c) are guided by a strict code of ethics; d) are subject to loss of accreditation or disbarment for violation of code; e) are communicators -- but lawyers are concerned with history (what happened), practitioners with perception (how public sees it).

Areas Where They Clash ¶ Product Introduction: Lawyer's concern is whether client's product infringes on competitors in any way. PR stresses differences to devise a Unique Selling Proposition.

¶ Special Events: Lawyer's concern is that there is insurance coverage, what the health law liabilities may be, etc. PR wants a crowd that gets persuaded.

¶ Deadlines: PR lives with them. Lawyers are used to getting extensions of time & continuances from court.

¶ "No Comment." Lawyers will often advise, "Don't say anything that might materially prejudice against you. Avoid the press. You don't have an obligation to tell everything you know." A pr person would counsel, "Listen & talk to your publics. Put the press in touch with contacts, divulge info ASAP."

TWO ITEMS OF RELATED INTEREST...

¶ Perhaps Bishop Should've Called PR Practitioner First. According to National Catholic Reporter, Phoenix Bishop Tom O'Brien called a press conference to apologize for way his diocese handled a child molestation case involving a priest & 3 boys. Controversial was a plea bargain engineering a 1-year sentence. "... public perception was that the church got one of its clerics off lightly..." Father of 2 of the boys claimed no one from the diocese ever contacted him. O'Brien admitted he should have ignored legal advice & called the family directly.

Koch: "We need to educate lawyers regarding their avoidance of the media. Often, a lawyer will advise not to publicly apologize for an incident, since that is seen as an admission of guilt should they be sued."

Isroff: Why does the lawyer get more respect for his/her advice than the practitioner? "Often it is the lawyer language -- CEO doesn't understand it, figures s/he'd better follow the advice."

¶ Frank Walsh's New Book On PR & The Law clarifies concern over legalities on pr issues such as: a) privacy; b) copyright; c) defamation; d) freedom of speech... and more. Published by The Institute for PR Research & Educ, Public Relations & The Law replaces Morton Simon's 60s version. Walsh is already working on a second edition because of the fast-changing pace of pr law & new restrictions in copyright. More info from The Institute, 310 Madison Avenue, NYC 10017; 212/370-9353.

ENLIGHTENED SELF INTEREST IS BEST PR; OUTDOOR CATALOGUE SUPPORTS VOLUNTEERISM IN WAY THAT ALSO SUPPORTS COMPANY

Subscribers of L.L. Bean's (Freeport, Me) catalogue may notice something besides gear & wear in this season's edition. The outdoor outfitters now offer an 800# from which readers can get a free list of fresh air volunteer opportunities in their area. Program responds to Bean readers' love of the outdoors. "We offer a way for people to volunteer, but not have to stay inside in a sweaty t-shirt, stuffing envelopes & getting their fingernails dirty," pa mgr Kilton Andrews told prr.

Other reasons for implementing Outdoor Volunteer Opportunities:

1. Image. Company's corporate giving record shows commitment to environment, but it's not public knowledge. And over the past 2 years, increasing social sensitivity on the subject has put those in the outdoors business under scrutiny. "The question on everyone's mind is 'Just what are you guys doing in the way of good deeds? How are you helping the garden grow?' With that kind of inquiry, we must transmit the fact that we take the outdoors seriously, we do give a hoot & a holler."

2. Volunteerism vs. Philanthropy.

"Over the past 5 years we've pumped upwards of a million dollars into conservation & nonprofits. Still, we get a flood of requests from environmental conservation organizations about contributions." Conclusion: "If you take all the manufacturers and put them in a big vise and squeeze them, you couldn't make but a drop in the bucket for impact. But moving the people into volunteerism makes them more serious about shaping public policy & voting. After establishing sweat equity, they have a stake."

3. Crisis. President's report indicates a need for greater involvement. Problems with acid rain, global warming etc. prove the environment is indeed in trouble.

4. Enlightened Self Interest. Without streams to fish from & forested mountains to hike, who would purchase Bean's fly hooks & camping gear?

Andrews notes volunteerism is on the rise -- key question is how to put it to best use. "That may be the most important direction to look to."

The Great American Contradiction: The President's Commission on Americans Outdoors found the environment in crisis, greater public involvement direly needed. Commission's report reveals an irony -- Americans revel in wooded & wild wealth, understand the importance of natural resources, but take it all for granted. Of the \$80 billion given to charity every year, only 1% goes to conserving natural resources.