

2. *Vendor participation.* "They committed a percentage of their sales. 'Shelf talkers' were placed in front of certain products to indicate to customers how many cents of their purchase would go to KFK."
3. *Media sponsorship.* It was a natural for the media. Radio stations posted remote vans outside the stores, conducted man-on-the-street interviews, gave on-site publicity. "We got a lot of new customers this way. People driving by were curious. Others heard about the event on their car radio."
4. *Signage, banners, balloons, etc.* Colors were light pink & blue, pale yellows, greens.
5. *Point-of-Purchase* donation cards.
6. *Participative Employees.* Chain uses service personnel thruout its stores. "Our employees were very participative and effective in answering customers' questions about the program."
7. *Super Tuesday.* "On the last Tuesday of April, we donated 15% of sales to KFK."

Results: 1. *Funds Raised.* "We raised the money for the alcove & gave \$19,000 to the Cancer Society."

2. *Enduring recognition.* "There will be a plaque, 'Sponsored thru the generosity of Randall's Food Market, its customers and vendors.' Tangible evidence of our involvement."
3. *Unity with the community.* "On the last day of the program, we were all so depressed. Everyone got so much out of it, we hated to see it end."

This year, Randall's lightens up its theme with a campaign to help upgrade the zoo. "It's not a life & death situation. Employees wear animal costumes -- it's a lot of fun." Program components are similar to KFK program, only color scheme is bold -- black, vibrant primary colors, stripes and spots. "Zoo mobiles featuring snakes, porcupines, etc. are parked outside the stores. It's a real educational experience for children and adults."

ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR PRACTITIONERS

PR Can Expect Onslaught Of Resumes because writers' salaries start low and stay low, finds survey from Women In Communications. Survey scoped writers in all media, found beginners can expect less than \$20,000 (often much less) per year. Even after a decade in the field, most writers report an annual income of under \$30,000. Pres Janice DiNezza warns this depressing financial outlook will inspire many writers to find jobs in the more highly paid areas of professional communications, i.e., the corporate sector.

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IF BATTLE BETWEEN HUMAN RESOURCES AND PUBLIC RELATIONS OCCURS, WHO GETS EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS? CASE FOR PR IS STRONG, BUT ORGANIZATIONS BEST SERVED IF HR REMAINS INVOLVED

Human Resources and Public Relations are bound to collide in the decade ahead. Two things are happening: 1) pr is becoming prime orchestrator of organizational relations through corporate strategy, risk & crisis management and internal relations; 2) human resources is striving to shed the confines of "personnel" and be central source of employee relations. Both groups are recognizing the supremacy of internal publics. If a turf battle does ensue, employee communication may be the prize.

HUMAN RESOURCES IS NO LONGER A LINE FUNCTION

Last year, the American Society for Personnel Administrators (Alexandria) changed its name to Society for Human Resources Management (pr 8/21/89). Cate Bower vp com, explains: "HR executives are now members of senior management, business partners looking at issues with a global perspective. The old-line concept of hiring/firing, benefits & compensation is giving way to strategizing for long-term issues." They boil down to:

1) work & family relations; 2) competitiveness & productivity; 3) training & education; 4) employee/employer rights 5) demographics. "We're now concerned with labor problems, recruiting/retaining employees, etc." So, naturally, communication comes into play.

Wyatt consultants survey of 2000 companies indicates HR dominates employee communication. In '86, 46% reported HR handled it -- now it's 53%. Meanwhile, in pr depts it dropped from 38% to 30%. But Alvie Smith, 32-yr com dir for General Motors, thinks stats don't mirror what's happening in large organizations. "In companies with over 10,000, ratio favors PR over HR 53% to 34%. Wyatt's survey is oriented toward small companies & should be looked at carefully." Smith feels pr's Annual Survey (1/22) of 841 organizations puts issue in perspective: 70% show employee communication under PR, 22% under HR.

"In the 80s, HR got away from batch processing, assembly-line mentality," says Bower. "We really started to see things happen -- baby boomers, women in the workforce, etc." Resultingly, a lot of attached issues came to a head. 10 years ago, an employer would say childcare was not a company concern. "Now it's a competitive issue."



THE CASE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

Smith thinks in general, HR staffs do a poor job of administrating employee communication. "It's difficult because they are not professionally trained communicators -- and they usually report to non-communication management. HR is the employees' representative to management (& vice versa), but pr staffs have a better grasp of the big picture." Smith, who is writing a book on the subject, also finds:

1. Importance & potential of communication is not understood by traditional HR people, including top execs. But pr staffs are established communication units with skills & motivation to do a top-notch job;
2. Full disclosure & 2-way communication is problematic for traditional HR people, who are non-communicators. "They follow a 'need to know' policy." PR staffs know early & full disclosure is important. They understand value of information & deadlines. "Consistency, promptness & regularity are second nature to them";
3. HR often management mouthpiece. PR is trained to be objective;
4. To HR, employee communication is a line function. "To PR, it's part of master strategic plan, creates potential for stronger activity in all corporate efforts."

PRACTITIONERS AGREE: SEEK A COMFORTABLE BALANCE FOR BOTH Many practitioners as well as HR execs would like to avoid competing and opt instead for a team approach. "I think the roles are different," Bower told prr. "HR should be able to do an analysis of how an issue, e.g. downsizing, will affect employees. PR must take a look at what's happening and advise senior management of the appropriate response. Things don't happen in a vacuum -- a strategic partnership is needed."

Despite its collective expertise, if pr is to take the lead -- or even be a viable partner -- staffs will have to shape up. Smith says too many: a) are driven by media relations mindset; b) consider employee communication after media, stockholders, fin'l analysts; c) give internal publics the "blue plate special" when what they need is depth, answers to why & what.

Smith agrees: "Strategic management is severely handicapped, efficiency & cohesion diluted if communication functions are dispersed." Effective employee communication requires close cooperation between PR & HR. "HR has much to gain from good communication in terms of employee performance, loyalty, satisfaction. Working together, the 2 departments can produce the greatest benefits for the organization overall." Other opinions:

1. David Warshaw, mgr corp comm, Alcoa: "There must be a partnership. HR is PR's most critical customer. It's HR's employment system that PR must understand and help to explain." He says the 2 departments diverge on how to handle information. "The basic difference is in the negotiation process. HR is more protective of information. But together, we can examine issues and come up with the most appropriate response."

Alcoa, which grappled with the issue during restructuring, has found cooperation brings success.

2. Counselors Stacey Smith & Lois Hogan, organization development (OD) specialists: "The issue of who controls employee communication should not be one of turf or personality, but should be looked at from the employee perspective. The 2 should work closely to assure employees are getting needed info, and collaborate on those subjects of direct relevance to employees." They suggest organizing an advisory committee to meet semiannually on direction, content, substance of employee communication. It should consist of reps from HR, legal, marketing, other interested departments. But it should not be charged with final issue approvals.

FOOD STORE CHAIN UNITES COMMUNITY IN EFFORT TO HELP KIDS WITH CANCER, GAINS VALUABLE "FAMILY" REPUTATION

Randall's Food Markets, a Houston-based chain of 41 stores, emphasizes "family" in every aspect of its operation, says dpa Rebecca Linkous. "We don't sell beer or wine, we're totally drug free. Our employees are subject to random testing for drug use." So, it follows that Randall's chooses causes which carry out the theme of family health & well-being: Child Abuse Network; March of Dimes, Project (drug- & alcohol-free) Graduation; various church & school programs. "It's our corporate culture and image. It's what we want to stand for as a company."

Last year, Randall's decided to replace its annual Fall Food Fest with a yearly charitable concern -- emphasizing family -- to be held thruout April. After surveying the medical community, Randall's discovered Texas General Hospital was desperately trying to raise funds for a "children's alcove," a place for kids to play and wait while undergoing chemotherapy. "The space they were using was way too small. Children were literally sitting on the stairwell waiting for treatment. When a child has cancer, everyone -- brothers, sisters, parents -- are involved in the treatment process. Entire families were packed in without any room."

"KINDNESS FOR KIDS" Goal: To raise \$300,000 for the new center. "Any amount over that would be donated to the American Cancer Society."

Strategy: To involve all 41 stores & a variety of publics (employees, customers, vendors, local business people, hospital personnel, media) in the fundraising effort. Simultaneously, to reinforce Randall's reputation as committed to family & community.

Tactics: 1. "Celebrity Sackers." Local doctors, dressed in hospital garb, bagged groceries for the customers. "In the surrounding towns, local leaders took this role. This worked well because they knew everybody, were aggressive about kidding around with friends, convincing them to donate."