

**DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH CONFIRMS THAT POST-2000,  
ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE DESPERATE FOR INTERNAL PR**

Practitioners  
will be needed  
more than ever

if forecasts made by Population Reference Bureau (DC) come to fruition. According to one in a series of reports titled "America in the 21st Century," bureau predicts:

1. **Sound communication skills will become a major job requirement.** There will be less & less room for the poorly educated.
2. **Need for addressing workplace problems will abound,** e.g. minority influx, aging workforce, new technology, productivity, single-parent employees or those who need allowances for family situation. Organizations will need problem solvers & policymakers **who understand relationships.**

**GANNETT REPORT ON AIDS COVERAGE  
SEES MEDIA WEAKNESS IN MAJOR SOCIAL  
ISSUE, TRENDS IN FUTURE REPORTAGE**

Media coverage of AIDS has been whimsical, irresponsible & detrimental, concludes special report from Gannett Foundation

Media Center, Columbia U. In AIDS Coverage: The 2nd Decade, panel of experts say:

1. **Media started late,** only when it began to affect mainstream publics. AIDS did teach media about health issues, made it more frank.
2. **Media is inept at covering processes.** "The epidemic is a process not an event. The media do poorly with coverage of process issues.... Many of the issues in AIDS are complex, scientific."
3. **Erroneous coverage** continues to focus on the threat to low risk groups -- a difficult issue to quantify & loaded with political import.

Panel notes that AIDS is the 1st major public health issue of moderntimes where the political & social contexts were defined before the medical & scientific contexts were. **"Future coverage will focus on the epidemiological shift; the politics of the conflict; the broadening therapeutic horizon."**

**ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISM FLUID  
IN DEFINITION & ALLIANCES**

"They forsake the big picture," says enviro journal Buzzworm. "Where they diverge from the environmental move-

ment, they can take votes & money away... They often get in the way of serious conservation work." Difference is **environmentalism relies on science whereas animal rights activism is a religion.** Add to that varying degrees of commitment: meat eaters who won't wear fur, those opposed to testing for cosmetic reasons but not medical, strict vegetarians who wear plastic shoes. Since they tout respect for life, this suggests links to pro-life groups. But PETA's Kathy Guillernno told *pr*, "We're pretty evenly split. There are varying opinions so it is not an issue on which we take an official stand."

**AS OLD-LINE INDUSTRIES CHANGE & MUST MARKET THEIR NEW SELVES,  
PERSONALIZED PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS DRIVE THE TRENDS --  
WHICH MEANS LONG-TERM THINKING REPLACES SHORT-TERM GOALS**

"We invest in **relationships**," advertises brokerage firm Paine Webber. The buzzwords on Wall Street, after a decade of greedy get-it-now excess, are "**relationship banking**." Real estate giant Coldwell Banker, celebrating 85 years, credits 3 qualities for its success: being smart, knowing the territory & "**understanding the value of relationships**." Many other industries besides finance are following the same path:

**FUNERAL DIRECTORS LEARN TO PERSONALIZE RELATIONSHIPS** A decade ago, their job was to hold funerals. Now the industry is upgrading its role to counselor, community advisor, program coordinator, friend. Sherry Gibson of Accord (Louisville), says trend is driven by:

1. **Customer demand.** "There has been a loss of support systems. Families are dispersed. People get divorced, kids move away. Communities are more fluid, offering less aid to grieving families. People are turning to the funeral director for emotional support."
2. **The market** -- increased competition, more sophisticated customers.
3. **Reputation.** FTC ruling in '84 called for itemized bills, highlighting negative practices. "This was actually good because it made funeral directors think about themselves as a profession & introduced accountability."
4. **Lack of cultural norms.** Medical science has made death a rarity compared to even 50 years ago. This has led to a loss of funeral etiquette. "Jackie Onassis & Coretta King are probably the last widows to be seen publicly in black veils. People used to drape their doorway in black. No one knows how to act anymore so they need guidance."

Such cultural change demands relationships. Accord is one of several new firms training funeral directors in **aftercare**, which, Gibson told *pr*, can include:

1. **Newsletters.** "Families receive a quarterly newsletter with articles about what to do when casseroles stop coming." Also advice columns, inspirational pieces, quips. **Correspondence** is another written medium -- letters of acknowledgment, remembrance cards on the loved one's birthday, etc.

- 2. **Personal visits** or follow-up phone calls to see how people are doing, alert them to upcoming programs & seminars.
- 3. **Community outreach.** "Funeral directors hold clergy lunches & support-group breakfasts. They comp their training materials to these groups and make them partners in grief support."
- 4. **Special Programs,** like Holiday Help Seminars. "Holidays are full of ritual & family. To the bereaved, they take on a whole new meaning." Seminars are held in funeral homes, at churches, halls, libraries. Include discussions, candlelighting ceremony, end on a note of growth & rebirth. Average attendance is 150.
- 5. **Special counseling task force,** for families of murder victims, widows, suicide survivors. Often they are part of a team to go into schools following a suicide, to help kids deal with the event, to desensationalize the act itself.

Increasingly, the industry is looking to pr for help. "Funeral directors want a more proactive approach," Katie Hamm of Runyon, Saltzman, Weagraff & Siegel (Sacramento) told prr. Firm counsels Calif. Funeral Directors Ass'n.

**REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS CAN USE HARD TIMES TO EARN KUDOS FROM COMMUNITY**

They're learning to nourish community relationships as a benefit now -- and when things pick up. State cutbacks forced Choate Hospital (Woburn, Mass) to close. Susan Koufogazos, dpr Cummings Properties, told prr shutdown left questions about a) **Medical Care:** "People were alarmed about where they were going to go in case of a medical emergency." b) **Preservation:** Building was a former Victorian mansion. "Many in the community had been born there. There was a lot of sentiment." c) **Property Values:** It was in an expensive area and residents worried about a 130,000 sq ft facility rotting away nearby. d) **Employment:** "A lot of jobs were lost." Cummings salvaged the property and earned public kudos by:

- 1. **Planning Ahead.** 5 years ago, Cummings set up a foundation to salvage places like Choate.
- 2. **Answering Immediate Concerns.** "We purchased the property because we realized we could answer the public's need for continued healthcare in a complex that blended in with the surrounding community," pres James McKeown told prr. Cummings renovated building with wood paneling & chandeliers, not as a hotel but as a **nonprofit congregate care facility.** "It responds to seniors who want to maintain an active lifestyle & enjoy community living at 1/2 the cost of private housing and 1/3rd the cost of a nursing home."

Counselor Richard Lewis (LA) says **buildings will soon be marketed like consumer products, and pr research will play a key role.** "Now developers use market research in presenting business plans to lenders during the pre-construction stage. In the immediate future, many techniques -- focus groups, attitudinal surveys, etc. -- will be applied."

- 3. **Going Further.** Since community lost a much needed facility, Cummings leased out some units to for-profit organizations, e.g., mental health care facility, walk-in med center, dialyses & surgical center. Money from the leases supports the nonprofit part of the complex. "It answers all the concerns the public had about the hospital's closure." Facility supports itself financially.

Koufogazos says the project is garnering enthusiasm from the city. "We're getting a lot of positive feedback." Residents are happy because the structure has been renovated to look like the upscale mansion it originally was. "Volunteers are offering support at the facility. New Horizons has a high occupancy level & continued sales. Letters to the editor praise the development."

**ELIMINATING MID-LEVEL MANAGEMENT A MISTAKE: REPORT URGES MAKING ROLE MORE CHALLENGING; OPPORTUNITY FOR PR IN SEVERAL WAYS**

When managers break thru the traditional role of boss and behave like coaches,

**teamwork increases** and so does productivity & quality, says data from Work in America Institute. Changing the culture requires creating universal awareness, setting expectations, training in relationships & communication -- all jobs for practitioners.

Continuing policy study, "New Roles for Managers," deals with the dilemma created by downsizing. While it removed restraints & interference, **it thinned managerial ranks & imposed greater burdens** on remaining managers, who are left with: a) wider spans of control; b) longer hours; c) greater stress; d) higher performance standards.

Bob Zager, vp policy studies, says in order to make managers into coaches, organizations should first help them feel secure in their jobs. Also introduce new challenges which require participation from others. "A lot of organizations try to force employee participation, force managers to become coaches, and it doesn't work. By increasing the complexity of the job, a new style can be achieved."

Credos of the new-style manager:

- 1. **Train rather than hoard skills.** Transfer knowledge to employees to develop their talent & ability.
- 2. **Lead instead of confine.** Increases employees' self esteem & boosts morale of the total group.
- 3. **Coach instead of scold,** developing rapport with employees and creating a spirit which can manage dissent & achieve consensus.
- 4. **Delegate** supervisory duties that drain time. (Set of 3 reports \$95 from 700 White Plains Rd, Scarsdale, NY 10583; 914-472-9600)

The trend to eliminate the mid-level manager has been a great mistake, according to Zager. "It goes on the assumption their only function is to chase people around," he told prr. "What ends up happening is the next person up takes on their responsibilities. And a lot of valuable work, such as investigating new technology, devising new processes, developing new systems, staff functions, etc., gets lost."