

**TREND IS FOR LAWS THAT RESTRICT DATA COLLECTION** European Community (EC) is considering a stipulation that "data subjects" (respondents) must give written consent for "automated data processing" of data considered "sensitive." This includes political, opinions, religious beliefs, health & sexual behavior & union membership.

U.S. Congress is discussing a bill to re-establish the Privacy Protection Commission to "determine the extent to which the privacy of individuals identified in information systems maintained by or accessed via cable, broadcast, common carrier, and related new technologies is protected." Four other bills all relating to telephone privacy are also pending. Organizations ability to survey their publics may be harder, if not impossible, very soon.

#### ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

**"Do We Really Know Our Publics?** Apparently not, say James Patterson and Peter Kim (chrmn & dir research, J. Walter Thompson) in The Day America Told The Truth. "People want to tell someone what they really believe...but that desire is tempered by the realistic fear that telling the truth will get them into trouble with spouses, bosses, parents, friends or neighbors..." The pair conducted highly confidential, in-depth research with more than 2000 Americans on a wide variety of subjects. The sensational in places, **book offers practitioners unique insights & potentially useful psychological & sociological data**. Chapter 7 (there are 10 plus appendices) looks at truths in the workplace by senior execs as well as average employees. (270 pgs, \$19.95, Prentice Hall Press)

**"Rule For Effective Coalitions: Time to Argue Over Who Gets The Credit Is At The Victory Dinner.** As Ted Kennedy demonstrates by stepping back from his longtime, often-lonely leadership on universal healthcare as the Palm Beach alleged rape by his nephew drags him into another scandal. He lets Sens. Mitchell, Rockefeller et al have the limelight, and the legislation rolls on.

#### NOTICES TO OUR READERS

1. Have you responded to pr's 27th Annual Survey of the Profession? If not, please do so now and return it to us. The sooner we receive it, the sooner we can get results to you. If you've misplaced your questionnaire, call us (603/778-0514) and we'll send another right out.
2. As is our tradition, pr reporter will not be published next week to allow our printer and members of our staff a well-deserved vacation. Our office will be open for business, however.

# pr reporter

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#### AS TQM (ANOTHER MANAGERIAL FAD) WANES, CAN ITS RELATIONSHIP-BASED PHILOSOPHY BE SALVAGED? WHAT BEGAN AS PEOPLE-EMPOWERER BECOMES NUMBER-CRUNCHER

Irony: W. Edwards Deming envisioned "quality" programs as springing from "a **participative** system based on **teamwork**," says one of his acolytes. Adds another, "The essence of Total Quality has much more to do with **communication** than anything else." In short, another application of public relations principles (without of course crediting pr).

Yet today Total Quality Management, as it's usually packaged, is being criticized & often dropped by organizations because it has evolved into an exercise in checklists & reports. Deming himself warned against numerical quotas, saying they are "a guarantee of inefficiency & high cost" (pr 2/4/85). As if to prove the point, one of the best known TQM devotees, Florida Power & Light, has dropped the trappings -- & the bureaucracy that grew up around them -- to go back to basics.

FP&L pres Jim Broadhead wrote all employees to report:

1. "We have created an intense institutional **emphasis on procedural requirements & processes**" in pursuing quality improvement.
2. "This has **required enormous amounts of time** & sometimes discouraged real innovation & creativity."
3. "We place too great an **emphasis on indicators, charts, graphs, reports & meetings** in which documents are presented & indicators reviewed."

**Managers must trust employees** to use quality techniques "without constant checking from above," he concluded. Yet other FP&L officials admit that without a firm mandate to learn quality principles, even if it meant memorizing checklists ("Plan, Do, Check, Act"), little would have happened.

BUT PR FIRMS/DEP'TS NEED IT

"There's a great appetite for **applying quality principles to the pr process**," reports Chuck Sengstock -- who's consulted frequently about how this program at Motorola works. His approach concentrates on a) cycle time reduction, b) customer satisfaction, c) defect measures, d) supplier performance (t&t 4/2/90). Most tasks that aren't process- or production-oriented will not be improved, so don't waste your time, he told pr. **PR firms have most at stake** & "ought to consider this a survival issue," since clients are into Quality -- whether TQM or a more basic program. "Unfortunately, a lot of practitioners are missing these cues." (Copy of his remarks to Communicating Quality Symposium from pr)



**WHAT TQM HAS BORROWED FROM PR**

1. **Quality is a customer perception.** Failure to meet their expectations results in dissatisfaction -- and thus loss of "quality" (Customer satisfaction)

2. **Customers are internal as well as external** (Targeting key publics)

3. **Quality is the sum of impressions** made on the customer (One Clear Voice)

4. Because it requires total involvement, quality cannot be decreed by management but **must involve all employees.** (Internal relations build trust, productivity etc.)

5. To quote one description of TQM:

**"Total Quality is the creation of efficient & effective communication systems both inside & outside the organization, nurturing an atmosphere of trust & accountability among all the individuals involved in the organization's mission."**  
Pure pr philosophy!!

The rise of professional managers has spawned managerial techniques as an industry, claims a new book, **Managing On The Edge.** One unintended consequence is superficiality -- best exhibited in managerial fads. Author Richard Tanner Pascale charts 26 fads between 1950-88 (that's one every year & a half). Remember T-group training, management by objectives, zero-based budgeting, excellence, intrapreneuring, one-minute managing? Now add TQM. Each holds basic truths...but all are present in **common sense, relationship management** (hey, maybe that will be the next fad).

**OPPORTUNITY FOR PRACTITIONERS TO RE-SELL BASIC PR PRINCIPLES**

As the fad crumbles, underlying value of really putting energy into relationship-building should be saleable -- particularly in organizations that have experimented with TQM or similar programs. It's a way to get benefit from the investment, even as the excesses of the faddy programs is shunted. For instance:

A. Tools like **Customer Satisfaction Models** come to the fore (pr 1/1/90). Better than anything seen so far, they combine external research with employee-based work planning to encompass, in a simple & straightforward way, the principles TQM promotes.

B. Changing internal communications so it **relies on supervisors foremost**, with the role of publications being to reinforce -- rather than vice versa (pr 3/25/91). Every study done shows employees want info from their immediate supervisor -- which builds trust & teamwork.

C. Lest practitioners think organizational communication is well understood, consider this headline in the current Working Woman (a fairly sophisticated biz mag): "The New Way To Boost Morale: Keep Your Staff Informed."

[For packet on TQM values & problems, including case studies, call prr]

**THE FAX AS A POTENT PR TOOL FOR NEWS RELEASES & EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

Faxing news releases may now be more reliable than newswires -- tho still behind hand delivery & personal phone calls, finds study of a cross section

of 40 pr veterans. Despite this ranking for effectiveness, respondents admitted 80% of their releases still go by mail, the method felt to receive least attention from media.

Fax was said to provide these **advantages**: 1) can be targeted to specific editors by name; 2) delivered within 1 minute; 3) avoids daily mail pileup; 4) gets special attention.

Familiar **disadvantages** of fax: 1) inaccessibility of busy fax machines in some media offices; 2) intrusive; 3) uses their paper & equipment without permission; 4) potential for technical problems.

Study was conducted -- by fax, of course -- for Talywain Editorial Systems (D.C.), which distributes group faxes.

**INSIDE THE ORGANIZATION, FAX MEANS INFO RIGHT NOW**

When a New England bank filed for Chapter 11 last fall, it sent daily faxes to employees to assure them the bank was not going under but just recapitalizing. Armed with this information, staff members could allay customers fears -- and reinforce one another in overcoming their own. No other method offered instantaneous release of info & special attention on the receiving end. We all complain about faxes -- but there is an upside for practitioners.

**RESEARCH CONFIDENTIALITY THREATENED; COULD CAUSE ALREADY SKITTISH RESPONDENTS TO JUST SAY NO & MAKE DATA-GATHERING HARDER**

Court has ordered him to release raw data from a privately commissioned survey

on "sensitive information about area residents' activities, including alcohol and drug abuse since the Valdez spill," says John Petterson, principal, Impact Assessment Inc. (San Diego).

Access to the data was given by Superior Court of Alaska. Petterson, an anthropologist, studied 600 households in what he calls a "one-time longitudinal study" and claims the information has no bearing on the Exxon Valdez case.

Without doubt such rulings will escalate respondents fears. Recent Gallup poll shows 78% of adults are "very or somewhat concerned" about the amount of information marketers may have about them without their knowledge.

Ruling goes against previous court decisions on confidentiality of survey research findings. Both the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and American Marketing Ass'n note that tho the ruling will allow only a few people to examine the data, "in the long run confidentiality could be breached unscrupulously."