

¶45% say they frequently or very frequently interact with their pr officers -- at least once/week or as the situation warrants.

¶52% of pr officers report directly to the president; 40% to vp for development.

¶59% of respondents rate the overall effectiveness of their pr departments as good; 17%, excellent.

However...presidents rated pr departments highest ("good" to "excellent") in tactical or task-oriented areas such as writing news releases, managing special events, managing positive media relations, producing publications, responding to crises.

PR departments were not rated as highly in the broader, more strategic areas. Average to good marks were given to a) explaining the institution's mission, goals, & character to various constituencies; b) enhancing community relations; c) garnering visibility for the institution; d) shaping the institution's image; e) providing counsel & advice; f) keeping the president informed of trends & events in the external environment. Presidents give this advice to pr officers: cultivate media contacts, develop a deeper understanding of their institutions, improve & increase the level of internal communications. (More info: CASE, 11 Dupont Circle, Ste.400, Wash DC 20036-1261; 202/328-5900)

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶**To Understand The Emotional Base Of Support For Animal Rights**, peruse a pet care direct mail catalog or visit one of the larger pet stores. Anthropomorphism has become extreme, with deli plates for dogs (the emphasis is on what restaurateurs call "presentation"), life preservers (animals are natural swimmers), raincoats & other items. This may draw fire from psychotherapists & organizations worrying about starving children (estimates run as high as 40,000 daily worldwide) -- but for practitioners involved in the issue, it's a guide to strategy. (What direct mail catalogs do **your** key publics buy from? Any psychological hints there?)

¶**New Guidebook For School PR** offers advice from practitioners who have been there on handling pressure groups, winning finance campaigns, involving staff in the pr effort, using community relations to enhance student achievement, resistance to change, much more. 20 pros contributed, many well known. Each entry follows the same planning process to achieve maximum usefulness in practice. (Planning for Success is \$30 incl postage from Mich. School PR Ass'n, Box 26245, Lansing, Mich. 48909-6245)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. Louis Cahill, 76, "Dean of Canadian Public Relations," founder of OEB International & founding member of WORLDCOM Group awarded honorary Doctor of Laws degree by

Brock University...John Sattler (retired from Ford Motor in 1980) receives John Hill Award for outstanding service to public relations from NYC/PRSA.

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CHANGES IN PRACTICE & APPROACH OF LEADING COUNSELORS HIGHLIGHTS NEW DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTICE

Is it desire for greater profits that keeps most public relations firms mired in publicity & promotion? Recently formed Omega Group defies this stranglehold on the profession. John Budd told pr:

"It seems to me that the niche, or 'Achilles Heel,' or whatever, of the major public relations firms is in their inability, or non-interest, in truly counseling vs. orchestrating huge projects with the support of a wide variety of personnel (graphics, editorial, pictorial, production, etc. etc.) with opportunity to write off several pieces of several overheads. On the other hand, counsel of 2 or 3 senior talent -- if they could be freed -- offers minimal profit margins or, in essence, a loss compared to the hours they could otherwise be churning."

Omega's approach: a) "To address the subjective, basically **hidden issues** inherent in corporate decisions -- such as individual judgments of trust, confidence, concern, credibility; b) to provide communications **strategies** calculated to minimize distortions or mistrust by c) "focusing on **perceptions** as well as facts."

With Budd chrm & Howard Chase vice chrm, Omega Group brings together 12 senior pr pros & 46 others experienced in 22 **disciplines complimentary to pr**. "The work we've been doing has been immensely satisfying in that we are tested to **innovate** not to renovate, resurrect or recycle conventional wisdom." (Firm's booklet is a model of new era publications -- almost a minimalist approach. Copy from 31 1/2 E. 38th St, NYC 10016)

COUNSEL TO COUNSELING FIRMS MOVE TO NEW HOMES & MISSIONS

Jim Arnold, who took over Chester Burger Co. when Chet retired, now says that firm has also retired.

James E. Arnold Consultants bills itself as "**communication consultants to management**." While serving its own clients, firm targets "public relations & advertising firms." But services to each are strategic counseling & training, including audits, performance management studies, program evaluation, presentation training; and for firms, client service audits, growth & profitability counseling, industry trends & analysis, staffing -- & others.

Dan Baer -- another of the handful of pros who counsel other firms -- has also moved, back to Daniel H. Baer & Co. from Cerrell Associates. But among his pr firm clients will again be Cerrell. His specialties: communication audits, environmentally-related crisis management, pr firm search & selection, plus acquisition assistance & management consulting for pr firms. Baer began counseling other firms in 1971.



IS COUNSEL/STRATEGIC PLANNING ONLY FOR A SELECT FEW?

Disheartened by what she is seeing in the field, rising pr major from S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication (Syracuse

U) Olivia Banyon writes to prr: "I am seeking to use the intense, 'correct' Bernays public relations background I have been taught. My first professor insisted on the importance of ethics in pr; pr is not just publicity -- it is strategic planning, research, implementation & evaluation -- a constant cyclical process.

"Why then, is it so seldomly seen in the workplace?" In one large, strategic-based, top grossing pr firm, she notes, "the executives seem to be the only ones 'allowed' to put to use any form of strategic full-force pr planning. Many people at lower levels only get their hands into task-oriented routines. There should be more pressure in the workforce to employ entry-level people who are fully capable to begin researching, planning, implementing, evaluating and talking one-on-one with clients."

What these counselors are doing may be a guide to new direction for all practitioners. Training, management consulting & strategic elements continue the trend toward **amalgamating traditional pr skills with pa, hr & od.** Resulting practice moves the field from a service unit to senior managerial decision-making. Further evidence of this trend is the number of professional development sessions in these areas now appearing in professional society programming.

NO CRISIS PLAN IN PLACE WHEN TROUBLE HITS THE FAN? REMEMBER THE 4 R'S

If you have no formalized game plan on how to deal with disaster -- but must

act fast -- remember this oft-touted formula made more helpful with aliteration:

1. **Recognize.** "See and acknowledge that you have a problem," explains Mary Woodell of Arthur D. Little.
2. **Research** quickly to determine what happened, what the dimensions & the implications are. "Be prepared to act on incomplete or conflicting information."
3. **Respond.** "Put out the fire, recall the product, clean up the spill, do what it takes. And make sure the people who need to know are informed."
4. **Rebuild.** "Once the emergency is under control, use your actions & your candor as the basis for rebuilding your reputation. Be patient, the process takes longer than you think it should."

Woodell notes that, of course, **issues anticipation facilitates easier crisis management.** If you deal daily with community groups, elected officials, shareholders, employees & companies, your organization is in a more advantageous position. "People who know you and respect you are going to give you a break when you are in trouble."

Biggest mistakes are a) **backpedalling** (making up for lost time all at once) and b) **stonewalling.** Both are especially deadly to media relations.

"Reporters have long memories. If you ignored them, or worse yet, have lied to them in the past, expect it to come back and haunt you." But same is true of public officials, customers, neighbors, employees, opinion leaders, et al. These publics are more important since they do more than just report on your organization -- they're its reason for existence and/or stakeholders.

WHEN PEOPLE LOSE CONFIDENCE IN KEY INSTITUTIONS, ALL OTHERS BECOME SUSPECT

Resulting cynicism & mistrust need to be factored into planning by or-

ganizations that may be far removed from the situation. Latest to "let the people down" are police. Bad as videotapes of beatings in LA & Houston are, new report on intimidation techniques allegedly used by Boston cops has more fear potential. To get an indictment in the celebrated Stuart murder, they a) threatened to frame witnesses unless they testified as desired, b) planted drugs on witnesses to gain compliance, c) refused to let witnesses use the bathroom, d) supplied inside info to witnesses & demanded they use it in jury testimony.

Tactics worked -- to focus guilt on man who was in fact innocent. Victim's husband turns out to be the probable killer.

How big a leap is it to wondering if the "bottomline" -- here an indictment, elsewhere a profitable third quarter or successful product introduction -- is driving the organizations **you** deal with to forget ethical & human concerns?

AND, OF ALL PEOPLE, BIG ACCOUNTING FIRMS

"Accountants now seem to be business executives who happen to be professionals, rather than the other way around." So laments The Big Six: The

Selling Out of America's Top Accounting Firms (Simon & Schuster). Book cites all-out push for billable hours as one impact. Is that causing the rank of scandals in which accounting biggies are fined for omitting critical data from audit reports, which in turn cause huge losses to investors (pr 5/6)?

Latest is Ernst & Young's failure to disclose true value of an Arkansas cooperative's purchase of a gasohol plant -- which bankrupt the organization. Federal appeals court upheld their guilt. What damage would a similar incident involving misconduct by a pr firm do to the field?

YET MORE RESEARCH CORROBORATES IAABC'S FINDINGS: CEOs VALUE PUBLIC RELATIONS

90% of college & university presidents agree that **pr has a role in institutional policy-setting & decisionmaking.** 82% say it will grow

in importance during the 90s. This from a recent mail survey of 300 institutional presidents in US & Canada conducted by CASE. Some findings:

86% say they must consider the public relations implications of most decisions; 88% feel public relations considerations should be a component of institutional policy making.