

dialogue. 19th C. author Sarah Orne Jewett (whose grandmother lived in the house pr occupies) put it distinctly: "**Tact is, after all, a kind of mind reading.**" Some examples where words wisely communicated seem to do this even when 2-way dialogue isn't possible -- or perhaps to stimulate that:

¶ Sign in Hawaiian liquor store: "If you are blessed with a youthful appearance, please understand when we ask you for ID. The law requires that we do this, for everyone's benefit."

¶ Marriott's widely displayed "Quality Mission Statement: "(We) are committed to being the best lodging company in the world **by empowering our associates to create** extraordinary customer service & shareholder value." Note recognition of the linkage between customer service & dividends.

¶ Label on clothing: "Subtle variations in weave and texture are what give linen its natural character and, therefore, should not be considered flaws." Asking for a Willing Suspension of Disbelief by setting the perceptual environment -- beforehand!

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **Hospitals Gearing Up To Deal With Next Advance In Right-To-Know.** Dec. 1 the Patient Self-Determination Act takes effect requiring all Medicare/Medicaid funded facilities to provide **written information** to every patient about rights under state law **and** court rulings regarding control of the care they receive. Goal is to eliminate cases where human vegetables are kept alive artificially by machines & medicines if that is not their desire. Hospitals' policies in this matter must also be disclosed.

¶ **Benefit Of Values Tuned To The Times** is shown again by Ben & Jerry's. Now it's "Peace Pops." Part of profits goes to 1% For Peace organization. Every inch of the wrapper, even the stick, carries the message. It works because company clearly believes -- as compared to much of the obviously pandering green marketing. Few tiny companies have gained more targeted WOM or media. Only Heritage Foundation in the 70s & 80s comes to mind.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. CPRS officers for 1991-92: pres, Peter Harvey (B.C. Telephone Company, Burnaby, BC); pres-elect, Carla Gates-Morris (Peat Marwick Thorne, Halifax, NS); vp, Yves St-Amand, Bazin, Dumas, Dupre, Sormany Communicateurs-conseils, Montreal); sec'y, Terry Aseltine (Winnipeg Art Gallery); treas, Gordon McIvor (CN Real Estate, Toronto).

HONORS. CPRS major award winners: John Francis (Francis, Williams &

Johnson Ltd, Calgary) wins Lamp Of Service Award for distinguished & dedicated service to CPRS; Jack Donoghue (Francis, Williams & Johnson Ltd, Calgary) receives Shield of Public Service Award for dedicated service in the public interest; David Annesley (Amoco Canada Petroleum Co. Ltd, Calgary) wins Philip A. Novikoff Memorial Award recognizing his superior service over time as a public relations professional.

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CEO SAYS REASON TO BE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE IS NOT DO-GOODING BUT BASIC SELF-INTEREST, WHICH HAPPENS ALSO TO DO GOOD

Corporate social responsibility is not a duty but self interest, says CEO John Swope of Chubb Life America, because corporations are formed for economic purposes. Therefore, all the money belongs to the shareholders/owners -- and their **only** common interest may be making money, with widely divergent viewpoints on social issues. How then could such an organization allocate funds for social responsibility if it were a **duty**?

Further, it is not good for corporations to make social decisions. Society as a whole must do that. But since social responsibility is in the self-interest of the enterprise, it is a legitimate business purpose & a legitimate use of stockholders' money -- provided management understands these precepts & follows them in allocating donations. Swope suggests:

1. **Don't confuse management's personal views with the corporate values** -- tho CEOs are very tempted to do so (& often succumb). To avoid this problem, corporate values must be stated & known.
2. **Avoid hypocrisy** by giving only in accord with corporate values. This also helps target the benefits of your philanthropy. It sours relationships when the golf tournament gets sponsored because the boss is a known golf nut.
3. **Don't be an anonymous giver; own the project.** Being on a long list of supporters rarely does much good -- even if "everyone else is giving to it." Focus giving so enough funds are available to get ownership.
4. **Ask for your name on everything.** It helps you **and** the donee.
5. **Don't give \$25 here & \$25 there.** It just fritters your budget away.
6. **Have a program & put your money behind that.** Otherwise almost no benefit accrues to the corporation.

EVEN COURTS & CREDITORS AGREE

A bankruptcy court in Cincinnati last week approved a request from Federated Department Stores & Allied Stores (Bloomingdale's, Jordan Marsh, et al) to spend \$3.6 million in charitable contributions. Creditors did not object -- saying they understood the need to generate community goodwill to spur business.



HOW TO DECIDE WHICH PROJECTS TO GIVE TO

A. Let employees decide by their matching gifts.

Swope suggests this even for United Way; if they'd rather see the money go elsewhere as proven by their contributions, respect that advice. He puts half his budget into this category. Other organizations restrict some or all giving to organizations **where employees serve as volunteers.**

B. Devote rest of budget to "pr or image contributions." Objective: "Get people we don't know to know us in a favorable light."

C. "Keep charitable giving seamless with pr objectives."

SELF-INTEREST BENEFITS OF RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAMS

1. A productive way of building relationships. Usually but not always targeted, yet creates a wide range of **networking** --

so you're ready to meet problems that come along.

2. Shows a positive public role of the organization -- you have an audience that will **listen** when you need them to.

3. Corporations & all organizations exist only at the sufferance of the people -- this helps them see good reason for your being there.

4. Great for employees -- involvement as volunteers or donors broadens & trains them as well as being rewarding & often fun.

Many see **corporate governance** as the key investor relations issue of coming years. As Swope notes, shareholders rarely would agree on a political stance or particular social project -- yet managements often use corporate funds to promote **their** views on them. Corporate democracy movement feels positions taken & projects aided should be approved by the stockholders -- which makes Swope's giving checklist timely.

IS SUPPORTING THE ARTS JUSTIFIED IN THIS APPROACH?

Swope, active in Business Committee for the Arts, finds it strongly so for his company. His reasons: 1) arts is natural communication so it reaches people powerfully; 2) its public is upscale & includes opinion leaders; 3) young people attracted to arts are future opinion leaders & decisionmakers; 4) bringing art into the workplace -- a painting or sculpture collection displayed on premises, or noontime concerts or plays -- is attractive to employees.

FOR PR FIRMS, KEY IS PRO BONO TIME

Accounting giant Coopers & Lybrand gave 61,000 professional hours last year to its "Supporting Youth Education" program. Asked the bottom-line payoff, CEO of

hard-headed auditors told columnist John Cuniff, "I don't want to know; it's one of the best things this firm has ever done." How does he know the payoff? "I can feel it." Program hours count as work time for staff. Company recognizes that strong communities are source of future employees & clients.

"LUNCH WITH..." PROGRAMS ARE A POPULAR EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT TECHNIQUE -- BECAUSE THEY BUILD INTERNAL RELATIONS

Senior management's role is to personify the organization externally to customers & others -- but also

internally to the "family." Creating methods to get it done on an equitable basis has led many to formal systems of "Lunch with" the CEO, SVP, CFO, et al. If officers drop in only on their old units or ones they feel comfortable with, it can cause feelings of favoritism.

B OF A EXECS BROWNBAG LUNCH WITH EMPLOYEES

Bank of America approaches employee communication via a revolving, face-to-face network. "We made a matrix, listing areas where employees were concentrated across the top, senior officers along the left hand side," vp Duncan Knowles told prr. "We filled in the blanks and made a schedule of officers to visit those places."

Prior to visit, officers are briefed on interests of the group they are visiting. After short intro, officer opens floor to questions. "The employees are encouraged to ask honest questions, and officers provide honest answers." After the meeting, they occasionally work side by side with employees, performing their tasks to learn what resources are needed.

Some departments are open 24 hours for backroom processing. "We had execs going at 2 and 3 in the morning to 'have lunch' with the night shift. It was a blanket attempt to cover the universe of the bank (900+ branches and scores of units & locations) with one program."

Anonymous questionnaires reveal 95% of the employees feel more comfortable about the bank's future after having been visited by an officer. And the mindset the officers adopted for the program lives on. "Officers drop in at breakfasts, for coffees, etc. with employees much more than they did before."

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS IN DETAIL

Some, like Michael Reichgut at Rhone Poulenc Ag Co., find it best not to issue blanket invitations -- but to select **representatives** from work units to attend. This keeps the group smaller, facilitating more interchange & building a more personal relationship between attendees & officers. Reps are expected to **report back** to their colleagues, who will **get their turn** to be the representative at future lunches (or breakfasts, midnight snacks, or whatever).

To gain credibility for the open exchange the sessions exemplify, reports on the questions & responses are carried to the entire employee audience **in company newsletters**. Officers report on the sessions at **executive management committee** meetings -- which can result in quick action on problem areas revealed by the interchange.

PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT MEANS NOT TOUTING YOUR VIEW FIRST

Not until finding out what perceptions, or misperceptions, are held by the public or person you want to address. Failure to do this puts you in a position of palming off propaganda -- and stiffening the resistance, which closes the door to communication or