

3. How are we **doing**, measurable in absolute terms, on these key items?
4. How're we doing **compared** to best in the industry, best in the world? How big a gap?
5. How do we **improve** the key areas? How much improvement is necessary?

#### ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

**Generating Media Interest Is Always Chancy But....** When a former Irvine, Calif. mayor approached Pintak Communication Int'l to provide media counsel in his bid for the Democratic Presidential nomination, he was advised it would be a long, slow process of building credibility & visibility. During a round of media interviews in DC, a conversation with Roger Mudd was obtained for airing on MacNeil/Lehrer, and an interview for a profile in the Christian Science Monitor -- both to run the day of his announcement, Aug 22. Then came the Moscow coup. While LA media turned out for Larry Agran's announcement, national media were nowhere to be seen. Previous commitments were scrapped in the avalanche of Soviet developments. "In the past, I've jokingly told clients with a very good story that, 'short of a revolution, we should be able to generate some interest,'" Larry Pintak recalls. "Well, welcome to the revolution."

**Flexible Scheduling Reaps Benefits for TRW**, on flextime since '78. Recent survey of 1200 employees & supervisors found: a) 45% say productivity is higher; b) 40% report less congestion in the cafeteria; c) 38% have less conflict between job & personal life; d) 38% have increased ability to use equipment on the job; e) 36% cite increased efficiency; f) 33% can accomplish personal business easier, and 30% use less company time for personal matters; g) 28% experience less supervisor/employee conflict over working hours; h) 26% say it has increased their time at work. It has, however, **brought problems with it**: increased difficulties in contacting people (64%); scheduling meetings (60%); managing a project (46%); managing people (36%).

**Another Firm Celebrates Anniversary By Giving Back** (see prr 9/2). In honor of its 10th anniversary, Cone Communications will contribute \$1,000,000 in services to a variety of organizations on a pro-bono basis. First NPO to benefit from firm's "commitment to give back to the community" is The Greater Table -- a nonprofit foundation of 50+ Boston restaurants raising funds for hunger relief. Cone worked with the foundation on strategic positioning, development of press materials, media rels, planning & executing The Greater Table's launch event.

**ANRs (Audio News Releases), Radio's Equivalent to VNRs**, "are a more efficient medium to get out your organization's news. With everyone concentrating on tv, little has been said about radio's ability to get airtime in major markets and do it cost effectively," explains Tom Sweeney, North American Network pres. Recently produced ANR handbook offers info. (Free from NAN, 2316 18th St. N.W., Wash DC 20009; 202/265-3689)

#### AS THE WORLD BALKANIZES, OPPORTUNITY SEEMS GLOBAL; BUT IS PRACTICING PUBLIC RELATIONS INTERNATIONALLY REALITY OR ILLUSION? IF REAL, WHO'LL DO IT & HOW?

Alexander Borisov & a handful of colleagues have formed the Soviet Public Relations Association. PRSA & others are helping him get the subject taught & practiced there. As PRSA pres Joe Epley reports, Borisov is convinced Russia cannot have an enterprise economy without pr -- "it won't work." So Borisov will tour 10 cities beginning October 21, to meet with practitioners, seek ideas & assistance. His tour will end at PRSA's Conference in Phoenix.

But does this & the many other ventures in China, Poland, everywhere imply that practitioners will truly **practice** internationally? **pr** thinks not, and offers this straw man to be batted down -- if it can:

1. The electronic global village may be here -- but **until a global culture emerges**, if ever (what a loss to be so homogenized), ideas & even information require **local** interpretation. Any US practitioner who has practiced in as similar a place as Canada, or vice versa, can speak to the truth of this. (How about Washingtonians or New Yorkers in Iowa, even!)
2. As a result, **pr staffs are 99% local nationals**. The stray member from the hq nation -- a Japanese in the US, an American in Europe -- is there to interpret hq's directives, but the local staff builds the relationships & handles communications.
3. The only international practitioners are those in policymaking levels in global organizations -- a miniscule number, unlikely to grow by much. And they depend on staff or counsel in each country to interpret, or alter, the strategy & tactics to fit.

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS IS CULTURE BASED

The English is emerging as the **world language**, speakers of its varied forms often have trouble understanding one another. As the tv series "The Story of English" predicted, Mother English seems to be giving birth to a host of new & distinct tongues -- as Latin produced the Romance Languages. French & Spanish are related but hardly the same. Ditto Jamaican, Australian & African varieties of English. The reason is that local cultures & mores turn the living, ever-changing language to their own practical uses.



If we could communicate with depth thru visual means -- signs, symbols, photos, film -- the video screen could have international use, and in simple cases it does. But to debate complicated ideas in our sophisticated societies...? Language isn't the basis: culture & all it entails is.

**BUT WHAT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PR PROFESSION!**

John Paluszek first broke the USSR barrier in his PRSA presidency. Now he notes in the International PR Review that "the triumph of democracy" means **people's opinions count everywhere** -- "in the markets, in the workplace & in the voting booth."

The "international" public relations opportunity here is to **seize this momentous event to help managers & others who resist this idea right here at home see the wisdom of practicing the pr philosophy of open communication, participation & co-authorship of policies.**

Paluszek believes democracies, and their pr pros, have an obligation to help new democracies, and thereby humankind. Hill & Knowlton & the Moscow News devised a Partnership for Progress Program to stimulate the flow of investment into the Soviet economy, for mutual benefit. H&K's interest in opening for business there was not masked: "the largest & most powerful public relations & economic affairs counseling firm in the world" it called itself. Many good ideas & cross-border cooperation resulted nonetheless.

**WHAT THIS MEANS TO 99% OF PRACTITIONERS**

A. **Global events must be scanned** for possible impact on organizations & clients -- altho like most of what occurs in the world, real effects will be little & later.

B. **Colleagues from nations that didn't participate in pr before** may now appear. Like much of what is discussed at IPRA World Congresses, it'll take decades before they reach a level of professional sophistication that is very involving for N. American pros.

C. **Forget that assignment as global pr czar** -- or even strategizing for more than your own nation & maybe its immediate neighbors.

D. **Bulletproof your organization/clients** against ever questioning the pr philosophy again by heralding the news as it evolves.

E. **Succumbing to the glamour of internationalism is dangerous** -- like falling for the lure of new technology. Relationships, not information transfer, remain the bottomline. They can only be built & maintained locally, face-to-face, over time. It is this truth -- **the power resides with the people** -- that the startling changes are proving, once again.

Paluszek's case: "As intermediaries in today's increasingly complex global society, public relations professionals can help move the process forward. I, for one, want to be part of these new efforts. **I want to apply public relations training & experience to the challenge of building a world so economically & culturally interdependent that... 'war must go out of style.'**"

**ARTHUR PAGE SOCIETY NOTES CURRENT STATUS OF FIELD, SUGGESTS ACTION STEPS**

1. **"Public relations is the chief executive's responsibility & he can't separate himself from it,"** John Budd told prr regarding discussion at

latest meeting of senior pros organization. Also noted: everyone has a different definition of public relations -- still -- making it worse.

2. **Concern that public relations' authority & stature is diminishing.** At one time, as Ed Block put it, senior public relations people were asked "what to do." Now it's "what to say" or "how do we say it" -- acting **after** policy decisions are made.

3. **"Whether or not I accept counsel from the sr pr person is very much a product of the person.** Do I have confidence in that person? Has s/he demonstrated an ability to look beyond the role of implementing communications? It's not a question of whether public relations has a role in policymaking, but whether the person in charge has established that reputation with management." If they're perceived as communication technicians, pr people won't be asked to have a voice in policy decisions. If they take initiative, build up a reputation for good judgment & establish credibility, management will include them in policy decisions. -- Fletcher Byrom, retired chrm & CEO/Koppers Industries.

4. **The problems chief executives are facing are becoming so complex, it's hard to say they are public relations problems per se.** There are a number of disciplines that have to enter into the solution. But public relations often seems to take upon itself a unilateral attitude that it's going to solve the problem -- which doesn't help its credibility with management. Other disciplines are necessary, too.

5. **Credibility is the product of perceptions, opinions, judgments, feelings,** all of which are subjective, ambiguous values. And the people with the capability of dealing with abstracts like that, which are qualitative, **are pr people.** 3/4 of their activity may be doing their job in a quantitative way, but 1/4 of their time is managing & interpreting signals, and anticipating what they mean. At stake is credibility of CEO & organization.

**O&M PR DOES SOMETHING ABOUT TQM BEING TAKEN OVER BY OTHER CONSULTANTS**

"PR counselors **are** carving out distinct roles for themselves in the area of customer service & satisfaction," writes Tony Katz, evp. Ogilvy PR's

Corporate Affairs Practice Sector believes it is the only pr firm to conduct TQM "Customer Satisfaction Benchmarking" assignments for clients. He reports taking business from "traditional TQM gurus" (pr 6/24 & 8/26). Service is labeled "Ogilvy Q." This is "a natural niche for pr practitioners," he feels.

Among several measures used, one **defines customer satisfaction:**

- 1. What's **key to the customer**, in what areas? What's less important?
- 2. How do we **know** what's important?