

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **PRSA TAKES ON ITSELF AS A CLIENT**, explains a recent news release from the ass'n. 2-pg ad in June 8th Wall Street Journal (cost \$130,000) highlights pr's achievements. Lists Silver Anvil winners, offers free summary of cases. Also features Best of Silver Anvil for business (Pepsi-Cola), non-profit (CARE), ass'n (Consumer Aerosol Products Council), & gov't (City of San Jose). Brief explanation (the challenge, strategy & results) is given for each. Portion of entry fees & revenue from an evening celebration for the Anvil winners is being used to pay for the ad, according to the release. "For the first time, our industry is using major media advertising to make the public & business community aware of the value & power of this important management tool. At the same time, the ad kicks off a PRSA initiative to build broader understanding of public relations & its role in building trust & credibility," says Joe Vecchione, PRSA pres.

¶ **"WE ARE COMMUNICATING WITH A VIDEO GENERATION**, fewer people are reading & more are depending on video resources," says Four Directions Productions (Valley Head, Alabama). "The strongest means to reach this new generation...is thru the media they most relate to...video. The need for constant visual stimulation is a proven condition that requires all of us to change the way we communicate important messages in a competitive marketplace." But studies reported in last week's *pr* claim computer users -- arguably more apt to take action than video watchers -- **read more**. What will be the media mix on the near-term future? (Following its own advice, FDP's 4-video *Quest of the Earthkeepers* is the teaching program of the Hawkwind Earth Renewal Cooperative. Videos share the actual experience of rituals, earth healing practices & ceremonies of indigenous cultures around the world. More from Charla Hermann at 205/635-6304)

¶ **FIRMS THAT OFFER SUBSTANTIAL PENSION PLANS ATTRACT MORE PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYEES** & thereby generate higher levels of profitability, according to research at Colorado State U. "This is theoretically because higher-quality employees do not consider themselves at risk of being fired prior to vesting in their pension & therefore are more likely to consider the pension as an integral part of their compensation," explains prof Vickie Bajtelsmit. "It also may be that higher-quality workers are more focused on long-term gain than are low-quality workers." Lower quality workers tend not to feel locked into their jobs, focus more on the immediate future, prefer their compensation up front, she explains. "Mention the word *pension* to most people, and their eyes glaze over. Yet, the topic affects just about every working person in the country, & pension funds represent nearly a quarter of the nation's capital base. I think business managers & other decisionmakers would be interested in these research findings," Larry Wiland of Colorado State's pr dep't writes to *pr*.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. Bill Dietrick (Public Relations Council, Richmond) receives Thomas Jefferson Award For Public Relations from Old Dominion Chapter/PRSA for lifelong accomplishments & contributions to the profession.

USURPING "SURVIVOR CLUBS" TO NULLIFY EFFECTS OF DOWNSIZING

Today's challenge: turning demoralized survivors of downsizing into productive team players. These employees "can feel like a marooned or imprisoned group of plane crash survivors who share a fear of not surviving further," counselor Bruce Harrison (DC) told *pr*.

UNDERSTANDING SURVIVOR-CLUB MENTALITY

"Essentially, it's sharing & replenishing resources, especially knowledge resources." For example, 6 survivors of a plane crash in a remote forest, cut off from resource replenishment for an indefinable time, will quickly assemble resources -- what do we have, who knows what about using what we have & getting what we lack, who has strength (physical, mental -- giving rise to leadership).

Survivor clubs are "extremely efficient & intensely communicative. Bottlenecks, mistakes, miscommunications are abhorred, not tolerated. Everyone in the club needs to contribute to making it one more day."

CONVERTING TO WORKING TEAMS

Problem among employees is lack of trust. Attitudes are *thank god it wasn't me, it could be me today, move with care, conserve resources*. "Major time is spent on resource conservation & replenishment -- not on wise use for productive next results." Harrison advises using survivor-club intensity to help re-forming teams be productive:

1. **Know survivor clubs are there** -- huddling. This is normal & needs to be acknowledged. They occur so learn to utilize them.
2. **Break them up**. Mix survivors with winners. Minimize emphasis on knowledge replenishment by focusing on new learning of the re-formed team's major goals -- short, medium & long-term.
3. **Communicate with the intensity** typical of a survivor club -- but focus on team's goals, not on surviving.

KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE IS KEY

Since downsizing hits veterans & less tenured alike, knowledge is lost. Harrison compares it with the impact of a nation's longevity on its economic success. When the national age of death is 35 or 40, society spends major resources to replace constantly lost knowledge. When life expectancy goes to 60, "more resources -- time, energy & the multiplier effect of knowledge longer shared -- are available for *increasing the store of*



knowledge & building on it with new knowledge & forward-looking application." The loss of this trusted knowledge, & other resources, is the challenge for re-formed corporate teams.

"Survivor knowledge has to be spread around & new knowledge has to be created. Communication -- understanding the gaps, the mentality of groups & the goal -- is vital & different."

SPEECH TECHNIQUE: MIRROR RIGHT/LEFT BRAIN FUNCTIONS BODILY

In presentations, stand to one side of the stage when presenting factual information, the other side when presenting anecdotal information. This is the finding of Steve Rafe of Rapport Communications (Warrenton, Va).

While researching info on the brain, "I began thinking about new ways to engage audiences' left or right brain. I was already teaching clients how to identify which side of the brain was engaged according to which nostril was more open. I had also developed a technique for positioning information on a screen in ways that would engage one side of the brain or the other. If positioning information or images on a screen could do this, why not try to do the same thing according to where one positions one's self when presenting to an audience?"

After 6 months of testing with more than 100 audiences, Rafe found:

- If you consistently deliver facts from the one side & humor from the other, audiences -- even the same kind of audiences at a repeated event at the same conference -- laugh more at the same jokes.
- If you tell some jokes from the anecdotal side & then tell a joke from the factual side, even your best joke won't get as much response.
- Audiences respond better to factual information presented from their left & anecdotal info presented from their right.
- Once a given side has been clearly established for "facts" & the other for "fiction," audiences tend to accept as truth a falsehood presented from the "facts" side.
- Audiences tend to discount or have difficulty recalling facts presented from the anecdotal side once the two sides have been established.
- The impact of this technique on audience members seated directly in front of you as you present from either side tends to be lessened. "Ideally you want to fill the center of the auditorium & leave the left & right margins empty. Then when you speak from those margins, you will be more powerful," he told pr.
- When you present a fact from one side, & then present the same fact from the other side, one tends to cancel the other. Audiences either discount the statement or do not recall it.
- A distance of 12-15 feet between the left & right zones seems to be most effective. Anything less tends to confuse the two & anything more tends to reduce the impact.

TECHNIQUE WORKS FOR 1-ON-1 COMMUNICATION, TOO

By using your hands. "I hold up my right hand & ask the person to visualize their worst fear. Then I have them shrink down the negative experience -- phase out lights, intensity, colors, sounds, all kinds of involvement factors -- till he or she can hardly hang on to it anymore. Then I hold up my left hand & ask him or her to visualize their best experience, & blow that up big.

"Then I surround whatever's left of the negative with the positive by literally taking the positive hand & covering the negative hand. Then I pull the negative hand away, turn the positive hand back over & say 'this is where you are now.' I just took a man thru this who had to testify before the EPA & another before the FTC. In both cases they were surrounded with very well trained critics & my people were weak when they started. The feedback was that they were the best presenters in both cases. The technique is very powerful." (More from P.O. Box 3119, Warrenton, Va. 22186; 703/349-1039)

Could Rafe's "alternate sides" theory apply to print? Book from which this week's t&t is taken, David Pincus' *Top Dog*, has a fictional portion & a factual portion. Wonder if that makes the factual presentation stronger?

WHERE U.S.' MOST CONSERVATIVE REGION STANDS ON ISSUES NOW

Snapshot surveys by Duffey Communications' research unit, InfoSearch, looks at attitudes, opinions & trends that impact employers & employees thruout the Southeast. Region has become political bellwether as it has shifted from solidly Democrat to up-for-grabs or Republican.

Environment. ● 2/3rds do not consider the federal govt's environmental policies are driven by a strong regard for the environment.

- 60% believe the effectiveness of their org'ns is being inhibited by federal gov't policies.
- 85% express concern over the "blanket of credibility" given environmental groups by media & the public.

AIDS. ● Only 25% have a formal AIDS policy in place, compared to higher numbers for policies on environmental & disability issues.

Healthcare. ● Primary reasons execs give for rising cost of medical care are "recurring abuse of the system" & "paperwork." Other concerns include: "increase in the uninsured" & "more regulations."

- 3/4ths state an adamant disagreement with the need & desire for socialized medicine & the quality of service it provides to its users.

On-The-Job Training. ● Grads without it or some form of experience will have a tough, uphill battle, according to respondents. Overwhelmingly, execs feel job experience wins out over a college degree in terms of hirings & promotions. (More from 3400 Peachtree Rd, Suite 1300, Atlanta 30326; 404/266-2600)