

& relationships; d) addressing multicultural diversity; e) understanding & reaching physicians & their professional organizations. "The survival of today's healthcare institutions depends on building relationships with many stakeholder groups, including consumers, physicians & health professionals, payers, insurers & legislators. This new emphasis on relationships brings the role of the public relations professional to the forefront as health-care leaders look for counsel & direction," says the author. (From Amer Hosp Ass'n, P.O. Box 92683, Chi 60675-2683; \$69, mbrs \$56, plus shipping)

**Useful Attempt at Media Balance** is seen in the Everett (Wash) Herald. In a story on medical research appears a prominent box, headlined: "Study advisory." Copy reads: "This is only a study. If you think the research may apply to you, discuss it with your doctor before taking any action." [Daily also runs large-type, full-page house ads telling how to reach editorial dep'ts & personnel, urging "Call us, write us, send us an e-mail or just drop by!" Paper's motto: "If it matters to you, it matters to us."]

**Sematic Power Seen Again in Drive to Stop HMOs from Forcing New Mothers Out of hospitals in 24 hrs -- too soon, say pediatricians & obstetricians.** So NJ legislator Joe Doria coined one of those powerhouse phrases to get his bill passed: "**drive-thru deliveries.**" Cost cutting has taken precedence over healthcare, he says now as spokesperson for a similar measure in Congress -- made nightmarish by the fact most HMOs are for-profit. One result of the semantics: it caught talk shows attention, then mainstream media.

**An Easy Way to Teach PR Basics to New Staff, Volunteers, Untaught Managers** is Gayle Pohl's 163-pg workbook-style text, *Public Relations: Designing Effective Communications*. Particularly valuable are brief but enlightening sections on (a) pr history, (b) organizational theory (often omitted in pr texts) and (c) using systems theory & related scholarship in pr campaigns (often another missing link). While references are given for further study, the book's brevity should make it useful. Essays by well-known practitioners including Gordon Strayer & May Randazzo add to educator-practitioner Pohl's straightforward approach. (\$23.20 from Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 319/589-1000)

**Will the Immigration Issue Affect Your Organization?** It's clearly the new defining topic -- not just Calif's Prop.187 but the rise of activist groups like CCN/Carrying Capacity Network, language groups like U.S.English et al. CCN claims *legal* immigration costs gov't "\$45 billion a year every year" & displaces 2 million workers annually. Another emotion-packed issue on which it's nigh impossible to hold a civil discussion. Carrying capacity "refers to the number of individuals who can be supported without degrading the natural, cultural & social environment, i.e. without reducing the ability of the environment to sustain the desired quality of life over the long term." (More from pr to aid in issue anticipation)

## WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**ANNIVERSARY.** Edward Howard & Co celebrates its 70th. (Cleveland, Akron, Dayton & Columbus)

## CASE: ANOTHER BIG EXEC ATTEMPTS TO FREEZE OUT THE MEDIA

Yes, they can't do organizations much good, can be harmful & certainly can waste a lot of your time on foolishnesses. But the media exist, have a role (even if they seem to be ignoring it lately) & are doing their thing. Creating bad relationships with them, as with anyone, is dumb.

Sorry to say, given all their success in recent years, but this time it's Chrysler that gets the "Shooting Yourself In The Foot" Award. The timing -- Kerkorian talking takeover -- makes the "shooting" more predictable (because of the stresses the company is under) but no less doltish.

**WHAT HAPPENED:** Detroit News auto editor Brad Stertz wrote a front page story with a direct quote from Chrysler chrm Robert Eaton that "quality remains a serious problem." Quote came from "an internal document we received," Stertz told pr. Leakers strike again!

While undesirable, the article's effect was made worse when Chrysler's vice chrm called Stertz on it. "Basically he told me from that point on our paper doesn't exist as far as Chrysler is concerned. None of our reporters will be invited to any Chrysler events, our phone calls won't be returned & they will work to help our competitor at our expense."

Of course, the News will continue to report the continuing conflict between Chrysler & Kerkorian: "We'll do our best with other sources." The episode has been "all over the wires, all over the country." This vice chrm is in charge of pr, notes Stertz, "has been for several years."

## TYPICAL EXEC RESPONSE TO LEAKS

"Chrysler is freezing them out," Fred Chapman, retired auto pr exec now pr prof at Grand Valley State U. (Allendale, Mich), told pr. "It's essentially corporate censorship. I don't see how this is going to fly."

A more effective response would be to look internally, where leaks occur -- not just to locate the disloyal leaker, but to **identify conditions that make employees take such self-defeating actions.**

A Chrysler spokesperson did return pr's call, but said Chrysler has no comment on this as they feel it's between them & Detroit News.

Chapman remembers when GM in '54 didn't like WSJ running a picture of one of its new cars, then canceled its adv'g because of it. Wasn't long before GM caved in. He boils it down to "big egos getting involved & doing dumb things."



## MORE HOMES CLOSE TO ELECTRONIC ACCESS -- IF THEY'LL ACCEPT IT

Consumers are poised on the edge of wanting more on-line access but are concerned about ease of use, reports a survey by Response Analysis. Phone interviews of households with \$35,000+ annual incomes found:

- More than 60% have at least one PC
- 38% report having data or fax modems
- 18% use on-line services
- 10% access the Internet
- Many nonusers plan to acquire such services over the next year
- Gender gap exists among those going on-line: 42% female, 80% male
- PC purchase motivator is developing computer literacy in children

Response Analysis predicts a 20% increase in on-line service users; & an even more significant increase in Internet users by next summer.

### RESEARCH IDENTIFIES 3 INHIBITING FACTORS

1. **Fear of Nerding.** Curiosity is offset by concern about the commitment required to navigate the Net successfully.
2. **Post-Traumatic Web Syndrome.** Once consumers go on-line, they may find the experience less than satisfying, confusing, with limited customer support available.
3. **Windows '95 Overload.** Microsoft's operating system will ultimately encourage on-line service growth. In the short term, however, it could have the opposite effect for current PC owners. The various upgrade considerations consumers must navigate may cause potential on-line customers to delay making any decision at all. (Info from 609/921-3333)

## ARE YOU KEEPING UP WITH THE WEB? COMPARE WITH 2 SURVEYS

1. PRSA/LA & Media Distribution Svcs polled PRSA/LA membership. Of 144 respondents, 44% are from firms, 24% corporations, 21% nonprofits, 11% others (freelancers, consultants & vendors). Findings:

**E-mail:** Corporations have highest internal usage (89%), least external usage (38%). Firms the opposite: 54% internal, 62% external. Nonprofits: 71% internal, 43% external. Other: 50% internal, 44% external. E-mailing outside the walls is still not big, apparently.

**Importance:** Only category where the majority were in agreement. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being least important) 84% of firms selected 7 or higher; corporations 86%; nonprofits 88%. In terms of knowledge of cyberspace, on a scale of 1-10, those saying 7+ are corporations at 78%, nonprofits 69%, firms 42%. (Margalit Grunberger, MDS, 310/836-6600)

2. **ARs on Internet:** "While the Internet itself is not a new channel for communication, it is only within the past year we have witnessed dozens of companies preparing the annual report for the World Wide Web, says Bill Ferguson, principal of Inc Design. His company conducted a survey of 600 execs responsible for managing the AR project. 14% responded.

61% are exploring the *Internet* as an alternative for communicating the yearly financial review. 20% are considering a *CD-ROM* version; 17% are considering *other multimedia formats*. Interestingly, only 11% (down from 38% last year) are examining the possibility of creating their report in a *floppy disk* format. (Nancy Fuller, 212/944-7222)

## IABC MEMBER SURVEY RAISES TROUBLING QUESTION

Communicators are working in concert with the business plans of their employers, notes *Profile*, IABC's 1995 member survey. 91% are tying their objectives to their organization's. 71% have written objectives or are in the process of developing them.

*Is it possible any communicators are now, or ever were, working on their own -- not in sync with organizational objectives? Where do we find managements that permit a key dep't not to have written objectives? No wonder many organizations treat pr like a peripheral unit. Sounds like the "in-house journalism" approach run wild.*

But there's trouble afoot on consistency: median number of times objectives are revised each year is 4. That frequency is consistent across all geographic areas. Other findings:

- 81% report having access to the top person in their organizations; more than half on at least a weekly basis.
- Since 1990, 52% have joined new employers, 75% are in new positions within their organizations.
- Mean salary reached the \$50,000 level for the first time in 5 years. Accredited members make an average \$8,400 more than unaccredited.
- Men continue to earn more than women. The gap narrowed some, but is not statistically significant. US women's salaries now represent 79% of men's, compared to 75% in the '89 study. Canadian women earn 87% of what men earn, compared to 86% in '89. Top salaries are in consulting.
- There are considerably more women (70%) than men (30%) in IABC.
- Oddly, only half report on-line capabilities.

12,010 were surveyed; 4,679 responded. (76-pg report from IABC, 1 Hallidie Plaza, San Francisco 94102; 415/433-3400; \$25 mbrs, \$45 nonmbrs)

## ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

*Public Relations in Health Care: A Guide for Professionals* (2nd ed) by Kathy Lewton offers both an overview & practical advice for newcomer & veteran pr pros, CEOs & other execs in healthcare. Updated & revised edition (1st ed, 1991) addresses contemporary issues: a) identifying & listening to multiple publics; b) defining the role of pr in managed care & integrated delivery systems; c) expanding the role of community relations