

representatives to the board, as this erodes the consensus nature that must exist for a board to be effective.

5. **Understand the process of issue management** & the benefits it offers. If the board's prime directive is "to ensure the right questions are being asked," one need only to look at issues -- areas where performance does not meet expectation -- to see where more questioning is needed.

MEDIA OF LATIN AMERICA ARE SEEING UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH

150-pg monograph -- *Changing Patterns: Latin America's Vital Media* -- from The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, based on more than 300 interviews, says that as the region's fledgling democracies stabilize, freedom of expression is expanding & journalistic professionalism is improving. Report maps the media of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico & Venezuela.

- **Radio is the most important medium in nations such as Ecuador & Guatemala.** Given low literacy rates in many rural areas, radio serves as the single source of news for many. TV, however, is a hugely important medium in Brazil, where the number of sets surpasses the number of refrigerators, & in Mexico where tv became a staple before newspaper reading became a daily habit for many citizens.
- **High-quality, flourishing business press exists:** Mexico's *El Financiero* & *El Economista*; Brazil's *Gazeta Mercantil*; Argentina's *El Cronista* & *Ambito Financiero*.
- **Last 10 yrs have seen a gradual movement** toward greater political pluralism & media openness in Mexico. Two important recent developments are the appearance of *Reforma*, an independent Mexico City daily, & the emergence of a private tv network, TV Azteca, which may erode Televisa's broadcasting dominance.

(More from The Freedom Forum Media Studies Ctr, 212/678-6600)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. IABC officers for '95-'96: chair, Michael Heron (nat'l vp, pa, American Cancer Society, Atlanta); vice-chair, Donald Bruun (pr mgr, Computing Devices International, Bloomington, Minn).

PEOPLE. Richard Evans named mng dir of Wilmington 2000 (city's biz-sponsored econ dev'l group), retires as vp corp comms, Delmarva Power & Light.

Steve Erickson named exec dir of PRSA's Counselors Academy, will also devote a portion of his time to pr for the Society.

ELECTED. CASE ofcrs: chair, Susan Kubic (vp institutional advancement, Northampton Comty Col, Bethlehem, Pa); chair-elect, Douglas Dibbert (pres, alumni ass'n, UofNC, Chapel Hill); sec'y, Richard Ammons (vp dev'l, Macalester Col, St. Paul, Minn); treas, M. Catherine Dunn (pres, Clarke Col, Dubuque, Iowa).

PR PARTNERSHIP GOES BEYOND COMMUNICATION, CHANGES BEHAVIOR

"Typically, health education programs emphasize PSAs, brochures & advertising that all communicate an important message but don't get to the heart of the problem.

"We looked beyond the traditional to a way public relations could be used to bring together all the people necessary to develop a substantive program ... & solve the problem," Brad Ritter, Paul Werth Assocs (Columbus, O) told pr. Result is Project L.O.V.E (Love Our kids...Vaccinate Early).

BACKGROUND

"Franklin County Hospital Council (11 hospitals that drove the effort) said to us, 'We'd like to tackle a community problem. Will you research it for us & come back with recommendations?' We looked at a number of issues, talked with community leaders & came back with the child immunization problem."

RESEARCH

In '92, 60% of Columbus 2-yr-olds (20,000 children) weren't fully immunized. The problem was as acute in affluent suburbs as in impoverished areas. Gallup Poll parental attitude study, US Centers for Disease Control reports & medical journal articles revealed that parents did not realize unprotected children were in danger & failed to vaccinate because they don't like to see shots given. Interviews with public health workers found limited clinic hours & locations as barriers to better immunization rates. From physician interviews it was learned they were not proactively immunizing their young patients & were not aware of changes to recommended immunization schedules & practices.

BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP

Research showed education directed at parents wouldn't solve the problem. A broad community partnership & healthcare system changes were needed.

1. CEOs from the 11 hospitals committed to a 2-yr program. "Never before had the hospitals worked cooperatively on such a major project, & intense competition was sweeping the industry."
2. Program required participation of several gov't bureaucracies "whose views & agendas often conflicted with the hospitals'."
3. Corporate support was needed -- when many were reducing contributions.
4. Support from physicians was needed "but many would initially view the project as a financial threat to their practices."



Partnership was a "diverse group": a) city health dep't; b) county health dep't; c) Hospital Council (the 11 hospitals); d) Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce; e) Health Coalition of Central Ohio (biz org'n addressing community health & insurance concerns); f) individual opinion leaders ("identified thru interviews & the planning process").

A "great deal of consensus" existed that there was a problem. "The challenge was how to address it together -- always true when you have organizations with different points of views. **That's where public relations played a key role.** PR facilitated getting everyone together & keeping everyone on the same track." The start-up phase (developing the strategic plan, which took 6 months) included weekly meetings with representatives from key organizations "where we could talk out different approaches, different solutions & ultimately come to consensus on what we would do."

PROGRAM INCLUDED...

1. **Parent Education:** a) booklets explaining the importance of immunizations, a shot schedule & a wallet-sized immunization record; b) videos; c) hotline (224-LOVE); d) displays at events; e) fliers.
2. **Special Events:** a) mayor kicked off the partnership & helped give the first official Project LOVE immunization; b) "Shots for Tots" program; c) grocery store clinics staffed by the Ohio National Guard; d) doctors received materials & incentives to make shots more available; e) number of free immunization clinics & hours of operation were increased.
3. **Media Relations:** a) daily paper added a weekly column listing sites & times; b) partners appeared before the editorial board of the daily paper; c) physicians & nurses appeared on 2 tv news call-in segments; d) a multi-part tv series was placed.
4. **Physician Program:** a) introduced partnership to the physician community during a special medical conference featuring a nationally renowned pediatrician; b) audio tapes with immunization messages were provided to physician offices for use when parents are "on hold."
5. **Partner Relationships:** a) monthly newsletter created esprit de corps; b) reports & evaluations of key events distributed regularly; c) quarterly presentations updated hospital CEOs; d) other biz groups endorsed.

RESULTS

- 117% increase in fully immunized children, far exceeding the 50% goal.
- \$120,000 in cash & in-kind services were secured, more than doubling program's budget for educational materials & promotions.
- \$79,000 grant from a local physicians' foundation to conduct 3 Shots for Tots promotions in '95.
- Well-known sporting event has approached Project LOVE about being the beneficiary of its '95 profits.
- Computerized immunization tracking/reminder system in development.
- Business groups recognized the hospitals for their leadership.
- Because the project is successful & becoming self-sufficient, hospitals will now create a partnership to tackle another community problem.

WORK WITH LAWYERS TO MEET INTERESTS OF MUTUAL CLIENTS

Tallahassee lawyer Mark Herron challenges pr professionals: The lawyer's phrase, "may it please the court," no longer applies simply to the courts of law & equity, but also to the court of public opinion. While the game of law may have changed -- with attorneys in the O.J. Simpson case holding news conferences almost daily, for example -- **the rules governing public statements remain as strict as ever.** It is important for pr practitioners to understand these rules, as they govern what a lawyer, & in turn, a pr practitioner, can & can't say. A lawyer

- 1) *"Cannot make a statement for public dissemination if he or she knows that it may have an effect on the outcome of a case";*
- 2) *"Shall not counsel or assist another person in making such a statement."*

Knowing this, from the minute allegations are made against a company or an individual, "public relations practitioners & lawyers need to work together to shape & control their responses."

"Clients sometimes get caught in a vortex created by the magnetic & sometimes malevolent forces of media, corporate politics & law. It's like the Bermuda Triangle." The challenge is learning "how to navigate those dangerous waters."

BOARDS: MOVE FROM REACTIONARY FIRE-FIGHTING TO PROACTIVE

Stakeholder demands confronting them make it necessary, says Teresa Yancey Crane of Issue Action Publications (Leesburg, VA). In corporations, "institutional investors are going straight to the top of the organization & therefore gaining visibility. This direct access approach is being replicated by other stakeholders thrusting even more issues onto the director's agenda.

"Such pressure occurs because the appropriate outlet for high-level consideration is not found among management." To cope, Crane recommends 5 board actions:

1. **Accept responsibility for strategic policy planning.** When policy "bubbles up" from stakeholders, it creates issues that raise costs or restrict freedom of operation. Policy formulation is a board duty.
2. **Assign responsibility for issues to a high level officer** (exec vp or above) to a) oversee the process of translating policy into action, b) report regularly to the board & top mgmt.
3. **Assign a chief policy officer** -- perhaps the chairman -- as the "one stop shop" for policy oversight & communication to the board & stakeholders. This person should be part of the chief executive office.
4. **Create non-voting stakeholder advisory panels** to work with mgmt to resolve critical issues. Report the results of this relationship thru the chief policy officer to the board. Do not add constituency