

- "We practice public relations which differs from, say, publicity on the one hand or propoganda on the other in that 3 ingredients need always to be present --

1) truth, 2) concern for the public interest, 3) dialogue.

Of course the first two are variables, but nevertheless they need to be weighed, argued & adopted. However, the 3rd ingredient is either taking place or it is not. Dialogue is measurable & if it is not happening in the process, then altho communication 'at' rather than 'with' may be being practiced, clearly public relations is not."

- **The value, or worth, society puts on pr defines pr's tasks:**

1. Amassing & public release of information.
2. Interdependence Factor -- what any person/organization/country does, affects another. "It is becoming increasingly difficult for an institution to assess the effect on others of its corporate plans & programs. But it is necessary that it does so. Its survival could well depend on it."
3. Balance Philosophy -- "respect the conditions & aspirations of all the parties involved in a particular enterprise or initiative, not just those with an obvious vested interest. The resolution of conflict between stakeholders has become a socially meritorious task.

- **The profession's own values:**

1. **Performance.** "The very essence of professional excellence is not necessarily giving the client what he wants but what he needs. **The professionalism involved is in persuading him as to what his response to his problem should be.** Admittedly, value for money drives most employers & most clients but if the solutions recommended are substantially not accepted, then taking one's hat off the peg is surely the ultimate sanction of a real professional."
2. **Conscience.** "If we wish as a group to enjoy public support then individually & jointly we must put the public first & be seen to do so. We must practice the 'mutual understanding & trust' we preach. Truth, openness, confidentiality, privacy, conflict of interest, honesty & fair dealing are all matters governed by personal & corporate conscience & they lie at the very heart of our own relationship with the public we exist to serve. Unless the relationship we enjoy with the public is beyond question, how can we possibly presume to advise others in regard to their public relations?"

## WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**DIED.** Paul Newsome, founder of New England's longtime leading firm, Newsome & Co, later the Boston office of Hill & Knowlton. He was a key influence on many well-known practitioners. When Ed Bernays moved to

the Boston area in '62, he chose Newsome to partner on projects.

**RETIRES.** Reynold Malmer (dir, American Optometric Ass'n Communication Ctr, St. Louis) on Aug 31.

## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION: ARE WE HITTING/MISSING THE MARK?

All you read or hear about is e-mail, world wide web, LANs, WANs, interactive video via computer screens et al. Exciting. But is toying with this what clients & employers pay pr practitioners for -- or do they expect some contribution to organizational goals, now, today? Whatever its current -- or more likely, future -- advantages turn out to be, electronic media are still merely ways to transfer information. Fun, you bet, but:

*Practitioners need to remember there is no evidence information by itself motivates behavior, in all but a few rare circumstances. Electronic communication is just another -- perhaps better in some instances -- but still just another method of communicating.*

Worst possibility: are we merely succumbing to the computer industry's hype? Of all industries, its record for accuracy, even honesty, about its products is low. (Has any hard- or software ever appeared on its announced date, and done what we were told it would do?)

### CASE IN POINT: THE INTERNET

Just about everybody is promoting their Internet capabilities, their home pages & their alleged ability to attract visitors to them. Not too long ago, these releases trickled in to prr. Now they dominate -- AND MOST COME TO US BY FAX & MAIL!! Everybody's doing it so it must be the thing to do. Right? Hmmm... Here's a sampling of releases we're seeing:

- "Unlike other passive Web sites, Dillon's (Mpls) site encourages repeat users by hosting an interactive Groovy Chat session for users to provide their comments on lifestyle tips & living cool on the coasts, mountains & fly-over country. The monthly update, written as the *Groovy Man's Guide & Not According to Marcia*, includes information on everything from groovy tunes & adv'g, to groovy restaurants." Key to a successful web site: "offer timely information in a creative, interactive environment." (<http://www.dillonweb.com>) [*Sounds like entertainment, which Disney says will be the ultimate main use of electronic com'n*]
- "'Clients are learning that building traffic on their Web page requires a new type of promotion,' said Steve Goodman, partner & dpr, Poppe Tyson (Morris Plains, NJ). 'This new service [Cyber PR] provides a multi-faceted approach to building Web-site traffic using a combination of traditional media relations & on-line promotion.'" [*Why go this costly circuitous route when there are already well known ways of going direct to targets?*]



- "Useful information for pr professionals (free of charge). Whimsical journeys into the changing world of words. Advice & ideas that might have worked, but didn't get a chance. Those are among the things that can be found at Padilla Speer Beardsley's new home page on the World Wide Web. 'The Internet is already beginning to change the way that public relations work is being done. Ask Intel. The more we learn about the Net's terrain, the better qualified we become to help our clients navigate in this tantalizing new frontier.'" (<http://www.psbpr.com>)  
[Do practitioners have spare time for this?]

### IS BEING ON THE INTERNET ADVANTAGEOUS?

- "The Internet is a great way to get closer

to your customers -- & attract new ones," says Carole Howard based on her work with Reader's Digest. RD readers use it to ask for tear sheets, order reprints, offer comments, ask questions of the editors. "It can also be a valuable early warning device to alert you to customer concerns. The Internet reveals your customers' opinions in an unfiltered environment, like tapping directly into the grapevine."

### ON THE FLIP SIDE

Some have differing thoughts on the subject:

- "Has the Internet & WWW overshadowed the basic crafts of pr & adv'g?" asks NewsNet (Bryn Mawr, Pa). "During the month of June, 24,139 stories were reported on the information age & its effect on the communication industry, according to NewsNet's electronic clipping service.... How did the communication industry ever function before the Internet?"
- "Direct marketers who are currently besotted with the Internet are throwing away millions of dollars 'getting ready for the future.' Why? The process of marketing & selling is pro-active. Marketers have to go out & beat the bushes... stir people up...get them to act & to respond...make them excited.
- "On the Internet or any other online service, the prospect has to do all the work. You have to turn on your computer & physically spend time wading thru what Bob Hacker called 'a huge library with 2,500 branches & no Dewey Decimal System. How will people find you in the clutter?' Remember, people are basically lazy. They get bored easily. If 98% don't respond to a direct mail piece placed directly into their hands, what percentage is going to drop out of cyberspace with all the chit-chat & irrelevance?... A new marketing concept that is 180 degrees from traditional marketing techniques simply will be -- at best -- a minor player in the media mix. At least in my lifetime. And probably yours," writes Denison Hatch, editor & pres, Target Marketing (Philadelphia).
- "Typing answers to Internet queries can be time consuming," says Howard. "Many of our editors do it on their own time evenings & weekends -- but I expect the bloom will fade on that rose before too long."

"It's easy to get drawn into the hype. Yet it's important to remember that **the Net is just another tool in your arsenal.** It may be the latest -- but it's not necessarily the greatest distribution vehicle for every publicity opportunity," sums up Carole Howard.

## CURRENT EMPLOYEE RELATIONS POLICIES ARE OBSOLESCE

What will employee relations be like in 15 years? 3 thought provokers.

### 1. "TEMPORARILY WITH THE COMPANY"

Stimulated by 4 HR pros' visions presented in HR Magazine, John

Budd (Omega Group) asks, "What policies will evolve to adjust to a transient workforce?"

"Studies of employees age 30 indicate that by '94 they had held 7 or more jobs, with the longest tenure being 5 yrs. And how does this temporary nature affect motivation, incentive systems & communications inasmuch as such short-lived relationships complicate, if not make obsolete, current policies on management-employee relations?"

### 2. DATA SAYS START GETTING READY

76 million baby-boomers will reach retirement age by 2010 -- 20% of

the population. "Even if Social Security benefits are available, many feel America cannot afford the wholesale retirement of its largest generation." At that time globally: 26% of the population in Japan will be 65 or older; Germany 22%; Sweden 23%. Ceaseless downsizing in the past 15 years (at an estimated average of 2.5 million jobs/yr) adds annually to the human resource pool, too.

- What jobs will there be? How will they fit in an organization?
- What will be the role of management vis a vis the job holders?

"I visualize an emerging management troika of HR, public relations & law, each interdependent on the others' professional skills & judgment but together presenting coherent, balanced policies sensitive to all contingencies," predicts Budd.

### 3. BOOK TITLE SAYS IT: "WE ARE ALL SELF-EMPLOYED"

Career ladder is replaced by "career lattice" -- where one jumps around rather than linearly progressing "upward." Author Cliff Hakim says "Dependence on the organization is obsolete. Today, and for the foreseeable future, people's employability lies in their own hands." Okay, pr pros: can you communicate that positively to the troops?

Book compares an "employed" attitude with a "self-employed" one. Offers help in showing employees what's happening, how new attitude benefits them. (\$24.95, 230 pgs, Berrett-Kohler Publishers) (Copy of HR mag articles from prr) (See also prr 11/21/94 re the new social contract)

## IF IT ISN'T DIALOGUE (2-WAY) IT ISN'T PR: TRAVERSE-HEALY

At the 40th anniversary of IPRA, Tim Traverse-Healy offered these thoughts based on his 50 years in the profession. [They raise some pros, and cons, about the electronic communication dilemma discussed on page 1]: