

3. More critical than the name are the benefits an organization provides its members, Weiss feels. Recent conference drew 1,100 people -- "most highly attended ever." Response cards indicate attendees felt this was "the best they ever attended." Merged society was able to offer over 120 sessions. "We couldn't have done this individually."
4. "I noticed org'ns sent 3, 4 & 5 members ranging from the publications editor to the CEO. They were networking together, saying 'If we're going to improve the healthcare in our community, we can't do it as separate disciplines. We have to do it as a team.' And because of our new org'n, people are saying we're on an equal level. That's what we want to achieve, what the new name can do."

(For more about the Society, call 312/422-3737)

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

Boy Scouts in Great Britain have a new merit badge -- for public relations. Logo is a cellular phone. To qualify for the badge one must: 1) give a presentation about Scouting, 2) obtain media coverage about an expedition or activity by preparing a press release, 3) produce 4 editions of a newsletter for their troop, 4) create a visual display for a parents' open evening, 5) arrange a visit to the local newspaper.

Major Problem in re-engineering pr is dropping tasks. Practitioners boldly take on new-age programs -- but dither & cogitate about what they can stop doing. Maxine Kollasch, mgr corp com'ns, Mercy Health Services (Farmington Hills, Mich) has a favorite quote that puts it in perspective: *Something that's not worth doing is not worth doing well.*

Among the face-to-face methods biz-to-biz programs favor is trade shows (pr 9/23). And how! Billions are being spent by cities everywhere to lure them with ever bigger & more attendee-friendly convention centers. Baltimore's spending \$150 million, DC \$450M, Boston \$500M, San Diego \$200M. World's largest, Chicago's McCormick Place, gets a \$1 billion upgrade. Reason: *Trade Show Week* reports attendance up from 60 million in '89 to probable 101 million this year. Despite the fads, basics are more vital than ever...if they a) are personal, 2-way venues; and b) accommodate step 4 of diffusion process -- social trial of an idea, product, service or org'n.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

DIED. John Sattler (retired dpr, Ford Motor), 77. During retirement wrote *Fifty Years Ahead of the News*; received the John Wiley Hill Award for PR Leadership.

HONORS. Ron Rhody wins '96 Hall of Fame Award from Arthur Page Society. Ex-BankAmerica evp/dir corp comms & extl afrs, recently a consultant,

announced in his address that in Jan, turning 65, he will indeed retire -- to write the Great American Novel & fish for trout.

Chet Burger receives "Legends of Public Relations" Award from Pinnacle Worldwide for his contribution to pr's growth & professionalism.

"THE MANAGER IS OFTEN THE WEAK LINK IN THE COM'N CHAIN"

So finds Tom Vitelli, dpr, Intermountain Health Care (IHC). To change that, IHC has begun a supervisors-as-communicators training program.

WHY

- "The challenge is to turn healthcare on its head & do some innovative things. Especially **customer service** -- which is becoming the differentiating factor between healthcare systems. We're trying to change the way healthcare has been historically delivered.
- "Historically, healthcare has had an 'if we build it they will come' mentality. Doctors offices are notoriously bad at customer service -- long waiting times to get in, things done for the convenience of the providers, not the patients or healthplan members. We're trying to change that with extended hours, relocating, building in neighborhoods that have not been served. We have a couple of clinics in elementary schools, things that **make care more convenient & easier to access.**
- "But we're not going to be able to reach operational goals unless we can have a culture which is less hierarchical, where people are more willing to speak out, where complaints are taken as compliments & opportunities to improve. We need an **accountability based culture** where we are less likely to blame others & more likely to take personal responsibility.
- "This requires a manager who has more than clinical skills. One who is able to talk to people, present that information, get ideas out in a way that isn't going to bottom-out morale. And employee morale is very important to maintain thru this process because it directly affects customer service -- we have studies that prove this. So we're trying to **improve managers' communications skills.**"

HOW

- A single-module program on **interpersonal skills** was piloted in one region last year. This foot-in-the-door "was so well received we decided to take it system-wide & expand it to 7 modules."
- For 9 months, pr team of 2 from central office & 3 from other regions has been preparing the modules. Each is currently 90 minutes long, may go to 2 hrs; will be presented 1 per week -- "**a major time commitment.**"
- Program "dovetails with what management was already doing" so didn't have to "sell" it to them. With the **support of area administrators**, team is moving ahead. "It's not something we're going to mandate. We hope it will be so successful people will ask for it."
- First 7-module program began last Wednesday at Logan Regional Hospital.



WHAT

• Prior to managers gathering for first module, their employees fill out a survey **rating their supervisor as a communicator.** This provides a baseline to measure improvement. "It'll be interesting to compare in 6 months how some of the indicators change on this com'n assessment tool. I think what we're initially going to see is managers rating themselves higher than their employees rate them. Then you'll see the gap between the two lines narrow as the months go by."

• **7 training modules are:**

- 1) *Your New Role* -- communications theory, what's expected of mgrs;
- 2) *One-On-One* -- interpersonal skills;
- 3) *The Right Stuff* -- what to communicate, prioritizing info;
- 4) *The Right Tools* -- how to communicate, the plusses & minuses of different communication vehicles;
- 5) *It's Show Time* -- presentation skills;
- 6) *Trouble Shooting* -- conflict resolution;
- 7) *Personal Plan* -- personal coaching.

- Logan Regional Hospital group will rate each of the modules & the presenters. "By the end of this year we'll know where we could go next & how we could change the curriculum."

(More info from Vitelli at IHC, 36 S State st, 22nd floor, Salt Lake City 84111; 801/442-5703; e-mail, cotvitel@ihc.com)

SURVEY: CORPORATE CULTURE CONTRIBUTES TO AN ORGN'S SUCCESS

Survey, entitled People Power & done for Proudfoot PLC (London), reveals attitudes of top execs (525 interviewed by phone) at companies in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, UK & US.

"Considering quality improvement alone is not the answer to the challenge. Many companies have launched Total Quality Mgmt (TQM) initiatives & found them only partly successful in addressing their particular needs & in delivering a significant, sustainable bottomline benefit.

"Often this is because there has been no accompanying change in the culture to prepare employees for a new way of working. Already there is strong consensus that securing 'buy-in' from employees is a vital factor in changing the culture to achieve successful outcomes," explains Malcolm Hughes, CEO of Proudfoot.

SOME FINDINGS PROVING PERCEIVED VALUE OF A STRONG CULTURE:

1. **46% have introduced culture change programs.**
2. **Fewer than 40% use any formal measure of corporate culture,** yet they claim their culture change programs are successful (86%), their culture is very strong (43%), & the culture of the organization contributes a great deal to business success (52%). "Just how they make these judgments without the benefit of formal research is worthy of consideration. Companies might ask themselves whether their picture of their own

organization is an accurate one."

3. **48% place culture change at the top of the list** of major changes they have faced in the last 3 yrs. This is followed by competitiveness (23%) & financial mgmt (14%).
4. Overall, 87% feel they have coped well over the last 3 yrs, tho a quarter say **internal communications could have been handled better.**
5. **Only 32% feel they are making a great deal of use of their people** to improve performance. 28% are very satisfied with how the company currently stimulates innovation & creativity in process improvement.
6. **Only 25% are satisfied with their use of internal communications.**
7. **63% use non-financial data to measure success** -- & they share this info with investors.
8. **Hospitality firms worldwide have the strongest sense of company culture.** 51% describe their corporate culture as "very strong," compared with a 43% average across other industry sectors & only 37% among manufacturing companies. Corporate culture also plays a greater part in business success in the hospitality sector than in any other sector surveyed.

"Great strides have been made in improving competitiveness thru the use of formal systems. Levels of satisfaction among those who have introduced systems are generally good, & the benefits acknowledged. But the research suggests many companies still **sense they are not making the very best use of their resources, particularly their people.** In the anticipated drive for increased competitiveness, organizations can ill afford not to."

(More from Anthony Thompson of Proudfoot, 407/697-9600)

HEALTHCARE GROUP MERGER DROPS PR FROM NAME

American Society for Health Care Marketing & Public Relations has merged with Society for Healthcare Planning & Marketing. Merger talks began last November. More than 90% of both societies' members approved the merger. New org'n, **Society for Healthcare Strategy & Market Development**, has 6000 members. The rationale:

1. "We're doing multiple tasks covering multiple disciplines. We have members in pr, pa, mktg, planning, comty outreach, contracting, business development. We wanted the name to indicate the future -- & how all these disciplines are part of strategic services. **We are advocates for viewing what we do as part of executive management,**" Rhoda Weiss (Santa Monica), pres of the new Society, told prr.
2. Just because pr is no longer in the title doesn't mean it's no longer within the Society's purview. "A large number of us do pr. But we do a lot more. This is positioning pr & other services as strategic in nature. It represents where the profession & the healthcare industry are going."