

a combination of a definitive set of high level technical service delivery activities combined with another definitive set of ways we humanely deliver that service."

3. Always attempt to execute a standard problem-solving outcome: quick/effective/skillful/safe/caring/managed.
4. Regard everyone as a customer.
5. Consider how you & what you are doing looks to others.
6. Don't disqualify the customer with your qualifications.
7. Basic organizational behavior must become customer-centered.
8. We must continually improve our customer service performance.

(For copy call 1-800-654-4055, item #35918, \$16.50)

#### BASIC FIREFIGHTER (READ FRONTLINE) EMPOWERMENT

Ask yourself:

- Is it the right thing for the customer?
- Is it the right thing for our department?
- Is it legal, ethical & nice?
- Is it safe?
- Is it on your organizational level?
- Is it something you are willing to be accountable for?
- Is it consistent with our department's values & policies?

... if the answer is yes to all of these questions, don't ask for permission, just do it!

#### PRSA PROMOTES ACCREDITATION ON NPR'S "MORNING EDITION"

In response to research showing members' desire to promote the value of accreditation in the marketplace. "Sponsor" messages air each Tuesday a.m. at 7:05 & 10:05 (EST); 6:05 & 9:05 (Central); & 7:05 (Pacific) until Nov 4.

"NPR listeners are educated, affluent & influential, and place a high value on NPR as a news & information source. Having our message directed toward this audience is a major step in raising the awareness of accreditation," explains Roger Lewis, chair of the accreditation board.

#### WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**DIED.** Lawrence Nolte (92, PRSA Fellow & pioneer counselor in the San Francisco Bay area) on Sept 27 in Williamsburg, Va. Co-authored basic texts including *PR Writing & Media Techniques* with Dennis Wilcox.

**HONORS.** Thomas Harris wins the '97 Amelia Lobsenz/Pinnacle Worldwide "Legends of Public Relations" Award for his contribution to the growth & professionalism of pr counseling.

#### MASSIVE CLIENT SURVEY CONFIRMS TRENDS, FINDS BUDGETS UP

PR budgets, especially work assigned to pr firms, are rising "dramatically," according to the 5th annual Thomas L. Harris/Impulse Research Public Relations survey. While internal budgets rose 10%, external budgets for pr firm work increased 44% -- confirming the much-talked-about outsourcing trend.

Survey is reputedly the largest of pr clients & was sponsored by the 13 biggest US pr firms. 2,042 clients (51%) responded. Findings:

- **Criteria for selecting a new firm confirms another trend** -- increasing emphasis on strategy & counsel (top 6 of 27 categories):

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>Change</u>
Creativity	57%	45%	12%
Quality of my account team	56	40	16
Client service	49	44	5
Chemistry	43	43	0
Knowledge of my industry	43	38	5
Strategic counsel	40	26	14

- **More confirmation of trend to strategy & counsel:** of 23 criteria used in evaluating an existing firm, the most significant change occurred in *strategic counsel*. Though it placed 11th at 42%, it rose 8% from last year (34%). Leading the list: overall quality of work (74%); quality of my account team (67%); meets deadlines, keeps promises (65%); client service (63%); quality of writing (54%); thorough/attention to detail (53%); honest, accurate billing (52%); creativity (51%).  
[Note drop in ranking of creativity in this category of responses]

- **Types of work done** (both inhouse & using outside counsel; top 8 of 24):

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>Change</u>
Media relations	99%	97%	2%
Internal communications	97	92	5
Strategic counsel	95	91	4
Crisis management	94	91	3
Special events	94	91	3
Graphic design	93	89	4
Measurement of results	93	87	6
Corporate reputation mgmt	92	87	5



- **Work done inhouse** (top 10 of 24):

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>Change</u>
Internal communications	93	91	2
Reputation management	87	81	6
Crisis management	86	85	1
Media relations	85	86	-1
Community relations	84	84	0
Issues management	84	84	0
Special events	82	83	-1
On-line communications	81	80	1
Strategic counsel	80	79	1
Public affairs	80	81	-1

- **Work assigned to firms** (top 10 of 24):

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>Change</u>
Strategic counsel	77%	67%	10%
Media training	76	(new question)	
Media relations	72	67	5
Graphic design	69	58	11
Primary research	67	60	7
Special events	66	62	4
Measurements of results	62	54	8
Secondary research	60	58	2
Crisis management	60	55	5
Reputation management	54	52	2

- **Evaluation method of pr campaign outcomes:** Judgment leads the way with 53%. Other methods are tracking studies (36%); pre- & post surveys (31%); focus groups (26%); phone inquiries, reply cards, direct response (26%); sales analysis (20%); mail intercepts (4%).
- **Financial arrangements with pr firm:** project fees (61%); annual retainer (38%); time against budget (26%); straight time (22%).

Survey covered large organizations, but is probably applicable widely. Total pr budgets of survey participants averaged \$2,355,000; average total revenues, \$3.5 billion. (More: Thomas L. Harris & Co, Port Clinton Square, 600 Central av, Highland Park, IL 60035; 847/266-1020)

## MORE ON STRATEGY: PR FIRM MERGES WITH MGMT CONSULTANTS

The growing demand for pr's strategic consulting capabilities (see above survey) is illustrated in the newly merged firm *Milestones - the critical thinking company*.

- Merged are Charlton Ruff Communications (strategic communications expertise) with Gabriliska Consultants (operational abilities & business process) working together in the area of scientific marketing.

Lorraine Ruff (partner with David Gabriliska in this venture) told prr:

"One of our clients is Paracel (Pasadena, Cal). It has developed a whole new computer system specifically designed to undertake genome data analysis. That's what we're engaged in. Not only the strategic communications -- what we call scientific marketing for companies whose products may be 5-10 years away -- but how to sustain interest among those who would fund science leading to technological applications.

"How do you help a scientist, whose culture is to be open, to communicate clearly & concisely science that is so complex the average lay person, tho intelligent, can barely comprehend? Things that have the potential of profound ethical overtones. We help them construct messages that aren't scary, that have the capacity to teach & inform rather than to put off out of fear. It's scientific marketing -- not of products but of science."

### WHAT CONSULTING LOOKS LIKE NOW

Their firm name, Milestones, holds significance for clients. "They have constant milestones they must achieve whether scientific, financial or business; for example, competing successfully for the best molecular biologist. If they achieve the milestone, they are able to go to the next step. It's like a Monopoly game. If they don't achieve those milestones thru inexperience or just not having the time or energy, their progress can be thwarted for all the wrong reasons."

**Milestone anticipation:** "The underpinning of our firm is milestones out of acknowledgment of the arduous task they have ahead of them. Because of our experience & because we're objective counsel, we can see these milestones coming & help our clients achieve them."

## C CUSTOMER SATISFACTION VITAL EVEN FOR FIRE DEP'T, SAYS CHIEF

Customer service is a burning issue for all organizations. Alan Brunacini, Phoenix fire chief, has put together a manual for his firefighters called *Essentials of Fire Department Customer Service*. By just changing a few words, it can apply to any industry. He writes:

"I strongly suspect that basic, positive customer service is fairly universal & that while good fire department service is delivered in a bit more urgent way, it's not that different from driving a cab, flipping (& serving) pancakes, checking in sleepy hotel guests, or providing medical services to anxious hospital customers."

Informal, friendly, 131-pg manual (written "like we were sitting around the fire station telling war stories & talking to each other"), illustrated with cartoons drawn by a firefighter, is structured around 8 essential customer service categories:

1. **Our essential mission** & number one priority is to deliver the best possible service to our customers.
2. **Always be nice** -- treat everyone with respect, kindness, patience & consideration. "Nice isn't some blue sky, smiley-face program -- it is