

- **Ask those who disagree to paraphrase one another's comments.** This may help them learn if they really understand one another.
- **Work out a compromise.** Agree on the underlying source of conflict, then engage in give-&-take and finally agree on a solution.
- **Ask each member to list what the other side should do.** Exchange lists, select a compromise all are willing to accept, & test the compromise to see if it meshes with team goals.
- **Have the sides each write 10 questions for their opponents.** This will allow them to signal their major concerns about the other side's position. And the answers may lead to a compromise.
- **Convince team members they sometimes may have to admit they're wrong.** Help them save face by convincing them that changing a position may well show strength.
- **Respect the experts on the team.** Give their opinions more weight when the conflict involves their expertise, but don't rule out conflicting opinions.

(More from Alexander Hamilton Institute, 70 Hilltop Rd, Ramsey, NJ 07446)

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **Council of Public Relations Networks has formed** to disseminate info about & to market the capabilities of pr firm networks. Charter members are Pinnacle Worldwide, The Worldcom Group, Public Relations Organization International (PROI), & IPREX. These comprise 239 pr firms -- 3,493 total employees, a '96 combined worldwide revenue base of \$350,141,466. "It is clear that international public relations networks are thriving, are growing enormously & are competing for multi-city & multi-national public relations business more effectively. This new council sees great merit in joining to collectively market & promote the value of networks in the corporate public relations firm selection process," reads the joint statement.

¶ **On the pro side of the voice-mail argument** (see prr 2/10 for con side), Joann Stuever of Martin Memorial Health Systems writes: "People are home but often tied up on another line, with someone in their office, in a meeting, etc. In an era of downsizing, we end up juggling more than ever before. Thank heaven for voice/e-mail! We don't miss important messages when one of the above stated events occurs. However, failing to return calls is not only bad business, it's rude!"

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. Roland Minda (Minda Assocs, Mpls) receives the Donald G. Padilla Community Classic Award from PRSA/Minn for volunteering time & talents toward improving the community thru com'ns.

THE CONTINUALLY CHANGING VIEW OF COMMUNICATION & MEDIA

Practitioners know that whatever the target circulation of a medium, information presented there can go everywhere -- fast. This blurring or blending of media reach presents a new paradigm of media use -- or, more accurately, a return to an old approach but with some important new wrinkles:

- In these times when communication is instantaneous, global & available to everyone, the old artificial barriers between employee com'ns, customer relations, community rels, gov't rels etc disappear.
- Each group not only quickly learns what is said to any one of them, but they are often composed of the same people. Employees live in the community, may also be customers, own stock if a publicly held company, are taxpayers & citizens concerned with public agencies & NPOs etc.
- Total Relationship Management (prr 12/6/93) is required -- and one of the changes it brings is **destroying the distinction between "internal" & "external" media.**
 - This has always been a dubious differentiation -- e.g. in org'ns with poor employee com'ns, the longtime complaint is that they learn about what's going on where they work from the local newspaper or radio station. On the other hand, employees quickly disseminate into other stakeholder groups any information communicated to them -- whether via their managers, a newsletter, or a town hall meeting.
 - Format no longer determines strategic use or differentiates one medium from another. Print, video, face-to-face, electronic -- doesn't matter.

THE 3 MEDIA TYPES

- Journalistic/reportorial** -- your classic news media. Major features are a) total lack of control by practitioners, b) editorializing, 3) the marketing or "Hollywoodization" of news selection & tone of coverage.
 - When they had public trust, these were the "3rd party endorsers" so valuable in many pr situations.
 - Now, their credibility is at an alltime low. Circulation/viewership/listenership are declining & fragmented. Their gotcha coverage emphasizes, even glorifies, the negative. As a result, they are least useful to practitioners in most cases today.



2. **Access/entertainment** -- the new ingredient. Talk shows, live interview venues, the return of radio, local access channels -- media operated by someone else, but where you are directly in front of the audience without a filter and can tell your story in your own words & body language -- tho you may need to know how to handle a host or interviewer.
- Coverage varies widely, from top ratings for popular interview shows & some talkfests, to slowly evolving audiences for local access.
 - The shock jocks of some talk shows are usually to be avoided.
 - When circumstances are right, however, these are valuable pr tools.
3. **Direct to stakeholders** -- controlled media, where content & distribution are in your hands. But strict rules apply to their effective use now:
- Relationships must be built *first*, before pounding anyone with more communication materials. Once that is done, they will be far more likely to pay attention than to communications from strangers.
 - Whatever the format, *information mapping* & brevity are essential. Few have time or inclination to wade thru long, paragraphic stuff.
- A major problem with e-mail, e.g., is the small-type, one long paragraph style, with letters spilling over the end of lines. E-mail will become really useful when senders can design the visual appearance -- possible now, but no one seems to have, or use, the software.
- Send publications or whatever very *infrequently*, or risk wearing out their welcome.
 - Lists must be *tightly targeted*, e.g. opinion leaders in stakeholder groups, a managers newsletter (vs. to all employees), the 20% of customers who give you 80% of your volume, those who ask to receive it ("pull" com'n), a volunteer fax network & similar.
- The rationale is not to keep it away from others, since they will get whatever info they want anyway, thru one means or another. Instead the goal is not to burden anyone with any more com'ns unless they can & will make use of the info.
- Recipients should be able to receive your com'ns *in whatever form they want it in* -- voice mail, e-mail, fax, print. This is one of the greatest stimulants for audiences to accept your message.

STATUS OF COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCTS

Predictions they would evaporate, including some in pr, were wrong. But the strategy for their utilization, and the way they are put together, is a far cry from the old ways.

Basically, they are no longer tactical first strikes. Instead, their role is to enhance & capitalize on existing relationships by keeping key people informed -- and letting them know what they can do to help.

CASE: LIFESTYLE RESEARCH VITAL IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Building relationships requires knowing specifics about the group you want to reach & how they will respond to your appeals. For example, the Pediatric Specialty Survey -- "A Profile of Pediatricians & their Practices" conducted by *Contemporary Pediatrics* -- debunks the stereotype of the pediatrician as a middle-aged family man, good old Dr. Spock.

Instead, 42% of all pediatricians, & 58% of practicing pediatricians under the age of 45, are women. In '95, 63% of pediatric interns were female. The American Board of Pediatrics forecasts that, if these trends continue, women in pediatric practice will outnumber men by the year 2004.

STEREOTYPING ALIVE & VERY DANGEROUS

Differences between the personal lives & professional experiences of male & female pediatricians are notable -- critical info for anyone attempting to work with this increasingly influential professional category:

- At any age, the female pediatrician is more likely to be single & childless than her male colleague.
- Among those under 45, 6% of male pediatricians are single compared to 16% of female pediatricians.
- Of pediatricians under 45, only 1 of 10 men is childless compared to 1 of 4 women.
- Among pediatricians over 45, 12% of the women are childless vs 3% of the men.

VITAL TREND CONCERNS

"Will the increase in female pediatricians result in a greater proportion of physicians who have no personal experience with child-rearing? Will mothers seek out female pediatricians so they can talk 'mother-to-mother' only to find the female pediatrician is less likely than the male pediatrician to be a parent?" asks Catherine Brown, editor of *Contemporary Pediatrics*.

Survey also addresses training, info sources, prescription patterns & practice characteristics, including managed care & patient relationships. (Copy from Amy Clarke at 201/358-2224)

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT NOW AN ESSENTIAL SKILL: SOME TIPS

Increased conflict among employees is a natural fallout of org'ns stressed by restructuring & downsizing. With expanding use of teams, skills in dealing with conflict are essential. Douglass Davidoff (dir com'ns & mktg, Indiana Housing Finance Authority, Indianapolis) calls attention to the counsel of Alexander Hamilton Institute. "The advice is pithy & useful. I have a copy of this brief guide pasted where I can find it near my phone & computer," writes Davidoff. Tips include: