

3. **Open With A Brief Description.** Let users know the purpose of your site immediately. Two or three choice sentences up front is all it takes. Avoid ambiguity or cute devices to "grab" users. Not everyone on the Web is looking for you or your organization. Keep disinterested browsers moving along -- quickly.
4. **Provide User-Friendly Tools** -- search options, a site index map or directory, direct access to phone numbers & addresses of key facilities. Provide the convenience & useful features that cause casual prospects to use your site as an essential business tool.
5. **Be Interactive & Mean It.** Don't offer a "feedback" link without having adequate resources to respond. If you don't have these resources, provide on-demand info or "knowledge bases" of frequently asked questions. Don't offer the illusion of interactivity.
6. **Don't Ask Too Many Questions.** Before you get carried away with "site registrations" & password protection, think about what it is you're trying to protect. Chances are, your Web site will consist primarily of public info. Another caveat: as many as 25% of users surf the Web anonymously or with fictitious identities. Why collect survey info that will probably be in error? Instead, let your initial Web site experience suggest a streamlined, non-bureaucratic buying experience down the road.
7. **Revisit Your Goals.** Offer a feedback element to your site. Solicit questions. Use this feedback & Web traffic reports (from your ISP or Web host) to measure the effectiveness of your site against your objectives & strategies. Unlike most marketing com'ns materials, Web sites can be produced almost overnight, cost little to "reprint" & can be instantly revised without waste.

ITEM OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

Generalists may have more opportunities than specialists in the future, pr executive searcher David Bell told CPRS. Even gov't agencies today look for practitioners who understand the bottomline -- which makes sense considering just about every gov't at every level is trying to balance their budgets. Best news: all sectors are paying competitive salaries for intermediate & senior level pr pros, he reports.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORED. CPRS' highest accolade, the Novikoff Memorial Award "for longstanding service to the Society," the profession & the community," to Jim Osborne (CEO, The Osborne Group, Calgary).

SAD COMMENT: CEO WHO TAKES CARE OF WORKERS SEEN AS CRAZY

Aaron Feuerstein, CEO of Malden Mills (Lawrence, Mass), is a much-honored, sought-after business executive. Some think he's a saint. In Dec '95, 3 of his mills burned to the ground. He decided to rebuild at the same location, to continue paying salary & benefits to his employees (whose jobs had literally gone up in smoke) assuring them they'd be called back to work. He is revered by many for this. That some think he's crazy shows how far society has gone in expecting selfishness, not social responsibility.

HIS THINKING: EMPLOYEES ARE ASSETS WHO HELP MAKE BETTER PRODUCTS

- **He didn't flee for low-wage areas.** In 1955, Malden Mills (located then in Malden, Mass) needed to expand but had insufficient room. At the time, many mills were leaving the area to go where labor was cheaper. "They saw their business as a commodity. To profit they must cut back on labor which they viewed as a component of the cost sheet." This was then & is now contrary to Feuerstein's view:
 1. Malden Mills' "vision" is to distance itself "as much as possible" from commodity & emphasize research & development -- making a better product, being creative, innovative. One result is hot-selling Polartec® fabric.
 2. Employees are assets -- not a cost to be cut.
- **Thinking long-term pays.** In '55, Feuerstein moved into mills left empty in Lawrence. Many thought he was crazy, acting contrary to good business practices. "Depends on your vision of business," he replies.

This same vision motivated his decision to rebuild & continue paying his workers. He estimates it cost about \$10 million to pay them -- for 90 days, plus benefits for 6 months. After 90 days, "almost all employees had been brought back." He met with them personally before the fire was out to assure them they'd have salaries, benefits & jobs.

Malden Mills, along with state & federal gov't, invested in training programs to help those left unemployed qualify for other work. "We told them we would call them back when we could & at that time they could decide if they wanted to return." All but 100-200 are back working at the mill.

"There was no way I was going to throw 3,000 people into the street." He quotes Hillel: "In situations where there are no decent human beings, do everything in your power to be a decent human being."



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PRIMER

Decision to rebuild & pay employees was based on "2 cardinal principles that are holy at Malden Mills":

1. **The corporation has responsibility for all its employees.** "We must all treat each other as we want to be treated."
2. **The corporation has responsibility for the community -- ie, to give workers "security" & to fight "unemployment that is destroying our cities.** Corporations must work with federal, state & city gov't to bring the unemployed into the workforce."

RESULTS OF HIS VISION ARE BETTER QUALITY & HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY

- Heroic efforts of employees & local fire dep'ts saved lives as well as prevented a 4th building from being destroyed. When that building was up & running, Feuerstein walked among the employees, all there sharing tears & thank yous. Employees promised to pay him back "10 fold."
- Before the fire, that plant was producing 130,000 yards/week. Now it's producing 200,000+/week.
- Before the fire 6-7% of what was manufactured was off-quality. Now that number has dropped to 2% -- a result of the "good will of the people."

¶ Widely praised for his actions, Feuerstein says, "The publicity I'm receiving is not so much deserved as what it's saying about how modern corporate America has changed."

¶ A hundred years ago, mills in the same complex burned & were rebuilt -- without fanfare. "The mill owner did what was normally done. How much of a celebrity do you think he was? What was normal before, isn't now. It's a poor reflection on our times," he told a local chamber of commerce.

¶ He believes we're living thru a time of excess, where investors are looking for short term gains, where downsizing is done to cash in on stock options. These are "unethical & not good for corporations. The CEO who acts on what is right in the longterm is helping his shareholders -- and will be more prosperous."

BLACK & WHITE STILL WORKS; HERE'S ONE EXAMPLE

From Lands' End comes relationship-building piece filled with b&w photos of employees at work, their families, & the area where they live (in Wisc.). Chatty letter from chrm Gary Comer runs thruout. 7 1/4" square, 12-pg piece has a front-to-back cover photo of a rural scene with the beginning of Comer's letter overlaid in white: "It was really good to hear from you,

and have the opportunity to send our catalog and tell you how things are out our way. Of course, this hasn't always been 'out our way'...." Comer continues with:

- 1) **Some history** (LE began in Chi making racing sailboat equipment; the apostrophe in Lands' End is in the wrong place because it was a typo in the company's first printed piece & money wasn't available to reprint & correct the error);
- 2) **His respect** for the people who live in this community & work at Lands' End & his love for the Wisconsin countryside;
- 3) **Company's 8 principles of doing business** (e.g., "we do everything we can to make our products better," "we accept any return, for any reason, at any time").

PUTTING FRONTLINE WORKERS OUT FRONT

Thruout, they are personally identified in photos of them working, playing, at home, on the farm, in the community. Inside front & back covers hold many contact-sheet size photos of employees. Photo on last page shows employee waiting to receive a customer's call with the words, "No answering machines here -- just friendly people like Sheila Wardell."

FREE WEB SITE EVALUATION STUDY OFFERS BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Internet Web sites of 18 business-to-business marketers are critically reviewed in a special report, "World Wide Web Site Inspection." This 1st report covers sites from companies in the chemicals & plastics industries.

Six objective criteria are used: 1) ease of navigation; 2) availability of opinion mechanisms; 3) access to organizational charts, phone directories or e-mail; 4) presence of links to other, related sites; 5) use of on-line transactions or other examples of interactivity; 6) special features that enhance the value of the site. Prepared by Boxenbaum Grates & TeKnowledge, copies are free on company letterhead (BG, 675 Third Ave, NYC 10017).

Survey found the most compelling & effective Web sites aren't necessarily the most sophisticated. "Universal" best practices include:

1. **Keep It Graphically Simple.** Elaborate graphics slow down users, especially if they have limited bandwidth from a telephone modem connection.
2. **Don't Waste A Prospect's Time.** Keep layout small enough to easily fit on a standard Super VGA page (800 x 600 pixels); a horizontal rectangle in standard VGA resolution (640 x 480 pixels) is better so users can quickly see your entire home page without scrolling. The default "white space" of most browsers provides a clean look without any extra bandwidth.