

statute & conspiracy regarding payment to physicians for referrals.

- Under its new name, is Tenet able to make this ironic comment & look like good guys distancing themselves from the villains?
- What's the risk someone will recall history & throw this back into Tenet's face?

The incident ranks with Lee Iacocca berating us all to "Buy American" at a time when Chrysler's major shareholder was Mitsubishi.

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

✓ **1998 Calendar of Health Observances and Recognition Days** features dates & descriptions of 250+ health-related observances of national significance from Adult Immunization Awareness Week to World AIDS Day. Listings include contact info for each observance's sponsoring org'n. (\$20 from 800/AHA-2626)

✓ **There are ample openings for pr professionals at all levels**, based on stats from PRSA's *Public Relations Career Opportunities* gathered since the beginning of '97. Of the jobs listed (positions paying above \$35,000), 40% were corporate (unchanged from last year), 29% pr firms (a slight decrease), 22% NPOs (a slight increase). Openings by title: 5% vp's; 21% directors; 21% managers; 6% acct svpr's; 4% sr acct execs; 7% acct execs. Hiring of mgrs & dirs is up from '96; acct execs slightly decreased; sr acct execs slightly increased. Executive search firms handled 23% of the hiring (mainly for corp'ns & firms) compared with 16% in '96.

✓ **New studies on how behaviors are learned & then retained** suggest there is a time lag of perhaps 6 hrs. while temporary retention of the behavior in the cerebrum transforms into permanent retention in the cerebellum. Besides direct application to *behavior change*, especially in the workplace or in use of new products/services, there are implications for such activities as *seminars & retreats*. Presenting many new ideas in the same time period may explain why so little is retained. Perhaps an unconscious sense of this phenomenon is why many trainers like to start in the afternoon or evening, then give attenders overnight to internalize the material.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

SELECTED. IPRA pres-elect for '98 & pres for '99, Roy Shozo Sanada (pres, Japan Counselors). His selection "helps ensure that our Ass'n will be very well positioned to move forward with an exciting, thought-provoking agenda for the next several years," notes '97 pres Roger Hayes.

APPOINTED. Issue Mgmt Council's new board mbrs: Judy Larkin of Register & Larkin (London); Janet Cesar de Pozarnik, sr pa planning consultant with Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A.; Keith Jackson, mng dir of Jackson Wells Communications (Sydney, Australia). Appointments are integral to IMC's globalization plans, according to pres Teresa Yancey Crane.

CHECK YOUR INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM AGAINST THIS ONE

"We're very controversial. We get tons of ink," Sylvia Brucchi, dpa, USDA Forest Service/Northwest (covering Oregon & Washington), told prr. So the need to keep employees *in-the-know* is accentuated. Ways they reach them:

- A. **ELECTRONIC WEEKLY NEWSLETTER**, strategically designed, whose goal is to get news -- issues, policy decisions & major happenings -- to employees quickly. "We want to make sure employees know our side of issues. We had an internal print newsletter but by the time people got it, the information was so old or so general it wasn't serving the purpose."
- **Self-selecting readership.** For the first 3 months, *R6 Update* was sent via computer to all 6000 employees. Now it goes just to those who say they want it -- about 3000. "We figure if people say they want it they will read it, rather than just automatically sending it to their inbox."
 - **Info mapped.** Instead of giving too much info in each issue, "we give just enough & include an e-mail address or phone number where they can get more."
 - **Interactive.** Readers can hit a reply button to send a message about what they're reading.
- B. **TWO OTHER ELECTRONIC PUB'NS:** 1) *The Bottom Line* carries administrative & personnel issues that employees are interested in, like decisions about buyouts (voluntary separations) or civil rights -- issues they should know about & watch for. Goes to the same list at *R6 Update* -- making communications the choice & responsibility of employees.
- 2) *Transition Times* which explains downsizing efforts or plans.
- C. **RED ALERTS**, like a personal letter from the regional forester (CEO), are sent electronically to *all* employees. For example, on Sunday 8/24, a letter was sent because "we had an employee missing. She was last seen on Friday. Her truck was found by campers in a remote area on Sunday with the radio on & her keys & jacket still in it. We've had a ranger's station burned down; we've had threats to employees. People are pretty nervous. So it's important that we get information out to them. When they got to work Monday they had this letter from our CEO explaining the circumstances, what they should do about their own safety, precautions they should take."



- D. **800#** for employees to call with questions, problems, complaints, etc. 2 or 3 people monitor it, follow thru on all requests by seeking out the manager responsible & responding. All calls are confidential.
- E. **FOCUS GROUPS** -- a vertical cross-section -- to find out what info is reaching them, evaluate com'ns methods. David Widmark, who with one ass't oversees all these com'n vehicles, travels to the 20 subunits in Washington & Oregon to learn first hand how they're working.
- F. **MBWA, ACROSS 2 STATES.** Widmark prepares & accompanies the CEO on a yearly circuit of all the subunits in the 2-state area.

This internal communications program began about 3 yrs ago & has been continually growing. Widmark began with an internal survey to see how employees communicated with each other within groups, if info was being passed down from the exec suite or across from other units. It helped make managers aware they weren't communicating as well as they thought.

SITUATION ANALYSIS: IT'S EMPLOYEES THAT DON'T GET THE INFO

"It's not the upper level mgrs & supervisors who think this program is so helpful -- because it's easy to get messages to them. But it doesn't get passed to employees. Sometimes it's nothing more than somebody not **thinking** that employees would like to know this (that's the positive slant). Others think 'my employees don't need this info' so they hoard it. Our direct electronic newsletter cuts thru that.

"This is the computer age. Alvin Toffler said 'Hierarchical mgmt cannot keep information away from employees.' We're trying to facilitate that -- making sure employees have access to the information they want. And we're very pleased with the positive reaction we're receiving." -- Sylvia Brucchi

THOUGHTS FROM AL GOLIN AFTER 40 YRS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

- 40 yrs ago, finds the founder of Golin/Harris Communications, the pr professional's dream was to figure out how to get people to do what you wanted them to do. Today's more realistic goal is to position your product/service so it's in sync with what people are going to do anyway.
- Knowing what a consumer *thinks* is not as important as knowing which of those perceptions will count most in his decision to act.
- History shows that while Americans eagerly gossip about a leader's moral character, they *act* on that concern *only* when they perceive it might affect them personally.
- It is in cases of a tie, or when products or policies fail, that the great value of reputation comes into play. When that happens, consumers give good guys a break, but turn on the bad ones like a pack of wolves.

- McDonald's Trust Bank philosophy calls for good community involvement which results in "deposits" of trust from customers. Those deposits are made up front in case "withdrawals" are needed down the line -- when tough times or sensitive issues hit. PR isn't something you do when you need an "emergency loan" -- it is saving for the future.
- Today's pr professional is humble enough to realize that the power to persuade is very limited. Success in the 90s & beyond comes from reading the public mind, not manipulating it.

EXPERT SAYS WEBSITES CRUCIAL FOR SOME, BIG WASTE FOR OTHERS

"Websites are crucial for the future success of many businesses -- but for some its a complete waste of time & money," believes website developer Timothy Husni of H2 Design. To help decide if a website is for you, Husni suggests asking these 4 questions:

1. Are your customers & prospects online?
2. Are your products & services suited to the Internet? Computer software can be tested online, but a truck?
3. Can you make your business more efficient using e-mail? For example, it can bring together a global sales force; save time & money sending large files to vendors.
4. What do you want to put on your website? There is a transaction when someone enters your web site. The user is spending their time for your info. Is what you have worth that time?

(More from him at 1224 E. Carson st, Pittsburgh, PA 15203; 718/275-2190)

CASE: CHUTZPAH, OR GOOD TACTIC?

Amid the accusations against for-profit healthcare provider Columbia/HCA, which have raised doubts about the for-profit concept, what should other for-profits do?

- Go under the radar until the storm passes, to avoid getting linked
- Try to clearly differentiate their operations & policies from those which have brought indictments of Columbia
- Ignore the Columbia situation & go about working their pr plan as if it hadn't happened

Tenet Healthcare, another major for-profit, didn't hesitate to jump right in and comment on its rival's problems. Its CEO told the media "the industry has been tarnished by Columbia/HCA's woes."

CAN THE POT CALL THE KETTLE BLACK ... AND GET AWAY WITH IT?

This bold comment blithely ignores one fact: the first for-profit to embarrass the

industry was none other than Tenet. Its predecessor, Nat'l Medical Enterprises -- the name was changed after a merger -- paid the federal gov't \$370 million to settle charges against it on some of the same counts Columbia/HCA now is accused of, violating the Medicare anti-kickback