

¶ **Take a break & log onto www.bainpr.com for a pr competition called Quandary** (pr 6/19/95). Recently revamped contest changes monthly, features humorous, make-believe pr disasters requiring creative solutions. Replies are e-mailed to Quandary, winning response is featured on the website following the next month's Quandary. Winners receive "I'm a PR Winner" t-shirt. (More: Julie Goble, 703-549-9592, or julie@bainpr.com)

¶ **Ass'n of Public Relations Firms changes name to Council of Public Relations Firms.** Formed this summer, Council is a trade ass'n representing the top 10 US pr firms (in size) plus 57 other firms. Chair David Drobis of Ketchum says the Council will be "the leading advocate for the public relations industry." CPRF has begun a campaign to build acceptance of pr by top corp execs, is sponsoring "Strategic Com'ns Scenarios" at 8 annual industry conferences in '99, as well as other research and promo activities. Question: Since Drobis also said "In addition to being the standard bearers for the industry, we also intend to set the standards for our business" -- what precisely does that mean? Quality standards? Best practices? Ethics? Is CPRF a complement to, or competitor with, existing pr societies? (Latest release from pr or more from Jack Bergen or Sarah Hunt, 11 Penn Plaza, 5th Fl, NYC 10011, 1-877-PRFIRMS)

¶ **Holiday card that by design forces recipients to know the sender** comes from Sarah Haun Com'ns (Brooklyn). Attractive, small (4 x 5 3/8) card folds out 5 times, the all-type design getting smaller with each fold. Final fold carries only a small white snowflake reversed on a light blue page -- with this message in 8-pt at the bottom of the page: "Heavenly peace to you this holiday season. Sarah Haun" This is graphic psychology at work, as opposed to pretty pictures.

¶ **Best help in existence to aid in targeting & supertargeting** is the annual Statistical Abstract of the US. Reading thru its many data tables -- including 100 new ones in the '98 ed., just out -- sets the mind to analyzing variables on which stakeholders can be segmented. To say nothing of supplying rich detail about those audiences. Sample: 5.5% of children -- 1 in 20 -- now live with grandparents, including both those living there because their parents do & those living there with parents elsewhere. The NRA is right on with its Grandparents Program to educate kids, as are schools who sponsor Grandparents Day. (\$33 soft, \$39 hard cover from 1-800-553-NTIS)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

OPENING. National Public Relations, Canada's largest pr firm, opens its first US office in NYC. Edmund R. Belak, Jr., heads the operation.

This is a different manifestation of globalism, since usually it's large US firms going into Canada. Today, where you're from isn't as important as what you can do.

AWARDS. Mark Ishkanian, mgr corp

com'ns, Central Maine Power Co., receives Maine PR Council's Edward L. Bernays award.

RETIRES. James H. Foster, chrmn of Brouillard Comms, moves at year-end to form Reputation Management Strategies, a corp com'ns consultancy, in Durango, Colorado. Helped found Brouillard in '68, often cited pr strategist.

BURGER: TRUST COMES FROM SPEAKING HONESTLY & QUIETLY

PR programs sometimes aren't worth the effort or expense because they can't -- and don't -- persuade, particularly when trying to influence personal values, top-rung counselor Chet Burger told Institute for PR's annual meeting. **The big problem -- gaining trust -- isn't getting attention, he feels.**

"The daily news report is shaping public disgust & cynicism much faster than pr pros can build trust in the honor and integrity of our private & public institutions. You cannot build trust while reality is destroying it."

WHY IT'S DIFFICULT TO BUILD TRUST

- **Opinions on issues are formed from the culture that surrounded people as they grew up.** Consensus doesn't exist on many major issues like abortion or foreign policy. Only reality events [what pr's Behavioral Model calls triggering events] -- like war & personal job experiences -- change basic opinions
- **People apply past experiences & beliefs to today's issues.** For example, many political & social ideas crystallize during college years. Many of today's media leaders & intellectuals were in college during Vietnam & Watergate. Is this the reason there's so much cynicism?
- **Reality limits what pr can accomplish.** Today's events are not only discrediting Pres. Clinton, Ken Starr & Henry Hyde -- *but also every American institution*
- **Biz messages are out-dated & lack credibility.** For example, annual chairman's letter promising a happy tomorrow when today's earnings are falling

4 WAYS TO GENERATE TRUST -- BASIC, BUT OFTEN OVERLOOKED:

1. **Don't get angry -- be quiet and civil.** Anger may result in 30-second TV spots, but pr advocacy is effective & persuasive when messages are civil
2. **Respond instantly -- important in the era of the Internet**
3. **Whole truth is better than half truth.** Honest admission of error is more acceptable than legalistic denial
4. **Trust basic decency & moderation of fellow citizens,** even tho public opinion swings back & forth. (More from Burger, 212-787-9130, e-mail: ChetBurger@aol.com)



HYUNDAI'S "BLIND DATE" WITH COMMUNITY IMPROVES (PART 2)

Three contentious years after announcing plans to build a semi-conductor plant in Eugene (Ore), Hyundai's facility is nearing full production (pr 12/7). Community outcry over the plant's construction has died down, reports John Lively, dir of gov't afrs & pr. What caused the change?

Evidence Hyundai's relationship with Eugene has improved substantially: "The business editor (of the local paper) recently called & said we've become boring," says Lively.

CHANGES IN STRATEGY THAT ARE CAUSING IMPROVEMENT:

1. **Stay out of the news** but always be available to answer questions & provide info to the media when necessary. Result: there isn't much "new" news to report
2. Give community opinion leaders company's position on issues
3. **Establish strategic planned giving program** to support community as a local corporate citizen
4. **Explain technical issues** like chemicals & air pollution thru a quarterly newsletter for key opinion leaders
5. **Keep employees informed of plant issues** thru monthly employee newsletter
6. **Quarterly newsletter for plant neighbors** educates them about plant activities. Example: explaining why plant alarms go off periodically
7. **Make media accountable** for inaccurate reporting by immediately identifying problems to them

Company recently distributed a survey to area residents to gage current opinions about Hyundai & identify potential issues. Hyundai plans to expand its plant, depending upon various marketplace issues. (More from Lively, 541-338-5015)

COMMITMENT, NOT LOYALTY, IMPORTANT TO EMPLOYEES

Commitment has replaced loyalty when Americans describe their relationships with employers, finds a study by the Wirthlin research firm. Useful data for practitioners:

- Employees who are most committed are most likely to feel their commitment is reciprocated
- More than half (56%) of working Americans surveyed feel very committed to employers
- Another third (28%) say they are moderately or somewhat (14%) committed

- But -- only 38% feel their org'n is committed to them
- This imbalance can be addressed thru a strong internal com'n program

PRIMARY DRIVERS OF EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT:

- Communication
- Relationship with boss
- Training & career development
- Reward & recognition

Challenge: To determine which driver(s) most affects employee commitment in your org'n. And how to influence employee perception they can benefit from being part of a committed workforce.

Conclusion: Effective internal com'n is critical to uniting & motivating increasingly independent employees. (Full report from Bryce Bassett, 801-226-1524, or www.wirthlin.com/publics/library.htm)

PRSA'S NATIONAL ISSUES CREDIBILITY INDEX TO GO BEYOND POLLS

Polls assess issues in broad, generic terms. Index will explore credibility of opinion leaders in driving issue decisions, says principal investigator Dr. Ronald Hinckley. Will be very useful for practitioners.

PRSA Fdn is underwriting a pilot developing baseline data to test Index's premise -- thanks to a major Rockefeller Fdn grant. "It is time to take credibility out of the closet & give it serious, scientific study, assessment & measurement," says PRSA pres Mary Lynn Cusick.

Center for research is Research/Strategy/Management, Inc. (Rockville Md). Participating are experts from Columbia U, U Minn. & Harvard plus pr think tank operator John Budd, author of prr's plain talk supplement.

Preliminary research is underway to establish a valid leadership index for 3 issues: race & ethnicity, use of force in foreign policy & Social Security. Each study will try to determine whether a leader's credibility affects public opinion. Results of first study to be released by spring '99. (More from Denise Gray-Felder, Rockefeller Fdn, 212/852-8441)

In essence, Cusick says, **this takes credibility to the next level.** If the concept proves out, it will underscore the fact that trust or reputation is a fragile asset, earned by leaders -- corporate, political, social, civil and academic -- thru truthful consistency.

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

- ¶ **Applying fact that only 3rd parties are trusted**, Champion is 1st paper & wood products mfr to sign on to Sustainable Forestry Initiative -- in which independent auditors check company's forestry practices. Audit defines how "growing, nurturing & harvesting of trees" is integrated with conservation of soil, air, water quality and wildlife & fish habitats." (More from www.championpaper.com)