

amount; in the exec branch 40%. Substantially fewer in each group say it affects their own policy decisions.

- All 3 groups give media poor ratings for its coverage of federal dep'ts & agencies. Roughly 70% in each group rate press coverage of gov't & gov't workers negatively.
- Congress more in touch. Despite this, 76% of presidential appointees & 84% of sr execs list the media as their main source of info about public opinion. Members of Congress' principal sources of info are: personal contacts (59%); phone or mail from citizens (36%); media (31%); public opinion polls (24%); public meetings (21%); interest groups (4%).

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **It's very easy to criticize news media today** but Terry Anderson, the AP correspondent held hostage in Lebanon for 7 yrs, ends his speeches with a question that reminds us what responsible media can do. He asks how many in the audience prayed for him while he was being held -- and says it has never failed that some have. Without media to trumpet his plight, how would we even know?

¶ **New academy to offer education for corporate contributions managers & planners.** Participants of *Corporate Contributions Management Academy* will receive 25 hrs of instruction that cover designing, administering & evaluating a contributions program. Classes will be limited to 35, begin in October & be repeated thruout the year. "Our goal is to establish a universal level of management expertise in the corporate contributions field," says Academy pres Curt Weeden who previously was corp staff vp at Johnson & Johnson, responsible for its \$122 million contributions program. He now heads Business & Nonprofit Strategies which conducts corp social investment appraisals & is the Academy's sponsor. Also on the faculty is Gerald Horton, former chrm of Ogilvy & Mather PR Group, currently a mgmt prof at U of Ga & Flagler College (Fla). (More from 138 Palm Coast Pkwy, Palm Coast, Fla 31237; 904/446-8008; www.BNSInc.com)

¶ **Words can be persuasive.** Geico Auto Insurance says its policies are "Like an air bag for your wallet." But note that the analogy is to an automotive device. This relevance is so often the difference between a cute idea & a persuasive one.

¶ **Another quote to use in counseling managers.** Ex-Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, awash in kudos for patiently brokering an Irish peace agreement, credits his ability to bring it about to a skill badly needed by most executives. He says, "You have to learn to lead with your ears."

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. IABC Research Foundation's inaugural Foundation Lifetime Friend Award to Bob Berzok (Union Carbide, Danbury, Conn), Fred

Halperin (The Woodlands, Tex) & Lee Hornick (Business Com'ns Worldwide, NYC) for their leadership in advancing the Foundation's goals.

WHAT NEXT, NOW THAT TACTICAL PR HAS BECOME A COMMODITY ?

There's a glut of good vendors for this commodity, so the selection is based on who can do it less expensively. This is so in spite of important new directions in tactics, e.g. no longer just throwing mass communications "out there" but using surgical techniques (see last week's pr).

- **The trouble is, anyone with basic pr savvy can do this.** That creates an oversupply of in-house or pr firm suppliers, driving the cost down.
- **Adding to the problem is new evaluation methodologies,** most of which cast doubt on the impact of the old tactics. So their value is questioned -- driving both cost & demand down as org'ns & execs become wiser about pr.

RELATED CASE

Despite claims of choosing agencies for their "creativity," advertising is also a commodity -- which is why the old 15% commission system died, to be replaced by "deals," i.e. lower cost. At least advertising has the advantage of controlling the message (tho anyone can do media buys, tie-ins etc.)

But pr cannot even control the message in tactics such as publicity, but must work thru gatekeeper journalists. In publications, Websites or video, the part that gets the most notice is that allied to advertising: design.

THE FALLOUT, SO FAR

- Outsourcing tactics to firms & freelancers has meant staff downsizing
- **Most of the effort of large firms & dep'ts remains tactical:** media relations (read publicity), events, promotions, publications, with perhaps community or employee relations by dep'ts, less by firms
- **Firms or dep'ts stuck in tactics realize their future may be limited,** since any rigorous evaluation finds less & less impact from these activities -- particularly since old-style tactics are predominant in these outfits. So they are rushing to become more strategic. With good reason: strategy reports in at the CEO/sr mgmt level & is worth any price; tactics report in at the sales, marketing, mid-mgr level.

THE PREDICABLE FUTURE

1. **Strategists will be in tight demand,** especially those with internal relations, organizational transformation & issue anticipation skills



2. **Tactics will become far more sophisticated**, with a strong research & theoretical base. We know how to do this but many have resisted change
3. **Symbolic communication**, often based on deep, mythic beliefs, will become the artform of pr -- the most valued creative element -- as words & rhetoric continue to decline in credibility
4. **Evaluation will become universal & rigorous**. Why should anyone invest in something that cannot demonstrate its worth & effect?
5. **Research will come out of the closet** & be routine for every project, program & plan. Shooting in the dark, guessing, flying by the seat of our pants -- these are not only unprofessional but downright unethical practices when fast, low- or no-cost research methods are available. (See pr's book, *Practical, Actionable Research for Public Relations Purposes*)
6. **Compartmentalization of pr will erode or end** as teaming, integrated communications & Total Relationship Management techniques pull programs into unified activities that reach all stakeholders with One Clear Voice. Goodbye community relations, employee relations, investor relations et al
7. **Eventually a uniform engineering process for pr practice** will evolve, based on the Body of Knowledge & incorporating best practice options as they emerge. These standard protocols will free energy & brainpower from process considerations to apply to strategy & creativity
8. **And tactical implementation may still be a commodity** -- since once the direction is charted (strategy) implementation can be farmed out.

PLEASE, SOMEONE CHART THE COURSE

Neither the professional societies, educational

institutions nor publications (in your editor's defense, we keep trying) have tackled the issue of necessary future direction for the profession --

- So it can rebuff inroads from mgmt consulting giants, lawyers & others
- And serve society & its institutions during coming periods of wrenching change & social unrest by applying pr's knowledge of human nature

Conferences of PRSA, IABC, CPRS, Page, NSPRA, CASE, FPRA et al offer a few sessions that investigate the topic. But someone needs to provide a macro view. Perhaps North American PR Council, as a coalition body, can do so. Or PRSA's task force on the future of pr, which has so far been busy on ideas to transform that organization to meet the future.

HOW WRONG IS THIS VIEW? SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Public relations is changing rapidly. Our predictions could be way off base. Contribute to a dialogue so pr's readers can begin to form their strategies of how to prepare for 21st Century practice.

FIRST FUNDRAISING TEXTBOOK, JUST OUT, SAYS IT'S A PR FUNCTION

Effective Fund-Raising Management (Erlbaum), by pr practitioner & educator Kathleen Kelly, is designed to support academic courses on the subject -- now taught in some 60 colleges & universities.

Because it includes much original research as well as extensive references & a section on recommended reading, it's also valuable for practitioners -- whether in their professional work or as volunteers. It blends practical know-how with theory. Text consists of 3 parts: 1) practice; 2) principles; 3) process, programs & publics.

PART OF PR

"Kelly clearly establishes fundraising as a public relations function, because nonprofit organizations use fundraising procedures & techniques to build relationships with a strategic set of stakeholder publics: their donors. She also establishes a scholarly & theoretical framework for the professional practice of fundraising," writes Jim Grunig.

KELLY LOOKS AT DONOR MOTIVATIONS

"American corporations make gifts because their senior managers are expected to do so by business peers (i.e., a standard of philanthropic behavior exists in the *business* sector, as well as among individuals)." According to Joseph Galaskiewicz, a leading scholar in corp philanthropy, corporate contributions are used as social currency. "Often referred to as 'old boy network philanthropy,' Galaskiewicz says this approach 'is better understood as status competition among very powerful actors within an economic elite.'" Concludes the author:

- "Fundraising, therefore, is not about convincing, persuading, or manipulating donors to *give* money because their inclination to do so is based on a tradition beyond the influence of practitioners.
- "Contrary to conventional wisdom, fundraisers affect not whether donors give, but to *which* charitable organizations they give, the *purposes* of their gifts, & the *amounts* of the gifts -- all of which are determined by the relationships identified, built, & maintained with them." (\$135; Lawrence Erlbaum Assocs, 800-926-6579)

WASHINGTON LEADERS OUT OF STEP WITH THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

Don't base your issues approaches on signals from the political sector. Survey by Pew Research Ctr, corroborates the one last fall by Program on International Policy Attitudes ("The Foreign Policy Gap," pr 12/15/97). Pew interviewed 81 members of Congress, 98 presidential appointees & 151 members of the Senior Exec Service. Some findings:

- All 3 groups significantly underestimate the public's desire for an activist gov't, believing instead the public wants the federal gov't to cut back. In fact, the public favors an activist approach by 57% to 41%.
- I'm in touch, others aren't. 54% of mbrs of Congress say public distrust affects the policy decisions of their colleagues a great deal or fair