

volume includes an analytical report & detailed case studies of the various HR subsystems in action. (\$95 each from Work in America Institute, 700 White Plains Rd, Scarsdale, NY 10583; 1-800-787-0707)

¶ **Are Awards Programs Stifling Best Practices** & reinforcing the status quo (see pr 6/1 lead)? Peggy Pavlich, ass't prof, Northern Ariz U -- a practitioner turned educator who's accredited by both PRSA & IABC -- has had her students enter awards competitions, sometimes winning against work by prof's. But the experience raises a concern: "While I believe the award categories reflect what many public relations/communications professionals DO, the categories DO NOT reflect the vision we tend to tout -- including a research-based counseling role. If you look at the awards programs nationally & locally of PRSA & IABC, I don't think you'll find they reflect pr's prediction" that research now drives pr (1/5/98). "Shouldn't they? After all, isn't the goal of such a program to reward innovation & progress?" Could they be ego gratifiers for members & cash cows for professional societies? Does the bar ass'n (best divorce pleading) or medical society (best appendectomy) have them?

¶ **Why Is "Off Of" Probably the Most Common Grammatical Error?** Where did this arise? Do teachers today consider it acceptable? Which generation started it? It seems a generational affect. Journalists are as wont to use it as anyone; you see it in their writing regularly. Is pr just old fashioned, we who use fonetic spelling, information mapping, partial sentences & abbrev's? Or are we correct in feeling that in an era of too many words, adding an unnecessary one is a waste?

¶ **pr & Communication World are co-hosting a Socratic dialogue** at the IABC Conference in New Orleans Tues. June 16. CW ed Gloria Gordon will chair & Pat Jackson will be questioner/facilitator of the dialogue. A panel of pr, com'n & media pros who've "been there" will debate the question: "Are today's news media of any value to pr campaigns? Are practitioners better advised to work around these gatekeepers & go direct to target stakeholders?"

¶ **School PR Salaries Reached a Mean of \$57,224 this School Year**, reports the annual survey by Educational Research Service. In the largest districts (over 25,000 students) it is \$63,828; and \$44,871 in the smallest (under 2,500 students). Interestingly, salaries are not affected by per-pupil expenditure -- demonstrating the value of the position. Highest paying region by far is the Far West. But pr pros make 20+% less than hr & finance execs.

## WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**APPOINTED.** Brig. Gen. Ron Sconyers, retiring chief of Air Force PA, becomes PRSA vice chair & project director of its behavior change initiative with Partnership for a Drug-Free America. Major event of PRSA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it

involves chapters in nationwide effort to reduce drug use among children. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is providing major funding for what will be the Society's largest ever public service undertaking.

## STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY VIA EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT NOW THE RULE

Employees are as important, or more important, to community outreach than the contribution of dollars, finds a study by The Consulting Network. 89 top companies (list from pr) representing 7.3 million employees, participated in a mail survey.

"Organizations are listening to employees when it comes to their corporate citizenship strategies. For example, 40% said they are making or considering making changes in workplace-giving campaigns because, among other reasons, employees want them," says John Coy, pres. Other findings:

1. **All respondents sponsor formal employee involvement activities** that include at least one of the following programs:
  - volunteer
  - matching gift
  - workplace giving
2. **90+% have formal activities in at least 2 of these areas; 58% have all 3**
3. **72% conduct a formal, organized employee volunteer program.** Of these, 95% support group volunteer projects among employees. Most common:
  - cash grants
  - recognition programs
  - release time
  - in-kind donations & mgmt assistance for org'ns where employees volunteer
4. **80% offer a matching gift program.** Gifts to education and arts & culture programs are the ones most often matched
5. **96% conduct workplace giving campaigns** -- of these, the majority (53%) are organized at the local unit level
6. **Employee surveys play an important role** in defining workplace campaigns. 32% surveyed employees as part of their assessment & evaluation process. Of these:
  - a) 46% plan to make changes in response to employee feedback,
  - b) 94% experienced an increase in total giving,
  - c) 68% saw an increase in employee participation
7. **30% include org'ns in addition to United Way in annual campaigns,** tho United Way is the primary recipient
8. **Strategic giving:** Primary factors in selecting these org'ns are
  - a) employee & b) corporate interests



9. **Majority allow employees to direct their contributions** to any health & human service agency
10. **Giving & employee participation increase** with a broader range of options
11. **Most have an employee committee** to help plan & manage the campaign

#### WHY IS OUTREACH IMPORTANT?

Fierce competition for qualified workers, & the need to be viewed as the preferred place to work. Org'ns "are realizing that a successful, responsive employee involvement program offers an edge in recruiting & retaining good workers," explains Coy. (More from The Consulting Network, 8608 McHenry st, Vienna, Va. 22180; 703/641-0533; fax 703/641-0534)

#### WHY THIS SURVEY FINDING IS IMPORTANT

Strategic community outreach & contributions programs arose in the early 80s when the former Seiberling Rubber, Mountain Bell (now USWest), B.Dalton Booksellers & others experimented with linking philanthropy to organizational goals -- rather than just giving away money or volunteer time.

The first article on the topic appeared in pr 12/21/87, citing the Quaker adage "You must do well in order to do good." pr included it among the 12 trends steering pr practice in '93 (3/15/93 issue).

Now, this survey is the culmination of the trend: it has proven itself & leading organizations are all doing it. (Copies of back issues from pr)

#### THE MASSES DON'T READ EDITORIALS, BUT POLICY WONKS & OTHERS DO

Plus "community leaders, & other governmental types devour them," writes John Salzman in *Making The News: A Guide for Nonprofits & Activists* (Westview Press, 1-800-331-3761). Chapter on "Lobby Editorial Writers" offers this advice -- assuming readers will be unsophisticated -- but it may bear reviewing by pros:

##### Initiate Contact:

- Get familiar with the paper's position on your issue [totally; in depth]
- Call the newspaper's main number, ask for the editorial page [they all encourage calls from readers today & promote the fact in their pages]
- Ask for the editorial writer who specializes in your issues
- Once you've hooked the right person, ask if he or she would like to
  - 1) receive info by mail or e-mail, 2) talk more on the phone, or
  - 3) arrange an editorial board or 1-on-1 meeting [the latter is usually preferable]

##### Info For Editorial Page Staff:

- 1-pg summary of your position, include details
- Newspaper articles [yes, they do pay attention to other papers]
- 1 feature article or a summary of a report
- Previous editorials that relate to your issue

- No more than 10 pgs of credible, concise info; follow up with a phone call the next week to find out if more material is needed

##### Tips For Meeting With Them:

- Conduct a practice session before the meeting, responding to difficult questions; it helps to know something about previous editorial positions
- Take no more than 4 people. Well-known experts with credentials are great as long as they can explain their views simply
- Don't expect more than a half-hour
- Bring the same materials you would have sent had there been no meeting
- Leave videos at your office [they won't watch them]
- Offer to submit an op-ed if the editors do not adopt your position
- Write a follow-up note offering further info

"Editorial writers are usually around longer than politicians; consequently, you should avoid destroying long-term relationships over errors or differences of opinion."

#### THE ARTS AS PROPAGANDA: DR SAM & THE MANAGED CARE BLUES BAND

Literature -- whether fiction, essays, drama, poetry or song lyrics -- has always been "the common man's philosophy." Natural, then, that authors & others should put it to the service of their beliefs or causes -- including practitioners.

A current example is this group's album, aptly named (for their purposes) "Minimal Services." Among the tunes is "No Overnight Blues (or You Better Come Home With Me Baby 'Cuz We Ain't Allowed to Stay Overnight)." The theme is the trials of doctors & patients dealing with HMOs.

Dr. Sam Bierstock, the organizer, told Congressional Quarterly "It's a fun non-inflammatory way to educate the public about how managed care really works."

##### BREAKS THRU THE CLUTTER AND SIMPLIFIES COMPLICATED TOPICS

One congressman sent the album to his colleagues to demonstrate the need for HMO legislation. As he noted in his cover letter: "A little levity always helps when you are discussing healthcare."

Another congressman's healthcare aide notes: "The tape makes the subject matter more interesting & puts a real human face on the issue. Music really helps when you're dealing with a subject like managed care that can be kind of dry."

#### ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **The PAR Model** (employee Participation; commitment to team & individual Achievement; financial & recognition Rewards) supports continuous improvement in organizations. Work in America Institute developed this model by studying 20 organizations over a 20-yr period. Research & implications of the PAR project are described in 3-part report titled PAR: *Creating the Infrastructure for Managing Continuous Improvement*. Each