

- Apple has shifted to a blue logo -- a sea-green turquoise (Bondi blue) that complements the new color highlights on the iMac itself
- Motorola has a blue E-Luma-Glow display & "Blue Streak" pagers for teens

(More from Ann\_O'Reilly@yr.com; fax 813/948-0134)

## IS PR ABOUT ONE-WAY, GET-THE-MEDIA-ON-YOUR-SIDE PUBLICITY?

Or is it about 2-way relationship building with your targeted publics? The tug-of-war continues. Len Reed (Bethlehem, NH) brings his recent encounter to pr's attention:

"Just having finished reading *Ethics, Professionalism And...Hypocrisy* (t&t 8/17), & agreeing with the writer's point of view, I opened my *PR Tactics* (Sept '98)" & read the article "Porter Novelli Makes The Most Of A Media Opportunity." Article explains how PN's offices are adjacent to the new legal counsel for Monica Lewinsky.

"As reporters camp outside, PN staffers bring clients' products (lunches from McDonald's, Gillette razors, Coppertone to ward off sunburn, ice cream from the Internat'l Dairy Foods Ass'n, etc) for reporters to enjoy -- PN called it Operation SSP (Shameless Self-Promotion).

"I'd say if *PR Tactics* is the official publication of PRSA & if its editor felt this example is what pr is all about, we have a serious problem in the 'profession.'"

## WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**DIED.** John W. Dillin (FPRA founding pres) Thurs, Aug 27. He was scheduled to call FPRA's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference to order (pr 8/3) but was ill. "If there is a silver lining to this news," writes Bob Gernert, ex-FPRA pres & exec dir, "it is probably that God's public relations director will soon become a member of FPRA. If God did not have a public relations director ... He does now. God bless John Dillin."

**ELECTED.** FPRA officers for '98-'99: pres, Lynn Schneider (dpr, Shell Point Village, Ft. Myers); pres-elect, Rick Oppenheim (R.B. Oppenheim Assocs, Tallahassee); vp accredited/certification, Kristen Roy (vp, Royal Consulting, Altamonte Springs); vp annual conf, Kathleen

Giery (pr coord, Univ of Fla Organ Proc Org, Gainesville); vp chpt svcs, Patricia Austin (asst admn comty afrs, Martin Memorial Med Ctr, Stuart); vp com'ns, John McShaffrey (pio, David Fierro & Assocs, Tampa); vp finance, Tricia Ridgeway (dir, Children's Miracle Network, Jacksonville); vp Golden Image Awds, Michelle Moore (com'ns speclst, Polk Cty Schls, Bartow); vp mbrship svcs, Chris Carroll (sr ae, Publishers Media Service, Bradenton); vp prof'l dev'l, Carol Savage (student activities dir/pr, Vanguard High Schl, Ocala); vp pr, April Podner (sr mgr comty/gov't rels, Orange Cty Schl Dist, Orlando); Counselor's Network chair, Ginnie Duffey (vp pr, Hospice of SW Fla, Sarasota)

## EVEN SUPERIOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS NOT BEYOND REACH OF ENTREPRENEURIAL TRIAL LAWYERS -- BUT IT CAN DEFEAT THEM

Community relations receives a strong focus by Rhone-Poulenc (Institute, W.Va.). "Just about any time our plant is mentioned in the local papers it includes the paragraph explaining that we manufacture the same chemical that killed people in Bhopal, India," Hal Turley, employee com'ns specialist told pr. "We're under a lot closer scrutiny because of it."

### INCIDENT BRINGS SUIT

In 1996, a fire broke out at the plant. Produced lots of smoke that went close to an adjacent area. "It looked very bad but it was under control within an hour & a half and no one was injured." As a precaution, people were asked to "shelter in place" -- stay in their homes, shut off air conditioners/cooling systems so outside air isn't sucked in. Neighbors have been trained in this process.

- Despite R-P's responsible actions, within a few days a class action lawsuit was filed by some area people. There was a "highly publicized effort to recruit people into the lawsuit, which created quite a controversy."

The intense fire consumed the traces of hazardous chemical, according to Turley. "We had witnesses who did modeling & were able to determine that there was no harm to the community." R-P was found not guilty on August 10, 1998. But the irony of getting sued for doing the right thing lingers.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS IS ONGOING, WHICH EXPLAINS THE RESULT

1. **Neighbors & Employees Communications Committee.** About 3 yrs ago, employees who live near the plant approached mgmt. Hearing from neighbors & friends about the issues around the plant, they asked to be spokespeople. Mgmt agreed, provided resources, & employees formed the committee, which even developed its own brochures.

"They've made presentations to local city government. Gone door to door in neighborhoods saying 'we live down the street; we're concerned about what comes out of that plant; we work there; we want to assure you what's going on in there is state-of-the-art technology; if you have any questions here's my phone number; call me & I'll see that you get an answer.'"

"We've been astounded by the results. That's grassroots...developing relationships with anyone who wants to see what goes on in here."



2. **About 2 dozen employees make up the committee.** They've requested training but mgmt is reluctant to give it to them. "They're good. They're natural. We don't want to give the impression they're being co-opted. We have confidence in them & don't worry about what they're saying."
- "We do provide resources, pay for dinner meetings, help give them an identity with badges, sweaters."
  - *Employees do this on their own time.* Monthly meetings occur on plant time, tho some come on their day off for meetings.
3. **Community advisory groups** "give the public an opportunity to present safety concerns & us an opportunity to talk about things going on here."
4. **Educational outreach** -- i.e. how to respond to a chemical emergency, including when to "shelter in place" or take other action.
5. **Plant tours**, about 4/month. "We've opened the gates, which is something that wasn't done 5-10 yrs ago. We want people to see what we have here."
6. **Partner with W.Va. State College** (1/4 mile away) & with a rehab center & hospital which are next door. "We do things with & for them."
7. **Partnerships with 2 local schools.** "Chemistry Connections" -- science experiments during 1 hr sessions with kids in schools. "We're teaching responsible chemistry. We practice it here & we teach it to children."

Rhone-Poulenc subscribes to the Chemical Mfrs Assn "Responsible Care" program, which mandates activities like these. Some observers call it one of the best pr strategies of modern times. (More from Turley at 304/767-6000)

## DOES PROFESSIONALISM TRANSLATE TO ETHICAL PRACTICE ?

Will a code of professional standards promote moral reasoning & protect the reputation of public relations practitioners? Not likely, argues Kevin Stoker of Georgia Southern U. Instead, he finds:

***"Over-reliance on professionalism inhibits rather than enhances moral reasoning because it stifles critical thinking & dialogue."***

He would "place the responsibility for ethical decisionmaking in the hands of the practitioner, who then uses professional codes for guidance & direction rather than as a crutch & an excuse." Highlights:

- **Professionalism teaches conformity, not moral reasoning.** Professional standards shift responsibility for making ethical decisions from the individual to the code. The motivation behind many codes is egoism -- providing an ethical foundation for self interest & is predicated upon the philosophy of bringing about the greatest good for me & those like me. In this way, codes protect professions from outside criticism & supply a ready excuse for rationalizing aberrant individual behavior
- **Since a code maps out the "right thing to do,"** students & practitioners assume that professional standards in general serve as the right maps to follow, adopting a passive form of ethical relativism

- **Ethical decisionmaking depends on individual integrity** -- not codes with stronger teeth. Codes offer practitioners (& educators then offer students) excuses for not dealing with moral questions
- **Action oriented at reaching understanding stands at the heart of effective & ethical pr.** Its success depends upon claims to validity -- truth, truthfulness & rightness. Practitioners make these claims every time they communicate to their publics. Challenge for practitioners is to balance their partisanship with their obligations to the publics with whom they speak
- **"The key is to provide practitioners with the tools to make decisions** rather than a set of standards to make the decision for them. They then become actors in the process of moral reasoning rather than passive conformists moralizing about how a rule applies or does not apply to a given situation."

(More from Stoker, Dep't of Com'n Arts, Georgia Southern U, P.O. Box 8091, Statesboro, GA 30460-8091; 912/681-5821; kstoker@gsaix2.cc.gasou.edu)

## SURVEY FINDS BLUE IS THE COLOR OF THE MILLENNIUM

In a poll of colleagues in 41 countries, Y&R's Brand Futures Group finds many associate blue with the future primarily because it's the color of sky & water, "providing a sense of limitlessness & peace," explains the Group's weekly trendletter *Future Dialogue*.

1. **"Increasingly, blue is supplanting green** as the color tied most closely to nature & environmental activism.
2. "Whereas 'green companies' give back to the planet as much as they take away, 'blue companies' give even more to the planet than they take away. They're post-green -- companies that are tied not to the environmental movements of the 60s, 70s & 80s but to the less-talk, more-action environmental activism of the future."
3. **During times of transition, apprehension & excitement,** people select blues, blue-greens & purples which invoke sensations of calmness, relaxation & well-being, notes color psychologist Leatrice Eiseman (Pantone Color Inst). "When we talk about blue for the millennium, we're talking about a twilight blue with a little green in it...a spiritual color that people will respond to."

## MARKETING EXAMPLES OF BLUE :

- Blue M&M's won over pink or purple (interesting since there are no blue foods except blueberries)
- Kraft's berryblue Jell-O is now 2<sup>nd</sup> only to strawberry-red in sales
- Sky-blue Oreos outsold classic Oreos during last spring's limited run
- Ice blue has become an important color for brides
- Pepsi's packaging is more blue this year in celebration of its Blue Centennial (1998) & the coming millennium
- American Express recently introduced a Blue Card
- Ice blue is a hot make-up color