

- **Focused philanthropy**, on environmental & community causes. "Tho we don't have a formal policy, we support things that are in sync with our business"
- **Hosting community meetings** for Rotary, church groups & other local organizations. "We help them but it's also good for our business -- once we get them in the door, they're reminded of why they want to come back" (Gould, who operates a local insurance business, has the advantage of solid local relationships built over the past 20 years)

"I'm not in the restaurant business," he says. "I'm providing a place for people to eat that's connected to nature & has some personality & soul."

Actually expressing personality is the key, & so few org'ns achieve it. One can agree or disagree with Flatbread's worldview, but the company's values & guiding principles cannot be missed. The strategy works for them.

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **PR - HR trend continues, should be encouraged.** At Northwest Airlines Chris Clouser's title is SVP/HR, Com'ns & Administration. Kerry King began the trend at Texaco in the 70s, with the same title. Makes great sense. PR & the motivation, training & OD side of HR belong together. Neither can succeed without the other. Some put them formally together in one unit, with the personnel tasks of HR redesignated Employee Services or similar. Administration also fits with pr -- since initiatives proposed for pr purposes sometimes run into barriers that are purely administrative, but stovepiped units cannot get around them.

¶ **Op Ed modernization.** *Springfield Journal-Register* in Illinois' capitol uses this heading: Your Letters, E-mails & Faxes to the Editor. Nearby box states boldly how to address each to the paper.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

RETIRING. Walter Lindenmann, svp/dir research, Ketchum (NYC), early next year. Begins part-time schedule in the fall while firm searches for new director. Ketchum is renaming its "SMART" Grant -- a scholarship & internship awarded through IPR's Commission on PR Measurement & Evaluation -- the Walter Lindenmann Scholarship. Scholarship is designed to promote & foster the development of new research focusing on measuring pr effectiveness.

HONORS. Marilyn Laurie, pres Laurie Consulting (NYC) & former

evp Brand Strategy, AT&T, recipient of Barnard College's Women of Achievement Award. She also recently received *Inside PR* mag's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Deveney Communications (New Orleans) receives Jake Wittmer Research Award from IABC Research Foundation for "NO/AIDS Task Force Handbook." Award recognizes "outstanding research by an organizational communicator used to achieve success in a communication program & illustrates how well-designed plans can yield tangible results."

CLASHING WORLDVIEWS SHOW THE CROSSROADS PR MUST NAVIGATE: CREATING MORE OVERCOMMUNICATION vs. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Is it to be advertising, logos & promotion surrounding us wherever we turn, whatever we do, at all times? A society of tedious commercialism.

Or a world where relationships are recognized as the real bottom line & resources are put behind this objective? A community of shared values.

VIEWPOINT #1 Commercial messages are ubiquitous. In rest rooms, church bulletins, taxi receipts, school scoreboards & players' uniforms. In classrooms on Channel One, the mail, the media, event names, stadiums named after sponsors et al ad inf. Here come some newer entrants:

- **Sponsored telephony.** GratisTel provides free phone service if you listen to 10-second infomercials every few minutes during calls. "Pure 1-to-1 marketing," the company calls it. British Telecom has signed on, US & Canada & elsewhere are targeted. 300,000 Scandinavians have the service.
- **Beach sand billboards.** The skywriters, blimps & banner-towing planes are now joined by messages pressed in the sand. They get walked on & washed out by tides -- but the pristine beach is no more.
- **ATM screen ads.** Clips from a new movie or tv commercials now greet you during the 15-secs it takes to deliver your money & receipt.
- **All over computer screens.** Not just the Web, and advertising e-mail -- but even on your cursor.

This makes it ever harder to break thru the clutter -- and pr messaging & awareness attempts suffer most.

VIEWPOINT #2 In Japan companies have "relationship managers." Their task is to "wine & dine, flatter, chat up & keep open ties" with customers & prospects, as *The Wall Street Journal* phrased it in a recent article explaining how this approach to business almost sank the merger between Travelers Group & Nikko Securities -- first inroads by a US firm into Japan's rich financial markets.

- So vital are these relationship-builders that there are 600 of them, but only 400 traders, salesmen & investment bankers, according to *WSJ*.



- Travelers saw them as too expensive for the business they generate. Does this signal renewed Wall Street arrogance & the end of relationship marketing, which the street pioneered after its '87 stock crash debacle?
- Nikko saw them as the only way to avoid the dashing criticism of now being a foreign company. "If clients don't have confidence in the joint venture, it can't work" said Nikko's president.

While the existence of such jobs is attributable to Japanese culture, the theory behind it applies to people everywhere. It is, indeed, at the core of the public relations worldview.

One answer to the conundrum is to remember that people want to be:
Served not Sold, Involved not Told.

RESIGNATION COVERAGE SHOWS WHY CEOs GO UNDER THE RADAR

Is it now better strategy not to have showcase CEOs (pr 6/7)? George Fisher's departure from Kodak is an object lesson:

- Bringing him to the imaging company from Motorola was a symbol of Kodak's desire to become high tech so it could lead in digital photography in addition to its world leadership in wet film
- But he had also been successful as a mgr, so Kodak's financial situation was also expected to improve vastly under new leadership

The mixed-message coverage of his retirement shows that only constant perfection will satisfy journalists, analysts & investors:

- *WSJ*: Fisher's "Kodak moment is over...with the company's old film business slipping & the promise of digital imaging unmet.... During his tenure, Kodak has become solidly profitable again with earnings of \$1.39 billion last year." Headline read, "Kodak's Turnaround Partly Developed, Fisher Steps Down." [So, he got a turnaround started, to the point of good profitability, in a historically insular & hard to change company -- what did they expect in 6 years?]
- *NYTimes*: "In some ways, Fisher has given (his successor) an easy act to follow. Until this year, sales were flat, its digital portfolio was hemorrhaging cash, rival Fuji was eating into its market share & its stock price seemed on a roller coaster.... He cleaned up a mess of monumental proportions, says (an analyst)...sold ancillary businesses, cleaned up the balance sheet...brought more outsiders into the company & onto its board." [Doesn't that sound like a pretty impressive job?]
- But *NYTimes* also spells out the difficulty, particularly for today's global market: "strengthening dollar & softness in overseas business" (can a CEO control that?). Then this telling line: "When Fisher was recruited...he was hailed as the wizard who would magically solve Kodak's problems." [Boards of directors, analysts & the media set up CEOs who are superstars to fail]

COMPANY SHOWS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY VISUALLY & SYMBOLICALLY

Local, small organizations often can role model effective pr by serving as test sites -- since they have control of the situation, in their narrower universe. Modeled after Ben & Jerry's, Starbuck's, Stonyfield Farms Yogurt and other social responsibility trailblazers, Flatbread Company (Amesbury, Mass) makes its USP (Unique Selling Proposition) clear to customers the moment they walk in the natural wood-fired pizza restaurant's door.

EYE-CATCHING VISUAL REINFORCEMENT INCLUDES:

- Hand-written mission statement sign, draped over wood oven in restaurant center reads, "To make the best pizza we can possibly imagine"
- Giant cast-iron kettle, which is actually used to make organic, homemade sauce. "Everything in the restaurant is functional," says owner Jay Gould. "We don't just decorate for show"
- Earth Day poster, prayer flags & other child art reinforce commitment both to the environment & community children
- Hand-drawn posters of organic wheat, garden herbs and fresh mushrooms emphasize commitment to environment thru use of organic ingredients
- Painted "thank you" poster made by Kittery Youth Connection advertises local support in an understated but visually noticeable way
- Menu backpage greeting states Flatbread Company ideals & reinforces commitment to organic farming & sustainable living (see box)
- Suggestion can by cashier's post is a giant organic tomato can

From menu's backpage: "The Flatbread Company was founded on ideals. Excellent ideas which inspire & guide us in creating our work:

- Quality and integrity of ingredients
- Clean food without pesticides or chemicals
- Support organic farming
- Good intentions in our work
- A place where children, adults & employees may renew their spirit"

FOCUSED SYMBOLIC REINFORCEMENT EMPHASIZES FACE-TO-FACE RELATIONSHIPS

- Statement of Purpose & Values on application form serves as advertisement of what restaurant stands for -- but also, pre-screener of potential employees. "They're clear on our values before they apply"
- Sponsorship of local programs beyond "writing the check." "We bring in school kids, let them make their own pizza & educate them about nutrition, and the role we play in protecting the earth's natural resources. We also involved the elementary school kids in building our ovens"