

everyone has a mentor from Day 1. Success breeds success, and the feeling among most IRs is 'somebody helped me, so I'm going to help someone else.'

3. **Develop win-win-win programs** like the "Goodknight Plan" to benefit new & existing IRs. Program, named after successful IR Jim Goodknight, allows existing IRs whose business has grown to a very high level to split off part of their client base & share it with a new IR. "It's a win-win-win situation. New IR receives a ready-made client base, existing IR has more time to focus on clients & all clients receive a higher level of service from their IR."

Edward Jones traces its roots to 1871, has more than 5,000 offices in the US, Canada & the UK. Revenues of \$1.4 billion in '98 are bottomline proof that strategies for teamwork & focus on associates pay off.

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **PR Contestants Can Cash In On Millennium Mistakes.** The new Millennium begins January 1, 2001, and a computer firm wants everyone to know it. Seale Group (Atlanta) is awarding a new computer workstation to anyone who can spot the most Internet errors touting the new millennium as starting Jan, 2000. "Y2K and the new millennium are not the same thing," pres Chris Seale told prr. "This contest serves to honor the companies & advertisers who took the time to get it right." And, he adds, to point out the companies who don't care.

¶ **Internet device helps get news to employees first.** Change Channel allows multinationals to simultaneously communicate with employees all over the world. "When announcing change, printed materials can and should be shared whenever possible with employees before external release," says Nicholas Kalm, deputy gm of Reputation Mgmt, Edelman Worldwide. "Change Channel allows management to distribute info to employees simultaneously so they are fully engaged prior to notifying the media & financial community." Device was developed as part of Edelman's new Employee Engagement program, a formal practice area dedicated to employee communication.

¶ **2 levels of healthcare may be dangerous to industry's health.** Are platinum bedpans & TLC an infectious trend, as in hotel-style hospitals? If you can cough up the dough, you can cough in luxury, notes *Wall Street Journal*. Units are appearing up & down the East Coast, in California & Texas. Posh facilities (often a floor or two of a conventional hospital) offer gourmet meals, mahogany furniture, even surprise parties for departing patients. Expensive artwork adorns the walls. The staff practices an advanced form of customer care, knowing the tastes & habits of their frequent visitors (say, returning cancer patients) and planning accordingly, e.g., keeping the fridge stocked with their favorite goodies. Hospitals say they're launching luxury care programs as a means of making up for Medicare and managed care cutbacks.

- But healthcare advocates are peeved as what they see as pandering to a pampered public while other patients get dog chow. And luxury clients admit nurses & doctors are far more attentive in the deluxe suites than on "other floors."

SCHOOLS STUDY SHOWS AGAIN DANGER OF NATIONAL RESEARCH ON LOCAL ISSUES; DEBUNKS SEVERAL POLITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

People who criticize an organization, institution or policy *nationally or in general* -- may feel completely different about the same organization, institution or policy close to home.

- The reason is obvious: they have personal experience or firsthand knowledge of local situations, but only rumor & innuendo of the same situation elsewhere
- The source of the rumor & innuendo is mainly news media, usually reporting on isolated but sometimes spectacular incidents and/or the views of special interests with an ax to grind

This well known concept -- seen before in studies of how people feel about their own congressperson or physician -- is demonstrated again by an insightful study on schools undertaken by Kaiser Family Fdn, Harvard's Kennedy Schl of Gov't & Nat'l Public Radio. Data is especially valuable because both parents of school children & non-parents were queried -- the latter often suspected of being the main education critics. Examples:

1. 71% of parents gave **their own kids' schools** an A or B mark
 2. But **other schools in their community** got only 60% A or B rating
 3. **The nation's schools overall**, however, were given A or B by only 23% of these same respondents -- and 18% rated them D or F
- While showing again that low marks for national institutions result from having no basis for giving the rating, the study sponsors feel this also shows a tendency to *overrate* local institutions -- an understandable expression of personal & civic pride

WE SEE PROBLEMS ELSEWHERE BUT IT'S NOT AS BAD AT HOME

Parents see more serious problems in schools nationally than in local schools. They name 6 major concerns

in schools *generally* but not one is seen by a majority as a problem in their community:

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Nationwide</u>	<u>Locally</u>
1. Undisciplined & disruptive students	71%	40%
2. Lack of parental involvement	68	43
3. Overcrowded classrooms	64	44
4. Violence & school safety	63	31
5. Student use of alcohol & drugs	62	44
6. Unequal funding of school districts	54	36



IMPLICATIONS Practitioners will recognize that the local numbers are plenty high enough to indicate these issues must be dealt with, of course.

- But the study establishes again the need for **specific local research** before school boards, administrators & local pols & activists jump to conclusions about what *local stakeholders* believe the problems are
- These data suggest once again a **loud minority** has been able to establish prevailing perceptions that in fact are not held by the supposedly-ruling majority -- similar to the situations with gun control & foreign policy
- School practitioners should be wary of **applying national research** by Public Agenda & others to their districts, especially to individual schools
- In dealing with local media, it's vital to emphasize their responsibility to report local situations, not parrot misleading national media reports
- Education decisions are 90% made locally. Therefore national perspectives serve **only as issue anticipation warnings** for local schools. This applies to all other elements of local, state or regional self-government.

As programs & policy-making continue their shift back home, away from the federal level, these are critical implications for many org'ns. (Non-parents responses on these topics track closely with parents'. Complete findings from www.npr.org)

IN TIGHT JOB MARKET, STAGED MEDIA EVENT DRAWS RECRUITS

ARCNET, a NJ architecture & engineering firm, was having trouble recruiting & retaining architects & CAD operators. Booming economy means scarcity of qualified candidates. Recruitment efforts were averaging \$300,000 a year "for expensive head hunters who would only guarantee their clients for 30 days," Chris Rosica, Rosica Mulhern & Assocs (Paramus, NJ) told pr. "They were taking out major advertisements in an effort to attract employees."

The company, which specializes in building bell towers, started a program rewarding employees who put in a year's service with a new BMW. It was having trouble, however, using the perk to recruit.

SPECIAL EVENT GAINED MEDIA ENTRÉE

RMA decided to stage a media event celebrating the car giveaway. After going thru the usual channels to invite media to the company grounds, they

- Lined up the cars bumper to bumper & had all of the employees come outside for their test ride -- an inaugural lap around headquarters
- "The CEO came running out with his hands filled with keys." The media loved it. Several photographers, whom Rosica provided with a manlift, asked for a repeat inaugural lap

PROOF IS IN THE RESUMES & EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Event resulted in 450 million media circulation -- exposure from *NYTimes*, *Parade*, *Forbes & Inc.*, as well as local press.

More importantly, ARCNET has been receiving, on average, 350 resumes a month. "The \$3,000 event generated \$4.5 million worth of media coverage."

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT STILL WORKS

In addition to helping ARCNET publicize its car giveaway, the pr firm involved the firm in *charitable initiatives* -- in building for Habitat for Humanity. Says Rosica, "We find when we get employers involved in a cause, it changes the culture of the workplace & helps employee relations." It also can't hurt that ARCNET picks up insurance payments on the car & renews the BMW lease every 3 years.

FOSTERING TEAMWORK AMONG EMPLOYEES: THE EDWARD JONES MODEL

In an era when so many organizations recognize & reward individual performance, hometown financial services firm Edward Jones (St. Louis) takes a different approach, aimed at building & rewarding teamwork.

Philosophies, policies & programs that contribute to its success include:

- **Employee ownership.** Ted Jones, Jr., the founder's son, envisioned an org'n owned entirely by its employees. Of 13,000 associates, 1/3 now are owners. 168 Principals & 3903 Limited Partners are all incented to help the org'n prosper. Anyone -- from investment representatives (IRs) in the field to associates at hq -- can qualify, based on performance.
- **Employee profitsharing.** All associates receive profit sharing benefits & thus are incented to work together toward the overall success of Edward Jones. "The average IR spends many hours helping fellow IRs -- they're working with each other, not against each other," says Mary Beth Heying, responsible for corp com's & pr. This engenders "a spirit of camaraderie here that's unique & special."
- **Incentive trips.** While many competitors reserve incentive trips for top qualifiers only, Edward Jones merely establishes an attainable performance benchmark IRs must meet to qualify. "Right now, 50% of our IRs are earning incentive trips, which are offered twice a year." Firm supports this incentive by earmarking 2% of revenues to underwrite it.
- **Focus on employee recruitment & retention.** Recognizing that associates are the firm's most valuable asset, efforts have been made to:
 1. **Involve all associates of the Edward Jones family -- including Branch Office Administrators & spouses -- to drive recruitment.** Managing Partner John Bachman emphasizes the importance of healthy growth in written communications & regional meeting presentations -- to which both IRs & spouses are invited. Firm hires about 200 IRs each month & expects to grow to 10,000 IRs by 2000.
 2. **Emphasize mentors** for every new IR in the early stages of their career. "Mentors used to be assigned only to those not meeting performance standards & therefore the mentor program had a negative association." "We've since realigned the training program to ensure