

will eventually make them self-supporting. In short, they invest in social service org's they way venture capital firms invest in startup companies. And, like VCs, they quickly drop their support of donees not doing well & give more to the successful ones

- **“Civil society”** is a new term to describe the 3rd social segment: not-for-profit org's whose purpose is to benefit everyone, even if targeted at areas of special need. This is also called the Voluntary Sector, as opposed to for-profit entities & gov't. Transitional nature of the term is illustrated by a series of publications titled *Charting Civil Society* put out by the Urban Institute's Center on Nonprofits & Philanthropy (sic)
- **“Webservant”** is what one religious org'n calls its webmaster. No masters here, all are servants of the faith

TITLE CHANGES GALORE

The list of new ones is rivaled by the attempts at accuracy:

- **Knowledge Officer** – in charge of best practices, operational methods, history & background, data that workers need to know to do things in the accepted way (pr 8/11/97)
- **Research Officer** – responsible for gathering the data needed by the org'n but not yet available; then passes it on to the knowledge ofcr once it's gathered. Shows a new emphasis on research
- **Retention Officer** – reflects the growing issue of keeping good employees. Other senior hr titles now emerging include People Ofcr, Support Ofcr to provide info, equipment & training employees require, plus Training Ofcr & Learning Ofcr

Biz futurists The Herman Group (Greensboro, NC) note that many of these & other titles are now prefixed by the word “Chief”. In fact, Chief & Officer before & after a descriptive word are becoming the popular way, e.g. Chief Science Ofcr or Chief Marketing Ofcr. This reflects the drive toward teamwork, where the old hierarchy of evp, svp, vp, dir, mgr & supvr suggest a top-down, micromanaging approach. While “chief” makes it clear where the buck stops, the fact everyone else has the same title without “chief” also symbolizes teaming.

- **And don't forget chief pr ofcr (CPRO) or its successor: Chief Relationship Ofcr**

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

- ¶ **It Can Be Dangerous To Win PR's Beauty Contests** when no evidence of success is required. PRSA Silver Anvil Award of Excellence was given to Office of Nat'l Drug Control Policy for “Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign.” And presto, out comes a gov't report saying teen drug use is rising again. Followed by media coverage of the effects of the dictatorial style of the Office's head, Gen. Barry McCaffrey, which drives staff away in droves. Explains why so many outfits have an Under the Radar strategy.
- ¶ **More Book Banning By Employers.** First Oprah Winfrey successfully sued to keep her employee from writing a tell-all, based on a clause in the employment contract. Now PC Mall has told author Russell Mayes he couldn't tell co-workers about *Tell'em Anything: Facing the Corporate Idiot*. Nor are employees to read it on company property. But you can read it at www.1stbooks.com.

ISSUE ANTICIPATION: 2 EMERGING ORGANIZATIONAL TRENDS, & HOW THEY MAY IMPACT PRACTITIONERS & PR STRATEGY

1. **THE CEO PROBLEM.** Just as there's a shortage of qualified CPRO candidates, there's a similar paucity of CEO material. Prime reason: *inability or unwillingness to handle task #1, being the chief pr person for the org'n* – the out front relationship builder, the personification of the org'n. To do this today, CEOs must be the strategic driver – the person with the often revolutionary ideas & the tough-mindedness to bring them into being. Which demands a persuasive leader.

- **This is perhaps most visible in schools**, where not only superintendents but also principals are in short supply. The latter are CEOs of their schools, as the former are of their systems. One aspect of the problem is that not many want the jobs – with their agenda of meetings night after night, virtually every stakeholder group angry about something & the frontline troops – teachers – also in a supply crisis
- **For the first time, non-educators are being named superintendents.** Seattle & Arlington, Va., hired ex-military officers a few years back, Minneapolis hired a pa pro, now San Diego has a former prosecutor, NYC a businessman & L.A. an ex-governor
- **This is starting to happen in other tradition-prone segments**, for the same lack-of-pr-skills reason. University presidents must do spectacular relationship-building – because from this comes major fund raising. Ex-deans & philosophy profs are rarely gifted in this venue, so businessmen, ex-officeholders & other non-academics are moving into these positions

IMPACT ON PR: Since pr writ large is the CEO's task, practitioners are the top counselors to the successful ones. When org's stick with tradition & hire conventional CEOs up from the ranks – in business they usually come from finance, engineering or law these days – the pr pro's role is even more vital, since these old-school types must be sensitized to the CEO's pr role, & trained (if possible).

- **Too often they revert to being “the boss” instead of a leader** & concern themselves with operations (making the COO & unit execs obsolete as micromanagement reigns). And it is this that makes experienced practitioners unwilling to be their CPRO – creating a cycle of failure for both positions, & often for the org'n

2. **WORKER REVOLT IN THE MAKING.** Average wage of frontline workers – the folks who *are* the org'n, because they provide its operations & control its relationships with customers & other stakeholders – has *not increased in true purchasing power since '79*. Contrast that with the huge increase in execs pay. Non-college educated whites actually suffered a pay *decline* of 9%. White high school dropouts' pay lost 24%! For minorities, the figures are even worse.

- **Will employees go 21 yrs with no pay increase ...** which is the reason 2-worker households are the norm ... which begets a litany of social problems e.g. latchkey kids ... without



revolting? Especially with years of layoffs, downsizings, program-of-the-month workplaces & other “solutions” to organizational problems than any dolt ought to know won’t work? When near-retirement-age workers are pushed out into McDonald’s jobs, how long will they remain quiet?

- **Could this be the reason morale & loyalty are low** among experienced workers, & “the work ethic” among generation.com has eroded? Society mostly has blamed the workers, parents, schools – everyone but the wage structure. Looks like another case of blaming the victims, & a situation employers brought on themselves
- **There is a handy target for the frustrated:** Wall Street greed, symbolized by brokers’ cheering when large layoffs occur
- **As usual, a cartoonist sums it up.** Morin of the *Miami Herald* offers 4 caricatures under the heading “Who’s responsible for the robust economy? First is Bill Clinton, then Al Gore, then Alan Greenspan, & finally “Joe Worker, whose employer downsized & ordered him to do the work of three employees to ensure acceptable corporate profits”

IMPACT ON PR: Any practitioner who hasn’t already decided employees are the #1 public had better do so. Most have. Skills learned on culture change & reorienting internal com’n could soon become secondary to cajoling the workforce – especially if the hot economy continues & workers at all levels get harder to find.

- **Now is the time for pr to get candid about the failings of our hr brethren** & take over the morale-building, productivity & training portfolios to complement pr’s work in culture, internal reputation & employee engagement programs. One practical approach: set off the personnel functions like benefits, wages, hiring etc into an Employee Services Dep’t (much better semantics than HR); then meld the OD pros, the trainers, the true hr types into a joint pr/hr unit – perhaps with the word relationships in its name

PR BENEFIT WAS KEY MESSAGE ON CHINA TRADE VOTE

When Goddard Claussen Porter Novelli took on the campaign to win votes to give China Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status, a series of unfavorable events hampered the bill’s chances: a) Prime Minister Zhu Rongji asked President Clinton to do this, and Clinton refused; b) US accidentally bombed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade; c) reports of nuclear secrets allegedly stolen by China surfaced. All wounded China-US relations & soured members of Congress – & the public – on voting favorably for China as a trade partner.

DUAL MESSAGES

GCPN svp Ed Armstrong told pr the strategy emphasized:

- **Message 1: Market Size.** China has far & away the world’s largest population. *“It only makes sense that we not isolate them.”* GCPN worked closely with 50 trade ass’ns & corporations to develop advertorials in periodicals circulated on Capitol Hill. 15-sec tv spots that “sandwiched” other ads noted “if we don’t sell to China, someone else will”
- **Message 2: Benefits Borrowed from PR.** The Business Roundtable wrote a report, *Best Practices of American Corporations Operating in China*, containing hundreds of examples of

how these **companies improve communities**, help the environment, launch charitable initiatives, etc. Corporate social responsibility efforts were put forward as a practical way to influence China from the inside

- This appealed to America’s sense of goodness, and also answered those who decry China’s human rights practices by saying, *“We can help them out.”* But this message was more difficult to construct & disseminate. Rev. Chan, a religious dissident, appeared in ads, talking about the religious freedom that would be gained for the Chinese. Another appeal was that lives would be changed. Chinese who worked for American corporations talked about how their lives were improved

DUAL MESSAGE DISSEMINATION

The messages had to be targeted not only at Reps in DC but also at their constituents at home. “The idea that the bill would mean a ‘rising tide’ from which all would benefit” wasn’t enough. Messages had to go to agricultural communities, wheat farmers, citrus growers in Florida, auto makers in Detroit – as well as their Reps in the Beltway.

- During Spring, when Congress recesses, GCPN launched articles, radio & tv spots, op eds, etc. to **follow Reps’ journey home.** They’d see PSAs in DC, then go home & see different ones targeted to their (say, agricultural) community, hear them on the radio while driving, then return to DC to meet with a delegation of their constituents who say, “trade with China is a good thing”
- During the trade riots in DC, what Armstrong calls a “non-event,” **support for the bill was actually bolstered by local media.** Not only could most people not relate to the nose-ringed rioters, but stations would turn to area news with the transitory comment, “On a local level, people in this community think trade is a good thing....” And follow the soundbite with stories of local businesses that export goods

HOUSE PASSED IT

Armstrong reports that in swing districts, 66% voted favorably. “We have not done a quantitative study on the success of the campaign, but Gallup tracked this & found that more Americans view the bill positively & are moving in a pro-China trade direction.” (More from him at 954/568-2100)

DOWNSIDE. While campaign was successful on the specific issue, it also showed again that money talks in getting gov’t to act. Well-heeled corporations can afford it, but citizen causes can’t – furthering the alienation people feel from a “rigged system”

HERE WE GO AGAIN CHANGING THE SEMANTICS USED IN PR

Every practitioner is involved in one way or another with what is broadly termed philanthropy – either giving donations of various types, soliciting them, or mounting social responsibility projects to benefit society. But the philanthropic community – foundations, social planners, fundraisers – are deeply concerned that the word “philanthropy” is too high falutin, or too long, or for whatever reasons has lost its value – especially as giving patterns change & the field “democratizes” (pr 5/29).

- **“Venture philanthropy”** is one alternative. Today’s newly rich tend to give to org’ns with a well-crafted business plan. Often they expect the charities they support to create income streams that