

## ACTIONS TAKEN BY AD AGENCIES AND CORPORATIONS

Coca-Cola pulled four new spots that were expected to feature Cal Ripken Jr. Coke spokesman Rob Baskin said, "We have halted for the time being all our national advertising until the early part of next week out of respect for victims, families and rescuers, and the country at large." Companies examined their ads to see if anything could possibly be perceived as inappropriate and reflecting badly upon the company. Chrysler pulled a spot showing a sport-utility vehicle maneuvering through an earthquake and other disasters, and Ford reviewed its ads for any shots that showed the New York skyline, said spokeswoman Paige Johnson.

**Speak out publicly and plan appropriate institutional advertising.** While bearing in mind the risk of bringing the company name into the minds of terrorists, executives in private organizations, as well as government officials, should be heard. Donald Marron, UBS America's chairman, told the NY Times, "Top management ought to be highly visible." Similarly, corporate ads could inspire our pride in country and solidarity as a nation. Some pointers can be gained from excerpts from an editorial broadcast from the Canadian tv commentator, Gordon Sinclair, at the time of the Gulf War, which has been included in the Congressional Digest (see box).

**Demonstrate corporate citizenship through philanthropic acts.** Big businesses contributed generously to relief efforts and to help the families of attack victims. The American Red Cross Disaster Relief received \$1 million contributions from Wells Fargo, Home Depot, Ford (which also donated 10 Ford Excursions to the NY Fire Dep't), and the Bill Gates Foundation. Microsoft also pledged \$10 million in cash & software. Others, like the Bank of America Foundation contributed \$1 million to the September 11 Fund established by The United Way and the New York Community Trust Bank of America.

**Companies also contributed to special funds:** DaimlerChrysler committed \$10 million to support the children of victims of the terrorist attacks, and GE pledged \$10 million to a fund that will assist the families of the firefighters, police officers and emergency rescue personnel who perished while responding to the attack on the WTC. Cisco made gifts to key relief and support organizations serving NYC and DC, including a \$6 million donation. Nextel loaned more than 5,500 wireless phones with unlimited cell phone and Nextel Direct Connect capability to government agencies and emergency service providers.

**Even small companies organized drives.** Nutmeg Welding in Waterbury, CT, collected safety supplies and demolition tools to aid the rescue operations in NYC. Buzzuto's Inc. in Cheshire, CT, sent four truckloads of food and water to the Federal Emergency Management Agency in NYC. The company said it would set up all of its IGA stores to sell flags to customers, with money raised going to a relief fund.

**Suspend advertising.** Many ad agencies say their clients are reassessing their messages and some are pulling spots.

### A TRIBUTE TO THE UNITED STATES

"This Canadian thinks it is time to speak up for the Americans as the most generous and possibly the least appreciated people on all the earth." Among his examples, he refers to the "generous Marshall Plan, which helped European countries recover after World War II. "I can name you 5000 times when the Americans raced to the help of other people in trouble. Can you name me even one time when someone else raced to the Americans in trouble?... I'm one Canadian who is damned tired of hearing them get kicked around. They will come out of this thing with their flag high.... Stand proud, America!"

## IN NEW YORK CITY AND WASHINGTON, D.C., LAST WEEK'S TRAGEDY CHANGED PRACTITIONERS' LIVES; A ROUND UP OF REFLECTIONS

The staff of *pr reporter* wishes to express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims killed in the attacks at the World Trade Center and at the Pentagon, and to those who lost loved ones in the downed plane in Pennsylvania. While we strive to come to grips with our own feelings of grief, loss and uncertainty, we are aware that many readers have already been affected in the way they conduct daily business. Some counselors report having lost revenues, others have lost clients. Will they or their staff continue to travel, or will telecommunications be the new mode for relationship building? How will various industries such as travel, tourism and telecommunications be affected? Will the marketplace, badly hobbled by the attacks, soon rebound? How can pr provide the leadership necessary to get back to business, even if it won't, as one practitioner notes, be "business as usual"?

This round up of reflections is from those readers who are closest to the tragedy – practitioners from New York City and Washington, D.C. Here's what they say.

### FOR D.C. PRACTITIONERS: TRAVEL WILL NEED TO BE JUSTIFIED

Council on Foundations (DC), told prr. "It felt like we were at an army post. A lot of streets nearby closed down and they kept widening the parameters." Many of the Council's employees are accustomed to using the subway (the "Metro" in DC) and cutting through buildings to get to work. For security purposes, they'll no longer be able to do that. "It's a small thing, but it does affect their daily lives. And people will be hesitant to get on the Metro." Many will have no choice, however, because now large portions of the employee parking lot have been obliterated.

Overkamp thinks the most significant consequence for the Council will be travel. "We are an association and have a lot of meetings and a conference center. Right now we are planning to do the next two weeks worth of meetings by teleconference. After October, we have other decisions to make. Everything looks like it may be done by teleconferencing and video conferencing for a while. We'd really have to justify why we'd have a meeting in person."

Susan Chilkoff, American Association of State Colleges and Universities (DC) agrees. "I think associations have to look for opportunities for teleconferencing, for both the cost effectiveness of it and the travel circumstances."

"The oddest thing was looking out of the window and seeing Humvees and the National Guard," Sunshine Overkamp,

"Will we ever go back to business as usual again? The way I see it, everything will change. We have people who have children at home; the children are asking their parents not to travel." – Sunshine Overkamp

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL SAYS HELP VICTIMS WITH NEW DOLLARS, CONTINUE DAILY BUSINESS TO KEEP ECONOMY STRONG

"We're about six blocks from the White House," Doug Pinkham, president of Public Affairs Council (DC) told prr. "I was initially concerned about panic in the streets and subways but I noticed that people did not panic and seemed to go home in an orderly way." PAC's conference in San Francisco, however, was disrupted as the speakers languished at airports, their flights grounded. Afternoon sessions were cancelled, but the roundtables did take place. "The participants had all made it there and they needed to talk," their reasons being somewhat therapeutic.

Pinkham predicts more telecom activity, but says travel will always be in the mix. "I'll bet there will be an increase in teleconferencing but people won't give up flying and meeting people face to face," he says. "**It's hard to build relationships without meeting with people.**" Furthermore, he says, people need to travel and it's imperative they get back to it. "America depends on air travel and we all have to get back to business. It's our patriotic duty to get back to business. Imagine what would happen if everyone steps to the side and pauses and holds off on investing and making long range plans. We'll be economically stronger if we deal with this terrible problem."

PAC, which provides a clearinghouse of information for pa & pr offices and dep'ts, sent an e-mail offering tips on how to help, saying "people can **make contributions by offering what they do best.**" Software companies, for example, can use some of their technical expertise to help facilitate grassroots support for the recovery effort. Healthcare companies can encourage people to volunteer and give blood two months down the road instead of today, and stagger other forms of aid. "Encourage people not to forget their usual charities. We really should support the victims with 'new dollars.'"

## IN MANHATTAN, COUNSELORS RALLY AROUND LEADERSHIP, ONE ANOTHER

In New York, the devastation is insurmountable. Contacting subscribers was difficult as phone lines, e-mail and Websites were down or busy. But practitioners who were reached exulted the city and its leadership. "Responses here have been terrific, from Mayor Guiliani to Gov. Pataki and all the way up to Pres. Bush," George McGrath, head of pr division at Broulliard Communications (NYC) told prr.

"Right now, I've never seen such unity in New York," agrees NYC counselor Clint Wade. "I am very proud of Rudy Guiliani, his courage and compassion. People want to change the charter of the state so that he can be re-elected. His leadership is vital."

McGrath notes that obviously, all travel plans were cancelled. "We had to close the office for a couple of days and a lot of our people worked from home. We reopened our offices on Thursday but gave employees the option to work from home." Broulliard also offered counseling to its employees. He foresees a lot of teleconferences. "We had some business trips planned to meet with clients in person but we decided it could be done by teleconference."

**PR's Role** According to McGrath, it's important to: a) take care of people who are hurting, and, after that, b) "**we have to get business rolling. That will be our role.**"

Wade says that the mission of the profession remains what it always has been, to a) interpret what is happening, b) tell people the truth about it, and c) help people pull together.

New York may be affected in a variety of ways as people struggle with questions of when to go back, when to celebrate and be happy again. "I have clients across the country who don't want to come

now and I can't blame them," says Wade. Furthermore, he notes, no one wants to introduce a product, kick off a campaign or hold a party right now because they don't think it's appropriate. "There have been and will continue to be a lot of cancellations. It's not a happy time but I am positive about New York."

## QUICK RESPONSE BY ASS'N HELPED PRACTITIONERS MEET CRISIS; SHOWS REAL BENEFIT OF PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP, E-MAIL

By 5 pm on September 11, the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) had e-mailed key documentation on how to assist students, parents & teachers in coping with the terrorist attack to 1,200 of its 2,000 members – everyone in its e-mail system. The speed of e-mail allowed, for the first time during a national crisis, the ability to be of direct service instantly. "On a strict communications sense, I find e-mail better than posting on our Web site because **e-mail comes to them** where they have to go after it on our Web site. We do link to our Web site and give more info there," Rich Bagin, exec dir of NSPRA, told prr.

Two immediate documents and two more a day later assisted local practitioners with needed information. "It's part of our communication plan to help members expand their clout with their school systems by being able to help in a time of need." Included:

- Tips for Parents & Teachers: Helping Children Cope with Tuesday's Acts of Terrorism, drafted by the National Association of School Psychologists and outlined in an info-mapped format – what adults, parents and schools could do and where to go for more info.
- A handout for parents from a local school district in North Carolina, which discussed what type of emotional reactions to expect from children and what parents could do in response.
- Information on Promoting Tolerance shared by NSPRA members in Ontario and LA that outlines message strategy, suggestions to maintain a safe environment and tips for multicultural communication.
- Script for Moment of Silence drafted by NSPRA member Janet Swiecichowski, with language for group meetings, etc.

The ability of e-mail to deliver – particularly when phone lines were limited and faxing would have been slow – shows the real benefit of such a system. While organizations all across the country utilized this alternative communication resource to check on the safety of employees, NSPRA used it to help thousands cope with this tragedy.

**The FBI defines terrorism** as "The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."

The Terrorism Research Center reports that there were 392 terrorist attacks in 1999 worldwide. The total attacks against US facilities and attacks in which US citizens suffered casualties numbered 169. Most of these were bombings (111), followed by kidnappings (20). Of the 184 US casualties, business by far outnumbered others: 133 business vs. 9 military, 9 diplomat, 7 government, and 26 other.

Advice for business travellers: do not sit in a bar in a high-risk country and let it slip that you are covered by a corporate insurance policy against kidnapping and ransom. (Other advice: avoid luggage bearing your company name or logo and being picked up by conspicuous chauffeured cars.)