

Hospice perceived physicians as gatekeepers who were caught up in 1) discomfort with discussing death, 2) being geared to high-tech treatments and 3) financial incentives to put patients in intensive care.

Kelly and Thompson utilized the co-orientation model to diagram examination of perceptions by both Hospice and physicians in order to design a more targeted and successful program to bridge the gap. A two-page questionnaire filled with Likert-like statements (7-point scale) not only asked about the respondent's own perceptions but also asked them to estimate the views of the other side.

Findings indicated much more agreement than disagreement, thus suggesting very different strategies for action. Hospice leaders and referring physicians held opposing views on only 1 of the 10 key variables identified as possible problem areas. That area was at what point the patient's condition warranted Hospice care and at what point treatment is considered medically futile. This finding enabled Hospice to devise a strategy that saved time and manpower. Real solutions could be sought, e.g., working for changes in Medicare rules, providing better education for patient families, and working together with physicians as a healthcare team. (More from kskelly@louisiana.edu)

"In their book on negotiation, Lewicki & Litterer (1985) recommend that parties in a conflict clarify and measure how they view themselves, how they view the other party, how they think the other party views them, and how the other party views themselves. 'A common result is that many apparent differences and areas of conflict are recognized as not real, while those which are real become more understandable.' The co-orientation model of organization – public relationships prescribes the same process for managing stakeholder relations effectively."

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **The Transformation To A Lively Economy Is Quietly Beginning**, says the Herman Trend Alert. "More aggressive recruiting of executives has begun. From a number of sources, we have indications of significant movement – among recruiters, among executives accepting new positions, and among relocation companies engaged to manage moves." Newsletter predicts a "churning in the American labor marketplace beginning in the 3rd quarter of 2002. As the economy heats up, refreshing opportunities and aggressive recruiting will challenge loyalties. **Wise employers will engage in strategies now to build positive relationships with their employees.** Employers will invest in training, development and coaching efforts to strengthen the bonds with valued employees." (More from The Herman Group at alert@herman.net, 336/282-9370)

¶ **Toplin & Associates Celebrates 20th Anniversary By Donating A Day Of Services To 20 NPOs.** "We wanted to commemorate this milestone in a substantive way. We talked about having a party, doing giveaways and other promotions – but nothing felt right. Corporate anniversaries should be a time to reflect and give something back, in appreciation of the success a company has achieved," notes founder Ellen Toplin. Decision to donate services to a cross-section of regional community organizations was made by Toplin and staff. They chose staff members' personal charities and groups that speak to the diversity of need within the firm's community. "We're taking what's at the heart of our business and giving a small piece of that back to our neighbors." (www.toplin.com)

CAMPAIGN FINANCE BILL LIKELY TO PASS, BUT DON'T OVERLOOK THE "HOWEVERS," SAYS PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Media stories of how money is corrupting the political system are now being trumpeted because of Enron's blatant and widespread use of political contributions in support of its lobbying efforts to obtain political favors. The rapid growth of Enron into the nation's 7th largest corporation, however, proves the value of public affairs. Enron could not have become a trading company giant without succeeding in establishing a deregulated energy market. To do this it spent lavishly – and cleverly – in at least 30 states to replace local utility monopolies. But money was not the only advantage. As Mary Kenkel, former manager for federal affairs at the Edison Electric Institute said, "**They were smart – they went after people who [they] knew would make a difference.**"

Enron also targeted Congress and the White House to change the rules governing the energy industry. The main idea was to keep regulators away. Enron was highly successful. As summarized by Albert R. Hunt of the *Wall Street Journal*, "Few special interests got more access or results than Enron: legislative favors, a lax oversight of its risky financial derivatives, tax breaks, unsurpassed input into the Cheney energy legislation drafting process and most of what it wanted, and reportedly even veto authority over regulatory appointees."

THE "HOWEVERS" OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Some sort of campaign finance legislation is likely to pass, predicts Doug Pinkham, president of the Public Affairs Council, saying, "Until the ENRON story broke, there was not enough legislative or public support for reform." But passage of a bill does not mean that "the era of special interest money in politics is coming to an end," says Pinkham. There are many "however's," as the following list he provided pr shows:

- There will be numerous court challenges related to restrictions on election advertising
- Final legislation won't apply to the 2002 elections

Enron's pr role in the public policy arena was the critical factor in achieving its success. The **three arenas of practice** and the **goals** of each are:

1. **Sales Support:** sales and profits, brand preference, marketshare, relationship marketing.
2. **Public Policy:** maintain a hospitable environment and a cadre of active supporters.
3. **Organizational Effectiveness:** teamwork, One Clear Voice, motivation, productivity, loyalty, morale, understanding, cost-effectiveness, support.

(For a copy of Pat Jackson's model – "The 3 Arenas Of Practice: How Public Relations Serves & Adds Value" – e-mail pr.)

- Implementation of a measure to help incumbents compete against self-funded millionaire candidates will be tied up in litigation for the next 20 years
- Political parties will find new ways to squeeze contributions out of supporters on all sides of the political spectrum
- Special interest contributions to campaigns won't go away (fortunately). After all, in a democracy where everyone from the Sierra Club to the Kiwanis Club has the right to band together to support like-minded candidates, there's nothing wrong with people exercising free speech through campaign contributions – as long as limits are reasonable and the process is transparent.

INTERNET VIES WITH NEWSPAPERS AND TELEVISION AS BELIEVABLE SOURCE OF INFO; IT ALSO BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS

Information delivered via the Internet has the potential to be perceived as being as credible as information delivered through any other mass communication source, **provided the Internet information originated with a credible and believable source**, reports Donald Wright, professor at U of So. Alabama, in his report "The Magic Communication Machine: Examining the Internet's Impact on Public Relations, Journalism and the Public." The quality of our relationships is still more important than the quantity of our messages. See box for some interesting data collected by Wright.

When comparing the **credibility of information** received from a friend via e-mail vs. face-to-face, little difference was perceived – 3% say e-mail is more credible than face-to-face, 47% say there is no difference between e-mail & face-to-face, and 50% say face-to-face is more credible. When the communication is from a *business associate* the numbers change slightly: e-mail more credible (8%); no difference (47%); face-to-face more credible (46%).

	Very/Somewhat Believable	Mean Score 1 = Very Unbelievable, 5 = Very Believable
National Newspapers	96%	4.31
Local Newspapers	94	4.12
Newspaper Websites	92	4.12
Network/Nat'l TV Stations	86	4.00
Local TV Stations	75	3.70
Network/Nat'l TV Websites	80	3.91
E-mail From Business Associates	79	3.97
Radio	78	3.82
E-mail From Friends	67	3.79
Local TV Station Websites	66	3.63
Corporate Websites	60	3.45
The Internet (in general)	46	3.21
E-mail From People You Do Not Know	5	1.88

A random sample of members from PRSA & IPRA, and those who attended the PR World Congress 2000 were surveyed. From these, 276 usable responses were received (a return rate of 32.8%).

OFFERS POSSIBILITY FOR GREAT CHANGE IN PR

"Some believe special interest groups, NGOs and a variety of anti-corporate and anti-capitalism organizations (ACOs) have taken better advantage of these cyberspace opportuni-

ties and used the Internet more effectively for public relations purposes than many corporations and most public relations and advertising firms. Scholars say corporate and agency websites focus upon communication *outputs* by disseminating information. However, special interest, NGO and ACO websites focus on communication *outcomes*, and **provide more interactive opportunities**, which enhance relationship development."

Other highlights from the survey:

- 65% say the increased information the new technologies have provided has strengthened the *professional ties* between journalists and public relations people. 19% say it has weakened ties.
- 53% believe the new technologies have strengthened the *personal rapport and relationships* between journalists and pr people; 31% believe they have weakened this rapport.
- 91% say they now stay in touch with more people in their business and professional environments than they did before e-mail; 7% disagree
- Asked if they believe technology teaches interpersonal communication skills, 55% disagree, 19% agree.
- E-mail has become the most popular method of delivering information to journalists. Two-thirds say they would be "very likely" to use e-mail if they had to deliver to journalists information similar to what is contained in a typical news release. 24% would be "somewhat likely" to use e-mail. Telephone and fax tied for second.

"Since effective public relations not only involves sending information to target audiences, but also requires forming relationships with these audiences, the building of relationship with key publics is a fundamental goal of what public relations professionals do. **This monograph represents one of the first studies examining how the Internet is impacting relationships between journalists and those who practice public relations.**"

("The Magic Communication Machine" is downloadable from www.instituteforpr.com)

RESEARCH SHOWS IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING STAKEHOLDERS' ACTUAL PERCEPTIONS; CO-ORIENTATION MODEL CAN IDENTIFY ISSUES, GUIDE STRATEGY

Research by Kathleen Kelly (U Louisiana) and Michael Thompson (Hammond & Assoc, Alexandria) using the co-orientation model shows **how critical prior, concrete knowledge is to designing programs**. Hospice and physicians disagreed over the amount of time terminally ill patients and their families need to benefit from Hospice services and deal with end of life issues. Hospice believes six months are important; physicians had in many cases shortened the time to weeks, if not days.

Hospice also considered the financial ramifications for shortened stays; Medicare reimbursements remain the same regardless of the number of Hospice visits, which increase sharply closer to death.