

rates, commute times, farmers markets, recycling rates, musicians/actors/nightclubs per capita. Top honors go to these cities: 1) San Francisco; 2) Minneapolis; 3) Seattle; 4) Boston; 5) Denver; 6) Portland; 7) Washington, DC; 8) Austin; 9) Chicago; 10) Milwaukee; 11) New York City; 12) Nashville; 13) Pittsburgh; 14) Los Angeles; 15) Atlanta. **What are Gen X'ers looking for in jobs?** 1) Control over their time (flex time, job sharing, telecommuting); 2) Career pathways or enrichment programs (read: training, training, training); 3) use of good technology for its intended purpose, to communicate with and among employees; 4) a meaningful job and a manager smart enough to communicate its meaning; 5) an employer who values a work-life balance and shows it by actively participating in community events like ethnic and Pride festivals, classroom wireups and extreme sporting events. (More from www.KeepYoungTalent.com)

¶ **Never Say "No" To Your Customers** if you want to exceed current levels, writes Barton Goldsmith, a leadership consultant. Instead, train your customer service team to find an answer for the disgruntled person that avoids the word "No." This may take a little research. Develop a list of solutions and alternatives. For example, rather than saying "No," say that you will work on their problem and you will find a suitable solution, or say "we are unable to provide that service." The word "no" gives rise to too many emotional issues and can put people off. By using alternatives to the word "no" you can turn someone who is disappointed in your product or service into a cheerleader for your organization. (More from Goldsmith at www.BartonGoldsmith.com)

¶ **Triggering Your Target Audience's Behavior Means Understanding Competing Interests** for their actions. A perfect example of how to do this is seen in a local church ad touting "Our winter worship schedule allows time for your other religion." The other religion? Football. Copy goes on to say that the "fourth quarter Hail Mary pass" might be more effective with "a little praying time under our belts." Sunday services are scheduled at 10am - late enough for those wanting to sleep, early enough for those wanting to make kick-off. (Copy of ad from prr)

¶ **A Fast, Low-Cost Approach To Audio And Video News Releases** has been developed by MDS Broadcast Services. "News Talkers" are 2-10 minute interviews produced by phone or in person and posted within one hour for access via the Internet by the media and other audiences. They can be promoted by fax, e-mail or mail. They can serve as stand-alone editorial commentary or as supporting material for news releases, pitch letters and other communications. For description and demonstration of "News Talkers," plus a hotlink to a free video guide on "Using Audio & Video on the Internet for PR Purposes," visit www.mdsconnect.com.

¶ **Hiring New PR Grads?** Give them "A View From the Cubicle: Ten Tips To Help You Tackle Your First Job." It's written with a humorous twist by two practitioners who themselves are "navigating the bumpy waters of our first 'real' jobs." Tip #1 speaks to both newcomers and longtimers: "Whosa Whatsa Huh - How to Decipher Professional Jargon. No matter how much you think you know, you have to learn the language to communicate with the natives.... Most of these folks have been in the industry for a while and forget that while this language is second nature to them, it sounds like Swahili to you.... Ask them if they will take 5 minutes to run through the language to make sure you have not misunderstood anything.... If you invest the time to seek explanations now, you will reap the benefits in the long run." Authors Allison Sloan and Gillian Rubin are account coordinators with the legal marketing firm Levick Strategic Communications. (For a copy of "Ten Tips," e-mail prr)

ENGAGING EMPLOYEES IS PRIMARY IN QUALITY CARE, EFFICIENCY; HEALTHCARE STUDY HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL EMPLOYEE RELS

Hospitals wanting to improve the quality of care - yet thrive financially - can achieve both goals by tending to the needs and concerns of their employees, suggests a new Gallup study. "Many healthcare professionals may not realize that by simply targeting the right workplace factors for improvement, both goals may be met simultaneously," says Rick Blizzard, healthcare consultant for Gallup (Princeton, NJ). Although quality care and bottom-line success seem like concepts that should be at odds with one another, both can be achieved by engaging employees in a real way.

THAT IS, GIVE MORE THAN LIP SERVICE

"Even among hospitals that seek out employees' opinions, many don't

ask the right questions or do little to implement change based on the results." Past Gallup research finds that employee surveys can make things worse.

The pollster's 1993 study of human resources and organizational development personnel in Fortune 500 companies found 80% conducted employee surveys, but a staggering 60% reported being "worse off" after those surveys.

"The key question is not, 'How satisfied are my employees?' It is, 'How strong is our culture?'" The answer requires a focused approach based on items of proven impact. To improve, healthcare organizations must select a process that is implemented at the local, or 'workgroup' level. This process must be seen as ongoing and not just a single event."

EVALUATE PROGRESS AT TAX TIME

Gallup has tested more than 1 million questions to identify the 12 key indicators of employee engagement, or the Q12. It measures employee engagement and links it directly to productivity, employee retention, customer retention, safety and profitability. Organizations reporting high levels of employee engagement are more likely to have above-average:

- employee retention
- customer loyalty
- safety records
- productivity
- profitability

"Engaged employees are more productive, make more money for the company, and stay longer. The benefits aren't just internal. Customers who interact with engaged employees return more often, purchase more, become loyal advocates and pay higher prices."



ENGAGED EMPLOYEES BRING BOTTOM-LINE SUCCESS

line, says Blizzard. Using hospitals in its database, Gallup tracked the impact of change in Q12 engagement scores on Earnings Before Interest, Depreciation and Taxes (EBIDTA) from 1999-2001. "Between those years, EBIDTA increased an average of \$172.08 per admission for those who increased their Q12 engagement scores by 4% or more," says Blizzard. "If Q12 engagement increased less than 4%, EBIDTA declined an average of \$38.73. If Q12 engagement declined overall, EBIDTA declined an average of \$160.97 per admission."

If the average hospital has 200 beds and 12,500 admissions per year and improves its employee engagement 4% or more, it can expect to add \$2,151,000 to its bottom line, reports Blizzard. "But more importantly, **engaged employees deliver better customer care**, and that's a healthy development for everyone."

A PRACTITIONER'S RESPONSE – EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT, BUT SOMETIMES DIFFICULT

community and public affairs, Scripps Center for Community Health & Advocacy (San Diego), told prr. "Satisfied employees treat customers well and the organization's performance is enhanced. Creating a supportive culture for employees within hospitals and other medical institutions also creates a more supportive patient environment – Gallup's numbers bear that out." But, Bardin notes, sometimes things are easier said than done. "There comes a time when revenue is so curtailed and demands are so great that you just can't maintain the level of supportive environment employees desire. Obviously, there is a balancing point between circumstances that surround positive employee engagement and fiscal and other operational realities that detract from the organization's resources to perform."

The objective – better efficiency and care – hasn't been reached until the organization can document the impact of those improvements on its bottom

"Gallup identifies a significant dynamic that is as important in healthcare as in any other service endeavor," Michael Bardin, PRSA's HC Section chair and director,

RESPONSE TO ACTIVISTS REQUIRES EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

Business should not ignore activist groups, argues Denise Deegan in a report titled "Managing Activism." Britain's biggest companies, she says, are losing the battle against a new breed of militants because these companies have no effective strategy to deal with activists. The activist groups use simple and powerful messages, regularly repeated. They influence people's feelings by using emotional language. Issues therefore easily spiral out of control.

As McDonald's learned, **taking activists to court can make them martyrs**. By appearing as David in a David versus Goliath battle, activists portray a company as a bully and thus damage its reputation.

When responded to in the right manner, activists sometimes change their approach from aggressively confrontational to cooperative. **Before engaging them in negotiation, however, the study recommends that companies "learn to think like their 'enemies.'"**

LESSONS FROM THE WORLD BANK

as a matter of wrong perceptions, the bank **introduced a more open information policy** with protest groups. This approach was started when James Wolfensohn took over the bank in 1995. The bank's

The World Bank has learned to deal with "civil society." Instead of treating criticism

new strategy, according to John Clark, the bank's principal social-development specialist, has five strands:

- Expanding **collaboration** in operations, emphasizing early involvement by civil society in project design
- **Engaging civil society** in discussing strategies within each country
- Beginning a new disclosure policy of **making a wider array of information public**
- Establishing a **regular dialogue** on big policy issues such as environment and debt relief, replacing more informal consultations
- Using its influence over borrowing government to **encourage greater tolerance** of civil groups

A NEW TOOL AVAILABLE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST URBAN LEGENDS – BETTER KNOWN AS RUMORS AND MYTHS

The rat in the chicken batter, the urine in the beer, the melting of the spoon in the cola are all long-standing urban legends forever despised by their current targets, feared by the next. As new legends arise in the wake of September 11, researchers in OD have found that the most effective legends – those that "provoke anger, fear or disgust" – are most likely to be read, remembered and passed on. Showing the multiplicity of similar stories that exist can help in dousing the flame.

Researcher Chip Heath, a professor of organization behavior at Stanford University, with colleagues at Duke University found that the most disgusting legend tends to become dominant. "As long as something has emotion, it doesn't need content."

Heath, in research published in the December issue of the *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology* suggests one of the most effective techniques in destroying a legend is to **show there are multiple versions of the same story floating around**. Targeted websites, such as www.snopes.com and www.urbanlegends.com, are recommended to help track false stories and persuade others that these stories are false.

"The people who pass them along believe they are true," says Heath. "People say this could happen and it's plausible and I am therefore justified in talking about it."

A ROUNDUP OF ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **The Difference Between Management And Public Relations Consultants** may be in how we feel about what we do...and ultimately, what we *do*. 70 NY *management* consultants joined ranks on a pro bono project to study the terrorist attack's economic impact on NYC. "For the first time," said one participant, "I could say I was actually doing something for society." [What is it they are doing the rest of the time?] Perhaps *public relations* professionals need to think more about what we can do. See this week's supplement, John Budd's [plain talk](#), on the relevant question of "what is public relations doing for society these days?"

¶ **The Top Cities For Gen X'ers** (aged 21-41) based on 43 variables measuring best places to live *and* work are listed in "Hot Jobs-Cool Communities." Researchers looked at such things as crime