

(5,121), c) U of Fla has the largest undergrad program with 907 students, d) Boston U has the most master's students (71), e) U of Maryland has the most doctoral students (19). In the joint pr & adv'g programs, f) U of South Carolina has the largest undergrad program (618 students), g) Northwestern U (IL) has the most master's students (85), h) Penn State has conferred the most degrees (171).

¶ **Measuring The Business Value Of Stakeholder Relationships** is the subject of a new quarterly newsletter titled *engagement* from Simon Fraser University's The Center for Innovation in Management (CIM). A joint study by CIM and the Schulich School of Business is examining the link between high trust stakeholder relationships and business value creation. Study is sponsored by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. "So far the research suggests that trust, a cooperative spirit and shared understanding between a company and its stakeholders creates greater coherence of action, better knowledge sharing, lower transaction costs, lower turnover rates and organizational stability. In the bigger picture, social capital appears to minimize shareholder risk, promote innovation, enhance reputation and deepen brand loyalty," reports *engagement*. The first phase of the research is complete and a report is available at CIM's website. Phase two involves detailed case studies with six companies that have earned a competitive business advantage through their stakeholder relationships. (More from [www.cim.sfu.ca](http://www.cim.sfu.ca); 604-437-6112)

**Tough Environment Creates Opportunity For PR.** "At no other time is pr more valuable as a sales tool than in challenging economic environments like the one we currently face," says Sabrina Horn, CEO of the Horn Group (San Francisco), a national high technology pr firm. She estimates that the length of the sales cycle may have doubled, with many hot prospects having deferred their purchasing decisions to end of the quarter or next year. She tells clients, "Now is the time to be bullish about all the good things that your company is doing to build investor, customer and employee confidence." With sales the most imperative function to help a company survive and thrive, "pr can be the most cost-effective, credible means of helping your sales organization succeed."

¶ **PR Salary Check-Up** is available free online at [www.springassociates.com](http://www.springassociates.com), offered by Spring Associates – an executive search and consulting firm serving pr, corporate and mktg com'ns, investor rels and pa. Your personal salary data is electronically compared to thousands of other pr pros nationwide with similar stats who live and work in your local area. The check-up will give you "actual salary ranges – a useful tool for determining your relative worth in the pr marketplace." Database contains salary & career info on over 8,500 pr and corporate com'ns pros nationwide. Firm also publishes a Salary & Bonus Report (annually since 1987). Salary and bonus data is given for a) 8 specialty categories across 11 title designations for corporations and firms; b) 4 regions of the country (NE, SE, MW & West), c) 8 key metro cities (NY, Chi, Atlanta, LA, Boston, Dallas, DC and SF), d) pr firm per-hour billing rates for various titles & specialties; e) job descriptions – for corporate and firm professionals. (More from [www.springassociates.com](http://www.springassociates.com))

¶ **Harvard Business School Launches Global Initiative** whose purpose is to increase the level of the School's international research and course development outside the US. Program also seeks to position the School as an intellectual resource to the world by reaching out to business leaders in emerging economies and also to leading business academics. John Quelch, senior associate dean for International Development and the Lincoln Filene Professor Business Administration, heads the program. He says it is important to the School's international student body that course materials are drawn from diverse country environments that illustrate cross-border and cross-cultural issues in business management.

## IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT DISSEMINATING INFO; BUILDING TRUST, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ARE KEY FOR SCIENCE AND ALL COM'N

Practitioners, educators, journalists and scientists recently gathered to: a) explore the changing way the public perceives science and technology issues, and b) figure out the best ways to communicate scientific issues to their publics. Sponsored in part by the Department of Energy, "Communicating the Future: Best Practices for Communication of Science and Technology to the Public" yielded insights about how perceptions of science and associated risk issues are evolving. Some highlights:

### EDUCATION IS KEY

Keynote speaker Joseph Schwarcz, McGill prof and dir of the Office of Chemistry & Society (Montreal) says that educating the public is key to allaying irrational fears. "We need public education.... A recent poll shows that 30% of Europeans believe that only genetically engineered tomatoes contain genes!" Schwarcz hosts a radio show that takes calls from people curious about chemistry. One woman, for example, phoned in upset about phosphates in bread. She had confused *phosphates* with *phosphorites*, a sedimentary deposit. Another person was afraid of the chemicals listed on the side of a macaroni box. There's no escape – "everything is chemicals," notes Schwarcz. Things to emphasize:

1. **Scientists are rational, ethical people**, not biotech Nazi's, as some websites would suggest;
2. **We can't afford to turn our backs on technology** – the benefits outweigh the risks;
3. **The public wants yes or no answers, but scientists talk in numbers.** That's the crux of some of the mistrust, as instantaneous, definitive responses are not always attainable;
4. **Many nutritional trends are based on nonsense** – outrageous science. One diet book claims enzymes are in all molecules and atoms. Furthermore, interests that have an agenda start Internet rumors such as "Aspartame Kills." "Our role as scientists is to **put the debate in the proper perspective** and communicate it to the public."
5. Science educators need to **teach people how to think**, not what to think, so that they can reason things through, such as would have been the case for the lady concerned about her bread.

"We have to have an open mind because things are often not the way they appear to be. When Marconi developed radio science, many scientists thought it couldn't work across the ocean, since radio waves couldn't curve. No one had thought of bouncing them off the atmosphere."

### ANOTHER VIEW: FACTS ASIDE, TRUST DETERMINES PERCEPTION

According to Texas AMU journalism prof Susanna Hornig Priest, conventional wisdom asserts that the general public would be more supportive of hot science issues such as biotech if it understood the science better. Hornig Priest disagrees. "The situation is more complex, presenting a challenge to our understanding." She says trust

in relevant institutions appears more closely related to levels of support than does mastery of scientific knowledge. She notes **three evolving paradigms in science communication**:

1. **Deficit Model.** This is the notion that the way to make people more sympathetic toward science is to fill them with scientific facts (hence, a deficit). Facts are only a piece of the picture.
2. **Psychometric Model.** Facts, but also values, attitude, misperception and risk perception issues also factor in. "But it's hard to take values and attitudes and put them in a qualitative model that will point to an improvement."
3. **Public Opinion Model.** "Here, we're conceptualizing how people respond to science in a different way." Attitudes about science and risk are matters for public policy, public debate, and public participation. "When people make up their minds, they're not always making a measurable decision based on data; it's a matter of 'who,' not 'what' to believe."

"Research finds that education has some influence on support for science, but not as much as we had thought. **The biggest factor is whether people have trust for the institution**, be it government, the scientific community, etc.... Scientific literature should include social dimensions and the politics as well as the facts." Then, adds Hornig Priest, public discourse would reflect the socio-political dimensions of a given science/technology issue.

Hornig Priest's research concerning European perceptions about biotechnology indicates a "trust gap" variable. "If we look at the difference between trust in industry and trust in environmental groups across 20 countries, it's the biggest predictor of feelings about biotechnology. We should recognize how science is viewed and the politics behind science is something we need to talk more about."

#### PICTURE BLEAK FOR SCIENCE JOURNALISM, BUT INTERNET ALLOWS BETTER CRAFTED INFO, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

According to science reporter Peggy Girshman of National Public Radio (DC), science writers face problems shared by all journalists:

1. **Declining interest in news.** News consumption about 9/11 aside, people are taking in less news. "Local and network news are collapsing their newsrooms, foreign bureaus are shutting down."
2. **What news they do get comes from tv.** Newspaper readership is in serious decline, especially among those 34 and under, and with competition from news channels running 24 hours, the news that producers feature has to be sexy. Girshman says it's therefore no surprise that a serious news program such as Nightline would be singled out for replacement by the hipper David Letterman.
3. **Everyone has a remote.** Unique to our era is the zap factor: if a reporter doesn't sound interesting in a half-sentence, he or she can be zapped off. "Women tend to be more loyal and wait for their favorite people to come back on. Men, if it's not blowing up, will change the channel."

The soundbite mentality is harmful to science news, which often needs time to be explained. Many reporters don't have the background to translate the importance of an issue to news directors. Furthermore, often-sensational medical news (e.g., a treatment for Alzheimer's) will fill a science segment and bump a story on, say, tabletop fusion. And even those medical segments are getting shorter and shorter.

Girshman points out, however, that hope for science news is not lost. One result of the competition all vying for a waning audience is lots of info sharing, of feeds, footage and news on the Internet. Some

outlets have found that providing an online expansion of the news (MSNBC) allows them to go into more detail about a subject without concerns about remotes or segment lengths. Furthermore, it allows the public to participate in discourse and in the news dissemination process.

#### WHY LOCATION MEETINGS WIN OUT OVER VIRTUAL MEETINGS

"It seems that webcasting, while promising in theory, often remains clumsy in practice. Erratic video delivery and participant connection problems are common complaints. Yes, money is saved. But the cost of saving money seems to be more than some organizations can afford," writes John Mackenzie from The Writing Works. He lists these **benefits of group (face-to-face) meetings**:

1. **Group therapy** (the catharsis connection). Attenders share anxieties and concerns, plans and problems better than if they're scattered around the country.
2. **Presentation impact** (the power of the group). You can introduce a new product or service with a virtual meeting, but you won't build the contagious excitement or feedback opportunities you get when an audience experiences the same event in one location.
3. **What I learned in the lounge.** Off-site assemblies provide a superb environment for informal exchange; often as useful as anything on the official agenda. And these encounters are not limited to the lounge. Hallways, hospitality suites, coffee shops are right up there along side your basic Bud and Margarita. Job-title barriers to candid discussion soften. Anecdotal stories surface that would never make the company newsletter or webcast. Employees who hardly ever see each other talk over company problems and potentials that would never make it onto any teleconference. And 3-D body language provides supplementary communication cues difficult to sense via desktop video.
4. **Recognition environments.** Reward and recognition meetings are tough to replicate with a teleconference. It's the nature of group situations to amplify recognition value and importance. Those who win awards get a chance to relish the disappointment of those who don't, while enjoying a degree of public envy and admiration denied by desktop isolation.
5. **Looking like a leader at the lectern.** Meetings are often more important for those who give them than they are for those who come to them. Using meetings to build career clout seems to work best in a group situation that geographically fractionated web transmissions cannot really provide.
6. **Does the medium massage the message?** To what extent does a two-dimensional webcast alter the impact and value of information otherwise obtained in a more traditional 3-D environment? I don't know. But I suspect there are substantial differences – remaining to be quantified by some Ph.D. in communications theory. (More from Mackenzie at [www.thewritingworks.com](http://www.thewritingworks.com))

#### ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **PR Education Info Is On The Internet.** Info on pr & adv'g programs in 197 US colleges and universities can be found at [www.mcom.ttu.edu/wsig/](http://www.mcom.ttu.edu/wsig/). Info comes from the 38<sup>th</sup> edition of *Where Shall I Go To Study Advertising and Public Relations?* edited by Billy Ross (Louisiana State U) and Keith Johnson (Texas Tech U). For example: a) 42,448 students are working toward pr & adv'g degrees, b) pr programs have the largest enrollment (18,088) and the largest number of grads