

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

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Contents

PR in Education: Staying Ahead of the Learning Curve

Despite its history of being an outcast in the business world, the PR field has undergone an evolution in recent years that any Darwinist communicator would celebrate: the weak, inept and distrustful PR practitioners have largely been weeded out of the proverbial gene pool, leaving the strong to prosper. But, in

spite of the continuing integration of communications into overall organizational portfolios, one nagging question still remains:

What must happen to elevate the credibility of the communications function once and for all?

Surely a dissonant chorus would reply with a number of answers, but one could make the argument that the problem – and solution – lie in the oft-

disingenuous attempts at incorporating public relations and communications into collegiate education. True, a number of

institutions have established credible programs that school students in PR(see sidebar), but there is still a disconnect between theory and practice. Where should it fit into curricula?

The crux of the current challenges in PR and communications education hinges on the following

industry trends, as defined by those within academia:

SUCCESSION PLANNING 101

“Communications [including journalism and marketing] and public relations education programs tend to be built around individual people rather than institutions,” according to Donald K. Wright, professor of public relations at **Boston University’s** School of Communication.

It is a challenge that rivals the issue of succession planning

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((PR PULSE))

Use and Abuse of Web Videos - Signed, Anonymous

Former presidential candidate Al Gore’s documentary “An Inconvenient Truth” made waves this summer as both a blockbuster hit and a meditation on the state of global warming, but recently a controversy surrounding the movie surfaced, putting a public affairs/PR firm in the hot seat: A video spoof of Gore’s film shown on **YouTube.com** that was allegedly created by a 29-year-old Beverly Hills resident identified as “Toutsmith” has been traced back to a computer registered with Washington D.C.-based **DCI Group**, as originally reported by the **Wall Street Journal**. While the PR firm has declined to comment on why press communications with the supposed video maker appear to originate in their office, the news raised eyebrows all around, especially considering that DCI counts once-environmental-offender **ExxonMobil Corporation** among its clients. According to the **WSJ** article: “Dave Gardner, an Exxon spokesman, confirms that Exxon is a client of DCI. But he says Exxon had no role in creating the ‘Inconvenient Truth’ spoof.”



Don Wright

Four Steps to Hispanic PR Outreach

The Hispanic population is America’s largest minority demographic, consisting of 39.9 million people or roughly 14 percent of the population. This group also represents the fastest growing portion of the population. Yet in some cases, PR professionals have been confused and uncertain in trying to reach out to this demographic.

Part of this challenge is due to the relative newness of this demographic’s numeric power. It was not until the 2003 release of **U.S. Census** figures, when Hispanics bypassed African Americans as the largest minority group, that many people acknowledged the depth and scope of this segment. Within this segment, 40 percent of the Hispanic population is foreign

born, and of that segment 52 percent arrived in this country between 1990 and 2002.

At the same time, many PR people find themselves making common mistakes based on misperceptions regarding language and ethnic identity issues. For any PR outreach to Hispanic audiences, there are four key considerations that need to be addressed.

COMMUNITIES, NOT COMMUNITY

Unlike other demographics measured by the **U.S. Census**, Hispanics are not viewed as a racial group. That’s because there is no such thing as a Hispanic race. Hispanics represent a wide range of racial heritages traced to Europe,

Africa, Asia and the indigenous nations of the Americas. The Hispanic world is also acutely separated by nationalism.

“I’d like to set the record straight about the myth of the Hispanic monolith,” says Felix Vasquez Jr., president of the New York agency **RPG Communications**. “There is no Hispanic community, per se. There is a Mexican-American community, a Cuban-American community, a Salvadoran-American community, etc. And, of course, there are the four million people living in Puerto Rico – all of them are American citizens.”

Vasquez adds that among the different communities, there is very little in the way

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► Charting The Industry

Managing Your Media Relations

Media relations management and measurement often go hand in hand, and the results of a recent *PR News/Vocus* survey underscore that reality. More than 400 PR and communications professionals in the agency, corporate and nonprofit sectors responded to the “Managing Your Media Relations” survey, highlighting the growing role measurement plays in executive-level conversations.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents said that they are required to measure PR activities and report the results to C-level executives. This reiterates the common notion that the C-suite speaks a very specific language, and numbers are the best way for communications professionals to have a share in the conversation.

What’s more, the most substantial percentage of respondents cited their reasons for reporting measurement results as the need to align PR goals with overall corporate goals (26%) and prove the value of PR to management (25%).

“We have to [measure our activity and report results] to justify our budgets,” says David Brunet, a communications specialist for **State Farm Insurance**. “There are also themes that the C-suite wants to communicate to the public, and we need to demonstrate that we can be successful in doing that.”

Not surprisingly, the most common mechanism for respondents’ media measurement efforts remains clip counting, with 68 percent of those surveyed spending one to eight hours per week on that activity (fifteen percent report spending between nine and 16 hours per week). This is still representative of an output-based measurement standard rather than an outcome-based one, as the majority of respondents monitor and track news

coverage based upon company, products and executives (79%), date of coverage (66%) and outlet and journalist (57%); a minority of people report the ability to monitor and track coverage of competition, and monitoring for tone is absent altogether. Most surprising, though, is the fact that one-third of respondents aren’t required to measure and report results to the C-suite.

“Companies that don’t track

and measure their coverage, as well as their competition’s coverage, are putting themselves at a disadvantage,” says Kelly Brighton, director of marketing communications at Vocus. “Measurement should always be tied to overall goals.” **PR*N***

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MANAGING YOUR MEDIA RELATIONS: AN EXCLUSIVE SURVEY

1. How many PR people do you have in your organization?

1	26%
2-5	50%
6-10	13%
10+	11%

2. How many hours per week does your PR team spend on compiling and managing news clippings?

0	11%
1-8	68%
9-16	15%
17-24	3%
25+	3%

3. Are you able to track all your journalist conversations and view the complete history of any correspondence or conversation?

Yes	36%
No	64%

4. Are you able to monitor and track the news coverage by: (check all that apply)

Your company, products and executives	79%
Your competition	33%
Date of coverage	66%
Outlet and journalist	57%

5. Are you required to measure and report on PR activities (news coverage, progress of campaigns) to C-Level Management?

Yes	67%
No	33%

5b. If so, what is the basis for that reporting (choose all that apply):

Plan PR budget	4%
Align PR goals with overall corporate goals	26%
Prove value of PR to management	25%
Involve and engage management in the PR process	13%
Don't know	2%
No response	30%

6. How much do you spend annually for your PR management tools/ services (e.g., news monitoring, clip management, list services)?

\$0-2500	39%
\$2501-5000	21%
\$5001-10000	17%
\$10001-15000	5%
\$15001-20000	2%
\$20001-50000	7%
\$50000+	7%
No response	2%

7. How do you most often collaborate with your PR team on projects and activities (including agencies)? Check all that apply.

E-mail	87%
Phone calls	58%
Weekly meetings	55%
Shared database of project status, activities	35%
No response	3%
Other	7%

Source: PR News and Vocus

► Quick Study

PR 2.0; Measuring Agency Mentions in the Blogosphere

THE HR/PR CONNECTION

► As the dividing line between PR and marketing continues to blur, the once-feuding siblings of the communications family are showing an increased likeness to one another, according to a recent study released by **HRmarketer.com**. The study, which surveyed suppliers in the HR/benefits marketplace during the first quarter of 2006, highlights trends in HR marketing and underscores the growing consolidation of marketing and PR resources.

This resource consolidation has benefited marketers accordingly, as marketing PR “drives online lead generation efforts ... through online media placements such as Web site publications and e-newsletters, more specifically those that link back to an online information collection form, and via marketing press releases.” With that, 74 percent of survey respondents have increased their PR spending; thus, PR-department size

has grown accordingly. Other increased allocations: print, e-mail direct and events marketing.

The study also points to the increase in PR 2.0, or the “adoption of Web 2.0 tools

Katie Paine, president and CEO of measurement firm **KDPaine & Partners**, has begun measuring the share of discussion of seven PR firms (**Fleishman-Hillard, Ogilvy, Burson-Marsteller, Weber**

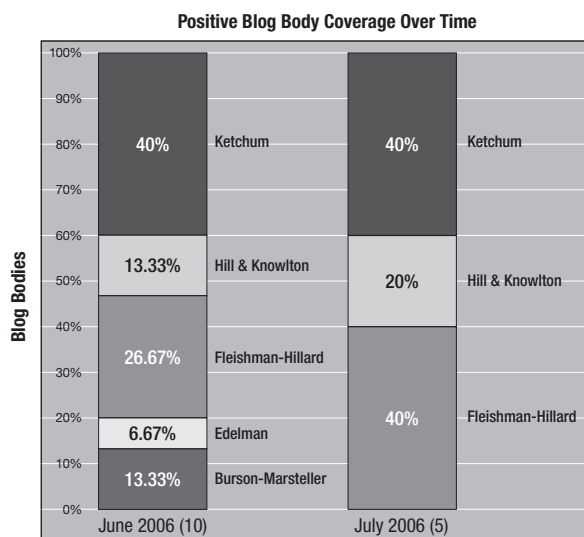
Shandwick, Hill & Knowlton, Ketchum, Porter Novelli and Edelman) in blogs over time as a feature of her proprietary measurement dashboard. (Note: Paine only counts blogs that allow for commentary – no postings of press releases were considered in these measurements.)

The results for July: Ketchum tied Fleishman for share of positive blog coverage in July with 40 percent; the remainder of positive cover-

(blogs, podcasts and RSS feeds) to distribute a PR message,” but acknowledges the still-slow adoption of the term – and the practice – in the communications industry.

MEASURING THE BLOGOSPHERE

► In the ever-growing world of measurement, yet another milestone has been reached:



age went to Hill & Knowlton with 20 percent. (See graph)

In terms of blog body coverage over time, Fleishman topped the list with nearly 26 percent, followed by Hill & Knowlton and Ketchum (both at just over 20 percent), Burson (close to 17 percent), and with Porter Novelli, Edelman, Weber Shandwick and Ogilvy rounding out the list. **PRN**

► PR Sherpa

Required Reading

Any PR professional can beef up his or her library with the following titles, each of which gives unique and anecdotal insights into the fields of PR, marketing and/or business.

The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR, by Al and Laura Ries (Collins, 2004)

The Cluetrain Manifesto: The End of Business as Usual, by Christopher Locke, Rick Levine, Doc Searls, and David Weinberger (Perseus Books Group, 2001)

Lead Generation for the Complex Sale: Boost the Quality and Quantity of Leads to Increase Your ROI, Brian Carroll (McGraw-Hill, 2006)

Naked Conversations: How Blogs are Changing the Way Businesses Talk with Customers, by Robert Scoble and Shel Israel (Wiley, 2006)

Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything, by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner (William Morrow, 2005)

Corporate Conversations: A Guide to Crafting Effective and Appropriate Internal Communications, by Shel Holtz (AMACOM, 2003)

Unleashing the Power of PR: The Contrarian's Guide to Marketing and Communication, by Mark Weiner (Jossey-Bass, 2006)

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Using Measurement to Plan and Manage Stakeholder Engagement

Company: **Comalco (a member of the Rio Tinto Group)**

Agency: **Burson-Marsteller**

Timeframe: **2000-2004**

Budget: **\$245,000**

The year 2000 was a tough one **Comalco**, the primary bauxite/alumina supplier to Australia, New Zealand and export markets. Not only was the Brisbane, Queensland-based company facing challenges common to the mining industry – environmental concerns, for example – but opinion research also indicated that it was in need of a reputation facelift in the eyes of its key constituents to improve business and garner support for expansion plans. It was just a question of how to go about doing it with the maximum results.

The answer would come from halfway around the world. Comalco (a member of the **Rio Tinto Group**) executives reached out to the New York office of PR firm **Burson-Marsteller** to meet one overarching management goal: Provide external communications for the purpose of measuring Comalco's business through managing the company's reputation."

It sounds like a clear-cut mission with an obvious plan of attack, but the effort would require massive amounts of research to:

1. Identify the stakeholders that matter most to the company
2. Define the issues that matter most to constituents
3. Formulate a set of questions around constituents' expectations of excellence
4. Establish a benchmark against which success will be measured

To initiate the research phase

of the effort, Burson instituted a "Stakeholder Dialogue" approach, in which more than 700 local government and opinion leaders were identified and surveyed. The survey collected data about the issues that were most important to stakeholders in terms of an archetypal mining company; it then benchmarked the level of awareness. These benchmarks helped focus communications initiatives according to the needs of the company and its key constituents.

"The most important element was finding what [stakeholders] knew about the company already and where their information appetite was," says Diana Shayon, managing director at Burson and head of the reputation management division within Burson's corporate practice. "That enabled us to plot an audience map that informed all communications and PR outreach."

The research concluded that the key constituents' - in Comalco's case, these included opinion leaders, government officials, media representatives and environmental NGOs – awareness of the company's external activities was low, as was the credibility of its outgoing messages. The premise, then, of the Stakeholder Dialogue was achieved: It is in the business interest to know as precisely as possible who matters to operations, how to communicate with them and what to say, and Comalco was able to begin setting a stan-

dard for doing just that.

Moreover, in measuring the survey results, Comalco discovered that its reputation and credibility were in greatest peril in the community of Gladstone (Queensland), which happened to be the planned location for a \$750 million (USD) investment in a new refinery. Thus, the company would have to go to great lengths to reestablish trust among its key constituents there or risk substantial financial losses. To do so, it developed a Community Fund as an arm of Comalco, but with a board of community leaders and company executives. (The Fund has committed more than \$1 million to the Gladstone community since 2002.) This effort also spawned the Community Needs Assessment (CNA),

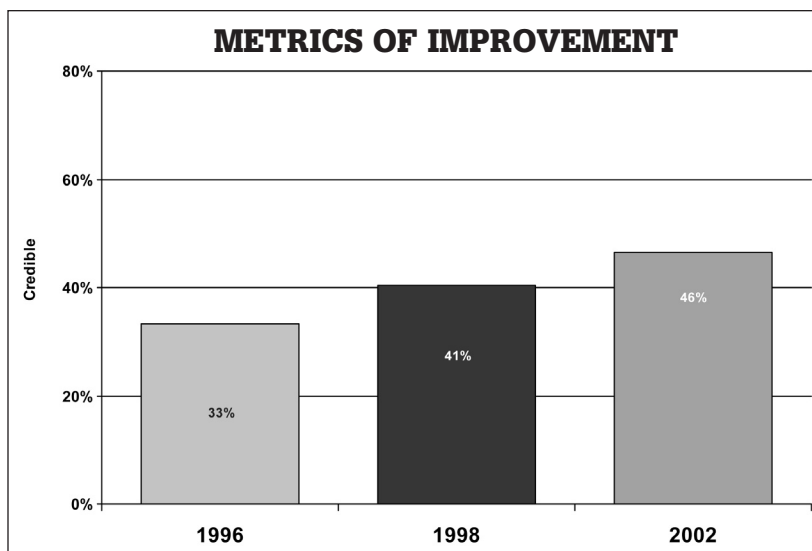
which provided an opportunity for company managers to develop personal relationships with the community's opinion leaders.

"Many companies consider media to be the primary message vehicle, but they miss the opportunity to get out and have one-on-one relationships with opinion leaders," Shayon says. "Technology now allows us to be very focused in that way."

As does measurement, which was the crux of this effort's success. Even though measurement was still in the early stages of maturation from clip counts and ad equivalencies to more complex outcome-based results when this initiative began, Comalco and Burson executives worked to measure goals against predetermined benchmarks. This was done through proprietary analyses that can't



**Diana Shayon,
Burson-Marsteller**



The Rio Tinto Group established stakeholder dialogues to survey constituents on their opinion of the mineral supplier's credibility. The above results track the metric over time; this measure was applied to Comalco, a member of the Rio Tinto group, by PR firm Burson-Marsteller to plan and manage stakeholder engagement for the Queensland-based supplier. The stakeholder surveys allowed Rio Tinto and its Comalco subsidiary to measure improvement in establishing credibility.

Source: Rio Tinto Group

be boiled down to one simple equation, but that are integral to defining success.

“Too many organizations react before understanding the nature of their expectations,” Shayon says. “Companies must use measurement as a benchmark and planning tool to guide communications, not simply as a report card.”

Indeed, with the help of Burson, Comalco used measurement as a planning tool and a communications strategy, but the final report card was worth mentioning as well. Management goals – understanding expectations and views of stakeholders critical to success; improving stakeholders’ perceptions and credibility of the company; maintaining Comalco’s operating license;

and providing a roadmap for the external communications programs – were all met and exceeded based on comparison of measured results against benchmarking data. For example, a follow-up survey of the same 700 hand-picked opinion leaders found that there was:

- ▶ A 70 percent increase in perceptions of Comalco
- ▶ A 60 percent increase in Comalco’s overall credibility
- ▶ An increase in the frequency of mentions of all company sources
- ▶ A 200 percent increase in Comalco’s credibility in Gladstone
- ▶ Closure in the gaps of awareness from 2000 to 2004
- ▶ A 100 percent increase in awareness of community programs and initiatives

Thus, success was achieved, but it didn’t come without its fair share of challenges. For one, initiatives like this often face a lack of continuity over time, which can complicate consistency in messaging. Shayon attributes the overall success of Comalco’s program to the company’s long-term commitment to the initiative – something many organizations have trouble achieving. She also emphasizes the importance of defining the measures of success before beginning an initiative; otherwise, goals can get lost in the shuffle. And, finally, understand that outcomes can change and progress can dwindle, so measure again to ensure that positive results are maintained.

In short, Comalco’s mission was accomplished – and lauded

by the communications industry as a whole. It won the **Institute for Public Relations’** Golden Ruler Award for Excellence in Public Relations Measurement in 2004, as well as a number of other national and international merits for excellence.

In the end, Comalco was able to position itself as an industry leader, and Shayon credits the accomplishment to the company’s attention to one key lesson:

“Communications must act as a mechanism to connect to the business of the business. Otherwise, you will be off track all along.” **PRN**

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▶ PR Scorecard

Good PR / Bad PR: A Public Affairs Spotlight

This week’s column climbs a hill: Capitol Hill, to be precise, with a focus on federally-oriented public affairs strategies. Whether the campaign involves getting messages into the corridors of power or getting the messages out beyond the Beltway, the public affairs experts take communications to new political extremes. But are the following examples a red-white-and-blue tribute to Good PR, or do they sink in the Tidal Basin of Bad PR? **PRN**

The PR Focus	Good PR or Bad PR?
EIN News reports the Republic of Congo hired Cohen & Woods International as its public affairs reps in Washington. Co-founded by Herman J. Cohen, former assistant secretary of state for Africa, the agency already secured a meeting between Congolese President Denis Sassou-Nguesso and President Bush. Up next: trying to get Sassou-Nguesso a Nobel Peace Prize for conflict mediation in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo.	GOOD PR: Nice touch with Bush, but the Nobel bit is a stretch due to Sassou-Nguesso’s domestic human rights policy. But his public affairs reps might see bittersweet justice in promoting his peacemaking skills. According to <i>American Diplomacy</i> , one of Cohen & Woods’s previous clients was Laurent Kabila, the slain president of the Democratic Republic of Congo.
In a video teleconference last month with Training and Doctrine Command public affairs officers, Brig. Gen. Anthony Cucolo (the Army chief of public affairs) stressed fighting the war on terror via the media. According to the Army News Service , Cucolo stated: “We need to fight misinformation, complacency and ignorance...When you are faced with misinformation, go after it and correct it.”	BAD PR: Cucolo also warned his audience, with no degree of warmth or irony: “I want those outside the Army who are talking about the Army to know we’re listening.” But is the Army really listening? The fact the Army is still trying to get a grip on its public affairs mission more than three years after the official end of hostilities in Iraq is a dismal reminder that its public information campaign is still not resonating.
<i>Online Journal</i> reports a new conservative Christian group has been created to promote Israel in the court of popular opinion. Christians United for Israel (CUFI) made its Washington debut on July 19 with the gala event “A Night to Honor Israel.” Israel’s U.S. Ambassador Daniel Ayalon was the guest of honor while greetings from President Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert were read aloud. CUFI also set up the “Israel Rapid Response” network to facilitate grass roots PR aimed at elected officials in Washington.	GOOD PR: Some critics have noted CUFI’s founder John C. Hagee’s statements that supporting Israel will lead fulfilling the New Testament prophecy’s of Christ’s return. Still, his generosity in considerable financial donations to Israeli charities and in coordinating the emigration of Russian Jews goes beyond mere evangelical babble. At a time when Israel’s PR is being hurt due to the violent conflict against Hezbollah within Lebanon, CUFI’s vigorous support of Israel is a stirring public affairs statement.

PR Education

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at large corporations – that is, what happens when the leaders that spearhead much of their institutions' thought leadership and education momentum leave their administrative posts?

SAMPLE OF PR EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- Alabama
- Ball State University
- Boston University
- Brigham Young University
- California State - Fullerton
- Colorado State University
- Eastern Kentucky University
- University of Florida
- Florida International
- University of Georgia
- Howard University
- Indiana State University
- University of Louisiana (Lafayette)
- University of Memphis
- University of Miami
- New York University
- Northern Iowa
- Northwestern University
- University of Oregon
- Rice University
- University of Southern California
- Syracuse University
- San Diego State
- San Jose State
- University of South Alabama
- University of South Carolina
- University of Texas at Austin
- Texas Christian University

Source: The majority of this list was compiled by Professors Don Stacks (University of Miami) and Don Wright (Boston University) and was presented at the Arthur W. Page Society/Tuck School of Business Academic Symposium in May 2006.)

The credibility of the programs should hinge on more than a single individual.

This is not to say that academic heads are not peerless within their institutions; instead, it is a impetus that PR education should operate as a business does, with succession plans for head professors and a means for continuing to evolve the curriculum to meet changing industry needs.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

It may be the holy grail of real estate, but the same can apply to PR education: Location matters. The problem is that, in the current state of PR and corpcomm education, the location of programs is not the same across the board – programs exist within journalism, business and communications departments, depending on the institution – and thus has sparked its fair share of controversy. Case in point: When Bob Zelnick, chairman of Boston University's journalism program, gave notice of his impending departure from the post in the spring of 2006, he spiced up the usual resignation letter with contentious side commentary.

"The two should be raised as adversaries," he wrote, referring to journalism and its PR, advertising and marketing relatives. He continued, "Had I remained in the chairmanship position, I would have begun urging that thought be given to divorcing Journalism from Mass COM [the umbrella term for BU's communications school]."

This statement embodies the debate surrounding PR's place in graduate education. If it resides within journalism, members of Zelnick's camp are up in arms that it is a conflict of interest and doesn't reflect real-world relationships. If it is housed within

business schools, as is the case with **Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business**, there is often more attention given to corporate communications classes and less to public relations. Depending on the student's area of interest, that can be beneficial:

"More CEOs want to give their communication executives a seat at the table," Tuck Professor Paul Argenti has said. "But to have that seat, they need to speak the same language and have a deep understanding of all areas of the business. That means having an M.B.A."

So should PR degree programs operate as independent entities?

"Once we establish the fact that we can measure and that we are strategic, we can stand on our own," says Don Stacks, professor and director of public relations at the **University of Miami School of Communication**.

No matter which side of the debate you land on, Wright emphasizes that one thing remains of utmost importance. "There is a huge need for public relations educators to communicate with each other regardless of which academic area they are housed in," he says.

HELLO, MY NAME IS _____

Which leads to another point: Communication often fails in more than one context, both between students and practitioners, and among professors of marketing, PR and business. Commenting on the latter communications foible, Wright says, "Business professors go to conferences where only a very small part of the meeting deals with corporate communication. I just returned from the **Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication** [AEJMC] conference, and that meeting was 90 percent journalism and broadcasting. We need

to stop this foolishness."

As for the former communications disconnect, **Northwestern University's** school of Integrated Marketing Communications is making moves to align its students with practitioners throughout the entire learning process. The programs offers:

► Advanced courses in advertising, public relations, direct marketing and e-commerce marketing

► In-class client projects where students solve real-world problems for participating companies. Recent client projects include **AOL, Kraft Foods, General Motors and Mercedes Benz**

► A residency program for full-time students that provides actual work experience, typically on location with corporate sponsors

(The characteristics of Medill's IMC programs were commented on by Adam Berkowitz, a student in **New York University's** Master's program for public relations and corporate communications, in his blog <http://nyuprprogram.blogspot.com/>.)

Perhaps it's a small step in the grand scheme of getting PR education up to speed with its business and journalism counterparts, but it's something.

"There is a group of enthusiastically concerned academics and PR professionals who want to move ahead," Stacks says. "If our core message is strategy, we must focus on getting the appropriate message to the appropriate audience. We have to prove that we can move the ball." **PRN**

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Hispanic PR

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of pan-Hispanic brotherhood. "It is the same thing with the Europeans," he says. "You won't find much common ground between Latin Americans. Go to a soccer match between a Mexican and a Colombian team and see how much Hispanic solidarity you'll find in the stands."

Kit Parker found that out the hard way. "Ten years ago, I did PR for the U.S. theatrical release of a movie called *Nueba Yol*," recalls Parker, president of **Kit Parker Films**. "In New York, the PR was easy because the local Dominican community loved the film's star, TV comedian Luisito Marti. The film made a lot of money in New York. But once we took it to other cities, it died." She acknowledged that a large portion of the Cuban community in Miami and the Mexican community in Los Angeles never heard of Luisito Marti and didn't care about a Dominican movie. "Yes, the film was in Spanish, but their reaction was 'so what?' The Dominican culture was totally alien to them and they didn't want to know about the movie," she says.

ENGLISH SPOKEN HERE

In some cases, it appears PR professionals abstain from outreach to many Hispanic media outlets unless the campaign is aimed directly at Hispanics. From the media side, journalist Carl Gomez is more than aware of this absence of communications.

"I've worked at Spanish-language newspapers and English-language newspapers, and the English-language newspapers would get at least 75 percent more news releases than the Spanish publications," says Gomez, associate pub-

lisher for the online magazine *Latino Review*. "Even for benign stuff, like new beauty products or the opening of a new movie, I'd hear about that over at the English newspapers but I would rarely hear about it in the Spanish-language newspapers."

From the PR side, there is evidence of disregarding Hispanic media.

"I know an agency (no names, please, but it is pretty

Testing Day campaign, she made sure she had Spanish-fluent talent at all levels.

"You absolutely have to have that capability," says Barnes. "We have someone on staff who is of Mexican descent, so we have the translation capacity here. Plus, for this campaign the program managers at the **Centers for Disease Control** are bi-lingual – so we had a lot of resources."

Barnes also worked with

bypassing the media for a direct communication with Hispanic communities is a B2C PR success story.

"Experiential promotions of consumer goods aimed at neighborhoods within the Hispanic population are among the most popular that we produce," says Borden. "Whether we show up at sporting events or music festivals, or even if our tour bus turns up in predominantly

Hispanic neighborhoods, the fact we are going into the community shows that we are interested in doing business there. It means a lot to our Hispanic customers."

On the B2B side, however, PR outreach to Hispanic business professionals may require more focus and input.

"Maybe there will be a couple of advertisers in *Hispanic Business Magazine* or a few vendors showing up at the U.S.

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's convention in Philadelphia this September," says Vasquez. "But on the whole, the corporate PR outreach to Hispanic business owners is lagging. However, how long did it take before corporate America realized there were African Americans who ran businesses? Hopefully, it won't take the same amount of time until Hispanic business owners get noticed." **PRN**

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America's Foreign-Born Hispanic Population			
COUNTRY	2000	2005	% CHANGE
Mexico	9,092,288	10,969,941	+20.7%
El Salvador	810,814	987,499	+21.8%
Cuba	855,704	895,861	+4.7%
Dominican Rep.	676,615	700,845	+3.6%
Guatemala	476,510	625,652	+31.3%
Colombia	507,955	556,407	+9.5%
Honduras	278,894	378,605	+35.8%
Peru	272,904	371,716	+36.2%
Statistics: U.S. Census Bureau and Queens College Department of Sociology			

big) that openly refuses to pitch the Spanish-language media in the U.S. unless there is a Hispanic angle to their work," says Vasquez. "I even asked one of their VPs why they don't include Hispanic newspapers and radio and TV stations in their outreach, and he said: 'Because they don't speak English over there.' It doesn't get dumber than that."

SPANISH, CORRECTLY

But that is not to say all PR professionals operate in that manner. Of course, it helps to communicate in Spanish without bungling the translation.

When Loring Barnes, managing partner of **Clarity Communications Group LLC** in Millis, MA, was planning a Hispanic media outreach as part of this year's National HIV

bi-lingual celebrities spokespersons, including actresses Salma Hayek and Laura Ceron and talk show host Cristina Saralegui, to help spread the campaign's message via public service announcements and podcasts. "We worked with celebrities who had affinities with that market and had different ways of communicating with their own style," she adds.

When asked about using free English-to-Spanish translation services found on the Internet, Barnes had an answer that is the same in both languages: "No."

INTO THE COMMUNITIES

PR programs aimed at Hispanics should not just be limited to media outreach. For Larry Borden, president of **The Borden Group** in Philadelphia,



A Failure to Communicate Should Not Be an Option When Doing Business

You've seen it in every classified ad and most job descriptions: Must have excellent communication skills. Even worse, once hired, it reappears annually each review period: Improve communication skills. What's a person to do? Communication skills don't require a graduate degree, just common sense, a bit of homework and a better understanding of the role communication plays — in everything:

► **Listen.** You don't have to speak like John F. Kennedy or orate like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to be considered a good communicator. Listening skills are the most ignored aspect of good communication skills. More misunderstandings occur due to poor listening than to misstatements.

► **Suspend that urge to speak while others are speaking.** Don't begin to prepare what you'll say next. Listen actively and intently, with ears, eyes, mind and body. Are you following what's being said? If so, nod in agreement. If not, a fur-

rowed brow indicates you are confused. Your speaker needs these cues. If you are truly heard and understood, repeat it back in your own words. This lets both parties know they're on the same wavelength.

► **Mind Your ABCs:** Accuracy, Brevity and Clarity.
► **Confirm you are being understood.** People appreciate short sentences; they are often confused by long, convoluted ones. Keep it succinct.

► **Don't be labeled "missing in action."** Some excellent communicators are deemed less so for not contributing in meetings. Don't let that happen to you.

► **Rehearse your ad-libs.** Now the night before meetings, review the agenda, compose your thoughts and rehearse making powerful yet concise statements about items of the day. To others, such remarks may appear off-handed. But you will be perceived as a more powerful and effective communicator. Also, develop

a nice yet firm statement to deal with interruptions, which will remind people you haven't yielded the floor yet.

► **It takes two.** Don't pay the price for another's communication shortcomings. It may require some work on your part, but it's worth the effort.

► **Fill the gap.** Don't be just a listener. Ask questions, even if those you are with don't; it will benefit everybody involved.

► **Write your speech.** It sounds like a Buddhist precept, but remember: Writing is a big part of communication. Let e-mails, weekly reports and other writings reinforce your clear thinking, organizational skills, attention to detail and ability to express important ideas.

► **Make your writing easy to read.** Spelling matters, even in e-mail. Use white space, numbered lists and bulleted items to communicate more effectively. Titles, subtitles and lists similarly add cogency. Write your piece, set it aside for a spellcheck, then review it and

strike out 25 percent to say it more succinctly.

► **Speak up.** Consider taking a public speaking class to improve your oral communication skills. The new skills, offline practice and confidence gleaned will help you in meetings, in giving reports and in making presentations.

Excellent communication skills help in many ways. With practice you can confidently give a speech, make a cold call, train others; conduct a meeting, make a sales presentation, interview someone or be interviewed.

Improved communication skills can open many doors, both within and beyond the workplace. It's time you sharpen your CQ — Your Communication Quotient. **PRN**

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► Corporate Reputation Gauge

Products and Services Make a Comeback

From *Fortune's* "Most Admired Companies" to *BusinessWeek/Interbrand's* "Best Global Brands" survey, the quest to achieve reputation greatness in the corporate world is an ongoing struggle. Along with the magazine world's measure of reputation and brand success, research and analysis firm **Delahaye** recently released the results of its second quarter 2006 Delahaye Index, which assesses how news

coverage reflects and shapes corporate reputation.

At the top of the list is **Microsoft Corp.** which, according to the index, has benefited greatly from news coverage of its products, services and corporate partnerships.

Another company that managed to achieve a top spot was **Walt Disney**, which the index says enjoyed positive media coverage from the success of their film "Cars." Delahaye also says that the com-

pany profited from one of its new products, Disney Mobile (a wireless device designed specifically for families).

In spite of various negative stories concerning labor relations, Wal-Mart surprisingly managed to finish in third place. The index credits its high position with news of strong revenue growth.

"We saw a retreat in the coverage of lawsuits and infighting and a resurgence of news about products and services," says K.C. Brown, Delahaye SVP and founder of the index, "for several of the highest profile companies, such as Microsoft,

Disney, **Boeing** and **Hewlett-Packard**."

Top Ten Companies:

1. Microsoft Corporation
2. The Walt Disney Company
3. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
4. Citigroup
5. Intel Corporation
6. Goldman Sachs
7. The Boeing Company
8. IBM
9. Pfizer
10. Hewlett-Packard **PRN**

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