

# news & views

Volume 49, Issue 3

## March 03 News & Views

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Special thanks this month go out to our guest editor, Kyle Potvin, Senior Vice President of Vorhaus & Company. Kyle chose to explore what may well be the most critical challenge facing public relations practitioners today - trust. Thanks Kyle, for helping us to think about this important issue at this important time.

Here's what you 'll find in this month's *News & Views*:

- March Program Announcement
- Escaping the Taint of Scandals

- Recent Surveys Confirm Truth is the Mantra
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## March Program: Crisis in the Catholic Church

### Real Life Crisis Communication - An Insider's View

#### WHAT:

**The sexual abuse scandal** rocking the Catholic Church was a local news bombshell that turned into an international event with far-reaching implications. Hear from the communications expert at the center of it all: Donna M. Morrissey, Cabinet Secretary for Public Relations for the Archdiocese of Boston, will share her story of real-world crisis communication.

#### WHEN:

Thursday, March 20, 2003

#### WHERE:

ML Strategies, LLC/Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glosky and Popeo, P.C.  
One Financial Center  
(Across from South Station)  
38th Floor  
Boston, MA 02111

#### TIME:

6:00 p.m Light supper and networking  
7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Program

**Note:** Space is limited, so please Register online at: <http://www.opinionpower.com/Surveys/76404106.html>

or send registration information to Paul Wetzel, 45 Broad Street, Boston, MA 02109 (617-451-9663) or fax to 617-423-7812 as soon as possible, or e-mail: [wetzelpaul@msn.com](mailto:wetzelpaul@msn.com)

#### COST:

PRSA members: \$40; Guests: \$55; Students \$20; Advance registration is required by Monday, March 17, 2003. Master Card and Visa accepted.

**Note:** no-shows will be billed; please cancel by March 19, 2003, to avoid being billed. «

## Escaping the Taint of Scandals When Combating Corporate Mistrust, Truth is the Ultimate Spin

By *Robbie Vorhaus*

A lot of very hardworking, honest corporations took heat over the summer as a result of scorching corporate scandals à la Enron, WorldCom, Tyco and others.

Now is the time for all honest companies to understand the universal benefits of classic storytelling, which is the only way to establish collective trust. Simply providing a standard information flow, with no point-of-view or value attached, leaves you susceptible to external interpretation, which essentially is someone else telling your story.

Chief executives need to communicate clearly and honestly what their company stands for to myriad audiences, including employees, investors, board of directors, their selling chain and industry influencers, because the financial numbers mean nothing without the trust behind them. After all, when it comes to corporate storytelling, truth really is the ultimate spin.

**Verify.** Before pounding your chest proclaiming superiority because your company is untainted, confirm that it actually is. If irregularities do surface, insist they are handled quickly, honestly and legally. A new government order requires CEOs to certify the accuracy of their public financial disclosures. Scrupulous executives will welcome this safeguard, which companies can use to demonstrate their integrity.

**Be prepared.** Routine media interviews regarding marketing initiatives, earnings or other topics can be opportunities to provide insight into your corporate governance. Journalists are apt to take advantage of these high-level conversations anyway to throw in a question or two such as “Will there be any surprises from (your company)?” or “How are you reacting to President Bush’s crackdown on corporate wrongdoing?” Preparing answers to the most likely questions in advance will help you reinforce your track record of ethical behavior, financial transparency

and commitment to corporate values that clearly dictate doing what is right.

**Tell your story internally.** Employees need just as much reassurance that you are above board and solid as the rest of your influencers. With formerly aspirational companies like WorldCom and Arthur Anderson laying off thousands of workers, concern over job security is high. This can interfere with productivity and undermine corporate loyalty. Now is a critical time for your CEO and/or other internal leaders to reinforce the company’s ongoing pursuit of its business objectives while at the same time making it clear that unethical behavior will not be tolerated. Also, as ambassadors to the outside world, employees will likely be asked if their employer is the next Enron. Make it easy for them to give an unequivocal “no.”

**Revisit corporate values.** You may think your corporate values speak for themselves but will a sampling of employees confirm this? Create a culture where these values are reinforced every day and become as second nature as breathing. To ensure everyone understands its expectations, DuPont posts “The DuPont Business Conduct Guide” in multiple languages on its web site. First published in 1989, the Guide “provides information to guide employees so that their business conduct is consistent with the company’s ethical standards.” Clear guidelines and values are equally important to potential employees as many job seekers are now conducting ethic audits, attempting to ensure the company they join will both value integrity *and endure*.

While the evolving corporate scandals raise questions of every organization, the squeaky-clean ones will see that this is really an opportunity to celebrate solid business practices and philosophies that draw closer its investors, employees, customers and other important influencers.

*Robbie Vorhaus is president & CEO of Vorhaus & Company Inc., a New York-based public relations firm. He is currently writing a book entitled, “Truth, The Ultimate Spin.” Reprinted with permission from: All About Public Relations with Steven Van Hook, <http://aboutpublicrelations.net/>«*

## President's Letter

Dear PRSA Colleagues,

I am happy to report on three successful events for our members during February.

More than 25 young professionals braved frigid temperatures to attend the first meeting of our newest affinity group, held at Boston University. Many thanks to John Boyle for organizing the group and the meeting - and to the senior agency executives who met with them. You will hear about additional plans for this group in the coming weeks.

Later in the month, three industry analysts -- Kimberly Knickle from AMR Research, Richard Mach from KMI Research and Ariana Moore of Celent Communications -- provided overviews of the industries they cover and advised us on the best ways to approach them on behalf of our companies and clients. Thank you to Liz Goldsmith for organizing the program and to Cherylann Dorsey for hosting at SunLife.

We held the second in our new member orientation sessions just before the February Chapter meeting, with several new and prospective members in attendance. We will continue these bi-monthly meetings - again thanks to Cherylann. They give me and other board members a chance to meet our new members, answer their questions about PRSA, and emphasize benefits of membership.

I also want to congratulate our two newest APR members, whom we recognized at the February meeting. Mark McClennan, APR is an account supervisor at Schwartz Communications and an active participant in our membership committee. Bonnie Sashin, APR is the communications director for the Boston Bar Association and a former member of the Chapter's board of directors and program committee.

Looking ahead, please circle March 20 on your calendar, for our timely meeting on crisis communications and the Catholic Church. Nancy Sterling and Liz Goldsmith have a compelling program lined up for that night.

And, for those of you in the non-profit sector, expect to hear more from Ann Getman about the formation of an affinity group for you.

Finally, we need more people like John, Liz, Cherylann, Mark, Bonnie and Nancy to continue to offer the programs and groups that meet our professional needs. Please volunteer to organize a program, host a program, join an affinity group, or serve on a committee. We need you! Please give us a chance to match your skills with our needs.

Barbara Wellnitz, APR  
President  
508-698-3374  
bwellnitz@ryanwellnitz.com «

### HELP WANTED - CHAPTER ADMINISTRATOR

Due to increased client responsibilities, Paul Wetzel, our long-time Chapter Administrator, is moving on. As a result, we're looking for a talented part-timer to help manage the day-to-day administrative operations of PRSA Boston.

Responsibilities include record keeping, member and potential member communications, program registration and services, maintaining member database, billing, financial reporting, and serving as liaison to the chapter board and PRSA national. The position demands proven skills in written and oral communication, general office management, database management, program planning, and financial record keeping. Public relations experience is preferred.

The position requires 20-30 hours per month and is paid on a monthly basis. The Administrator operates the chapter's permanent office so candidates must have use of a phone, fax, email and computer. (Direct expenses are reimbursed.) The board is looking for a candidate who will commit a minimum of one year to the job.

Please e-mail your resume and cover letter by March 31, 2003 to Kirk Hazlett, APR, at [mkhazlett@msn.com](mailto:mkhazlett@msn.com). «

## Recent Surveys Confirm Truth is the Mantra

By Kyle Potvin

The list of corporate wrongdoing grows longer with Royal Ahold, the giant Dutch-based grocer and food distributor, saying it overstated earnings by at least \$500 million over the last two years and two former Kmart Corp. vice presidents indicted on securities fraud and other charges. This will not be the end. But it does mark the finale of a laissez-faire attitude toward cooking the books.

A recent article in *The Wall Street Journal* announced the results of the latest Harris Interactive Inc. ranking of the best and worst reputations among American corporations. Reporter Ronald Alsop writes, "After learning about scandal after scandal and losing big chunks of their investments, the public is demanding one thing above all else: Tell us the truth."

Truth is the new mantra...or maybe not so new. Johnson & Johnson, a 117-year-old-company, topped the Harris reputation rankings for the fourth year in a row. Others on the list also offer rich heritage including Harley-Davidson, General Mills and Eastman Kodak.

Yet, some of the most respected companies in years past like General Electric faulted, dropping to 20<sup>th</sup> place from 12<sup>th</sup>. Why? News of Jack Welch's bountiful retirement package - coupled, perhaps, with his romantic entanglements -- raised questions about the company's credibility.

Interestingly, the dynamic changes when employees look at their own employers. Another recent study shows workers trust the CEOs they work for more

than ever. Despite the scandals and harsh economy, this year, 43% believed in their senior management versus 36% from 1995 through 2001, according to Gantz Wiley Research.

It could be that changing public sentiment has stimulated smart leaders to invest in communicating who they are and where they are going both internally and externally. Or, it could just be that by comparison, if your own company hasn't been publicly exposed as a sinner, you feel safe.

Of course, the fact that firefighters are considered seven times more trustworthy than CEOs (PlanetFeedback survey) tells a different story.

Without a doubt, 2003 ushers in a new age of integrity, dependability and accountability. The companies that understand this - and change to meet the new demands - are the ones that will endure.

### Top Five Ranking Companies in the Harris Interactive Poll

1. Johnson & Johnson
2. Harley-Davidson
3. Coca-Cola
4. UPS
5. General Mills

### Bottom Rank

60. Enron
59. Global Crossing
58. WorldCom
57. Anderson Worldwide

*Kyle Potvin is Senior Vice President of Vorhaus & Company «*

## Building Integrity From the Inside, Out

By Kyle Potvin

When it comes to building integrity within an organization, leading by example is Rule #1. Yet, it takes more than the CEO to change or maintain a corporate culture.

Creating a strong, compelling culture and then infusing each employee with a sense of mission and guiding principles, is ultimately what provides companies a competitive advantage. Spending time focusing on communicating your story to your troops offers two main benefits. First, employee loyalty and dedication shoots way up. In turn, this leads to improved retention and best of all, increased profitability.

### Here are some perspectives from notable companies:

**Have a Vision.** Starting with the CEO, you need to articulate for the organization where it's headed and how you'll get there. At Domino's Pizza, its vision statement and guiding principles are reinforced everywhere: in stores, intranet, in-house publications, e-mail signatures, internal and external speeches, and more. Whether at corporate or in the marketplace, team members know exactly what Domino's Pizza stands for and are on fire to fulfill its mission to be the best pizza delivery company in the world. It must be working as Domino's delivered more than 400 million pizzas last year alone.

**Corporate Culture is the Game.** In his book, "Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?" former IBM Chairman and CEO Lou Gerstner says, "Until I came to IBM, I probably would have told you that culture was just one among several important elements in any organization's makeup and success - along with vision, strategy, marketing, financials, and the like...I came to see, in my time at IBM, that culture isn't just one aspect of the game - it is the game."

Any management system can set you on the right path and carry you for awhile, he continues, "But no enterprise - whether in business, government education, health care, or *any* area of human endeavor - will succeed over the long haul if those elements aren't part of its DNA." Gerstner faced a daunting task trying to remold IBM's culture as profitability sank in the early 90s, yet he recognized transformation was critical to survival. Continual, direct communication paved the way.

**A Never-Changing Core.** During the past 200 years, DuPont's ability to adapt to change has made it one of the world's most innovative companies. Yet, throughout the years, one thing remained the same: core values. The company's commitment to safety, health and the environment; integrity and high ethical standards; and treating people with fairness and respect has never wavered. Expectations are reinforced continually, and DuPont even posts "The DuPont Business Conduct Guide" in multiple languages on its web site.

Having a strong, vibrant culture will attract many and alienate just as many. But that should not be a concern. In their bestseller, "Built to Last," James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, shattered the myth that visionary companies are great places to work, for everyone.

If you go to work at a visionary company, the authors write, "you will either fit and flourish...or you will likely be expunged like a virus. Visionary companies are so clear about what they stand for and what they're trying to achieve that they simply don't have room for those unwilling or unable to fit their exacting standards."

Don't make apologies. Revel in a strong culture and make sure that integrity is its backbone. Then you'll have a company that truly stands the test of time.

*Kyle Potvin is Senior Vice President of Vorhaus & Company «*

Getman Strategic Communications of Cambridge celebrated its tenth anniversary in February, according to principal Ann Getman, with the launch of its website, [www.GetmanStrategicCommunications.com](http://www.GetmanStrategicCommunications.com),«

## Young Professionals Kick-off New Special Interest Group

By John Johansen

The PRSA Young Professional Affinity group held their first meeting on February 13 at Boston University. This professional development group caters to anyone with an interest in public relations or up to five years experience in the industry. Meetings will be held on a monthly basis allowing ample time for networking as well as receiving advice from more senior PR practitioners.

The February kick-off centered on a discussion with a panel of Boston PR stalwarts including: Jack Agnew of MS&L, Roger Bridgeman of Bridgeman Communications, Michael Ward of Ward Rovner & Partners, Jim Issokson of Sterling Hager and Howie Sholkin of Getronics.

Each panel member shared thoughts on how to find, obtain and keep a job in this economy. One main point communicated from across the panel was the need to research a prospective employer. With most PR firms having a presence on the Internet this is more easily done now than it was in the past. In other words, there are no excuses for not knowing about a company before approaching them.

Sholkin stressed the need for general business skills saying, "To be a good practitioner is a good starting point but one must be able to effectively and efficiently apply PR and marketing tools for clients and prospects to feed the sales engine. This can be

done by understanding the company's business plan and direction, its competitors, and key marketplace issues."

Bridgeman discussed job interviews in more detail by describing 99 percent of people who come to interviews ready to discuss *what* they did rather than *why* they did it. He followed up by saying he would prefer to see more of the latter.

Other advice focused on personalizing resumes, finding contacts within a company and maintaining a network of contacts in this industry and other relevant industries.

The Young Professionals Affinity Group has also created an online forum for its members to use anytime. To join please visit [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prsaboston\\_youngprofessionals/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prsaboston_youngprofessionals/) or contact John Boyle at [johngordonboyle@hotmail.com](mailto:johngordonboyle@hotmail.com)

John Johansen works at Schwartz Communications as an Account Coordinator. He can be reached at [jjohansen@schwartz-pr.com](mailto:jjohansen@schwartz-pr.com). «

## SASHIN, MCLELLAN NEWEST APRs

Congratulations to Mark McClellan, APR, Schwartz Communications, and Bonnie Sashin, APR, Boston Bar Association, on successfully completing the written and oral exams to achieve Accreditation by PRSA's Universal Accreditation Board.

Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) is a mark of distinction for public relations professionals who

have demonstrated their commitment to the profession and its ethical practice, and who have been selected based on broad knowledge, strategic perspective, and sound professional judgment.

The chapter congratulates Ms. Sashin and Mr. McClellan on their achievement of an honor hard-won and well-earned!«

## "Leveraging the Power of Health Care Public Relations"

**March 28 - 29, The Fairmont Hotel, D.C.  
March 27, Pre-Conference Session at the  
U.S. Food & Drug Administration**

Now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year, the Health Academy Spring Conference provides senior-level public relations practitioners with the opportunity to discuss the most pressing issues they face with leading experts from all segments of the health care field. Medical error reduction, bioterrorism, funding for medical research, Medicare prescription benefits and medical labor shortages - all are issues that depend on the power of public relations to raise the right issues at the right times.

The conference will focus on ways to break down barriers and create new opportunities in health care communications to better leverage the power of our messages. Participants will gain an insider's perspective on timely policy and regulatory trends and issues in Washington and throughout the nation.

Highlights of this year's conference include:

- Optional pre-conference session at the Food and Drug Administration: Spend the afternoon learning about the FDA from key decision-makers and hear about hot topics such as the latest medical error reduction initiatives, clinical trials, and regulating biologics and foods.

- Dynamic specialty tracks: The conference sessions will have something for everyone - payers, providers, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and medical devices - with advanced tactical sessions added this year.
- "On the Hill" session: Hear unique insights from representatives of government agencies, legislators, and lobbyists during an afternoon session on Capitol Hill.
- Crisis simulation exercise: Participate in a hands-on simulation of a health care crisis immediately after the crisis plenary session.
- Exciting networking reception: Enjoy the opportunity to network with your colleagues and sample scrumptious food at the historic National Press Club
- Health Care Café: Meet other attendees, speakers and sponsors in the conference's gourmet coffee bar. The Café will be open during the entire conference. Information on the Health Academy's professional development opportunities and awards program will be on display.

For registration information, visit [www.healthacademy.prsa.org](http://www.healthacademy.prsa.org) or call 212 460-1438. «

### **New: Nonprofit Affinity Group**

PRSA is starting an affinity group for people practicing public relations and communications in a nonprofit organization. It's objective is to create a forum for members to network, explore common needs and resources, discuss common problems and solutions, identify relevant program needs and opportunities, and add value to PRSA membership.

The first brainstorming meeting will be held in early March. If you're interested in participating or being kept informed, or have any questions, contact Ann Getman, APR, at 617-576-1847 or at [Ann@GetmanStrategicCommunications.com](mailto:Ann@GetmanStrategicCommunications.com) «

## Professional Connections

### Public Relations Account Executive Needed

PerkettPR, Inc. is a growing virtual public relations agency with clients that range from exciting start-ups to established companies. PerkettPR offers a premiere work environment - with our virtual model, employees experience true quality of life while working as part of a nationwide team from their home offices. You must be comfortable working from home, as well as with a small team that requires effort at all levels on a day-to-day basis.

We're on the search for a full time Account Executive. The Account Executive is responsible for planning and executing activities on behalf of clients under the direction of an Account Director in a timely, efficient, and high quality manner. Activities include new business outreach, supporting media and analyst relations efforts, writing and proofreading materials, client contact, speaking opportunities, awards and general account administrative tasks.

We offer competitive salaries, new business bonuses, flex time, generous vacation time, birthdays off, summer Fridays, a complete package of health and dental insurance, office furniture reimbursement, and a work environment that supports professional development and work/life balance like no other company can! You must be a media hound, great communicator and motivated, strong team player who is able to work alone, and enjoy the opportunity to work from a home office environment.

If this describes you, send us your resume, salary requirements and tell us why you would be a good candidate. We do not have a need for any senior executives at this time, so please, only apply if you are in the appropriate experience range.

Qualified candidates may contact:  
Chris Perkett, President & Founder  
chris@perkettpr.com  
708.570.6178 (fax)  
No Phone Calls Please

### Director of Public Relations and Marketing (Clipped from the Cape Cod Times)

The Steamship Authority is seeking an experienced individual who will be responsible for all areas of public relations and the overall direction and management of the Authority's marketing, advertising and communication programs as well as manage the organization's customer service/relations program and reservation call center operations.

The individual will be the principal spokesperson for the Authority and the contact person for all media outlets; will direct the marketing and advertising strategy to enhance market share and promote a positive image for the Authority; will develop and implement public relations strategy regarding the Authority's functions and the communities affected; and will be a part of the senior management team to participate in the overall management and direction of the organization's goals and objectives.

The ideal candidate should have a strong communication background with the ability to communicate effectively, verbally and in writing, with the public, customers and the community. The individual must be able to analyze business data and develop strategic action plans to resolve organizational issues and problems. A college graduate is preferred with a background in any of the following areas: journalism, public relations, business administration, marketing or advertising.

Competitive salary and fringe benefit package. EOE.  
Send resume to: Philip J. Parent, Director of Human Resources, Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority, PO Box 284, Woods Hole, MA 02543«



