



ARTHUR W. PAGE SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1983

JOURNAL

Can You Hear Us Now? The Art of (Truly) Listening to Key Constituencies

21ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 12-14, 2004

WESTFIELDS MARRIOTT, CHANTILLY, VIRGINIA

THE ARTHUR W. PAGE SOCIETY

Vision

The Arthur W. Page Society is committed to the belief that public relations as a function of executive management is central to the success of the corporation. The membership of the Society will embrace those individuals who epitomize the highest standards of public relations practice, as exemplified by the Page Principles.

Mission

To strengthen the management policy role of the corporate public relations officer by providing a continuous learning forum and by emphasizing the highest professional standards.



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GETTING READY TO LISTEN – AND RESPOND ACCORDINGLY

They were there not only to listen but also to engage in lively dialogue with the impressive list of speakers who were on the program for the 21st Annual Conference at the Westfields Marriott in Chantilly, VA. Nearly 150 members and guests filled the Washingtonian Ballroom when President Tom Martin, ITT Industries, stepped to the podium to issue the welcome to what promised to be another outstanding Page forum.



Tom Martin welcomed the membership to the 21st Annual Conference, his first as president of the Page Society.

The Annual Conference and Spring Seminar, Martin said, have always been major information-sharing meetings, providing “real-time exercises that touch on issues that we all need to understand.” To share information in the context of listening is appropriate for the Page Society because, as Martin added, “Listening is one of the tenets of the Page Principles...in some respects...the most fundamental Principle as far as public relations is concerned. How can we



Conference Chair Harvey Greisman set the stage for the Conference – and the listening theme.

conduct our enterprises in the public interest if we don’t understand what the public wants and needs?”

Conference Chair Harvey Greisman, IBM Global Services, set the stage for the Conference by talking about the complexities of listening. “It is a combination of (many) factors that determines what we truly listen to,” Greisman said. “These include memory, attention and visual cues in addition to auditory processing.” He went on to cite examples of how, particularly in the political arena, listening can sometimes produce very different

impressions and opinions based on what is heard and how it is processed. “Listening,” Greisman said, “is important because it’s at the heart of what we all do, personally and professionally.” And, he added, “Few of us do it well.”

For the most part, it was easy listening during the Conference as speaker after speaker addressed the theme, “Can You Hear Us Now? The Art of (Truly) Listening to Key Constituencies,” with presentations that provided a range of perspectives on the importance of listening. Because the Presidential election race was in full stride, there was a definite political tone to the proceedings – but not a partisan one. The leadoff speaker, an advisor to four Presidents, David Gergen talked about listening as an essential component of what makes a great leader. Gwen Ifill, moderator of *Washington Week*, provided a journalist’s view of listening during a political campaign. And three former press secretaries – Dee Dee Myers, Jody Powell, and Tony Blankley – told what it was like to listen to the most powerful voices in Washington. Two Administration insiders, Patricia Harrison of the State Department and Torie Clarke, late of the Pentagon, shared their experiences dealing with the war in Iraq.

The corporate viewpoint on listening was ably provided by Verizon CEO Ivan Seidenberg who advised the attendees to



Gathering for the new member reception were Tom Kowaleski, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Martin, Dave Drobis and Kristen Bihary.

listen carefully to your stakeholders, but at the same time, “be aggressive in telling your story.” Public opinion consultants Dan McGinn and Peter Hart talked about a new kind of listening that is having an impact on both corporate and political perspectives.

There was still more about listening as Alan Hilburg led the members through a dialogue on effective communications and Don Stacks got down to the nuts and bolts of the art of listening, pointing out that because we are not especially good at listening, it extracts a cost in terms of business, profits and relationships.

Every presenter elicited many questions from the audience, creating a good deal of give-and-take. Hilburg in particular

got the members involved in understanding how effective listening depends on the ability to ask the right questions. It’s the question that sparks the answer, the dialogue and the conversation.

Greisman wrapped up the meeting with an admonition and a challenge, saying he believes the public relations profession “is at a critical junction on the road to either greater success – or a loss of integrity and identity. I say this, because many of our basic communications tools are now available to anyone and everyone through the blessings of technology. And more are invented almost every week, it seems, which only complicates the listening process because there is so much more that we are hearing.”

Greisman believes the business process transformations taking place across all industries require the underpinning of communications to effect changes. “If we can combine our business insight and ability to truly listen to our customers with the best tools of our trade, I believe we can evolve our profession from a staff competency to a business line solution – with the opportunity to be priced and valued accordingly.” The Arthur W. Page Society, he said, is “the group to make that happen.”

All in all, the 21st Annual Conference was a meeting that covered lots of ground in exploring how we should listen to our constituencies. But it was also another great networking opportunity for the membership. The breakfasts each morning saw members catching up on the latest news while at many of the tables committees were hard at work planning their agendas for the next year.



New members David Turnbull and Fred Cook greet each other as Trustees Don Wright and Dick Badler look on.



Networking time at the reception: left to right, Angela Buonocore, Jim O'Rourke, Chuck Sinclair, Bob O'Leary and Matt Gonring. Sinclair and O'Leary are new members.



Tom Martin leads the traditional Jefferson Cup Toast at the opening dinner.

The Sunday night dinner included, besides the traditional Jefferson Cup toast led by Tom Martin, the introduction of the new members who were attending their first Annual Conference. On Monday night, the conferees were transported to the elegant Russian Embassy in Washington DC where they enjoyed a reception and dinner that featured entertainment by The Capitol Steps, the famous Washington political satirists. In their inimitable way, the "Steps" provided proof that listening is not a passive activity.



Members were entertained at the Russian Embassy by The Capitol Steps who satirized the Washington scene, including a former First Couple.



Members gathered at the Russian Embassy for an elegant reception and dinner on Monday.

LISTENING AND LEADERSHIP IN AMERICA DAVID GERGEN

COMMENTATOR, EDITOR, AUTHOR, TEACHER AND PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR DAVID GERGEN TALKS ABOUT LEADERSHIP IN AMERICA AND THE NEED TO LISTEN CAREFULLY TO WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING.

For 30 years, David Gergen has been an active participant in American national life, earning a reputation for being one of the most knowledgeable observers of public policy matters.

His resume explains why. Gergen served as director of communications for President Reagan and held positions in the administrations of Presidents Nixon, Ford and Clinton. As a journalist, he has been an editor of *U.S. News & World Report* and a television commentator, most notably on the *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour* and later *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*. He is currently professor of public service at the John F. Kennedy School of Government and the director of its Center for Public Leadership.

Drawing on his extensive experience, Gergen published in 2000 the best-selling book, *Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership, Nixon to Clinton*.

As the Page Society's 2004 Distinguished Lecturer, Gergen told the opening day crowd that the relationship between listening and leadership is not something that is often discussed. But increasingly, in his view, political leaders and CEOs alike are recognizing how intertwined the two are.

"At the Kennedy School," he said, "we try to teach anyone who wants to lead an organization, whether it's a nonprofit or corporation or country, that deep listening has now become an essential part of effective leadership."

"Deep listening," Gergen explained is what Gandhi did early in his career when he went into the rural villages of India and talked to the people, "listening to their voices, (trying) to understand their frustrations, what was going wrong in India, what their dreams were." Only then, Gergen said, did Gandhi become the leader of the unrest against colonial rule.



David Gergen was a dynamic opening speaker as he talked about leadership in America.

Using the deep listening analogy as a starting point, Gergen said he wanted to make four points about effective leadership. The first is that the form of leadership emerging in this country and other industrialized countries "depends more heavily upon listening than at any time in the past." Secondly, he said, "deep listening on the part of a leader of a group or organization is not a passive activity; it's an active, demanding activity."

His third argument is that when you engage in active listening, what you hear may be conflicting and confusing. "You're going to have to do a lot of sorting out," he said, "to figure out what the true meaning of what you're hearing may be." Finally, leaders must not only listen to others, they "must also listen within...to their own inner voice."

The old "top down" form of leadership, Gergen said, has given way to a new model that calls for leaders to empower others, to build relationships with trust and to create partnerships across boundaries. It's a more collaborative form of leadership made necessary by the way we now work. "We have to move quickly," he said, "and can't wait for decisions to come from above."

Increasingly, Gergen said, the most important task of the person running a big company, a big organization or a big government is "to assemble a terrific team around him or her and then insure that they have enough authority to get the job done."

Leaders can also no longer automatically count on deference within the organization. "You have to earn respect," Gergen said. "You have to pay a lot more attention to the people (in your organization) and go through a process of building trust."

That's why, Gergen volunteered, he commends the Page Society for their new book, *Building Trust*, which provides a

platform for leading CEOs to state their case for ethical leadership. “This (book) goes right to the heart of what leadership is about today,” he said.

Listening plays an increasingly important role in leadership, Gergen said, because if you’re trying to get others to pursue



A good leader is listening all of the time, Gergen said.

shared goals, “you must engage in serious listening with your followers” not only “to determine what the goals should be” but also “to establish a relationship of trust...that will inspire (others) to act.”

Gergen’s second point about “deep” listening is that it’s an active, demanding form of listening that requires intellectual and emotional engagement. He used as an

example the experience “of reading something with our eyes but not our minds” as we scan the daily newspapers, e-mails and other written materials that cross our desks every day. “We go through them as quickly as possible,” he said, “just to check them off, and then move on. Until something we read really engages our attention. And then we try to understand it and look for the deeper meaning.”

The same thing is true for listening, Gergen said. Most of the time we’re passive listeners, he explained, talking on the phone or sitting in a meeting and thinking about something else. “A good leader,” he suggested, “is engaged in active listening almost all the time. Indeed, most of the politicians I’ve known have been extremely good listeners.”

Gergen was quick to add that, on the other hand, most politicians – especially Presidents – don’t have long attention spans. It was Averell Harriman, he said, who used to say that “if you wanted to get the attention of a President, you had seven seconds – after that he was gone intellectually.”

Nevertheless, Gergen said, most Presidents had “a good ear” and that is important because “leaders spend a stunning amount of time listening to others.”

On his third point that what you hear may be confusing and often in conflict, Gergen said people do have differences of opinion and it’s the job of a leader to think carefully about



Harvey Greisman presented a copy of *Building Trust* to Gergen. Gergen said the Society’s new book “goes right to the heart of what leadership is about today.”

what he or she is hearing and to listen for the deeper message. Presidents have had to do this, he said, on hot-button issues like abortion and gay marriage where there are a lot of different opinions but also a great deal of ambivalence about such matters. In such situations, you can’t rely on polls to understand the public voice. “You have to listen,” Gergen said, “for the subtleties, the nuances, and the uncertainties in what the public is saying.”



Pat Coulter had a question for the speaker, one of many that were asked.

Finally, Gergen said, you have to listen to others but you also have to listen to your own inner voice. The most effective leaders, he said, know how to listen to others and also to their inner voice and then fuse them together as much as they can.

He used Martin Luther King as an example of how this happens. King, he said, thought of himself as a preacher, not as an activist. He didn’t want to go into the streets; he didn’t want to go to jail. But he found that even when he was preaching about inequities, he was not reaching the people. “So when he came out of the pulpit and went into the streets,” Gergen said, “he began

to participate and to hear the voices of the young people who were so frustrated. And as he began to understand more completely what their lives were like and began to incorporate that understanding into his own life, his preaching changed, his life changed and eventually” what he was hearing fused with his inner voice. “His voice became the voice of those in the civil rights movement.”

That’s what leadership is all about, Gergen said. “It’s a process of listening, of leading and fusing them together.”

A CEO'S PERSPECTIVE ON LISTENING IVAN G. SEIDENBERG

A LEADING CEO TALKS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING TO STAKEHOLDERS BUT ALSO HOW TO GET THEM TO LISTEN TO YOU.



Ivan Seidenberg delivered the keynote address with his strong perspectives on the importance of listening.

Running the biggest and most visible telecommunications company in the U.S. is no easy task. Ivan Seidenberg just makes it seem that way.

The Verizon CEO, who delivered the keynote address as the first speaker on Monday, dispensed with his prepared remarks and suggested that, “we go straight to the Q&A.”

He was only kidding,

of course. Or was he? “I’m actually looking forward to the Q&A a great deal,” Seidenberg said, “because that’s the greatest way to learn and share ideas.” (And it might be added, a great way to listen to others.)

A 38-year veteran of the telecommunications business (he began as a cable splicer’s assistant), Seidenberg has a reputation for being a thoughtful and forceful executive who likes to solicit opinions as he analyses issues and makes decisions. He was also in comfortable surroundings at the Annual Conference, having once been a member of the Page Society when he was the chief communications officer at NYNEX, one of the original Baby Bells that eventually became part of Verizon.



Seidenberg said he was proudest of his company’s response to 9/11. “We didn’t have to tell our people what to do. They just did it.”

Having been one, he knows how challenging the job of the senior public relation officer can be. “All business right now is in the center of the eye of the storm,” he said, “and when you look at all of the agendas that drive the different stakeholders we communicate with, it’s very difficult to get a simple message through to everybody.”

Seidenberg also recognizes that the job is complicated by the fact that there is a lot of skepticism about business these days. He proceeded to tell about attending a roundtable discussion earlier in the year that included some two dozen senior people from the biggest publications in the country along with columnists, free-lancers and business reporters. As a board member of the Museum of Television and Radio, the sponsoring organization, Seidenberg got an invitation to sit in on the discussion and, as he put it, “listen to the media talking to itself.”

Seidenberg said he came away from the meeting with several impressions. The first is that people who report on business – at least those there that day – believe they have been soft on business and that most business reporting is favorable to

business. At the same time, he said, they took some responsibility for not being more active in reporting on the bad behavior that was going on at some companies. But they also were, in Seidenberg’s opinion, singularly focused on the issue of executive compensation. “Almost every evil associated with disclosure, corporate governance and accounting rules...linked back, in their minds, to the issue of executive compensation,” Seidenberg said.



Seidenberg had his audience hanging on his every word as he expressed his philosophy and answered their questions.

The third thing he observed at the meeting was that a lot of people were “irritated” because business executives had not spoken out about the behavior of other executives. The media believes there is “a club, a code, a behavioral thing,” he said, that doesn’t allow CEOs to criticize other CEOs.

(It should be noted that in his essay for *Building Trust*, the Page Society’s new book about CEOs and corporate integrity, Seidenberg wrote: “The public is absolutely right to hold corporate executives to the highest standards of conduct...But while we’re holding executives’ feet to the fire, we also must look well beyond the executive suite when examining the forces that shape behavior – for better or worse – in large organizations.”)

Based on what was said at the meeting, Seidenberg said he and his PR advisors decided that the company needed to sharpen their focus on certain things, “disclosure being number one. We decided we had to be clean as a whistle on disclosure...whether it’s good news or bad.”

They also decided that accessibility was critical. “Whether it’s myself or other senior executives,” Seidenberg said, “the principals associated with every issue” have to be ready to speak to those issues. Timeliness is essential, he added.

“You may have noticed that we have been much more aggressive in policy debates,” Seidenberg said. That is intentional, he volunteered. “If the press and the public are always going to have a certain degree of skepticism (about us), then you might as well speak to your self-interest quickly

and loudly because you can't be accused of being duplicitous if you're clear (about your intentions)."

In the Q&A that Seidenberg said he was looking forward to, he was equally forthright in providing answers – and expressing his opinions.

How do you get people to tell you what you need to hear? "I like a lot of checks and balances," Seidenberg said, "multiple sources of information." It's very important to hear as much as possible, but "I also ask a lot of questions" to get information and put things in perspective. Asking questions, he believes, demonstrates a willingness to hear what others have to say.

How do you get people to tell you the truth? "I believe most people in the company believe they are telling you the truth," he replied. "I also think cultures that have a high degree of success and are results-based tend to get the truth out faster." But, he continued, if you find out that people are not telling you the truth, that they are manipulating information, "you should get them out of the way real quick."

How would you describe the culture at Verizon? "I think our response to 9/11 is characteristic of the company's culture," Seidenberg said. "We didn't have to tell our people what to do. They just did it."

Seidenberg didn't stop there. "When I look at our industry," he said, "the companies that got in trouble were trying to satisfy Wall Street before they satisfied Main Street." Verizon is very service-oriented, measurement-driven and process-focused, he explained. "We're also more results-oriented than we were before. We used to be a company that liked to have a lot of excuses and footnotes because there's something else that affected the results. I think we're getting better at



Jack Kotten presented a copy of *Building Trust* to Seidenberg who was one of the 23 leading CEOs who wrote essays for the book.

recognizing that there are no excuses for not getting the job done the right way."

The questions kept coming and Seidenberg kept giving comprehensive answers, reflecting his philosophy of full disclosure. It was obvious throughout his exchanges with the audience that Seidenberg, who spent 38 years working in a business that made the "spirit of service" a sort of holy grail, was confident that the spirit still lived. "If I left the company tomorrow," he said, "the thing that would strike me

as the most important development (for the company) was our response to 9/11. To me, that is the perfect characterization of our culture."

Seidenberg also takes a longer view in his essay in *Building Trust*. He wrote: "I truly believe that the most important thing I can do for Verizon, long term, is be faithful to the principles of my institution, to guard its values and make sure they remain in sync with society's, and to reward employees' behaviors that exemplify and perpetuate them."

For now, Seidenberg is busy trying to navigate Verizon through the eye of the storm that he mentioned earlier. It's really not an easy job. But following his self-imposed rules for disclosure, accessibility and honesty, Seidenberg is the picture of confidence that he can keep the ship on course.

In today's corporate environment, Seidenberg said, you have to live up to your word or you quickly lose credibility. "You can't finesse your way out of situations," he said. "You also need to be fact-based if you want people to listen to you. But sometimes the best thing you can do is to follow your instincts. It all comes back to knowing what you're in business for, which is service."

A JOURNALIST'S VIEW OF LISTENING IN THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

GWEN IFILL

IN DOING HER JOB, GWEN IFILL KNOWS THERE IS A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN LISTENING AND HEARING – PARTICULARLY IN WASHINGTON AND DURING AN ELECTION YEAR.

As a journalist who spends her days, as she puts it, “searching for something approximating the truth,” Gwen Ifill feels like she has a unique vantage point for doing so.

An accomplished political reporter with experience in both print and broadcast news, Ifill currently holds two of the most highly respected posts in her field. She is moderator and managing editor of *Washington Week*, the longest-running public affairs program on public television, and senior correspondent for another PBS standout, *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*.

From her vantage point, Ifill has made herself a respected observer of the news events that shape public agendas and public opinion. She recognizes that the truth is an elusive concept in journalism. “It’s something I keep trying to pursue and I’m not sure I ever quite reach it.” In politics in particular, she said, “everyone seems to have their own version of the truth.”

But that doesn’t keep her from listening for the truth. “Listening is what good reporters do,” Ifill said. “But it’s hard to listen, I find, when everybody is shouting. The din kind of drowns out the information.”

Contrary to what some may believe, Ifill said most political journalists, such as herself, are idealists. “We are in love with the idea that unknowns and underdogs can get elected against the odds,” she said. “We adore watching the American voting public come awake – usually right about now, after Labor Day – the conventions, the general election campaign. And we are convinced that, overall, it matters. And because we believe this, we are willing to set aside our deeply ingrained skepticism about politics and politicians and try to get to the heart of the matter.”



Gwen Ifill lead the audience through a very informative and very personal view of what it is like to be a political reporter.

An election year, Ifill said, should provide reporters – and the American public – an opportunity to ask the hard questions. But this year, she lamented, the campaign events have been “buffed and polished to a shiny gleam” with the audiences screened and the questions to candidates “kind of soft.” That being the case, she said, we are fortunate there are other places – “an explosion of news sources” – to go to for information. From print to cable, from broadcast to Webcast blogs, there is lots of information out there, “probably more than most people can stand.”

With information readily available from a variety of sources, we are living in a unique time. “That’s good for the news business,” Ifill said, “but it’s also good for society as well.” Young people especially,

she said, are getting information from non-traditional sources such as late night shows, talk shows, even comedians. “That doesn’t bother me in the least. I think information is information is information.” Besides where do Jay Leno, David Letterman and Jon Stewart get their information? Their writers, Ifill said, are getting it from *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

However people choose to get information, they still have to learn how to use it. With so many sources, the information tends to get mixed together and, according to Ifill, “it’s hard for people to distinguish between straight-ahead journalism and opinion journalism.” James Carville, she said, would tell you he’s not a journalist, But he’s on a television show that people think of as a news show. It’s unfortunate, she added, that there are lots of opinion journalists – and opinion non-journalists – who are dominating the news.

There is also the question of liberal bias among news organizations. If there is a bias in so-called straight-ahead



Although she usually asks the questions, Ifill was at her best during the Q&A session with the audience.

journalism, Ifill said, it's in favor of those in power because they control access. "We are in many ways hamstrung by official sources for our information," she said.

"The people you are getting information from may have a vested interest in telling you only their side of the story. But, in many cases, we have no other way to get that information."

That's a big problem in covering the White House, Ifill said, because official sources carry more weight than unofficial sources. "That's also one of the advantages of incumbency; the President is going to get attention (for whatever he says or does.)"

Ifill said that if there is a bias in the newsrooms, it is often because of the things "we choose not to cover as much as the things we choose to cover. Sometimes it's a bias that's imposed by time and other constraints...When you read a newspaper, the distinction is what's on page one and what's inside. In television, there is no inside – only page one.

There is another bias, Ifill said, and that is a bias in favor of the running story, the dramatic, ongoing, unfolding, we-don't-know-how-it's-going-to-end story. The OJ story. The news by soap opera. "Given the choice of covering (a sensational trial) or the political process," Ifill said, "you know where the cable networks, along with the mainstream networks and newspapers, will always go...It's one of the reasons I'm in public broadcasting because we don't have to go there."

There are other frustrations in being a working political journalist. Ifill said her job is to point out when questions are actually being answered and when they are not. But you also don't always get the right answer, the first time you ask the question. "Ducking the question has become endemic," she said. "It crosses party lines and you see it every day as

the campaign unfolds. But that doesn't mean we stop asking the questions." In fact, Ifill said, we ask the questions more strongly because that forces the wheels of government to keep turning.

Asked about negativity in the current Presidential election, Ifill said, "We all like the idea that there was a time when we had deep, serious debate (about issues). But no one can exactly cite examples of (that happening). Nor that it's what everybody wants to hear. (The truth is) negativity works. That's why they do it."

She cited the example of the "daisy" ad during the Johnson-Goldwater race that ran once, but had a very negative impact on the challenger "in the same way that the swiftboat ads had this year" because of the attention and coverage that the media gives to such ads.



Stuart Pearlman posed a question to the speaker.

Negative attacks work because people hear them and they catch on, Ifill said. We need to find a way to put things in context, she said, to get voters to not just listen to the negative ads but to also pay attention to other information sources that are out there.

Covering a political campaign, Ifill said, involves trying to get to the heart of what a candidate is saying. Who is the truth-teller, who is not? Can the candidate be counted on to "present the straight facts to voters, to colleagues, even to a spouse?" Have we listened to the answers closely enough?

To get to the facts, you have to ask the right question. Which, Ifill acknowledged, "we sometimes don't do."

A PANEL OF FORMER PRESS SECRETARIES

TONY BLANKLEY, DEE DEE MYERS, JODY POWELL, WILLIAM G. MARGARITIS, moderator

JUGGLING COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS IN THE LAND REQUIRES GETTING THE ATTENTION OF THE MEDIA – AND ALSO YOUR BOSS.

Three who served as press secretaries to the politically powerful provided lively insights into the challenges of the job. Jody Powell, who was President Carter’s press secretary; Dee Dee Myers, who had the same job with President Clinton; and Tony Blankley, who was press secretary to House Speaker Newt Gingrich, made up the panel with William G. Margaritis, FedEx Corporation, as the moderator.

Margaritis got discussions started by pointing out that “there are lots of parallels between what we do and what they have done. We have the lawyers to deal with. We have our subsidiary CEOs. We have the CFO. And oftentimes we need to forge consensus and bridge disparate opinions and actively influence decisions.” He asked Myers how she was

able, given so many disparate interests, to get the proverbial seat at the table and be effective.

“All of you in corporate communications are obviously at the nexus of business interests and media interests,” Myers said. “And in politics it’s the same thing. So much of what the President does is dependent on the media. You have to sell the President’s agenda.”

As the first woman and among the youngest persons to hold that post, Myers said she started out managing two agendas, her own and the new President’s. In her case, she noted, she also had to deal with scandals that were outside the agenda. “Part of my job was to minimize damage,” she said. In that environment, she said, “it wasn’t hard to make the argument



It was a mini-press secretaries reunion at the Annual Conference. Left to right are Bill Margaritis, the moderator, Tony Blankley, Dee Dee Myers and Jody Powell.



The first woman and among the youngest press secretaries ever, Dee Dee Myers served during the sometimes tumultuous years with President Clinton.

that somebody needed to be at the table...For me, it was a constant battle to strategically go back to basics, to focus on what President Clinton was there to do, to not get too distracted in subsidiary issues, although that's always hard to do, and

to just try to push forward. And we met with some success – sometimes more than others – but the first couple of years were very rough.”

Blankley, who had previously worked on the Reagan White House communications staff as well as for Gingrich, observed that Michael Deaver, President Reagan’s press secretary, was involved “at the launch of almost everything, whether it was foreign policy or...whatever.” This practice, whether for a product or a Presidential policy, provides a deeper understanding, he said. “The key to that is persuading the boss, whether he’s a speaker of the House or a President or a CEO, of the value of integrating at the beginning the public relations expertise.”

And then there is the question of how to be persuasive. Blankley said he had a great relationship with Gingrich but that the Speaker “wanted me to be a coach, not a critic. You have to know when to give advice and when to keep quiet,” he said. “There’s a moment in any rational CEO or politician’s day, or a couple of days, when they can take advice, and there are moments when you can’t give it to them. And part of the skill of the public relations advisor is understanding their client, finding the moment when they’re going to be open to the useful advice you can give them.”

With the Page Society meeting near the nation’s capital in the midst of a Presidential election, Margaritis turned the conversation to politics as he asked Powell to address the partisanship that seems so pervasive in Washington today. Polarization and partisanship have been building for at least 10 years, Powell said. “It’s hard to see how you can turn

things back. I think a lot of people thought after September 11th that...perhaps this trend...would be reversed, and it was for a time...but it definitely has not lessened. To me it’s a very unfortunate aspect of the political scene right now.”

Why is negative advertising resonating, Margaritis asked, and is it something that will continue?

“Negative ads resonate,” Myers said, “because they’re effective. If you monitor people watching positive advertisements and negative advertisements about political figures, they not only remember the information in the negative ad more easily...they’re more likely to think it’s true, even though they know what the source of the information is.” Unless the public demands an end to those kinds of ads, she said, “they’re not going away.”

“Negativity obviously can work,” Blankley said, “but it has to be effective. It has to be judged to be persuasive and credible, or at least plausible...One of the disadvantages of these shadow organizations doing advertising on behalf of each of the candidates is that (they) don’t necessarily have the same political judgment behind them.”



Jody Powell lamented the polarization and partisanship now so pervasive in Washington DC.

Margaritis asked why character and values have come to play such a big part in the current election.

Among the many things that play into the nature of an election, Powell said, is the identity of the candidates. “This year,” he said, “we have two candidates whose experience with Vietnam is so different. Our society has never come to terms with that experience and yet, all of a sudden we have Vietnam in our laps again.”

There is a culture war going on, Myers said. “I think national campaigns are very much about values, cultural values, on some level” as well as about issues, she said. “The unresolved nature of the whole Vietnam issue...remains in the center of...an ongoing battle about ‘whose’ values.”

Another similarity between corporate and political communications is the use of polling and research, Margaritis said. “We all use customer research, of course, in our world,” he said. “You all have used polling data and research, and it’s gotten to be so scientific and prolific in the decision-making process.” He asked panelists to comment about when they “put the research data in context with what we’ve heard (referred to as) the so-called inner-voice.”

There is a point, Myers said, that regardless of the polling data, candidates (and Presidents) “have to make a decision, and they have to have the discipline to stand by those decisions.”

Blankley agreed, saying, “You look at the data and the data may say the people seem to think (one particular thing.) But it’s only of so much value, so you want to rely on your own judgment, the judgment of other people, your feel for a situation, which may be just as reliable as very scientific-looking tabulations of data.”

Yes, said Powell, “it really sort of comes down to guts at some basic level. I’ve always thought that if you really were looking for a shorthand definition of Presidential leadership, it would be precisely a person who would push us a little bit further than we really wanted to go as a society...On the other hand, hold us back a bit, perhaps, when tempers and passions were to enflame where we would like to go at the moment.”

Margaritis offered his opinion that the public demand and appetite for information is now greater than ever, that “people seem empowered and want information (and) the truth.” He wondered how the transparency of information can be balanced with the demands of national security.

“You have to remember,” Powell said, “that when I was in government there was no CNN, there was no Blackberry, there was no PC. IBM Selectrics were state of the art because you could erase stuff just by hitting a key.” From the beginning of the current information explosion, he said, he felt it would lead to “an overwhelming demand for editors.

And I still think that’s where it’s going because people clearly cannot process and deal with that flood of information. And so for people who are actually looking for information as opposed to looking for something that will feed their own predisposed positions...I still think what is...needed is editors – some way of putting this together in a way that people can process it and deal with it in a reasonable amount of time.”



Tony Blankley said his boss, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, wanted him to be a coach, not a critic.

Government finds itself in a difficult position in this age, Myers said. “I think there’s no better...metaphor to me than the color-coded security alert system. On the one hand, I find it ripe material for lampooning because I’m not sure what it means when we go to ‘orange,’ and what would ‘red’ be? Run for the exits? And what would it take just to get down to ‘green’? And why did they change the order of the spectrum? (Perhaps) Tom Ridge just made a mistake in a meeting and no one wanted to raise their hand and say so.

“But I also think,” she continued, “it’s an honest attempt by the government to say, ‘We need to give the public some information about what we think the security environment is because we have some responsibilities as the government, and we want people to be able to take adequate precautions to secure themselves and their families. But how much information do we actually tell them?...It’s a very tricky problem for the government to solve...How do we give a reasonable amount of information that doesn’t cause a lot of fear but that gives people...adequate time and information to prepare themselves.”

It is a problem that has existed for a long time, Powell said. “In a nutshell, it is the fact that often when what you have to say is the most important, you are the most constrained in how much you can say...That’s particularly true in national security. But I think it’s also true for corporations and companies as well as for governments and public officials, because the only thing you have to carry you in those situations is a reputation for credibility. And if you don’t have it, then that inability will be seen as an unwillingness, and you can’t communicate in those situations.”

But, said Blankley, “Large organizations that are in the business of managing information – whether it’s a government or a television network or a corporation – by constipating some information and emitting other information is about to get its advantages taken down by several magnitudes by the Internet, which is going to force transparency to a shocking degree on entities that are used to managing and holding...information.”

During the question and answer period, the discussion returned to the subject of listening. What lessons had the former press secretaries learned about those times when their bosses were not listening to them? How did they overcome that?

Blankley said it would be fairly easy, when Gingrich was angry about something that “there was no point in trying to break through all that storm of energy that was focused elsewhere. But,” he said, “I always found that within any 24-hour period I could find a moment when he would be receptive to hearing whatever it was I wanted to tell him. So I looked for the moment. I didn’t have to force an inopportune moment.”

Myers agreed. “You have to know your boss and your boss’s rhythms, and hopefully have enough access that you can sort of pick your moments,” she said. “I always found with Clinton, it was helpful to come armed with one piece of information that you knew was going to get his attention.

And depending on what the issue was – maybe it was a poll, maybe it was an anecdote – and once you engaged him...your chances were much better being able to make him listen.”



Bill Margaritis masterfully led the panel through their lively discussion of life with the politically powerful.

“I was fortunate to work for a man that I really never had a problem getting to listen,” Powell said. “Sometimes after I had made the same argument the second or third time, it became pretty clear that he’d heard it, heard enough. And sometimes I think perhaps he didn’t listen because I was dead wrong, which we all need to keep in mind as we’re offering advice to our bosses and to our clients.” Powell said he learned from Carter the value of getting to the nub of an issue “in a real hurry. He wanted to know what it was that you wanted him to do. What was your point? What were you urging? What steps did you think needed to be taken?”

Once you had set that out, he would give you time to make your case for it, but he wanted the action item first and build the case later.”

When a questioner asked the panelists to rate their respective bosses as listeners and then processors of information, all three political leaders got highest marks from their former staff members. And, judging by the attentiveness of the audience and the reluctance with which they accepted the agenda-dictated end of the question period, it was obvious there was a lot of (truly) listening going on there too.

THE NEW ERA OF PERSUASION DAN MCGINN AND PETER HART

TWO LEADING PUBLIC OPINION CONSULTANTS EXPLAIN HOW NEW PASSIONS, ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATIONS ARE CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF THIS COUNTRY.



Dan McGinn began the discussion of the “New Era of Persuasion” with his co-presenter Peter Hart waiting in the wings.

Analyzing trends and identifying consumer attitudes and behavior patterns is what The McGinn Group does for a living. Dan McGinn, president and CEO of the independent consulting organization, told the Annual Conference audience that it’s a whole new ballgame when it comes to reaching out to stakeholders.

For one thing, there’s a new audience out there. And it is one that is driven by new technologies, new passions, new attitudes and new loyalties, all of which are having an impact

on both corporate and political perspectives. We are in what McGinn calls “the new era of persuasion.” With Peter Hart, the long-time public opinion analyst who is now a senior consultant for The McGinn Group, the two described what forces are changing the face of America.

Fifty years ago, Hart said, Thomas Wolfe wrote *You Can’t Go Home Again*. “Today home for everyone of us is in the future.”

Consider this: By 2040, half of all Americans will be what we now call “minorities.” The face of immigration is also changing. In the 1950s, 60 percent of immigrants were European. Today 85 percent of immigrants are non-European. The percentage of children in public schools who are non-white

is approaching 40 percent. Forty million people in this country are non-English speaking.

It’s also worth noting, Hart said, that 45 percent of the population knows someone who is gay or lesbian.

As far as the American family is concerned, there has been a significant decrease in the number of married-couple households and married couples with children. The number of one-person households is clearly on the rise. And today

one in two kids will grow up in a single parent home.

All of this means, Hart said, “We have to learn to listen to America with new eyes (and ears).”

McGinn explained what is driving this new American audience and how they are spending their free time and free money.

Seventy-nine percent of Americans have a passion, i.e. hobby, cause, sport. But it’s not necessarily the traditional passions.

Pets are very big. In 2003, Americans spent \$31 billion on pets, \$14.3 billion on pet food alone. Furthermore, 52 percent know the names of their neighbor’s pets, but they don’t know the names of their neighbors.

Interest in traditional sports such as tennis and baseball are in decline, tennis down by 23 percent, baseball by 27 percent. Taking their place are extreme sports – “life on the edge sports” – such as mountain biking and inline skating, both up by more than 300 percent. On the other end of the scale, one in 10 men find time to manage at least one fantasy sports team. Fantasy football alone is a \$3 billion industry. That tracks with the interest in reality TV. There were 34 reality television shows in 2000, 191 in 2004.

But gambling, according to *The New York Times*, is the number one cultural phenomenon in America today, McGinn said. In 1988, casino gambling was legal in one state. Now it is legal in 26 states. Slot machines alone now generate more revenue than McDonald’s, Wendy’s, Burger King and Starbucks combined.

Besides the surprising passions of this changing audience, McGinn also pointed out that they have new expectations that challenge traditional thinking.

For only \$45, McGinn said, you can be the star character in your own fantasy novel. You can also personalize your appearance. Thirty nine percent of young Americans have done that with a tattoo or some form of body piercing. You can even personalize to the nth degree that hot new mode of transportation. The current Harley Davidson catalog for bike accessories is 832 pages long.

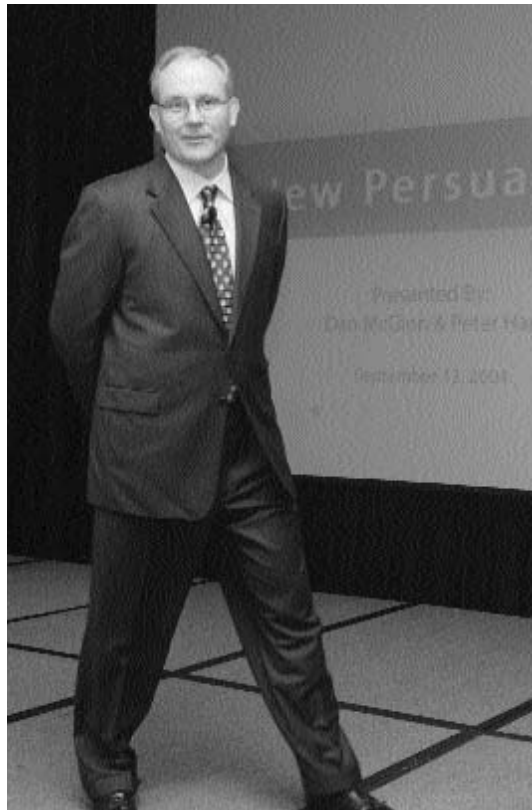
Expect more choice in your life? You got it. There used to be only one type of Tylenol or Oreo cookies. Now the choices in everything are overwhelming.

The good life is also now an expectation. “Luxury is for everybody,” McGinn said, “a necessity, an expectation” at every price point and in every way, no matter who you are. One of the phenomenal things is that, from 1970 to 2004, the average home size increased 50 percent, from 1,440 square feet to 2,200 square feet. Meanwhile, the average family size has steadily declined.

In every part of our lives, we expect more. Today a Sears lawn tractor has a 27 HP engine. In 1949, the Volkswagen Beetle had a 30 HP engine.

Picking up the discussion, Hart said, “Something is happening in America, and it’s happening outside of what you may know about and what you’re living...It’s a trend called free agency.”

Not the free agency associated with baseball and basketball but a kind of free agency brought about by all the changes taking place in our society.



The new persuasion, McGinn said, is all about the new passions, attitudes and expectations of a changing public.

It means you get to choose what you want, what you buy, what you do. In short, you're the boss, doing your own thing. And you're no longer bound by a sense of loyalty. "We're all free agents," Hart said, and that is changing the way we act and the way we communicate.

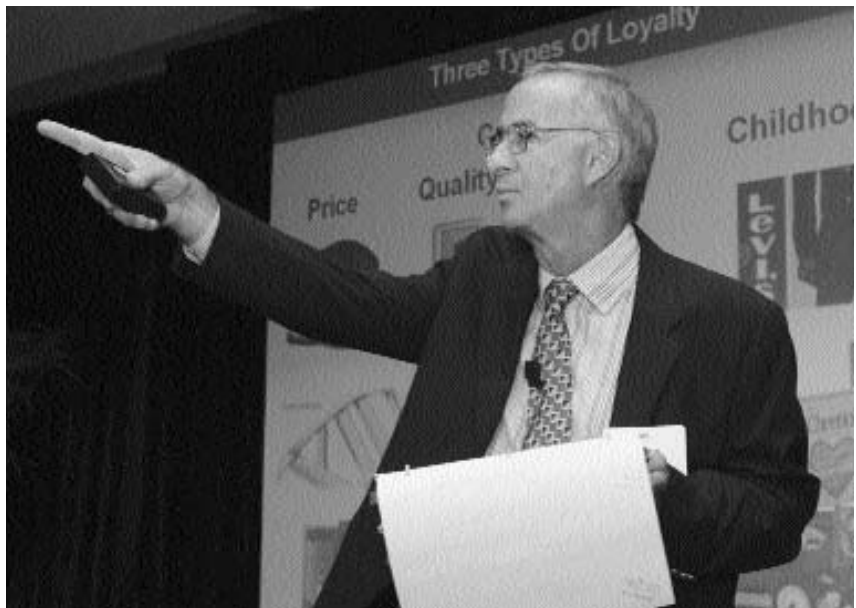
The old-time loyalty is out. Today there are three types of loyalty: Loyalty based on convenience (one-stop shopping, neighborhood stores), loyalty based on coercion (chain hotels, credit cards, frequent flyer miles), and loyalty based on commitment (price, quality, taste, childhood).

In this new marketplace, Hart said, the product is first and foremost, followed by service and respect for customers. Third has to do with ethics, what the company stands for. "The most important way we judge a company today is how they treat their workers," he said. "That is the new standard of judgment." Consistency is the fourth criteria. It is why only 30 percent of consumers have a high brand loyalty to the products they use.

"It's a new society out there," Hart said. "It's also a whole new era of persuasion and the way in which we have to deal with it is indeed different."

Where are we as a country in all of this? United, divided or in the middle? Hart contends that we have forgotten the way in which we relate and what we are about. He points to the fact that every political analyst and commentator says we are either red or blue. "That is wrong," Hart said emphatically. "We are not listening to the people in the gray areas, the people who are conflicted and divided on the issues. They are everywhere in our society" and they don't fit into neat, color-coded boxes.

Hart said there are new rules of engagement and they involve a sense of empowerment, "a sense that I can be a participant in the process." An example is the groundswell of small donations that the Democrats have been able to generate through the Internet. Admittedly, we are in a period of great uncertainty, Hart said, and that's why the two parties are struggling with whether to expand their market or energize their base.



Peter Hart said you have to listen to America with new eyes and ears.

From a corporate perspective, McGinn concluded, we need to tune in to the changes that are taking place in our society. For one thing, opinions are far less driven by news than ever before. "It's now about personal experiences and cultural influences," he said. We inform ourselves differently, we are smarter in different ways and, as a result, other forces are driving opinions.

As demographics change, he continued, a new assimilation is taking hold in this country and, in the process, transforming our society. We need to think of our society, not as a melting pot, but as a quilt.

A third change involves free agency. Among other things, McGinn said, this will lead to a transformation in how brands are regarded by different groups within our society. It means there will be big winners and big losers depending on how loyalty and perceptions change.

Finally, there is a growing and deeper respect for each other throughout society. Respect me as an individual. Respect me as a senior citizen. Respect me as a gay person. This deeper respect that we are seeing applies to everyone and everywhere, McGinn argued. And it also means respecting "my wallet and my time."

That is the new era of persuasion.

BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH SOCRATIC DIALOGUE AND DISCOVERY

ALAN HILBURG

IT'S NOT ABOUT ANSWERS; IT'S ABOUT QUESTIONS. QUESTIONS SPARK THE DIALOGUE AND ULTIMATELY THE ANSWERS.

What do “Bringing Good Things to Life” and “Where’s the Beef?” have in common, besides being famous advertising slogans? For one thing, they are both attributed to the marketing communications credentials of Alan Hilburg who came to the Annual Conference to lead the Page members through a Socratic Dialogue about effective communications. But the advertising taglines also, in a way, reflect the Socratic method of asking questions to get at some truth.

Considered one of the world’s leading strategic counselors on crisis and reputation management issues, Hilburg is a multi-faceted professional who was described by the *London Times* as being a “leading corporate brand architect,” by *The New York Times* as the “Red Adair of corporate crisis management” and by *The Wall Street Journal* as the “earliest practitioner of reputation management in litigation contexts.” He is also an author, consultant and president and CEO of PNConsulting.

Considered an authority on the Socratic method of using repeated questions to elicit the truth, Hilburg said his favorite way of starting a conversation is to ask a question: “What do you mean by that?” (There is no record of how



Asking questions, Alan Hilburg told the audience, is the way to get people to listen.

many times that approach ended the conversation.) He admits that it drives his colleagues crazy when he does that. But he believes that asking questions is the way to get people to listen and learn.

And so he began his presentation by reminding his audience that a Socratic Dialogue is not about answers, it’s questions. And that he would be asking a lot of questions over the next hour.

He also said he would be sharing a radical new framework for communications, and that is to get people to listen more effectively.

Communications, Hilburg said, is about getting your audience to listen. And to accomplish that, the communication has to create curiosity. “You do that with language,” he said. “You ask questions so people will answer you. You ask questions that will compel people to stop and listen.”

To get the dialogue going, Hilburg broke the audience into small groups and asked them to consider two questions. What are some guidelines for asking smart questions? And, what are the barriers in your organization that keep people from asking questions?

As Hilburg went around the room, asking each group to share their views, it became obvious the guidelines for asking questions revolved around having a good environment for open discussion. Showing respect for and interest in the views of others, having a good information flow, responding to every question asked – these are things that encourage questions. The barriers that discourage questions were many but included such things as hierarchy, intimidation – both intellectual and bureaucratic – and lack of action or feedback.

Hilburg tried to make several points during the discussion. We learn by asking questions, he said. Communicators, in particular, need to know how to ask questions. And open-ended questions are critically important in the communications process.

Another question was put to the breakout groups: How do you create an environment that will lead to a questioning culture? Again there were many ideas and suggestions that included knowing your audience, establishing a mindset for asking questions of leadership and a leadership that listens, being accessible, having the patience to listen and not asking leading questions.

Creating the right environment can transform our industry, Hilburg said. We must not only create an environment where questions can be asked but also a workplace that is driven by questions rather than answers. Such an environment, he said,

“must be part of the value system. It must show respect and it must be an open environment.”

The biggest challenge, Hilburg added, is to get the organization to recognize that questions are part of the learning process. “We are all preconditioned from an early age not to ask questions,” he said. The greatest contribution public relations people can make is to change that mindset and become facilitators for questions and answers.

Challenge your staffs, Hilburg said, to tell what they can do to make a difference. Challenge them to ask others the kinds of questions that will not only add to the knowledge and vision of

the company but will also reveal the risks that the company faces. “The ability to see around the corner is the benchmark of our profession,” he said. It’s also the most valuable service you can provide to your CEO; prepare him or her for the questions they may face. But in order to anticipate the questions, you have to make yourselves the most effective questioners in the company. You have to become the one voice, he said, who can facilitate a question and answer process.

Effective communications, Hilburg concluded, depends on the ability to ask the right questions. It’s the question that sparks the answer, the dialogue and the conversation that enables communications professionals to learn what they need in order to render effective advice.



Working the room, Hilburg led the members through a dialogue on listening and effective communications.



Franklin Parisi reports on the conclusions of his breakout group.

THE ART OF LISTENING DON W. STACKS

BECAUSE WE ARE NOT ESPECIALLY GOOD AT LISTENING, WE PAY A PRICE IN TERMS OF BUSINESS, PROFITS AND RELATIONSHIPS.

Don Stacks' academic career covers more than 25 years, during which he has authored or co-authored seven books and written more than 150 scholarly articles and papers on communications topics. One of those topics happens to be listening for which he received the coveted Ralph Nicols Award for research in listening in 1984. As the resident Page Society expert on listening, Stacks shared his experience on the subject during this Annual Conference that was all about listening.

Actually it was the University of Miami professor's second presentation on listening at a Page meeting. At the 2000 Annual Conference in Charleston, SC, he and University of South Alabama Professor Don Wright reported that most people believe that hearing is the equivalent of listening. That's not the case, Stacks said. He quoted Warren Guthrie,



Don Stacks reminded the members that while we hear, we don't always listen.

who is considered the father of listening theory, who said, "Almost all of us hear, but nearly none of us listens." Stacks proceeded to explain why that happens.

He ran through some key facts about listening that helped make the point. About 85 percent of what we learn, we learn through listening, he said. But about 75 percent of the time, we're distracted, preoccupied or

forgetful, and that "takes us away from the listening process." On the other hand, he noted that young people have the ability to work through these distractions, watching TV while listening to a CD while working on the computer. "They have the channel capacity to work with the increasing amount of information, processing it far better than we can or our fathers could."

There are costs associated with listening, Stacks said. While studies indicate that listening is a top skill needed for business success, “the cost of not listening in business is estimated to be \$1 billion a day.” A very big number to be sure, but that’s only part of the story.

If you believe what the pre-Conference survey of members showed, listening as a percentage of overall communications (i.e., writing, reading, speaking and listening) has dropped sharply in recent years.

There are a number of reasons why this is happening, Stacks said. “We’re too busy, listening is not considered as important as it used to be, and we have too much information to work with.” Some of the culprits, he said, are e-mail and voicemail, both of which have become listening alternatives for many people. In fact, 87 percent of the Page members surveyed equated text messaging to listening.

Many people erroneously believe that hearing is listening, Stacks said. Unless you’re an active participant in the communications process, he said, you’re not really listening. You are probably not listening to the whole argument and more than likely you are anticipating what is being said. Listening is very much an interactive process.

“The upside of listening,” Stacks said, “is that people talk to you.” But their responses don’t have to be verbal. They could be non-verbal listening such as laughter, a smile, applause, even silence. The important thing, he said, is that there be some sort of feedback, otherwise the message is not getting through. By the same token, if the speaker doesn’t respond to feedback, they are also not listening.

“Real communication goes in both directions,” Stacks explained. “It was Lee Iacocca who once said, ‘Business people need to listen at least as much as they need to talk.’” There is some evidence that his admonition is being heard. Business schools are beginning to recognize that listening is an important topic, Stacks said, and, of course, it has been an important topic in communications programs for a long time.

At the same time, he said, we need to recognize that we are not especially good at listening and, as a result, that is costing us in terms of business, profits and relationships. As he does in his seminars on listening at the Public Relations Executive

Forum and elsewhere, Stacks talked about some of the factors that influence our listening ability.

Distractions are a major hurdle. If someone isn’t responding as you think they should, Stacks said, you know they’ve probably been distracted. But how and why? The external distractions are obvious to anyone who has had to sit in a restaurant and listen to a nearby diner talking on his or her cell phone. Phones, clocks, loud equipment, interruptions, people talking can all interfere with the listening process.

Internal distractions also play a role. These include psychological states such as tension, anger and hunger (missed breakfast again?)

along with emotional triggers such as a word or phrase that you react to without thinking. Ineffective listeners fail to control their emotions, Stacks said. You shouldn’t react to the word but to the total message that’s being given. That is easier said than done, as Stacks acknowledged, because you don’t control your emotional triggers, other people do, people who want to pull your chain. “You have to learn to interpret and evaluate what others are saying,” Stacks said, “and if you can do that, you’ll become better listeners.”

So how do you improve your listening effectiveness? Stacks will tell you that you do it by participating in the process, understanding at what level the conversation is taking place. You do it by avoiding distractions, both environmental and emotional. And you do it by learning and practicing interpreting and evaluating what you hear. Don’t project the other person’s message; listen to the entire argument – and then react.

“We need to learn how to listen,” Stacks said, “and how to utilize the discrepancy between speech and thought.”



We need to learn how to improve our listening effectiveness, Stacks said.

AMERICA'S CONSTITUENCIES ABROAD: CHALLENGES FOR THE STATE

PATRICIA DE STACY HARRISON

BUILDING A COMMUNICATIONS BRIDGE TO THE ARAB AND MUSLIM WORLD IS NOT EASY. BUT NEITHER IS IT IMPOSSIBLE.

“There are people of good will everywhere. It’s up to us to find them and work with them.”

That is one way Patricia de Stacy Harrison describes her job as acting Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and, particularly, her office’s efforts “to engage the people in troubled areas of the Middle East.” In addition to being an acting Under Secretary of State, Harrison is also Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, a position she assumed on October 2, 2001. She came to the post with more than 20 years’ experience in communications strategy and coalition and constituency-building as an entrepreneur, author and political leader.

After 9/11, Harrison said, “We saw that we had to move away from serving the elite (in the Middle East) – maybe the sons and daughters of people who were in high positions or people in an upper middle class level of society – and reach out to a new generation of young people in the Arab world who had really little knowledge of who we are except through movies and television programs and news shows.” We needed to reach “a growing group who were basically undereducated and underemployed.”

This led to the formation of Partnerships for Learning (P4L), a global initiative providing young people with enhanced education and opportunity. It includes programs such as high school exchanges with the Arab and Muslim world and



Patricia Harrison described the efforts “to engage the people in troubled areas of the Middle East.”

the “CultureConnect” program that sends American performing artists to teach master classes and, as Harrison said, “talk to young people about what they can aspire to.”

Harrison was also instrumental in reviving the Fulbright Program in Afghanistan and Iraq. “There are now about 20 men and women from Iraq on Fulbrights,” she said. “By 2005, we should have well over a thousand in the program. We expect these young people to return to Iraq and Afghanistan with enthusiasm for what is possible.” To expand the influence of these programs, the State Department is fostering alumni programs for returning Fulbright

scholars and providing a CultureConnect Web site to allow mentoring to continue after the in-person sessions with artists.

Also launched was the Citizen Diplomat Program, Harrison said, which sends Americans of achievement, “who are not household names,” to countries where, working with religious leaders, teachers and journalists, they are able to sit down and talk with people, share their expertise and reach out to youth.

In explaining the rationale behind many of these initiatives, Harrison reminded the audience of a familiar aphorism: “Someone asked, when is the best time to plant an oak tree? And the answer is, 25 years ago. So when is the second-best time? And the answer is now.”

She continued, “By reaching out younger, deeper and wider, we have an opportunity to build relationships for a lifetime.”

Many of the ways in which Americans are connecting with other cultures don’t make the headlines, Harrison said. But she warned that it will take a long time to determine if attitudes are changing. “The point I make over and over whether I’m talking on the Hill or talking to publics...is whether what we’re seeing is promising or not, we have to commit to the long term...and we have got to commit to building and sustaining our outreach in both good headline time and bad.”

She pointed to the first Page Principle, *Tell the truth*, and remarked that, “of course, in public relations as in public diplomacy,” that maxim is paramount. “And armed with the truth we can build these relationships and open doors, (even) admittedly within an environment where there is hostility and deep skepticism about our motives and our policies.” To do this, she said, it is necessary to engage more with the media in the region, something being done over the past three years as both print and broadcast journalists have been brought to the U.S. and given access to high government officials. They are provided, she said, opportunity to have in-depth discussions – “a real discussion, not just a brochure that...identifies it from one to three what our forward strategy is for the Middle East.”

Meeting these visitors, Harrison said, has given her an opportunity “to see our country through the eyes of the men and women who come here for the first time.” She told of an Egyptian journalist who wondered whether Americans have changed since 9/11 and particularly whether we still say “Have a nice day.” Yes, she was told, we still say that. That same woman had advice for Americans. “She said, ‘Please stop asking us all the time if we hate you. It’s not a productive question to ask anyone. You almost make us find reasons to give you. Instead, why not find out how we can work together?’”

Harrison told of “Afghani women teachers who taught young girls, moving them from cave to cave despite threats and

torture by the Taliban. We brought them here to get training at the University of Nebraska, and they went back to train other teachers,” she said, adding that because of the program there will be 5,000 new Afghani teachers. “I asked one of them, ‘How in the world did you ever find the courage to do (what you did)?’ And she answered, ‘It wasn’t courage; it was just the right thing to do.’ Through people-to-people diplomacy, we are affirming people who are doing the right things, and these teachers, we do not just bring them here and then they go back and we forget about them. We are working with them, providing school supplies and sewing machines and centers and really keeping in touch with them.”

One group of Iraqi Kurds told Harrison that they had been “afraid to come to America because they were told that

America hates Kurds. And then one member of the group...said, ‘I found out America doesn’t hate the Kurds. America doesn’t even know who the Kurds are.’ And then he said the thing that really upset me. He said, ‘I found out that Americans don’t care.’ I said, ‘What do you mean?’ He said, ‘No, no, no, you don’t understand. Not one American asked us how do you pray, what is your religion? Can you believe this?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ And he said, ‘You know what? I think we need this kind of not caring (in) our country.’”

She met with Iraqi businessmen whose hands had been surgically removed and a warning “X” tattooed on their foreheads on orders from Saddam Hussein. “They came here as a result of the private sector...to get new prosthetic hands that are computer-generated,” she said. They told her,

“The American people have not only given us back our hands, they have given us back our hearts.”

She also met an Iraqi Fulbrighter who said, “You have given me the keys to the gate of my future. I will learn everything, and I will go back and build a perfect society.” After relating that encounter, Harrison said to the audience, “Now that’s one oak tree worth planting, don’t you think?”

A group of religious leaders visiting from Pakistan, Iraq, Indonesia and India were shocked, she said, to learn about American hospitality. “One of the members of the group



Armed with the truth, Harrison said, we can build relationships and open doors even in hostile environments.

became ill, and just like any of you would have done, the host family calls a doctor. I did tell him getting a family doctor to visit was an extraordinary thing. He told me he was warned not to come to America because it is a godless place. And then he said, 'I found God is everywhere in your country. You just don't talk about it.'" That man, she said, is now "part of a dynamic group in Pakistan (and) India, working for religious tolerance, bringing kids in, trying to get them away from this rote-hate teaching that comes out of the Madrasses."

Harrison observed that "truth as a news event changes constantly, but what we offer truly are constant truths: our living, breathing Constitution. The understanding of what our rights are within our society has had a profound impact on our visitors. One teacher from Nigeria said, 'Every American seems to understand their rights. I want people in my country to have rights and know what they are.'"

In spite of negative headlines about how our country is disliked, there are voices of opinion leaders emerging, she said, citing recent remarks by Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah bin Ahmad Badawi, who said after a meeting with President Bush, "I believe that now more than ever we need to find the moderate center. We need to bridge the great divide that has been created between the Muslim world and the West." At a meeting of the Islamic Conference and the Nonaligned Movement, Badawi further said, "Underemployed, undereducated youth, Muslim youth, (are) vulnerable to extremist ideas and become easy recruits. We must recover the hallmarks of peace, prosperity and unity... We must put our own house in order, and we must no longer neglect women in our society. We must not marginalize one full half of Muslim humanity."

Harrison added, "My point is that we have a new level of dialogue and responsibility, and it can be discerned with two-way listening and shared values if we don't get in the way."

In addition to the exchange programs, public diplomacy is also involving expanded languages and distribution channels for print and electronic media, as well as materials that can be accessed directly to Web sites (accessible through www.usinfo.state.gov) designed specifically for foreign audiences, she said. "More than 1,200 users have signed up for our Arabic language daily listserv," she said. "Eighty-five percent of the users of our Arabic Web pages come from overseas, 50 percent from the Middle East itself."



Jim Grunig reaches for the microphone to ask a question.

Harrison had praise for foreign service officers "who are working in an environment of such great danger." And yet, even with the barriers presented by security precautions in many places, are able to connect with local citizens. She cited a program called American Corners, which places resource centers throughout the world in universities and office buildings, where people "can attend seminars, use books, go online and participate and learn more about America." And she offered Page Society members an opportunity to participate. "If any of you think that your corporations would be interested in sponsoring an American Corner, just e-mail me," she said.

She also welcomed input from Page members. I am interested in increasing the numbers of people of good will who are eager to help," she said, noting that her office is working with a number of private sector organizations. "Public relations and public diplomacy, as you know, are not limited to tactical responses and short-term maneuvering. Attitudes are complex. Values and perceptions are deeply embedded in culture and history. And that's why I think in both peaceful times and times of conflict, our mission is to ensure a positive American presence in the world, forging links of mutual respect between people on a continuous, sustainable basis. And as I said, it isn't the work of weeks and months, it's the work of years and generations."

"But," Harrison concluded, "I'm extremely hopeful because as I look out over this audience, I see an awful lot of oak tree planters."

WHAT ALL THE WORLD WANTS TO KNOW

TORIE CLARKE

A FORMER PENTAGON SPOKESPERSON TELLS A DRAMATIC STORY ABOUT REPORTING THE TRUTH, EVEN IN TIMES OF LIFE OR DEATH.

Torie Clarke has been at the center of some of the most historic events in the U.S. in recent years. As Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, she was at her desk in the Pentagon when it was attacked on September 11, 2001. She became one of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's top aides and was instrumental in designing the program that embedded correspondents with military units at the start of the Iraqi War.



Torie Clarke told how correspondents were embedded with military units at the start of the Iraqi War.

Although there were different points of view about how to cover the war, Clarke said, "We had to get the media involved in order to tell our story. It was important to military operations and it was important that the American people see the conflict as they have never seen it before."

When the reporters, including foreign correspondents, were embedded, Clarke said, there was a debate over what they might report. "Although we knew there may be scenes of death and injury," she said, "I believed that, even in times of life or death, it is better to tell the truth and be honest."

When information travels so fast as it does today, Clarke said, there is no way to hide from the truth. "And telling the truth includes admitting mistakes," she said. "In Washington – and particularly at the Pentagon – that's very hard to do."

While she was the Pentagon spokesperson, Clarke said she always tried to find out what was happening, something that was not easy to do when so much information was pouring in from Iraq. "But when we screwed up," she said, "we admitted it and told the press what we were doing to fix it."

The concept of embedding – "such a bad name for such an amazing thing," Clarke said – was pertinent to the

Page Society Annual Conference, she said, because it was all about listening.

It included listening to the news media who were "were not particularly happy with the kind of coverage they had gotten in Afghanistan," she said, "and they were really unhappy with the kind of coverage they had gotten in previous major conflicts. So as we were leading up to a potential major conflict with Iraq, they were expressing a lot of that."

It also included listening to the families of service personnel, some of whom, she said, "really wanted people to see what their sons and daughters and husbands and wives were doing." Others, some quite vocal, felt it was not the news media's business, she added.

“(Some of the military leadership...(were) truly enlightened (and) totally got why we were trying to do something like this.” And then, she added, there were those, who said, “You’ve got to be out of your minds. I’m going into one of the biggest conflicts in over a decade, and you want me to put these reporters up at the pointy end of the spear and take care of them and keep them out of trouble – and do my job?” Some, she said, were “flat-out opposed to it.”

Another consideration was foreign audiences and “how the rest of the world would perceive what we were doing and how we were doing it.” Furthermore, based on experiences in Afghanistan where, she said “propaganda put out by different entities including the Taliban and al Qaeda had a real effect on foreign audiences,” there was concern that the Iraqi regime itself would try to find ways to influence these audiences.

There were many different stakeholders, she said. “So, given all those issues,” she said, “why would you ever do it? Why would you do something like this that was so bold and audacious?”

First, she said, it was the right thing to do. “The American people have an absolute right and, I think, a responsibility to know as much as possible about what their military is doing because it is so critical,” she said. It was also, she added, “the smart thing to do. We knew going into Iraq that there was nowhere near the public support for a potential war with Iraq as there was with Afghanistan. You can get through a short-term effort without public support, (but) you cannot get through a long-term military operation or initiative without public support.

“I knew,” she continued, “that building and maintaining support would be critical, and I knew from personal experience, the more people saw these kids – and I can call them kids – up close and personal, the more amazed they

would be. They are so well trained. They’re so disciplined...so dedicated...so committed...just so inspirational. I knew the more people could actually see that in their living rooms, the more support we would have over the long haul.”



The American people have a right to know as much as possible about what the military is doing, Clarke said.

She also knew, she said, that it would be a smart thing to do because of the need to influence foreign audiences. “We could stand up at that podium...and speak the truth...every single day. Some people would believe us (and) some wouldn’t. Particularly in other parts of the world, they weren’t going to believe us no matter what....To reach those audiences and influence them in a credible way, we needed the eyes and ears of the news

media telling those stories...(because) in many parts of the world, CNN, CBS, etc., *New York Times* are more believed than I am, certainly.” They were also aware of the need to “break through some of the Al Jazeera-type influence, if you will, which is why foreign reporters were also a big part of the embedding program.”

Clarke said she was fortunate to work for people “who appreciate the role of information in the 21st century...they made information and how we managed it as critical and central to the planning process of everything else,” she said. “There wasn’t a meeting we weren’t in. There wasn’t a war-planning document that didn’t have aspects of our planning in it. We got the resources...the people...everything we needed to get the job done...”

She called it “enlightened leadership that backed it up with resources” of money and equipment. “For instance,” she said, “we had backup plan after backup plan after backup plan for these reporters to get their stuff back. But if all else failed we could – and did – requisition helicopters and planes to get their stuff back.”

The most critical part of the planning, she said, “was

listening to all those different audiences...the military leadership, the news media, the families, the foreign audiences. Because every aspect of preparing for embedding was completely transparent. Every document...piece of paper...policy...guideline...equipment list we shared with everybody, including the news media.”

Not only listening was important, she said, but doing something with the information being heard was also important. The program was a collaborative effort among many offices and individuals and was reworked countless times before it was put in place, she said. “The transparency of it and the constructive engagement that we had on it is what made it work,” she said. “The American people saw conflict in a way they had never seen it before, and it really raised their appreciation and support for the military.”

The plan worked even, she said, when bad things happened. She reminded the audience of an incident in the early weeks of the Iraq war at a Marine checkpoint. A speeding van filled with civilians was fired upon after several unsuccessful attempts by the Marines to get the driver to stop. Everyone inside was killed or injured. “It was awful for all the obvious reasons,” Clarke said, “for the people, for the families, for those Marines who were just distraught...but the coverage was...accurate. It wasn’t based on second- and third-hand reports of villagers from down the road.” There were seven or eight journalists there with the Marines, she said, and “it provided a context you never would have had if the media hadn’t been there.”

In the 21st century, Clarke noted, “everyone is a communicator...Everyone from the front line troops up to

the CEO has to be able to communicate what the organization is about, what they’re trying to accomplish, how they’re going about doing that...And that is something we really embraced at the Pentagon. Instead of two or three people who were the only ones who would ever say anything, our theory was that everybody should be out there. Everybody should be talking about what we’re doing.”

During the question and answer period, Clarke was asked why, with all the emphasis the Pentagon placed on transparency, they drew the line at showing flag-draped coffins returning to Dover Air Force Base. “Dover for the military is a transit spot,” she said. “It is a transit spot at which bodies are accepted (and) they are put into a condition that they can be sent to their loved ones for whatever kind of service the families want, with support and the participation of the military. There is nothing more important to people in the military than families.”



Clarke’s dramatic story had the audience riveted to what she was saying.

Clarke said she had disagreed with the majority of the military who believe that Dover should not be a place for news media coverage. “I said I think we should take every opportunity to demonstrate our appreciation for these people who have given their lives, and I (saw) Dover as an opportunity to do that.” But a recent conversation with a young widow who had been flown to Dover to claim her husband’s

remains changed Clarke’s mind about the issue. “She told me she couldn’t imagine anything worse than having the news media there, knowing what he had gone through, knowing what was happening to his body there. “I can’t imagine anything worse,” the woman said. “I would ask you if you’d think about changing your views on this.” Clarke told her she just did.

HALL OF FAME LECTURE AL GOLIN

FIX IT BEFORE IT BREAKS

I really don't deserve this honor – but, I guess I also don't deserve a bad back either.

But, seriously, when I consider the previous recipients of the Hall of Fame Award, I'm even more grateful for this recognition. Still, I think I'm accepting it under false pretenses. I'm told my induction into the Page Hall of Fame relates to my "work" in the industry for almost 50 years. But, I really have never considered what I've been doing for these many years as work. Rather, I've lived by the words of a wise old man, who gave me good advice when I was starting out. He said, "Find a job you like – and you'll never work a day in your life." That's what I've done, and today I feel sorry for those people who always seem to dread going into the office most Monday mornings.

I've seen a lot of Monday mornings in my day, enough that people often ask if I ever intend to retire. When they do, a song by Stephen Sondheim, one of my favorite composers, comes to mind. His tune, "I'm Still Here" seems to be my theme song these days.

Besides, I know I'll never be in the "Hall of Fame" for my golf game – so I have all the more reason to continue going



Tom Martin presents the 2004 Hall of Fame award to Al Golin.

to the office almost every day.

And now, thanks to you, I have another.

As I considered the honor of joining the Page Hall of Fame – and the careers of those who entered before me – I naturally reflected on my own career. And I've come to realize how lucky we are to be able to do what we do for a living. It's never dull, it's always challenging, and it's constantly changing.

One of the great parts of our business is its youthful face and its commonality of purpose. I've been fortunate to be surrounded by young, energetic people, and when I visit some of our offices throughout the world, I'm always amazed to discover the similarity of people in our industry. They may look different in Taiwan than they do in Chicago, but their business acumen, creativity and enthusiasm is contagious.

Ours is a business that can't help but keep you young. You have to be curious and probing, and above all, current on what is happening today – and perceptive enough to forecast tomorrow. Ever since I was a kid, I remember reading the newspaper every night before dinner. I wish my grandkids

had the same interest. That latent curiosity, I think, helped propel me into the PR business.

I began this journey some 48 years ago when I joined a small PR firm in Chicago, coming from my first job in the promotion department of MGM Pictures, where I thought it would lead to a career in movie production. About a year later, I made a phone call that proved to be a turning point in my life.

Actually it was October 10, 1957 – but who’s counting? I made a cold call to a man named Ray Kroc who had a handful of the old red and white McDonald’s around the Chicago area.

Ray asked me to come right over to discuss his fledgling 15-cent hamburger business – and after a half-hour, he said: “You’re hired for \$500 a month. And you can start Monday.” When Ray told Harry Sonneborn, then president of the company, Harry hit the ceiling. He roared at Ray: “Why the hell are you hiring a PR firm, when you and I can’t even afford to draw our salaries?” For the first few years of our relationship, I tried to avoid bumping into Harry, as I didn’t want to remind him of the \$500 a month they were spending. (I’m happy to report that we finally got an increase last year.)

In those early years, our role was based on delivering two audiences: 1) customers and 2) potential franchisees. Our efforts were linked to new restaurant openings and to building awareness of the McDonald’s concept in the local community. In those days, and for quite a few years later, McDonald’s couldn’t afford advertising, and public relations had to build both awareness and credibility.

In those days, we didn’t have much to go on besides our instincts. If it seemed right and it appeared to be working, we kept doing it. This community involvement was part of their culture from the very beginning – and still is today, even with their huge advertising budget. I coined the term “Trust Bank” for all the community involvement – which helped them build “deposits” of goodwill in case they might need it for a “withdrawal” when a crisis or sensitive issue arose. I’m happy to say that the term has stuck with the McDonald’s lexicon all these years. And I’m proud that

other companies have incorporated it into their own vocabularies.

Today, more than ever, the concept of the Trust Bank should be central to every business out there. But you don’t need to take my word for it. Our firm just completed a new study on Corporate Citizenship and American business.

The two most important factors that emerged when evaluating the individual companies were: 1) ethical, honest, responsible business practices, including executive behavior; and 2) how a company treats its employees. These are essential to trust internally

and externally – people want to do business with and work for a company they trust.

As an aside, I’m glad to see that employees want to draw a check from a boss they trust. We’re finding a renewed interest in employee relations these days, and I can remember when this area was treated as the “stepchild” of communications. It was considered an entry level or a dead-end job for people in our business. Now, companies understand their people have a more sophisticated understanding of business and expect a more sophisticated explanation of company strategy from their leaders. For my part, I’ve always tried to be visible among my co-workers – eager to answer their questions and seek their opinions.



Al Golin delivered the traditional Hall of Fame lecture, the 20th honoree to do so.

In fact, I recently did my standard lunch session with our summer interns, and as always, they were very attentive. Of course, the stories I've told repeatedly to others are new to them, so I am working with a captive, new audience.

And whenever I have the chance, I reiterate my own twist on the old adage: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Actually, it's my most un-favorite saying. I've always said: "Fix it before it breaks."

We should all have the courage to change things before we have to. Sometimes familiarity can breed contempt.

I think JFK (Kennedy, that is, not Kerry) said it: "The time to fix a roof is when the sun is shining." Nothing could be more true.

In any case, whenever I meet with the interns, they usually ask a couple of questions that help me evaluate what I've done over the years. There are two questions they always ask: "What have you done that you're most proud of? And, "What do you regret not doing?" I like the last question because it's something I can do something about and perhaps help others in our profession. So we come back to my tried-and-true tagline: "Fix it before it breaks." It really boils down to "going with your gut feeling." When we've had a long-standing relationship with a client and I observe our account team seemingly pleasing a client, sometimes, I've been reluctant to rock the boat when I know that our team might be wrong for the account. The same thing can happen when I've been talked out of a good idea when I know it makes sense. We've had some of our greater successes when we "stuck to our guns" when the naysayers tried to play it safe.



The Page Principles are designed to reinforce leadership, Golin said.

I've heard too many of our colleagues complain that they're the "Rodney Dangerfields" of their companies – they get no respect. We have to earn that respect with our CEOs and clients – through a solid understanding of the companies we represent – and the willingness to take a stand for a position that may not be popular but we know is right. However, too many of us are thinking of the *headline* – and not the *bottom line*.

In our business, we must take risks – and learn to love it. If you play "not to lose" rather than "to win," you'll never be a success.

Now, some people might see an upside to this: Play it conservatively, and you may hold your job forever – maybe; you'll certainly never make a mistake that way. But I believe you'll also never really reach your potential – unless you raise the bar.

Once again, Stephen Sondheim's lyrics say it best. His song called "Everybody Says Don't" sums up this philosophy:

"Don't walk on the grass. Don't disturb the peace. Don't upset the cart."

It ends with "Maybe you're going to fail. This time a ripple. Next time a wave. Don't be afraid."

Albert Einstein once said: "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."

The Enrons, Tycos, Worldcoms and the others have inadvertently given our industry a big lift. Thanks to factors like the ever-growing media microscope, instantaneous Internet news, quizzical employees, society's insatiable appetite for gossip and our voyeuristic, need-to-know

mentality, CEOs' every step and misstep are closely monitored. The once arrogant, greedy CEOs that some of us have known have suddenly found "religion." As a result, corporate leaders are listening to their PR counselors and staff a lot more these days, while discovering that greed is not always good – and realizing their employees and prospective employees want to work for companies they're proud of.

Some of the most impressive CEOs I've encountered know that it's important to practice humility even when you have a lot to brag about. My twist on a line from an old Mel Brooks movie, is: "If you've got it, you don't need to flaunt it."

It's gratifying to witness the Arthur Page principles becoming fashionable these days to certain CEOs who probably regarded them as unrealistic, naive, or soft and fuzzy values until recently.

I believe CEOs these days know that public trust is the currency of good public relations that is accumulated and used in the same way capital is used in a broader business sense. I hope they now realize that the Page Principles are not a defensive philosophy. They are really designed to reinforce leadership.

Paul Holmes reported on a recent MBA study, confirming this. Some 97 percent of MBAs from 11 major American and European universities say that they were willing to forego financial benefits to work for an ethical organization that is socially responsible. This never would have happened a few years ago.

Even Michael Porter has become a believer. I saw the famed Harvard Business School professor on Charlie Rose recently and he said he admitted that he was wrong originally on the role of corporate philanthropy. He said that there was a direct link from corporate social responsibility to economic success. Not only can't government do it all, but it's just good business for a company to get involved in social and cultural issues.

In the early days of my career, most of us tried to motivate our audience to do what we wanted them to do. Today, it's more realistic to position our products and services so it coincides with what people are going to do anyway.

I think we all have to be humble enough to know that the power to persuade is limited. Success these days comes from reading the public mind, not manipulating it.

As many of you might recall, my latest – and first – book was published last fall, and dealt with a word near and dear to me: *trust*. I'm delighted the Page Society has a new and exciting book dealing with this subject – with chapters written by some of the most enlightened CEOs in the world.

A great quote from British author, G. K. Chesterton illustrates the point that the buck really stops at the CEO's desk. Chesterton said: "I've searched all the parks in all the cities – and found no statues of committees.

Even before I was finally persuaded to write this book, I thought that if I ever wrote a book about my career, I had the perfect title. It sums up how I've worked, and I know all of you can relate to it as well. We've all worked behind the scenes, giving sound advice to our clients and bosses to make them look good and sound smart. So the title was: "When Is It My Turn?"

Well, thanks to this wonderful honor you've given me, I'm happy to discard the title. My wife, June, who among her many talents, likes to say that her main mission in life is to keep me humble, just said: "It is your turn."

One of my favorite quotes from George Bernard Shaw sums up my life these days. He said: "You don't stop playing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop playing.

Thanks again for this very meaningful tribute, as it gives me another reason to keep playing.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD JOHN M. REED

ORGANIZED, ETHICAL PERSUASION

Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you to the members of the Honors Committee for this unexpected honor. Ladies and Gentlemen. Since receiving notification of the award, I received a letter from Larry Foster, an old friend and colleague. He suggested that I take you on a 20-minute tour of just where international PR is today, the obstacles and challenges, etc. As usual with Larry, he called for a tall order; however, I'll try to comply, albeit in a very personal manner.

The day after I was born – May 20, 1927 to be exact – Charles Lindbergh took off from Long Island and flew nonstop to Paris, an amazing feat at the time, and an indirect indication to a very young John Reed of things to come. While in boarding school I loved receiving post cards from my father, and one day a card arrived from Lima, Peru. Wow. My first direct contact with the wider world. I became fascinated with geography and foreign cultures. I dreamed of visiting faraway places. That urge and interest continues to this day. I spent my third year of high school in Berthierville, Province of Quebec, Canada – a real experience. There I studied French and Latin. You can see



John Reed accepts the Distinguished Service Award from Tom Martin.

the pattern. Uncle Sam sent me to Korea and Japan in 1945-'46 where I studied Korean and Japanese. The future was clear: I would have an international life. And I haven't looked back, with trips to Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Mexico, England and Portugal so far this year. Those early journeys taught me the importance of understanding other cultures, their histories, languages and customs.

The real secret in my life, however, is that it was, and is still, fun. If my bosses and clients had only known, I would have paid them to allow me the pleasure of working in assorted parts of the globe. Happily for my family's sake, I did get paid.

Because of my own experience, I continue to look for enthusiasm on the part of young people who want to enter the field of international PR. Enthusiasm, plus a knack for understanding other peoples and cultures, without losing a deep respect for their own society and country.

My definition of public relations is "organized, ethical persuasion," and to me international PR means we do it someplace else – persuading people of cultures, languages,

religious, ethnicities different from our own . The first rule of international PR is “get local help.” No matter how fluent we become in other languages, no matter how deeply we understand other cultures, there is no way we can attain a native’s instincts for his own place. So, get local help.

Did you know that Magellan had a PR man on his epic first circumnavigation of the world? His name is Antonio Pigafetta, a young Italian from Vicenza who obtained passage as keeper of the log, and who collected word glossaries of each territory visited on the two-year trip. It was Pigafetta who wrote the account of the trip that was published by a newspaper in Cologne, and who later wrote two books that electrified Europe and made Magellan a household name. Today we have the straits of Magellan at the bottom of South America, and the Magellanic Cloud up in the sky. A neat trick considering that Magellan failed to complete the trip, being killed half-way. The chap who captained the ship back to the starting point in Spain remains virtually unknown, because he didn’t have a PR man. Antonio is my hero.

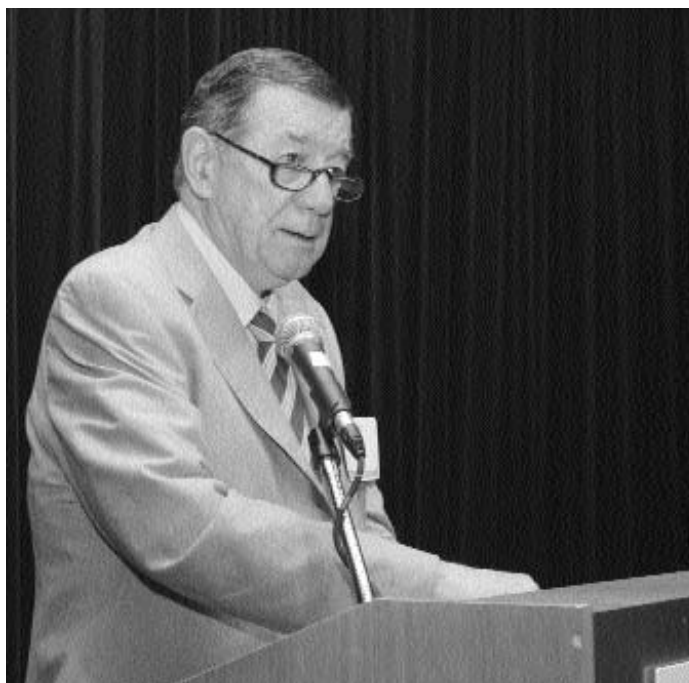
From Pigafetta to today, nearly 500 years later, tell your story straight, truthfully, and direct it to the right audience. Therein lies persuasion. In modern times we have moved from the tub thumpers who promoted circuses to e-mail, microwave television and the like. Our most recent progenitors began work in the early years of the 20th century, growing largely in the hot-houses of early American corporations, including the Bell System, with Arthur Page. Over time, with practice and responding to changing conditions, PR has become a routine function of business management, government and the non-profit community. Side by side, ethical practitioners and charlatans alike have

moved ahead, utilizing the evolving media to meet the needs of ever-smaller segmented units of society. What has happened in America has also happened abroad.

The early extension of PR around the globe was a result of the need by such groups as transportation, extractive industries, foreign investors and the like to use PR in lockstep with their global expansion. Airlines and hotel chains pioneered in hiring and training local people to conduct PR in many countries; operators of ships did likewise, as did mining companies and eventually producers of pharmaceuticals and consumer goods. Along with spreading American foreign trade came growing PR operations, using Americans sent abroad plus local hires, and training. This expansion was chiefly an American development that resulted in people in various countries being trained and establishing PR practice in assorted places. This was followed by large PR agencies setting up overseas branches to serve the clients, and incidentally to train local practitioners. One of the first such agencies was formed by

Sylvan Barnett and Arthur Reef in the late 1950s, and those two pioneers will be honored in New York next month by the International section of PRSA with the Atlas Award.

American universities have played an important role in the development of international PR. Most major universities now have courses on PR, usually in schools of journalism or communication. Eventually, there will be specialized curricula just for PR majors. In my opinion, the best place to locate PR courses is in departments of rhetoric, with access to courses in departments of language, journalism, media, history, etc. The reason for this choice is that the aim of PR is persuasion. That objective is wider than the courses



Reed talked about international public relations, a branch of the profession that is needed more than ever before because of the war on terrorism.

taught in media or journalism departments. Writing is a tool, not an objective. There are many other tools needed by future practitioners. Of course, that's just my opinion.

Today the field of PR continues to grow, and will do so as long as bottom-line results are seen. Gradually PR is reaching parity with advertising in many companies, including ad agencies themselves, and in the future advertising will be seen as a sub-set of PR, rather than the opposite, as it is today. While earlier I noted that PR is distinct and separate from journalism, it remains crucial that future practitioners be excellent writers and speakers, for language is the vehicle for the transmission of persuasion. Too many people in the field are inarticulate in their own language and need serious training if they are to be successful.

We Americans are now engaged in a great global war. You would not think so to study the program of the forthcoming national annual conference of the Public Relations Society of America that will be held next month in New York City. I counted just under 150 meetings, seminars, roundtables and assorted gatherings to take place at the PRSA Conference. Of that number, about 10 may be considered to deal with some narrow aspect of international PR, and of that small number, only one – yes, just one – actually deals with our primary problem in the world today: war. So please allow me to make a modest proposal to you.

The Arthur Page Society membership is the most senior, experienced, serious, dedicated, ethical group in the field of public relations. It is uniquely qualified to render sensible, effective advice to our government on the creation of a sound international public relations policy, and the conduct of international public relations programming to support

our global military effort. That military action is designed to root out and destroy the worldwide terrorism network. To do that, in addition to military might, the United States needs a vigorous program to persuade all of the many audiences affected by this conflict of the need to do so, and that benefits will accrue from our success in this global war.



We need to win the support of audiences abroad for the rightness of our actions in combating terrorism, Reed said.

In short, we need an international PR campaign to assure that we win speedily, and in the aftermath of the war, have the support of various audiences abroad for the rightness of our actions.

To accomplish this goal, I suggest the Arthur W. Page Society form a voluntary action committee to study the matter, and present its recommendations to the U.S. government. Unfortunately, the once-logical center for such study and planning, the former U.S.

Information Agency, is no longer equipped nor positioned to handle such a task, now being a small unit within the State Department. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the sense of urgency fostered by the real dangers of the expansion of communism, we have let down our guard (and budgets) in the international governmental PR arena. To reinvigorate and, if necessary, staff a renewed, practical international PR program to deal with our present danger, America needs the benefits of the best minds in the PR profession. Besides, any danger or damage to American prestige and any lowering of respect for the American people will have adverse effects on American companies and the American economy. There is safety and a competitive advantage in being out front and successful in the PR arena globally.

There you have it, fellow practitioners of the noble profession of public relations: an international challenge, on which could well hinge the kind of world in which our children and grandchildren will live. Thank you.

PAGE PRINCIPLES AWARD

Reuters was presented with the first Page Principles Award at the Awards Luncheon during the Annual Conference. Accepted by Simon Walker, the media company's director of corporate communications, the award recognized a communications strategy that was used in rebuilding Reuters' corporate reputation after the dot-com bust and a deep downturn in the company's core financial businesses.

Also as part of the newly revised awards program, MassMutual Financial Group was given a Merit



Simon Walker accepts the Page Principles Award from Tom Martin.

Award in recognition of the company's LifeBridge Free Life Insurance program that involved giving away \$1 billion in term life insurance coverage to lower-income families.

Luncheon participants also found at their tables copies of a printed tribute to George Hammond, an early pioneer in the profession, who died recently at age 96. While Arthur Page set high standards working within a large corporation, Hammond established similar principles in an agency setting as chairman of Carl Byoir & Associates.

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