

the Journal

July/August 2005

Lawrence Ragan Communications
Journal of Employee Communication Management



Rolling the dice in Sin City

Do HR people care more about employees than you do? We sent our man to Vegas to find out 6

First, communicate

Rebuilding Tyco from the inside out 11

Balancing act

Strategy matters, but results count, too 20

Creative juice

Today's remedy for the common communicator 23

New demographics

Are you ready for the work force of 2015? 26

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2

Editor's note

David R. Murray

3

Who moved my verb?

James Ylisela, Jr.

Too many executive communicators have gone over to the dark side. It's high time they came back.

6

Hullabaloo in Vegas

David R. Murray

Our intrepid reporter goes to an HR conference with an attitude and comes back with newfound respect for "benefits geeks."

11

Tyco does some talking

By Rebecca Anderson

New CEO Ed Breen needed to repair Tyco's reputation—and with its own employees first. All he needed was a few good communicators.

14

How to get involved in benefits—from the beginning

Kathy Collura

17

Communication consulting—from within (part 2 of 3)

Stacy Wilson, ABC

20

Too far toward strategic? Plan, then execute

Sean Williams

23

Exorcise the oxymoron: kick-start creativity

Barbara Leimsner

26

The demographics are coming: seven surprising trends

Diane Gayeski, Ph.D.

41

As I see it

Steve Crescenzo

the Journal

Lawrence Ragan Communications
Journal of Employee Communication Management

Publisher
Heather Burns
heatherb@ragan.com

Editor-in-Chief
David R. Murray
dmurrayil@earthlink.net

Graphic Designer
Suzanne Croke

Editorial Director
James Ylisela Jr.

Illustrator
Nancy Julson

The Journal is published six times a year by Lawrence Ragan Communications, Inc. under the leadership of Chief Executive Officer Mark Ragan. If you have any questions, call customer service representative Diane Tillman at 800.493.4867 x4250.

29

Opinion diversity:
put it to work
for you
Mike Klein

32

Got brand? A
guide for employee
communicators
Gary Grates

35

Starting Over:
how to remake
your department
(part 1 of 3)
Virginia Stefan and
Liz Gutheridge

38

Advice from
today's exec
communicators
Sue Wescott Alessandri

Your Editorial Board

Australia

Barbara Palframan Smith
Director, BPS Communications, and President of the IABC
Australia NSW chapter

Canada

David Estok
Associate Vice President Communications and Public
Affairs, The University of Western Ontario

Rawle Borel, Jr.

Director Communications and Customer Care, Rogers
Communication

United Kingdom

Ezri Carlebach
Head of Communication, Royal Society for the
Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce

United States

John Clemons
Vice President/Communications, Raytheon Technical
Services Company LLC

Gary Grates

Vice President, General Motors North America
Communications

Shel Holtz

Holtz Communication + Technology

Angela Sinickas

Sinickas Communications, Inc.

COMMUNICATION CONSULTING— FROM WITHIN PART 2 OF 3

One doesn't become an internal consultant overnight. Use this step-by-step method to gradually earn the trust and respect of your new clients—and then to steadily deepen the relationship.



By Stacy Wilson, ABC

What can working from a consulting methodology inside an organization do for you? In the last *Journal*, I hypothesized that a different process and a different way of thinking can position you in a more credible, respected and strategic role. It can get you to the decision-making table and keep you there.

While consulting from the inside doesn't normally carry responsibility for revenue generation as an outside consulting role would, it does lean on the same processes, practices and skills. So much of consulting is

about having the right mindset—just allowing and disciplining yourself to think differently about your role, your client's needs and how you do your work.

Secondly, knowing what resources are available to you can make you more confident about thinking differently. It's OK to suggest a really unusual approach you have little experience with as long as you have a resource that can help implement that approach. Know your resources both inside and outside your organization and how best to tap them.

Job one? Know the business. >

Stacy Wilson, ABC, is president of Eloquor Consulting, Inc. She has served as a consultant internally, in large consulting firms, and now as an independent consultant. Her Consulting Skills for Communicators, a manual, toolkit and workshop on the topic, is available at www.eloquor.com.

Be the strategy, goals and objectives

Knowing the business will help you focus. A good first step is to analyze the business strategies, goals and objectives. You may need to turn to many different leaders within the organization to do this properly.

There are five areas to look at:

- 1 What's your scope of focus? Are you working for just one division or business unit or are you working for an entire enterprise? Understanding the scope will help you refine your research effort.
- 2 What do the business strategies, goals and objectives really mean and how can you influence them positively?
- 3 Who are the competitors and how can you use this information?
- 4 What do subject-matter experts, leaders and the media have to say about your organization?
- 5 What big ideas do you have that tie the business strategies, goals and objectives to the initiative your client has asked you to help with?

When analyzing the strategies, goals and objectives, ask these tough questions:

- How do employees become aware of unwritten strategies, goals and objectives?
- What might happen should the organization fail?
- What specific behaviors are required of employees to achieve the objectives?
- How can effective communication improve the organization's chances of achieving the goals and objectives?

Your answers highlight challenges and barriers and help you find a path that has real impact for your client and the organization.

This is why it's helpful to conduct an analysis periodically, or at the outset of each major initiative. Business changes, and you need to stay on top of those changes. An annual review isn't enough.

Grow the relationship with unsolicited counsel

As a consultant, sometimes you must give counsel that hasn't been sought by the client. This is part of growing your relationship. However, unsolicited counsel requires tact and timing. For those relationships that are ready, you can build your credibility with your client by being proactive.

There are many reasons you might need to offer unsolicited counsel: Perhaps the client hasn't benefited from the same observations you've made, is inexperienced in the particular issue or is distracted by another project. Several ways to do this effectively include:

- Share a published article, a presentation you saw at a professional conference or other professional documentation on the topic that supports your recommended approach. This works even more effectively when you are the author of the article or presentation.
- In a direct and honest conversation, share your observations and recommendations.
- Ask questions that may lead the client to understand the value of a different approach or the importance of a seemingly inconsequential issue.
- Communicate a best practice that clearly demonstrates the value of a different approach and the results realized by another organization.

Many executives like to know what other organizations are doing

on specific issues. They don't want to recreate the wheel if someone else has already worked out the bugs. Best practices can be a tremendous boon to communicators. But, it's important to consider what constitutes a best practice. Establish criteria that fit your organization. You might include:

- How many and what size companies have successfully used the best practice?
 - What measurement data is required?
 - What industries have implemented the best practice successfully?
 - What type of media coverage and commentary has the best practice garnered?
 - What body of research validates the best practice?
- When hunting for best practices, look at:

- Case studies
- Benchmarking data
- Related academic research
- Award-winning projects (such as Quill or Prism awards)
- Media resources

Questions uncover great solutions

Each one of the steps in the consulting process model have multiple parts. For example, "collaborate on the solution" incorporates everything from brainstorming to benchmarking to collaborative implementation.

Questions can be used effectively in every step of the consulting process model. And, the art of asking questions goes hand-in-hand with the use of best practices when looking for the right solution. Select questions that:

- Provide ample detail—a yes or no isn't enough
- Seek clarity on the linkage to business goals >

- Are clear and direct, but not confrontational
- Use supportive language

Some clients learn best from visuals, so be prepared to offer a visual for them with the question. Sometimes an informal drawing on a white board can better illustrate a proposed approach.

Two questions most clients find annoying are the endless asking of “why” and “what’s causing your pain?” The why question is a little like dealing with a 3-year-old. And what pain? The pain in my tooth? In my head? Just ask the client, “What are you currently most concerned about?”

Most importantly, don’t allow the client to ask all the questions. While you want to communicate

your value proposition, when working toward a solution, allow the client to do most of the talking.

Don’t forget to measure

I’ve discussed four significant elements in the consulting process: learning about the business, unsolicited counsel, best practices and questions. Along the way, I noted a few key observations about each step in the process model.

Measurement is the only one I haven’t discussed. As it says in the Consultant’s Charter (discussed in the first article in this series), “you can’t improve what you don’t measure.” Ask your client what’s working and what isn’t. Use business metrics to identify the larger

impact of your initiatives. Conduct a return-on-investment analysis when appropriate to ensure you invest your time in the right efforts. Use what you learn to improve.

In the next and final article in this series, we’ll focus on the skills required to deliver great consulting services inside your organization. Specifically, we’ll look at using adult learning methodology in client teaching and how you can adjust your leadership style to the needs of individual clients. Ultimately, whether inside the organization or out, any communicator can use a consulting approach to deliver great service. ■