

NYC PR Exec Helps Firms Adjust to a Changing World

BY DON CASCIATO

With new technology changing many companies at a rapid rate, a New York City public relations executive believes the need for communicating the corporate story has increased.

"There is a need for corporations to communicate even sensitive matters," said Ken Makovsky of Makovsky & Company, Inc.

Mr. Makovsky, whose firm recently was cited by *Inside PR* as the "Best Managed Public Relations Firm in the U.S.," started his company in New York in 1979 and today has 70 employees.

"I feel that corporations today are basically living in a transparent environment," he said. "Practically everything the corporation does can be exposed in terms of public awareness. There are no more corporate secrets."

Mr. Makovsky observed that the role of the chief executive officer (CEO) also has changed. "The CEO is more and more the individual the public wants to hear from whether there are problems or not," he said.

"The CEO is one of the more important gauges of the reputation of a company. The public wants to hear from the leadership of a corporation."

As an example of a sensitive contemporary situation requiring skillful handling, Mr. Makovsky cited the crash off of Long Island of TWA Flight 800.

Reputation Factor

Mr. Makovsky also cited a recent survey which found that 90 percent of the CEOs in the United States believe that "reputation" is one of the significant factors in determining growth of companies in the next five years. "This is an indicator that the role of a public relations firm becomes more significant as an important counsel to a company," he said.

He also pointed out that computerization is the most significant change in his business.

"We are connected within the firm as well as with clients," he said. "So the speed of communication has increased significantly. The amount of media to communicate with has expanded exponentially."

Mr. Makovsky cited the many narrow market segments. For example, there are magazines and Web pages for cigars.

"There is an opportunity to target audiences you want to reach," he said. "There is print as well as the Internet as well as the explosion of cable channels."

Asked about media fragmentation with so many different audiences and markets, Mr. Makovsky said such circumstances posed a challenge to his company.

He explained that "public relations people had to get a handle on making sure of understanding the range of media that is available and the size of the audience."

Mr. Makovsky continued: "It is so explosive. There are a mounting number of interest groups out there where companies can have direct access to those they want to reach."

Worldwide Service

Although headquartered in New York, the company serves clients worldwide. In addition, it is a founding member of IPREX — an international corporation of independent public relations firms with 46 offices in the United States, Europe, Asia and South America.

According to *Inside PR* magazine, the firm's success is based on the "...agency's focus on client service ... and its ability to manage national programs for clients who would otherwise never consider a firm outside the top ten."

"Makovsky & Company is the master of controlled, consistent growth. In 1997, the firm grew by about 10 percent, breaking \$7.1 million in fees."

Makovsky & Company also was cited in three other categories by the magazine:

- Top 9 Business-to-Business Agencies
- Top 16 Investor Relations Agencies
- Top 16 Agencies With National Capabilities

Makovsky & Company has been among the top ten growth agencies for most of the past ten years.

Inc. magazine named Makovsky & Company a finalist in its "Entrepreneur of the Year" Award program.



Ken Makovsky's New York City public relations firm, Makovsky & Company, was recently named "Best Managed Public Relations Firm in the U.S." by *Inside PR*, a trade magazine.

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