

PRSA-LA *Prisms*

The Monthly Newsletter for Members of the Public Relations Society of America Los Angeles Chapter ♦ April 2003

'Networking' is an Action Verb!

Networking! It was the topic that dominated the March 18 Independent Practitioners Group meeting – the importance of networking, the art of networking, how to do it and where.

Guest Patrick Henry, the well-known networking guru who calls himself "The Fishing Coach," provided attendees with the essential steps to creating an individual "Discovery Elevator Speech" – a vital networking tool. Patrick provided meeting attendees with copies of his witty workbook "CEO of Myself," as he guided the group through Part One: The Positioning Statement and Part Two: the Unique Process/Approach.

After asking attendees, "What is the question that people almost

always ask each other when they meet?" Several people responded, "What do you do?" After affirming that was correct, Patrick suggested that the answer to that question – the discovery elevator speech – should last no more than 14 seconds. "The human mind," he said, "can only go for 14 seconds before ego intrudes and we start thinking about something else." People are much more likely to listen to information they've specifically asked for, he said.

Therefore, he urged attendees to "say what you do in a very powerful way that encourages people to ask more questions. Let them discover what you do." His own elevator speech is, "I'm Patrick Henry, the fishing coach. I help clients locate and land new business." When asked the

question that naturally follows such a statement – "How do you do that?" – he can provide additional information to an intrigued and interested listener.

During a discussion about positioning statements, Patrick noted that two essential things to consider are target market and the compelling benefit to that market.

Many helpful hints emerged during the group interaction, some of which follow:

- The best place to network is within college and university alumni associations. USC, in particular, has made an art and science of networking.

- It is possible to create a brand without having a big budget. However, your personal brand must stand for something. Remember, Mother Teresa didn't have a Web site.

- Books to read: "The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference" by Malcolm Gladwell, "Dig your Well Before You're Thirsty" by Harvey McKay and books on positioning by Al Ries and Jack Trout. One of their titles is "Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind."

- Your positioning statement should be the unique thing that separates you from anyone else.

Like the first Independent Practitioners Group meeting, held in February, the evening was a lively one filled with important and valuable lessons, group interaction, a sharing of ideas, and, of course, networking.

For information about upcoming Independent Practitioner Group meetings, please visit the PRSA-LA Web site at www.prsa-la.org and click

PRSA Leaders Support Pepperdine Conference

