

LATEST BATCH OF D.M.
PROVIDES GOOD & BAD
COPY, STRATEGY TECHNIQUES

Direct mail is said to be the toughest medium to write & strategize. Others call it the basic persuasive format -- since it retains the aura of one-on-one "personal" communication (even tho letters are produced by the millions). Some noteworthy techniques, good & bad examples currently in mailboxes:

¶Lung Association keeps trying for a decade. Computer fund raising pitch we saw refers to "your generous gift in the 1973 campaign...."

¶Mobil's tricky 1980 datebook mailing arrives end of January. Purposeful timing or peril of third class? Seemingly non-selling offer to credit card customers is "our way of saying Happy New Year!" Copy spotlights deal, leap year: "A gift you'll enjoy all 366 days in 1980. A value of \$9.95 or more, yours for the asking." Only cost is "a mere \$2.99 for order acquisition (cost of printing & mailing this sales literature), postage, handling ... plus applicable taxes, to be billed to my Mobil credit card." "DateMinder" reminder service, which computerizes important dates supplied by customer & automatically sends reminders, is free. However, buried near end of literature is kicker: future year's datebooks (at full cost) will also be sent & charged to account, unless customer specifically cancels. If cancellation card arrives with monthly credit card bill, will it go unnoticed? Message, ethics seem inconsistent with company's ads aiming to build trust in oil industry. Shell did similar mailing.

¶Phony bill is tried by advertising newsletter. For several weeks the Gallagher Report sent free copies to pr execs in circulation promo. Then sent "invoice" -- which arrived accompanied only by reply envelope. "Bill" copy does not mention fact recipient placed no order. One of the oldest, most despicable tricks in direct mail.

¶Little known magazine uses simple graphic strategy to gain name awareness. Material is stuffed into #10 envelope so that upon removal recipient sees a single panel reading "THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR" in attractive green on white. Classic direct mail copy quickly engages reader with interesting topics, pulls eye into pitch letter. Additionally, 3 lines of typewriter copy appear next to window of outside envelope: "Inside: an invitation to subscribe to 'one of the nation's most energetic and sprightly journals of opinion' (quote from Time magazine)." Corner card gives magazine name, which is then reinforced by insert.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES. Irene Macauley, Hill and Knowlton (Chi.)...Gary Caruso, Cohn & Wolfe (Atlanta)...Mary D. Stein, Image Management (Hales Corner, Wis.)...David C. Anderson, Gilbert, Whitney & Johns (Morristown, N.J.)...Judy R. Goldsmith, Modern Talking Picture Service (NYC)...David L. Ross and Catherine P. Saxton, The Rowland Company (NYC)...

John N. Hubbard Jr. and Louise M. Pollock, Carol Moberg Comms (NYC).

FIRMS. Barmmer Elliott, Inc. new pr firm at Suite 210, 3 Landmark Sq., Stamford, Conn.; 203/356-9411; Russell Barmmer is pres...Barkley & Evergreen (Southfield, Mich.) form pr dep't headed by Robert A. Popa, vp-pr...The Haft Group, Inc., 99 Park Ave., NYC 10016; 212/697-8550; headed by Robert L. Haft, pres.

pr reporter

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WILL AIR TIME FOR NONPROFITS BE REDUCED BY PUSH FOR MORE PROFITS?
MISUNDERSTANDING OF "PUBLIC SERVICE" VS. "PUBLIC AFFAIRS" BROADCASTING
CAUSE OF FLAP OVER PROPOSED FCC REGS, SAY GOV'T & RADIO INDUSTRY

The regulators & the industry agree that objections to proposed radio deregulation raised by U.S. Catholic Conference (pr 1/14) and the Red Cross, along with numerous other nonprofit org'ns, are largely misconceived. Aimed at eliminating "time and talent wasting" paperwork, Nat'l Ass'n of Broadcasters insists actual programming will be little affected. FCC says its data corroborates NAB claim.

Proposal will eliminate 4 guidelines specified in Communications Act of 1934, including requirements that stations 1) keep program logs; 2) execute recorded amounts of public outreach (called formal ascertainment requirements); 3) have no more than 18 commercial mins/hr.; 4) air a minimum number of non-entertainment programs (public affairs).

Nonprofits fear they will be denied presently allotted air time as broadcasters opt to sell more ads, attracted by more profit. However, both FCC and NAB indicate that even with present guideline, most stations air only about half the commercial time allowed. FCC attributes this to "concern for listenership" and dearth of sponsors -- since overwhelming demand for broadcast time applies primarily to television, not radio. Even if stations were tempted into commercial inflation, the situation would soon be corrected by "dynamic marketplace forces." (Who wants to listen to a radio station with too many commercials? What sponsor wants to buy air time with a non-existent listenership?)

As for elimination of requirements for community outreach and non-entertainment programs, NAB reports broadcasters fulfill both in news-gathering and reporting. "There's an undeniable market for news. A radio station must air news to adequately serve the needs of its market." FCC offers supporting statistics: small radio stations carry 300% over the minimum amount of public affairs broadcasting required under current guidelines.

— GOV'T LINGO IS THE PROBLEM -- AGAIN —

Commonly misunderstood is distinction between "public affairs broadcasting" (reporting on current public events, i.e. news) and "public service broadcasting" (messages of public interest but not necessarily newsworthy -- such as psa's for nonprofit org'ns).

Proposed FCC amendments do not involve public service broadcasts. "There has been no regulation requiring these since 1960," says FCC's Roger Holburg. Stations need not carry any psa's unless they wish to.

Further semantic hurdle is present "formal ascertainment requirement" ... which means community outreach & news gathering on station's own initiative, as opposed to psa's brought to them by others. It would be eliminated.



HOW TO STIFFEN THE RESISTANCE:
CASE STUDY IN SELLING DEREGULATION
AS DONE BY LAWYERS, MEDIA

Despite concerted effort by NAB to confer with objectors to FCC dereg proposals, misconception and suspicion still cloud issue, delay proceedings. "This is an emotional subject, especially for the religious organizations, and it is hard to counter misunderstandings in an emotional atmosphere," explains the NAB.

Lobbyists arguing what he terms "non-issues" make the logistics of the FCC proceedings "overwhelming," according to Barry Umansky, NAB atty. Because of this, proceedings can be culminated "only by the end of this year or early next."

One-on-one conferences with opposing org'ns, arranged to clear up misconceptions, have been only minimally successful. The lawyer chaired several of them, which may partially explain NAB's failure to communicate effectively. He met with Red Cross media specialist Lon Walls, who describes Umansky as a "fast-talking lawyer" whose presentation "left a lot of holes" and even raised new suspicion. Russell Shaw, U.S. Catholic Conference sec'y of public affairs, sees distinction between "public affairs" and "public interest" as "a veiled threat directed against us so as to say if you guys don't lay off, we'll fix your wagon somewhere along the line"-- meaning stations won't carry his psa's. prr's interview with Umansky confirmed his approach.

Could it be that attorneys and media people don't understand public relations?

PUBLIC MORE SENSITIVE THAN PRACTITIONERS
OR EDITORS TO SURVEY DESIGN, AAPOR FINDS;
"A PRIORI" ANTICIPATIONS MAKE BAD CAMPAIGNS

American public is more sensitive than average editor to survey design of public opinion polls, according to Donna Charron, dpr Amer. Ass'n

for Public Opinion Research. PR execs are "even less sensitive to disciplined public opinion research." Implications are serious in advent of an era Charron calls the "quantitative society."

Some newspapers like Financial Post of Canada & Boston Globe include sampling techniques when reporting poll results. Jim Shriver of Gallup Org'n (Princeton, N.J.) says data is nothing new to editors. For 20 years AAPOR members have provided complete info on methodology -- as a matter of policy. But media seldom use it.

"I don't think resistance to publishing this kind of information is tied into editors' evaluation of the public's need and intelligence," Charron told pr reporter. Instead, it reflects their "collective lack of quantitative training." Efforts to educate editors via seminars have fallen flat. "They've been generally unreceptive."

Practitioners' education leaves most in same boat as journalists -- unable to interpret research. As a result, they depend on "a priori anticipations of public reactions" rather than research. "This is the slip between cup and lip which makes so much public relations ineffective." (See this week's tips & tactics.)

CONSULTANT TO LAW FIRMS RECOMMENDS PR
OVER ADVERTISING, FINDS ACCOUNTANTS
MORE SOPHISTICATED ABOUT MARKETING

Robert Denney, Phila. management consultant, says law firms "are coming out of the wood-work" looking for marketing help. Tho still "definitely a minority," all sizes & types across the country are interested. Denney provides planning, then advises clients to hire public relations firms for implementation.

"A top question is 'Should we advertise?'" he told pr reporter. "Generally, I say no, and recommend public relations -- depending, of course, on marketing objectives and the firm's personalities." The public "isn't ready for advertising," neither are the partners, he finds. "I shy away from recommending firms providing both services because they are more likely to encourage lawyers to advertise."

Majority of lawyers don't understand marketing, "client orientation," or public relations, he says. Public relations is equated with news releases. Denney tries to "educate them on the many things a pr firm can do." He lists publicity, "pr in the broader sense," speech writing assistance, design of brochures & promotional materials as examples.

Until recently accounting firms dominated professional marketing seminars put on by Denney's firm. They're "3-4 yrs ahead of lawyers," show a "greater interest in at least considering marketing." Lawyers are so uncomfortable he now avoids word "marketing," uses "practice development" -- a lesson "learned the hard way."

WHO CANADIANS BELIEVE:
PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN FOUND NEEDED,
BUT INFORMATION SOURCES LACK TRUST

Pollsters from Decima Research, Ltd. uncovered an endemic credibility gap among Canadians which could compound gravity of the energy crisis. Researchers polled 1505 Canadians, found widespread disbelief in existence of an energy crisis. Massive public education campaigns were clearly indicated.

"But who will do the educating?" pollsters ask, for among their results was evidence that Canadians didn't trust any of the traditional informational vehicles very much (see chart). Respondents were asked to rate 12 potential sources of information for believability. Even the source deemed most reliable, the "expert on the issue," was rated trustworthy by barely half the respondents.

Source	Respondents Trusting Source
Expert on issue	53%
Religious leader	50%
Community activist	39%
Local MP	29%
Government ad	26%
Newscaster	26%
Prime minister	26%
Provincial premier	25%
Public-interest spokesman	24%
Celebrity	22%
Businessman	21%
Industry advertisement	17%

Excerpted from The Financial Post, 1/26

PUBLIC OFFERS OPINIONS WILLINGLY
EVEN IN FICTIONAL SITUATIONS;
GOV'T MISTRUST RUNS HIGH

Survey by researchers at U Cincinnati casts another doubt on value of using raw public opinion data -- without interpretation. Asked whether the Public Affairs Act of 1975 -- a fictitious bill -- should be repealed, one-third of 487 respondents said yes. Surveyors attribute "pseudo opinions" to: 1) unwillingness to seem uninformed and 2) second guessing purpose of question. Earlier in survey, many respondents indicated mistrust of gov't in general. Thus, Public Affairs question may have been viewed as simply another test of gov't trust.