

"Pieces about TAG in publications ranging from the Wall Street Journal to corporate newsletters have shown Textron as a company that cares about its retirees and uses innovative approaches to expand its resources," Eisenhower told prr. Another side benefit: Textron Advisory Group -- or TAG -- is helping promote the company name.

Now in second year, TAG has fielded over 40 retired execs. They work "just as much or as little as they like," says Eisenhower. Clients come from within -- and outside -- the company. Textron's diversity is TAG's asset. "We have a deep bench of retired specialists, with wide-ranging areas of expertise," says Eisenhower. Typical customers, he says, include capital companies and banks, which use TAG execs to help bail out ailing debtor companies.

Eisenhower reports TAG receives few requests for public relations help: "It seems companies can more easily spot the need for financial or engineering specialists than the need for public relations help."

Media coverage has evoked numerous inquiries from companies seeking to set up similar programs, although Eisenhower says Textron hasn't spotted anything like TAG.

Textron plans to extend TAG, now available only to top level execs down to middle mgmt. "This will enable us to offer more complete service to our customers and to extend the benefits of TAG to more former Textron employees," says Eisenhower. "Don't let your brain go down the drain," he advises fellow retirees.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR PRACTITIONERS

¶ Another business group chooses direct action. Independent oil producers are shipping their drilling rigs & other heavy equipment to Washington for a traffic-stopping protest of windfall profits tax legislation. Move is patterned after farmers' Tractorcade 3 yrs. ago (see prr 12/19/77). Earlier, pro-nuclear groups held marches & rallies to protest anti-nuke tactics, demand licenses for power plants. As an awareness technique such staged events are provably successful. Question is whether they win converts or create resistance.

¶ 64 million viewers in 76 cities are seeing PRSA's psa on protecting the First Amendment. In first 3 weeks of release, 582 telecasts in 21 states were reported to Planned Communications Services (NYC), volunteer producer & distributor of the spot. Negotiations for national network use are continuing, according to PCS pres. Alvin Roselin.

¶ Clients need public understanding of pr as much as practitioners do. Religious leaders know the value of public relations, but some of the faithful do not yet share recognition of its need. A group of Catholic clergy, religious & laity, known as Call To Action, is questioning the Archdiocese of Chicago about expenditures for a pr firm. Janet Diederichs & Associates was retained (pr 5/21/79) to conduct a communications audit, which Chicago Tribune says aimed at "improving the public image" of Cardinal Cody. Later, he replaced his entire communications staff.

Diederich denies rumors the firm received \$66,000 and continues to counsel the cardinals. Call To Action wants to know how much was spent, and where it is reported in the Archdiocese's '79 financial report.

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GOV'T TURNS TO IMPERSONAL MEDIUM TO GATHER SENSITIVE INFO; COMPUTER STORAGE, PUBLIC MISTRUST RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY

Federal gov't is getting ready to conduct most massive poll in nation's history: Census '80. Challenge is to gather demographic data -- considered highly sensitive even in public opinion surveys -- from every citizen. Compounding task is "low public confidence in gov't" and the "inertia of the 'me generation,'" says Census Bureau dpr Hal Webber. But virtual 100% return is essential. Data underpins basic democratic process of equal representation, influences gov't priorities, and is basic planning & research tool in private & voluntary sectors.

Tho required by law to comply, citizens "post-Watergate decade" now more reluctant to supply confidential info. For first time this year, Census is relying almost entirely on individual initiative -- and impersonal postal system -- to do job. Every household will be mailed form. 90% will be expected to complete & return it without once-traditional on-premise visit.

"Most people like answering the questions in privacy and at their own pace," Webber told pr reporter. Bureau also found mail answers tend to be more accurate -- "possibly because there was no stranger asking the questions." In '70 Bureau tried mail for 60% of households, got 85% return. This year's goal is slightly lower: 80% first go-around.

Webber emphasizes that garnering public support becomes crucial in keeping costly follow-up to non-respondents at minimum. He acknowledges that success hinges on more than law and new mail strategy. Computer technology, for example, raises specter of disclosure abuses -- a strong public concern. Gov't mistrust compounds it. Two common fears says Webber: 1) tax info may be released to IRS which could then prosecute for tax evasion and 2) among urban poor, data could be released to landlords.

QUESTIONNAIRE TACKLES CONFIDENTIALITY CONCERN

"... The law under which the census is taken protects the confidentiality of your answers. For the next 72 years -- or until April 1, 2052 -- only sworn census workers have access to the individual records, and no one else may see them.

"Your answers, when combined with the answers from other people, will provide the statistical figures needed by public and private groups, schools, business and industry, and Federal, State, and local governments across the country. These figures will help all sectors of American society understand how our population and housing are changing. In this way, we can deal more effectively with today's problems and work toward a better future for all of us."

-- Director,
Bureau of the Census

Info Campaign Aims At Awareness Census has launched massive "public awareness campaign." Six week blitz culminates March 28 when forms hit mailboxes. Every communications channel is being used: radio & tv spots, newspaper articles, 120 million pieces of handout literature, even formation of local citizen groups called "complete count committees." Goals are two-fold says Webber: 1) "Convince Americans of the importance of the census" and 2) "reassure them of the confidentiality of information." Hotlines are being set up nationwide to field questions.

"Targeted outreach program" aims at special audiences that might become "the missed American public." About 2.5% of all U.S. residents went uncounted a decade ago, according to agency estimates. Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, other minorities filled the ranks.

Key element for this group, says Arthur Mielke, Bureau pio, is personal strategy. Workers will be sent to specific neighborhoods to distribute literature and "provide a visible presence." Other tools include materials in 32 languages and census forms tailored to needs of special populations such as Indians, Eskimos.

The info campaign mainly aims at building awareness rather than education & attitude change, it includes two noteworthy exceptions. Kit for press provides detailed background on census, including info on confidentiality. Program developed for schools features take-home projects. Piloted in '70, this year it's reaching every primary & secondary school. "Experience has shown that children, once motivated, can be highly influential in motivating parents," Webber says.

Bureau will be taking hard look at how effectively it communicates its case, Webber says. Public's voluntary response to mail survey will be one measurement. But Webber also plans to hire outside opinion research firms. They'll be conducting random surveys of public's attitudes to gov't census taking. Results will be used in planning the first mid-decade census, scheduled for 1985.

THE MOVIES RETURN AS OPINION MOLDERS:
NORMA RAE TURNS ON BOTH SEXES
BUT HELPS IDENTIFY WOMEN'S ROLE

"Norma Rae" joins "The China Syndrome" as current example of issue films with demonstrated success in influencing public opinion. It is credited with helping Food

and Commercial Workers organize Woodward & Lothrop dept. stores, largest private employer in Wash., D.C.

"One of the turning points," union's Eva Andriak told Press Associates, Inc. -- PAI is the labor news bureau -- "was showing 'Norma Rae.'" Commercially successful film tells true story of Clothing & Textile Workers campaign to organize J.P. Stevens. Actress Sally Field won an Oscar nomination for her performance. Andriak said workers identified with the heroine, went on to emulate her organizing efforts.

Film motivates men as well as women, claims Coalition of Labor Union Women. CLUW finds employers that violate labor laws or women's rights are apt to violate employee relations principles. In its guide to "Effective Contract Language for Union Women," group says: "The so-called women's issues are really people issues that will affect men, women, children, blacks, whites, Hispanics, Indians -- all of us in short."

Specific women's issues now include child care, job safety & health, pregnancy disability, sexual harassment, "female job ghettos" of low-wage industries, unequal pay -- and, refusal of unions to develop female leaders.

SOCIAL REGULATIONS FOR UTILITIES
PROVE LESS EFFECTIVE THAN
CUSTOMER RELATIONS PROGRAMS

Another fallout of gov't regulation: when public utilities commissions drop bans on utility shut-offs, it leaves companies on their own to thrash out difficult question of social responsibility.

Moratoriums "merely deferred the agony for those unable to pay their bills," says Rhonna Stokes, media rep, Baltimore Gas & Electric. Also left utilities with millions in lost revenue. With energy costs continuing to climb, search for long range solution is on.

One approach is to create innovative subsidy programs which protect consumers from shutoffs while ensuring utilities will eventually get paid. Maryland's decision to lift its 2-year ban was met "with instant public panic," Stokes told pr reporter. BG&E worked with legislature to set up Baltimore Fuel Fund, non-profit organization that raises capital from business. BG&E provided \$10,000 in seed money, pledged to match up to \$190,000 a year (including funds provided thru other assistance agencies). Convincing other businesses to give has been major stumbling block, but Stokes is optimistic program can work.

Carefully targeted public information campaign is Detroit Edison's response. The Michigan lifted its shutoff ban, utility has faced October - April moratorium passed by city of Detroit. "Help Us Help You" campaign is aimed at audiences hardest to reach, most likely to face payment problems -- hearing impaired, blind, foreign language households. Multi-media approach includes:

- * tv commercials with sign language boxes
- * booklets printed in braille, 11 foreign languages
- * foreign language telephone crews to answer customer questions

These customer relations efforts are impacting the bottom line. Mike Maurer, Detroit Edison media rep, says uncollectables have dropped to .36% -- one of the lowest rates in nation. BG&E hasn't compiled its winter revenues yet but Stokes is pleased. In moratorium winter of '77, 4,000 customers were shut off. This winter service has been interrupted to only 181 homes. All were back in service within 1 to 3 days.

TEXTRON RECYCLES RETIREES;
GETS KUDOS AS "COMPANY THAT CARES"

Instead of turning retired top level execs out to pasture, Textron is putting them back to work as part-time management consultants. While program's initial goal, says Bob Eisenhauer, retired vp corp. rels., was "to ease executives' transitions into retirement," widespread media praise has bolstered Textron's public relations as well.

— BG&E's SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICY —

1. Will not interrupt service to elderly, handicapped, chronically ill or households with infants.
2. Warns customers of impending shut-off at least 24 hours in advance by telephone and premise visit.
3. Will not shut off customer who responds to warning. Halts collection procedure if customer says doesn't have funds.
4. Refers those unable to pay to outside assistance agencies like Baltimore Fuel Fund, or puts on graded payment plan.
5. In conjunction with state Dep't of Human Resources, has social workers at hospitals advise company if customer coming home to recuperate can't meet bills.