

MORE DATA (AND A CORRECTION)  
ON FUTILITY OF INFO CAMPAIGNS

Last week prr presented research by John Wilkes of Worcester Polytechnic Institute showing that knowledge about an issue -- or lack of it -- does not swing people either for or against. Issue studied was nuclear power. In each of 3 knowledge categories respondents are somewhat evenly divided between pros & antis. But when well informed, the more evenly divided they become. Study spotlights weakness of campaigns which aim to impart info; on the logical model, while overlooking emotional base of human decision-making. (prr transposed 2 cols of figures, however; chart should be as follows:)

Knowledge Base	% of Sample	Strong Pro-Nuke	Weak Pro-Nuke	Strong Anti-Nuke	Weak Anti-Nuke
Well Informed	4%	39%	10%	37%	10%
Less Informed	19%	27%	13%	44%	15%
Poorly Informed	77%	25%	16%	34%	25%

A related interpretation: how little the public knows about nuclear energy in spite of all the publicity, organizing & educational efforts. 77% are poorly informed. Politics is a better indicator of position on issues, as Wilkes' study iterates. Note in chart following that neutrals truly are; liberals are almost evenly divided; while conservatives voice strong feelings. But key point, says Wilkes, is that in nearly every category more people voiced strong feelings than weak ones -- a further indicator that information alone will not change their opinions. (See last week's issue for other interpretations. For copy of complete survey, write prr.)

Political Ideology	% of Sample	Strong Pro-Nuke	Weak Pro-Nuke	Strong Anti-Nuke	Weak Anti-Nuke
Liberal	20.2%	30%	19%	37%	15%
Leans Lib	15.7%	27%	20%	29%	24%
Neutral	5.8%	28%	22%	24%	26%
Leans Cons	27.7%	36%	29%	22%	14%
Conservative	21.8%	52%	22%	17%	10%

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. E. Roxie Howlett, vp Howlett & Gaines (S.F.) named sec'y Commonwealth Club of Calif., 76 yr. old pub affrs forum. Howlett is first woman in profession to hold position.

AWARDS. Dorothy Gregg, vp corp comms Celanese Corp (NYC) receives Women in Communications, Inc.'s Headliner Award for 1980.

LEADING CAUSE OF PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION WITH HIGHER EDUCATION  
ELIMINATED BY SUPREME COURT -- OR PERHAPS MADE WORSE;  
"DUPLICATE BUREAUCRACY" OUT AS FACULTY UNIONS RULED UNCERTIFIABLE

Recent phenomenon of faculty strikes dealt serious blow to the reputation of higher education. Widely publicized cases such as Boston Univ. and Univ. of Cincinnati focused public attention on unique & confused management systems of most universities. Now a Supreme Court decision may have alleviated problem -- or made it far worse.

Unlike business, gov't or other nonprofits, universities seldom have well-defined channels of authority. Faculty-administration clashes center on role of teachers. As scholars responsible for delivering the college product -- education -- faculties traditionally make "governance" decisions, such as curriculum formation, admissions, tenure & promotions. Pro-union faculty members see need for organizing to deal with such "managerial" decisions as salaries & working conditions -- on which faculty and administration rarely agree these days.

Potential relief may be last week's 5-4 Supreme Court decision that National Labor Relations Act doesn't apply to Yeshiva University faculty (NYC). Majority felt governance system distinguishes professors as "managerial" personnel. But opinion suggests a "line may be drawn between tenured and untenured faculty," making the latter eligible for unionization. This may open a Pandora's box of divisiveness, both within faculties and between faculty & administration, which could dwarf present conflicts.

EAST COAST MYTH EXPLODED

U.S. Supreme Court's Yeshiva decision gained top left front page position in NYTimes Thurs., Feb. 21. This is the news source for the nation, right? Well... a week later leading college public relations execs. in Midwest & West did not know about the Court's action, when called for statements by prr. (After Chronicle of Higher Education comes out this week, everyone in field will know -- ten days later.)

Dissenting opinion sees governance structure as "bottomed on an idealized model of collegial decision-making that is ... medieval." Since federal labor laws do not cover gov't employees, faculty at public universities -- where 80% of all faculty unions are -- will be unhindered. But Wes Christenson, dpr, Georgetown Univ., believes case should "virtually end efforts to organize faculty unions" in private colleges. Administrations will "seek to ignore existing unions, arguing that they no longer have the force of law." Christenson believes faculty are indeed "managerial personnel" whose recommendations are "only in very rare cases overruled."

American Association of University Professors spokesman Gerie Bledsoe disagrees. Though not all faculty "want or need collective bargaining, we are anxious to see all doubt removed that faculty do have protection" like other professional employees.



AAUP is preparing legislation to guarantee inclusion of private universities under labor laws.

Legalities May Give Way  
To Public Relations Problems

Claire Guthrie, asst. gen. counsel, American Council of Education, says problem arose because faculties "try to have it both ways." There is "no way for colleges to have both governance and union structures -- it's duplicate bureaucracy." Public relations considerations, however, "might keep university administrations from bringing their cases to court," Guthrie explains. "The cost in pr terms of the litigation process might be seen as outweighing the implications of signing union contracts with faculty."

Probability of faculty unionization under such foresightful administrations is doubtful, believes Univ. of Denver dpr Bud Mayer. He describes unions as "the last resort of faculty frustrated by repeated administrative rebuff, usually entered into with a sense of self-doom." While unionization might continue, it would occur under circumstances in which administration would fight it to the very end -- thereby undermining public confidence.

HOW TO REACH UNHAPPY CUSTOMERS?  
FLORIDA RETAILER RUNS "PLEASE COMPLAIN" ADS

Florida retailer's ads actively soliciting customer complaints are "just good public relations." But even

this bold stroke fails to bring forth unsatisfied customers so store can rectify complaints.

Thirty times each year readers of two dailies, Fort Lauderdale News and Sun-Sentinel, see 3-col, 7 1/2-in. ad headline: "If you have a complaint, call the owner of Dale Alan. His number is 563-8636." Owner of menswear chain says ad represents his sincere desire to personally deal with customer complaints.

But few actual complaints follow ad. According to gen. mgr. Paul Schweck, most feedback is positive: "Usually the callers just want to say what a great idea they think the ad is, or to compliment us on one of our stores, or a particularly helpful salesman." Hank Meyer Assocs. (Miami) is store's public relations counsel.

RESEARCH & MATERIALS OF VALUE TO PROFESSIONALS

¶Checklist of stockholder concerns covering such areas as corporate governance, public affairs and business management has been compiled by Georgeson & Co. Although intended for distribution to clients, limited number of copies are available to corporation communications professionals. (Call Kenneth Metviner, 212/440-9855, or write c/o Georgeson, Wall St. Plaza, NYC 10005.)

¶Favorite source of business info picked by cross-section of business execs is Wall Street Journal according to independent survey by Alexander Grant & Co., Chicago-based accounting firm. 85% of respondents reported reading the Journal regularly. Business Week, Forbes and Fortune trailed distantly, clustering around 40% of the response. Rate of response was low (only 1,908 execs sending in survey mailed to 24,495) but replies were received from all sections of the country. (For results, write prr.)

¶Does providing postpaid reply envelope or card increase returns from a mailing? Piggybacked on Alexander Grant survey (above) was test in which half the recipients

got it on a postpaid reply card, other half on card that required postage. 63% of replies came on postpaid cards, 37% on postage-required cards.

¶New edition of Ray Simon's text, Public Relations: Concepts & Practices, has been released by Grid Publishing (Columbus, O.). 450-pager is used by over 100 colleges. 2nd ed. is 9th book written by Prof. Simon, of Utica College (NY).

¶Handbook on broadcast editorials, issued for media managers & editorial writers, is available to practitioners as well. Nat'l Ass'n of Broadcasters & Nat'l B'cast Edit'l Ass'n prepared "The Editorial Director's Desk Book" to encourage greater use of on-air editorials. Covers invasion of privacy, Fairness Doctrine, political positions, FCC requirements. (\$3 from NAB, 1771 N. St. NW, DC 20036)

¶Communication is ... impossible to define? Scholars' definitions vary widely in list collected by Ball State Univ. prof. Leonard Snyder. For example: 1) "Process that links discontinuous parts of the living world to one another" (Jurgen Ruesch); 2) "Mechanism by which power is exerted." (S. Schachter); 3) "Process that makes common to two or several what was the monopoly of one or some." (Alex Gode). Snyder's own definition: "Influenced behavior -- the transmission and reception of ideas, feelings & attitudes ... which produce a response." For copy of full list write prr.

IF YOU'RE A FORMER JOURNALIST, OR TRAINED IN J-SCHOOL, READ THIS

"Endemic identity crisis" among some professionals still taints public relations with a stigma of "illegitimacy," says Don Bates, former PRSA dir. spec. projects. "One's public image generally mirrors one's self-image," he feels. Too many practitioners "persist in referring to themselves as journalists -- and consequently wind up being seen as hacks."

Bates traces identity crisis to early career frustration, recounts own experience as typical. "I was always 'on my way to becoming a great writer'... accepting a public relations position was a source of degradation, tantamount to 'selling out.'" This "frustrated-artist attitude," was so deeply ingrained that "development of pride" in his vocation was delayed, but finally nurtured by friends' complimentary recognition. First "heartfelt" public affirmation of his profession took on significance of "Alcoholics Anonymous-type confession," Bates recalls. "Asked to introduce myself in a board of directors meeting, I stood up and said 'My name is Don Bates, and I'm a public relations professional' -- and for the first time felt proud it was true."

Way to achieve legitimacy is to expand professional development, he believes. Field needs "wider theoretical base," more high-quality books and journals. College public relations curricula provide "too much how-to, and too little grounding in vital issues." More exposure to related fields, such as psychology and sociology, is crucial for professionalism." Especially detrimental, he feels, is "PR's silence about itself" which "simply propagates public misunderstanding. Professional growth can squelch much public misperception, but can only develop after individual practitioners overcome their professional 'identity crises.'"