

BENDIX GIVES TOP COMMS POST
TO 28-YR-OLD FINANCIAL EXEC

Without a day of real public relations or public affairs experience, Mary Cunningham, 28, has been elected vp of corp & public aftrs at Bendix (Southfield, Mich.). She assumes responsibility for corporate comms as well as gov't relations and public affairs activities.

Cunningham, who holds an MBA with honors from Harvard, joined Bendix year ago as exec assistant to the chairman. She has been an assistant treasurer and financial analyst at The Chase Manhattan Bank & served in the corporate finance dept at Salomon Bros (NYC). Her work at Bendix has included strategic planning & analysis of merger & acquisition proposals. She retains these responsibilities.

"While she hasn't been directly involved in public issues development, she has been involved in some visible and volatile issues," David Taylor, dir ext comms, told prr. "As the chairman's executive assistant, she has interfaced with the networks and national newsweeklies and has accompanied the chairman on a number of trips to Capitol Hill." Thus Cunningham is 1) asst to chairman, 2) involved in strategic planning, 3) vp of corp & public aftrs. She faces a monumental challenge since her experience in each area seems minimal.

BEYOND POSITIONING: BRAND CHARACTER
INSTITUTIONAL IMAGE-MAKERS ALSO TAKE NOTE

Advertising (NYC). The concept may have applications for institutional image as well and is valid for all promotion activities.

"There is a common denominator to great advertising," says Richard Kiernan, exec vp creative svcs. "During the 70s positioning was everything, yet when you analyze the successes and failures you conclude it is beyond positioning."

Brand Character is a "tripod" consisting of "product, positioning and personality -- it's who the brand is," Kiernan told prr. "The first step is to define a concrete personality for the product, a character that is relevant, memorable and appealing."

But most important is never to confuse audience by contradicting an already successful image. "It just wouldn't make sense for Perrier to come out with a promotion giving away bath towels -- every communication should augment, not fight, a product's image."

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

CPRS REORGANIZES Annual mtg delegates approved plan for greater membership participation in policy making. New Bd of Dirs, of which every reg'l soc pres is a member, replaces Nat'l Exec Comm. Outgoing pres Ron Coulson is chrm. New ofcrs are pres, David McAsey (pa mgr, Amoco Canada, Calgary); 1st vp, Joseph Cottreau (comm mgr, Gulf Canada, Toronto); 2nd vp, Donald LaBelle (dpr, Canadian Automobile Ass'n, Ottawa); treas, James Osborne (coord, public &

info svcs, Univ of Regina); sec'y, William Wall (pa spvr, TransCanada PipeLines, Toronto).

Consultants Section elects Robert Baugniet (exec vp, Berger & Assocs, Toronto) chrm, Wayne Grainger (Edmonton) v-chrm, Neil Oakley (Montreal) sec'y-treas; David Webster (Halifax), Luc Beauregard (Montreal), Allan Saunders (Toronto), Ed Martens (Winnipeg) are mbrs-at-large.

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WILL NUTRITION DEBATE BE FOOD INDUSTRY'S LOVE CANAL?
SEE-SAW SCIENTIFIC CONTROVERSY BEGETS CONFUSED & CONCERNED PUBLIC

Promoting food products becomes chimerical task as scientists spew forth conflicting nutrition theories. Resultant regulatory controversies produce confusion. Industry has responsibility to help public sort out facts. Yet, taking stand risks future indictments should scientific chips fall unfavorably.

Companies must simultaneously 1) get basic nutrition info to public; 2) try to explain latest findings, regulations, controversies; 3) attempt to exert pressure on regulatory system. Some strategies:

"Moderation is the answer," claims Louis Gelfand, dir corp rels at Pillsbury. "The majority can eat whatever they want as long as they eat it in moderation and within a balanced diet." Moderation theme reflects schizophrenic public attitude. Says Richard O'Neill, res dir at Durkee Foods: "People give lip service to nutrition, but when it comes down to it they like the steaks, the lemon pies and the quiche lorraine."

Nonetheless, food companies are spending plenty of time & money. Much effort goes to combat proposed regulation -- particularly labeling proposals. Unique among proactive responses is computer system set up by Pillsbury. It provides complete analyses of meals, diets, recipes. Company used it to compile cookbook -- the only one with complete nutritional evaluation alongside each recipe. Pillsbury terminals also operate at fairs. 40,000 people have used them to evaluate their diets.

Food Safety Council is important facet of General Foods' program on regulation. "Consortium brings together academia, federal gov't, consumer activists & food industry," Kate MacDonough, mgr corp issues, told prr. Program is "non adversarial and solution-minded." GF also spent \$1 million to run series of newspaper ads in response to USDA nutrition guidelines released in February. Ads were not all adversarial. GF agrees with guidelines "in principle" but "in specifics we do not agree with every word and when we did not, we said so."

Ads also aim to aid consumer "who is enormously confused about what he should eat." Each ad deals with single facet of guidelines, explains scientific evidence & controversy, takes a stand, and makes dietary recommendations. No GF product is mentioned.

Guidelines recommend cutting fat consumption. Oscar Mayer's response was two-fold: 1) marketing line of 90% fat free meats, 2) voluntary labeling for these products. To kick off new line, company produced "A Meat Lover's Guide" which explains role of meat in diet. "What we've said is we'll do our best to develop nutritional products," says Phyllis Lovrien, vp cons aftrs. Newest vicissitude in scientific sector: Food & Nutrition Board Report which recommends a moratorium on reducing fat intake, should help Oscar Mayer some.

DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE IN DIFFERENT INFORMATION SOURCES

	<u>A Lot of Confidence</u>	<u>Some Confidence</u>	<u>No Real Confidence</u>
Their own medical doctors	77%	22%	1%
Local pharmacists	37	50	13
Government health warnings	25	65	10
Family members' advice	19	65	16
Television programs on health and medicine	17	66	17
Booklets on health care/ nutrition published by major manufacturers	14	66	20
Doctors' columns in newspapers	14	65	21
Psychiatrists	15	53	32
Friends with similar health problems	6	50	44
Health claims for advertised products	5	42	53
-- Study by General Mills (Mpls), conducted by Yankelovich, Skelly & White			

ANOTHER EXECUTIVE SECTOR HEARD FROM:
D.C. SCHOOL SUPT SAYS PR CRUCIAL

Labeling himself "a reborn believer in public relations," Dist. of Columbia supt of schools Vincent Reed once thought it

"hogwash, a cover-up, taking something bad and making it look good." Today he realizes "public education is in trouble because it has not sold itself to the country."

Reed shared a personal experience which helped change his mind with the 27th national seminar of National School Public Relations Association. At 9:15 the D.C. Board of Education fired the former superintendent. At 9:20 they hired him. At 9:25 he found himself in the middle of his first press conference. "The hardest problem I have faced in these 5 years is getting information from the school system to the people."

Public relations people must know about & be involved in everything that goes on, he believes. This calls for "workaholics: they must be at the side of the superintendent at all times. If he is working at 8 or 9 p.m., you are." Practitioners need to "be spokespersons, get out there, get their hands dirty interacting with the public." They must also 1) create excitement; 2) keep administrators from being heavy-handed & destroying morale; 3) "get the word out" to principals & teachers -- who often "talk worse about the schools than anyone."

Reed says public relations is half the job of public education. "We know kids are not learning all they could. So we must do 2 things: find out how to teach 'em; find out how to tell the people we're doing it." He challenged NSPRA, "If public education is to be saved, it's going to be done by people like yourselves."

PUTTING LOCAL AGENTS TOGETHER WITH SCHOOLS
SERVES SOCIAL PURPOSE, AIDS INDUSTRY

As both the uppermost societal concern (see prr 1/21) and a social ill which creates costs for every organization, crime presents a clear opportunity to marry social responsibility with organizational self-interest. One successful crime prevention program by Commercial Union Assurance Companies (Boston) has reached almost 3 million youngsters nationwide and recently garnered the First Annual Corporate Citizen Award from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

"Play a Part in Crime Prevention," aimed at youngsters in grades 5-9, started two years ago as a campaign "to educate the general public about far-reaching consequences of crime in their communities and to themselves," says Pat Homsy, pr coordinator. Company soon found, however, that "to effectively educate the public we had to especially reach the children -- future policyholders," she told prr.

The focus of the program is a teaching kit, compiled by the company with help of educational consultants & individual teachers. Kit features five units -- shoplifting, buying stolen goods, employee theft, juvenile court & vandalism -- problems most relevant to early adolescence. Although kit includes lesson plans, puzzles & posters, the primary teaching mode is through role-playing. The kit works "precisely because kids really relate to situations in skits -- they all know someone who's shoplifted, and the schools themselves are suffering such terrible vandalism problems," Homsy explains.

The primary purpose of the program is to make children aware of the consequences of crime. "70% of all juveniles picked up for shoplifting have no conception of having committed a crime," the kit reveals. Further, company wants to teach "the dangers tolerance of crime is posing to their way of life and to motivate them to take positive action against it," Homsy says.

"Teachers are finding the material very easy to use," she adds. "Everything is prepared and complete for them." So too the company's far-flung network of individual insurance agencies, which introduce the program to their own communities. The kit includes canned speeches, camera-ready ads & suggestions on how to implement the program in their communities. "It was our responsibility to supply ready-made public relations," Homsy tells prr. "The agencies' primary responsibility is to sell insurance; they don't really have time to pub a community relations program together themselves."

OBJECTIVES OF CRIME ED PROGRAM

1. To enhance agency's image with consumers.
2. To publicize local agents' public service involvement through ads and/or press releases in local media and state trade and consumer press.
3. To deepen the hand in hand relationship between agents and Commercial Union.
4. To encourage crime prevention at the school and community level.
5. To educate the next generation of consumers and policyholders about the social, economic, and moral effects of crime.