

the more effective you'll be. The more you write in this book, the more you'll get from it. So make marginal notes, cross out things you disagree with and add thoughts about communication that come to mind as you thumb through the pages." (\$2.95 postpaid, The Synergy Group, 53938 Sunderland, Utica, Mich. 48087)

## LESSONS FROM SCHOOL PR

"What is public relations, anyway? It is common sense organized. It is being considerate of others. It is recognizing that listening is more important than telling. It is caring about people.

"Why do we need pr? Because the public supports things they understand ... or think they understand. Without the understanding communication generates, schools & school people don't get the backing they need to provide necessary educational programs."

-- The Banach-Barkeley Brainstorming Book

IMPORTANT ITEMS FOR PRACTITIONERS

¶ Achieving credibility (and fame) can be charted in the lives of charismatic public figures like Einstein, his biographers said at a U of N. Mex. lecture series. Essential are 1) appealing human qualities, 2) coming on the scene at the right time, 3) using language that can be understood (even if, like Einstein, your subject is theoretical physics), 4) being accessible. Prof. Abraham Pais believes Einstein's personality made him unique among scientists. On timing, he notes that Einstein began offering new beliefs at a time people needed something to believe in -- right after WWI. And he talked about the stars, "something that is part of an inner fantasy for many people."

¶ Forget attitudes, change behavior first, says B. F. Skinner. The Harvard behavioral psychologist told a lecture audience "behavior is changed by making consequences contingent on it. Only by changing the contingencies under which people live -- which are largely controlled by institutions --" can behavior be changed. It is not a matter of willpower, so attitude change is ineffective. Rather than trying to change attitudes in order to change behavior, he believes in changing behavior first -- and attitudes will follow. Dieting is an example he uses. If you've sworn off candy but a box of it is nearby, it's unrealistic to expect you to resist by willpower alone. Instead, get rid of the candy. "Self-control is not exerting some kind of willpower over yourself; it is changing the world in which you live. You have to change the world instead of changing people."

¶ A "Consumer Reports" for business purchases is now being published. What to buy for business is an offshoot of a successful European publication of the same title. A publicity opportunity as well as Buyer's Guide, the pub'n each month reviews 3 areas of equipment & svcs. No advertising. Objective is bringing consumerism to business purchases, says co-editor Phillip Oppenheim. According to his counterpart John Derrick, comparisons will be made between competing models & brands. (Info from P.O. Box 1783, Ft. Collins, Colo. 80522)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

PEOPLE. Sr. Ella Zink, APR, retired from YM-YWCA (Ottawa), operating from Mother House of the Sisters of Service (Toronto)

will replace Dr. Walter Herbert, APR, as chief examining ofcr, CPRS English accreditation prgm.

Vol.25 No.17  
April 27, 1981

MEDIA TACTICS PROPOSED TO REAGAN BY THINK TANK  
MAY TRANSLATE FOR USE BY PRACTITIONERS & THEIR CEOs;  
SEE "IMPERIAL MEDIA" AS MORE HINDRANCE THAN HELP

Use news media "with selectivity & precision," advises Institute For Contemporary Studies in a volume of advice for Pres. Reagan. News is defined as "drama unfolding" -- which steers reporters away from real news to spotlight conflict. Institute was founded by Reagan backers at his direction when he left Calif. governorship in '73, so study may set tone of his Administration. Chapter on "The Imperial Media" applies to any CEO. Among key proposals:

Reduce reliance on media events.

When CEOs are involved, media do cover events. But the hyped ceremony or the minor announcement cloaked as major, reinforce the cynicism of journalists & the public.

Use honeymoon periods to dampen, not raise, expectations.

New CEO, landmark achievements, record earnings, etc. push expectations up -- so they can only tumble. The honeymoon is "precisely the best time to inject caution & realism." Done after the inevitable later failures, this sounds like an excuse or apology.

Handle the media's tendency to amplify conflict by negotiating in private, then announce the final deal.

Taking to the media to publicize positions on issues is no assurance the public will be swayed. "It is astonishing how quickly the media lose interest when there is only one voice clamoring instead of two." Lack of publicity allows other means of persuasion to operate.

Shift reporters' attention from suppositions & plans to facts & figures.

Getting data covered in the media gives the "what" of organizational policy, rather than the "why" (which so many are skeptical about anyway). Facts tell clearly what the organization is doing for people.

Discourage personal mingling between press officers & journalists, quit the press club.

The advantages of personal friendship dissolves when the news gets juicy -- and co-optation works both ways. Good reporters get more out of off-the-record remarks or alcohol-induced slips than practitioners can get out of friendship with reporters.

Keep press staff (except dpr) in the dark about details or tradeoffs in decisionmaking.

If they're not privy to strategies & plans, "they can honestly fend off reporters' gossipy 'why' inquisitions and steer the focus to the 'what.'"

Chapter relies heavily on formal studies of media by recognized researchers. Author Robert Entman, Duke public policy prof, is candid. "Presidents can manipulate but not dictate news," he says, using these techniques: 1) selectively releasing information, 2) controlling the forum & timing of contact with the press, 3) secrecy, 4) co-optation of reporters & editors thru personal friendship, 5) news conferences orchestrated to convey favorable impressions, and 6) applying licit and illicit pressure thru gov't agencies.

"The press tends to judge responsiveness to the public on the basis of cooperativeness with reporters," which is purely self-serving, he notes. For practitioners in gov't, politics or public institutions the 12 other chapters are also applicable. (Politics & The Oval Office, 332 pgs, \$7.95 paper, from the Institute at 260 Calif. St., San Francisco 94111)

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE MEDIA WORK

"Among the processes that journalists used to construct (political) news stories are: personalization, the neglect of historical or structural explanations by concentrating on individuals whose deliberate choices cause events; source standardization, the use of the same group of informants on the beat; dramatization, the depiction of interactions of news personalities so as to generate audience interest, pity, fear, catharsis, where possible; and surrogate representation, the enforcement of (government) responsiveness to the public by pressing (politicians) to explain candidly their actions, motivations & plans. Because these practices are almost universal, different media (and even the same ones) tend to repeat similar stories, themes, questions and answers."

-- "The Imperial Media"

PRSA ISSUES POLICY STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF DAN MORGAN ON FIRST AMENDMENT ISSUE

After an investigation by his new attorney, Arthur Abelman, PRSA issued a policy statement "deploring the action taken by Florida's Lee County commissioners when they censured & evicted PRSA member Daniel

J. Morgan, Ft. Myers Beach, from a public meeting" (pr 3/23). The statement continues:

"Morgan was performing his job as a spokesperson when he was evicted. We believe public relations professionals must have open access to government forums to operate in the public interest.

"We believe the commissioners' action is in violation of civil rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. We take serious issue with the commissioners' action in violating these rights." It is believed to be the Society's first active involvement in such an issue.

SAYS PR LACKS SOME ELEMENTS OF A PROFESSION

"Professional status is not something one can claim for oneself, but rather one which is achieved through prescribed study, research & examination by a third party. To be a profession the status must be awarded by a third body, usually government.

"I contend pr is not a profession because 1) it does not have a defined & generally accepted body of knowledge, 2) nor a generally accepted course of study for graduate work and 3) there is no examination & certification by an authoritative third party. If we really want to be a profession the course is clear: establish accepted courses of graduate work and set up licensing.

"Your suggestion that pr is 'a universal, socially valuable, ennobling philosophy of life' is idealistic. A few of us subscribe to that, both in theory and practice, but I'd hesitate to suggest we represent 5% of the group.

"As a subscriber to idealistic theory & practice, I suggest that if public relations wishes to be part of institutional management, then it must serve not a management function, but a variety of management functions. The journalism trade schools do not prepare one for this, nor is there an adequate prescribed course of graduate or continuing education to accomplish this. This is also a major failing of PRSA as a professional type of society. The second is its unwillingness to face up to licensing in any form. As a result you have a calling which is not a profession, a Society which is not yet professional."

-- Frank Wylie, dpa, Calif. State Univ, L.A. & former PRSA pres, responding to prr's issue on professionalism (1/5)

TOP SCHOOL PRACTITIONER WILL COUNSEL PROMINENT CORPORATION IN INTERNAL & LABOR COMMUNICATIONS

Ann Barkelew, pio to L.A. County Supt. of Schools & consultant to its 95 school districts, is taking leave of absence to become spcl ass't to CEO, Munsingwear (Mpls). Well known for her work in labor negotiations & teacher strikes, she will assist the company in communication during negotiations, employee communications prgms, & development of mgmt communications. Immediate past pres. of Nat'l School Public Relations Ass'n, Barkelew is accredited by both NSPRA & PRSA.

She told prr such exchanges between public & private sectors will become common as the wide range of experience of school practitioners is better understood. Work for a school board provides firing-line experience in public controversy, gov't policy, employee rels, community rels, intensive media rels & counseling both hired mgmt & elected officials. In the private sector, she points out, cost increases are passed along by price rises. To get more money for schools means winning a public vote on millage or bond issues. Since school dpr's have small staff if any, they amass personal background in all types of situations.

With Bill Banach of Macomb County Schools (Mich.) -- elected NSPRA pres-elect -- she is author of The Banach-Barkelew Brainstorming Book. 38-pg workbook is packed with pr idea starters, a unique volume. Illustrating pragmatic approach of school practitioners is the foreword: "The more you take our ideas and change them to yours, the