

PUBLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

¶Spell It Fast resulted from an unusual poll conducted by Rob't Gilboy. It is a list of 4500 of the most commonly misspelled words in various industries & professions. Unlike traditional spelling books, problem words are divided into 60 groups by subject. Within these groupings, words are then arranged alphabetically. For those totally mystifying words, 2 sections, "Spelling Demons" and "Sound-Alike Words," are included. Useful for practitioners who write about a multitude of subjects. (\$5.95, 286 pgs; Acropolis Books Ltd, 2400 17th St. NW, Wash DC 20009)

¶Consumer Sourcebook is a primary information source for & about the US consumer. 2-vol directory lists: 1) gov't org'ns -- fed'l, state, county & city svcs; 2) ass'ns, centers & institutes -- prof'l & voluntary svcs; 3) media svcs -- syndicated newspaper columns & "action line" features, radio & tv consumer afrs & "call-for-action" prgms; 4) selected bibliography -- books, periodicals & audio-visual materials; 5) indexes -- lists org'ns & pub'ns; 6) company & trade names -- alphabetical list of 17,000 companies providing consumer goods & svcs along with product brand names. Entries include name & address of org'n along with name, title & phone number of contact for consumer problems. Brief description of org'n's activities on behalf of consumer also included. (\$78/set, 1,481 pgs; Gale Research, Book Tower, Detroit 48226)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

AWARDS. 1st CPRS Quebec Chapter's "PR Person of the Year" to Louise Rousseau (Imasco Ltd, Montreal).

ELECTED. Albert Johnson named sec'y & continues as dpr, Kimberly-Clark (Neenah, Wis).

PEOPLE. Robert Ozaki joins Amfac, Inc. (Honolulu) as corp comms mgr...Libbey-Owens-Ford (Toledo) names Kathryn Begley writer-corp afrs div...Bozell & Jacobs (Mpls) names Ted Murphy mgr...Dillard Field joins Murray Financial Corp (Dallas) as comms coordinator...Miller Brewing (Milwaukee) promotes Obrie Smith to corp comms dir & Shelia Payton to mpr...Hill & Knowlton (Chi) names Robert Stone vp-media rels...Pat Penney PR (LA) appoints John Jones pub'ns dir.

Data General (Westboro, Mass) names Richard Brown to new position of dir corp pr...Jack Powers joins Davidson College (Davidson, NC) as vp dev'l...Bliss, Barefoot & Assocs (NYC) names Amy Krieger associate...Synapse Computer (Milpitas, Calif) names Richard Bennett Jr mgr corp comms.

ACCOUNT SUPERVISORS. Dan Pittman, Cochrane Chase, Livingston (Irvine, Calif)...Berenice Kleiman, Hesselbart & Mitten/Watt (Cleveland).

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES. Nancy Elliott, Michael Bower & Assocs (Los Alamitos, Calif)...Barbara Gross, Ingalls Assocs (Boston)...Cari Fredrick, acct coord, & Phyllis Kierig, Creative People (Chi)...Edward Becker, Marquardt & Roche (Stamford, Ct).

SUPPLIERS. Modern Talking Picture Services' Canadian operation bought by Lynn Meek (pres, LM Media Marketing Services, Willowdale, Ontario).

ERRATA

Please correct your copy of prr's Jan-June '81 index published with the 8/10 issue -- pg 1, col 3 -- to read:

"Computer Basics for Mgmt" course via cable tv, 6/1

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UNUSUALLY EFFECTIVE ANNUAL REPORT APES "PEOPLE" MAGAZINE, GETS COVER-TO-COVER READERSHIP FOR HOSPITAL WHILE CARRYING THRU KEY PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES

Want your annual report to be read as avidly as a popular magazine? Then pattern it after one, concludes Bob Ristino, dir. comty rels, Mercy Hospital (Springfield, Ma.). Hospital's report is titled "Patient," imitates People magazine. Right down to page layout, letters to the editor, bold cutlines, color cover design. Full page "Patient Puzzle" near the back asks readers to select correct definitions for 12 medical words or phrases.

Neat touches: 1) where book or tv reviews would be in People, "Patient" details hospital's tv & print publicity highlights for the year; 2) masthead becomes listing of hospital staff; 3) articles all focus on a person, such as an elderly diabetic using hospital's Lifeline emergency phone service, hearing loss victim, award-winning photographer who is Mercy trustee, hospital's adult day care center director & her job switch with eczema-plagued mate who became house-husband ("Couples" section, naturally). All stories use People's human-interest, homey-touches style.

Inside cover carries letter from administrator, but since an ad would appear in that space in People it doesn't break the mood. Writes Sr. Mary Caritas: "Annual reports are usually stodgy and a bit difficult to get into. I've always had the feeling very few people actually read them cover to cover. We think that 'Patient' is going to be different."

So was the response. Instead of usual ho-hums, Ristino told prr "Patient" was talk of the town. He thought some might criticize the format, but no one did. Text asked readers to "pass it on to a friend" and many did. Self-mailer moved thru postal service like any magazine. "People don't want to read figures," he believes -- so a single 1/3-pg chart is used to report census statistics, revenue & expenses. It is titled, "Facts & Figures" just as People might do.

Services selected for stories were those least known to the public. All were direct patient assistance, rather than impersonal, machine services. Next year hospital will

One tactic of Mercy Hospital's unusual annual report is to get away from the cost issue, refocus on patient care. Intro letter sets the tone.

"We also think our annual report is appropriately named. Patients are what health care is all about. Unfortunately, in today's news, all we seem to hear about is the high cost of health care. No doubt, health care is expensive (what isn't?). Certainly it's an issue worth discussing. But all too often the cost issue overshadows the human issues -- pain and compassion, hope and despair, life and death. That's what 'Patient' is really all about -- the human side of health care."



use same approach but probably not emulate "People" so directly. (Copies while they last from P.O. Box 9012, Springfield, Ma. 01101.)

PROFITS NOT ONLY FISCAL CONCEPT MISUNDERSTOOD BY MEDIA, AS STRIKE COVERAGE SHOWS

Coverage of recent strikes shows journalists misunderstand the concept of benefits paid to workers over & above wages. Reporters write only about the percentage of wage increase offered by the employer vs. that demanded by the strikers. The benefits package is rarely mentioned. Practitioners involved in strikes confirm media's lack of interest in benefits. Apparently they think pensions, insurance, holidays, recreational facilities et al don't cost money.

In the New England nurses' strikes, for instance, one union asked 33% in wages over two years -- but also for enough improvements in benefits that the total cost to the employer would be 42%. This could make a significant difference in public perception. While 33% seems high enough, almost everyone would understand why the 42% was "unaffordable" by hospital management. Yet the press only reported the 33%, despite continuous urging by hospital public relations staff.

Another misunderstood concept is the need for nonprofit org'ns to finish the year with a surplus. A portion of the "profit" earned must be re-invested in physical plant and improvements by nonprofit as well as for-profit entities. If an org'n ends the year merely covering its operating costs, it is in trouble -- particularly when rapid technological advances demand constant investment.

Rash of strikes may be on horizon. Current strikes illustrate that very high incomes earned by some persons in society are increasingly seen as "unfair" and may be the emotional stimulus behind strikes. For instance, nurses peg their demands to the astronomical incomes of doctors. The air traffic controllers' demands have been compared to the wages of pilots. When the latter earn \$100,000 yet cannot even get off the ground without air traffic controllers who earn a third that much, the resulting disaffection is predictable.

ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS NOW?

CEO view, as reported to CPRS by Elias Buchwald: "Communications and counseling are parts of the role. But conciliation is the unique function of the public relations person. Public relations professionals are the only ones within the institution with inherent functional responsibility to be concerned about the internal & external environment -- and with making those gears mesh without clashing. It is the public relations person alone who is charged with the responsibility of being sensitive to this environment. The one alone who is responsible for understanding the needs, desires and goals of the institution and the needs, desires and goals of society. Every other position is an advocate function, i.e. lawyers."

FAILURE OF SEAT BELT CAMPAIGNS SHOWS BEHAVIOR CHANGE NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE; POLICIES MAY HAVE TO CHANGE INSTEAD

When behavioral change just won't happen, maybe it's time to consider new organizational policies. Worldwide attempts at increasing seat belt use have proven a dismal

failure. Pre- & post-study data show no change despite a number of intensive campaigns.

Argument for changing behavior first, then attitudes (see prr 4/27) may be disproven by seat belt & other health-related campaign failures. Historically, inoculation & pasteurization campaigns also met fierce opposition at the time. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety researcher Leon Robertson concludes, "The history of public health suggests that attempts to control damage to human beings by changing everyone's behavior is never completely successful."

Campaigns covering only awareness & information steps of the diffusion process are especially ineffective. Slogans such as "Buckle Up for Safety," "Lock It to Me" & "What's Your Excuse?" are designed to create awareness, yet expect immediate behavior change. This contradicts psychological theory, but such campaigns are tried again & again. Public responds negatively to being told what to do.

Use of television to promote seat belt usage is also ineffectual. The adage "television can influence anyone" is called into question by poor results of these campaigns. "The messages, despite their ability to win advertising club honors and their acceptability to broadcasters, were a flop," Robertson says.

Campaign failures suggest a change of tactics is needed. "Behavior modification approaches are inefficient and often ineffective means of reducing highway losses."

Change of policy may also be required. The question is raised: Where does the burden lie for protection of the public? If people won't do it for themselves is it the auto manufacturers' duty to do it for them? "Passive approaches show greater promise toward reducing deaths & injuries in crashes, as they have historically in closely analogous public health situations," concludes Robertson. Studies show that automatic protection -- airbags -- would largely remove the problem. But manufacturers to date have shunned the use of such equipment due to costs. Will this result in another major public relations problem for the industry in future? Robertson feels there is an inherent bias in North American culture against public health strategies "which bypass a voluntary individual decision by the person to be protected." (For packet of studies, write prr.)

"Does it make sense to continue to concentrate on changing every individual's behavior whether by advertising, education or law enforcement? Or does it make more sense to force decision makers to provide automatic protection where the technology is available to do so? If faced with the choices today, would we purify water at the source or would we launch an ad campaign which would attempt to persuade everyone to boil his or her drinking water? Would we require pasteurization of milk before it was sold or would we pass a law that each family had to boil their milk before it was consumed? The choices we face today with respect to motor vehicle injuries are no different."
-- Insurance Institute for Highway Safety