

Wash., N.C., Va., Ohio & Del. Four of these have held their position for two years or less; none for more than six.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS EXAMINE ROOT CAUSES OF THEIR FUNDING WOES Funding/budget cut-backs is top concern

of educational institutions (43%) and miscellaneous nonprofits (40%). Although 22% of dpr's of educational institutions also refer to the economy, especially inflation and its effect on the cost of education, their mood is to look for root causes of their plight. They find them in social values that erode the demand for education and research. About 25% make such comments as these:

"A Lewisburg, Pa., dpr refers to "need for better justification of a liberal arts education in an increasingly career-oriented society."

"An ass't dir of health sciences relations in Ann Arbor, Mich., speaks of the "need for support of education in economically troubled times and tax revolts."

Some (12%) do talk of loss of credibility and public confidence; and a few focus on how their own institutions can improve their image and marketing efforts.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE FOLLOWS ECONOMY AS MAJOR CONCERN OF INDUSTRIALS Almost half of comments about the

environment are made by dpr's of industrial cos. Their well-known concerns are about excessive environmental controls, problems of toxic waste, resource depletion and land use policies. These remarks merged with those about unnecessary government regulations (about 14% of their comments).

Conglomerates are more concerned about energy issues (11%) than industrials (9%). But both groups fret about "customer resistance to increasing costs,"

"opposition to development on federal lands," and "deregulation of natural gas." Canadian firms are particularly worried about the "federal/provincial haggle over oil pricing" and, as stated by a Calgary dir-corp comms, the lack of a "national energy policy."

Comments about the economy -- the top issue for industrials and conglomerates -- are the most diverse and penetrating of any group. After general comments about inflation, productivity is the chief concern. They also refer to related issues of capital formation and taxation, especially "legislative need for quicker depreciation." Other economy issues are: "purchase of foreign trade products vs. domestic," "federal price supports," and "curtailment of import/export bank financing."

UTILITIES CAUGHT BETWEEN INFLATION & GOV'T REGS 7 out of 10 utility comments are

about economy and gov't regs, particularly cost/rate increases & need for improved capital recovery. "Growth is an issue," says an Oklahoma City vp-pr.

We're a "mix of regulation & competition," says a dpr. In fact, 7% of comments refer to competition as a concern, implying they don't see themselves as a "natural monopoly."

About 1/3 of comments on regs deal with gas dereg, which many oppose. Besides rate relief, concern includes "legislation affecting service programs," and federal block grants.

Consumerism received 5% of comments, low but the highest of all groups. They refer not only to "anti-utility consumer groups" but, as stated by a Vancouver, B.C., dpr, "increased pressure for public involvement in business decisions." Specific social action groups are "pro low-income consumer" as well as "pro environmental advocate groups" (Honolulu) and "minority groups" (El Paso).

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SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL SURVEY OF THE PROFESSION -- PART I ECONOMY AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION REMAIN TOP ISSUES BUT SOCIAL CONCERNS PROLIFERATE

As in 1980, concern over the economy is the most important public issue facing public relations practitioners and their organizations or clients. Over a third (34.3%) of comments referred to the economy, compared with 28% last year. Inflation is still the main economic topic, but talk about high interest rates is a close second. Prescriptions as well as malady are mentioned: "Do something about monetary policy." "Increase productivity." "Encourage capital formation." "Increase foreign trade."

Reaganomics does not enjoy a consensus. The head of a Washington, D.C. pr firm urges "support for President Reagan's economic/tax program to stimulate business." Another says it is important to "gain public acceptance for the benefits of the radically new approach to the role of government." On the other end of the spectrum, an xvp at a NYC pr firm blames Reaganism for disastrous "economic and geopolitical" results.

Issues related to government remain the No. 2 concern. About a quarter of the comments refer to it, particularly excessive government regulations. What's new this year is spreading concern about effects of deregulation (e.g., in banking) and other specific issues. Some of these are tax policies (such as block grants, opposed by some utilities); inefficiency and waste in government; need for accountability; and global issues of national defense policies and international stability.

SOCIAL ISSUES PROLIFERATE

That the purview of pr practitioners is expanding is evident in the rising percentage of comments dealing with social issues -- 15% this year, compared with 4% who mentioned the single issue of social responsibility last year. The following listing shows the range of concerns:

1. Children's television
2. Attacks on intellectual freedom
3. Protection of individual rights
4. Status of women
5. Rising elderly population
6. Impact of technology, especially computers, on society
7. Social responsibility/volunteerism/charity
8. Health & safety, particularly in the workplace
9. Crime
10. Anti-humanitarian sentiments
11. Multinational code of ethics
12. Implications of corrupt practices
13. Censorship



1981's MOST IMPORTANT PUBLIC ISSUES AS SEEN BY INDUSTRY GROUPS

Issues	No. of Comments	% of Comments	Industry Group with Top & Next to Top % of Mentions for Issue	% of Mentions in Industry Group
ECONOMY: Inflation, Interest Rates, Competition, Productivity, Capital Formation	417	34.3	Banks	60
			PR, Adv'g & Consulting Firms	47
GOVERNMENT: Regulation, Deregulation, Inefficiency	294	24.6	Insurance	44
			Consumer Product Cos. and Hospitals	34
SOCIAL ISSUES: Social Responsibility, Values	179	15.0	Hospitals	25
			Educational	25
ENVIRONMENT	77	6.4	Industrials	17
			Government	12
FUNDING/BUDGET CUTBACKS	65	5.4	Educational	43
			Other Nonprofits	40
ENERGY	64	5.3	Trade & Prof'l Ass'ns	13
			Conglomerates	11
COST CONTAINMENT	37	3.1	Hospitals	26
			Insurance	2
PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS	33	2.8	Government	19
			Educational	12
CONSUMERISM	24	2.0	Utilities	5
			Insurance & Consumer Product Cos.	5
TOTALS	1197	100.0%		

Note: Results based on 720 responses to mail survey conducted in June 1981 from a sample of pr reporter subscribers and accredited or active PRSA & CPRS members.

Environmental, Energy & Consumerism Issues Less Important

Consumerism (2%) and environmental (6.4%) issues remain steady -- the combined issues were 9% last year. Concern over energy has dropped to 5.3% from 7% last year, probably reflecting increased energy supplies and price stabilization.

There's also less attention given to the public confidence issue -- 2.8% vs. 5% last year. But cost containment and funding, both related to the economy, slightly rise in importance: from 2% in 1980 to 3.1% in 1981 for cost containment and from 3% to 5.4% for funding.

BANKS TALK MAINLY ABOUT "POLITICAL ECONOMY"

Banks make more reference to high interest rates than any other group. They are equally concerned about competition -- from "near banks," foreign banks, and interstate banks. They complain about "branch banking laws that result in competition from non-regulated corporations." Reference to government regulation is just slightly ahead of comments about deregulation -- the combined total is 33%. Along with 60% of comments about the economy (see table), most bank comments focus on the "political economy." Only two dpr's refer to consumerism or community activism. A Memphis pa mgr refers to "demands by community on banks for community redevelopment, right to credit, credit allocation, etc."

GOV'T REGS A GREATER CONCERN FOR INSURANCE COMPANIES THAN ECONOMY

43% of insurance co. comments are about government regulation and possible federal legislation. Specific concerns are: 1) rate setting; 2) federal taxation; 3) policy loan legislation in the 50 states; 4) mandated benefits.

A New York vp-corp comms worries about "deregulation of banks and other competitive financial service sectors." In addition to general comments about the economy and inflation -- the second major concern with 28% of comments -- competition is seen as an economic issue. A vp-pr spoke of "encroachment of direct-writing insurance organizations;" an ass't vp-pr from Milwaukee warns of the "effect of possible national health bill on us." "Survival" is the key issue of a Detroit dir-comty rels.

Crime (arson, vandalism, insurance fraud), the racial climate, changing

technology, and changing demographics & psychographics are the main social issues reported by insurance companies, accounting for 13% of their comments. On the little-mentioned consumerism issue, their comments amounted to 5%.

HURT BY ECONOMY & GOV'T REGS, HOSPITALS TURN TO PUB AFRS AS WELL AS COST CONTAINMENT

Although government regulations are chief concern of hospitals (33.6% of their comments) they exceed others in voicing concern about fundamental social trends. Hospitals speak of the "status of health planning," "availability of healthcare, especially for the poor," "shortage of professionals," "keeping up with technology," and "the changing role of medical institutions."

A Wilmington, Del., dpa asks: "How much healthcare can we afford; for whom?" A Florida pr practitioner refers to the problem of "attracting qualified professionals to our hospital (particularly nurses) and maintaining a competitive salary level." An Indianapolis dpr refers to "trend toward 'wellness,' preventive medicine, high technology care, aging population, etc."

Cost containment (26%) is still the major response of hospitals to government regulation and the economy. 5% are worried about competition within the health-care field. A Springfield, Mass., dir-comty rels writes about "competition from parahealthcare organizations, e.g., HMOs, surgicenters, etc."

Whereas last year many references were made to marketing, this year a trend toward greater use of public affairs titles appears: of 60 respondents, 11 have public affairs titles. Almost all parts of the country are represented: Calif., Ill., Mich., N.J.,