

TELETEXT & VIDEOTEX HAVE ARRIVED  
AS BIGGIES JOIN FIELD

AT&T and CBS have started their 7-mo. test of telephone-based videotex -- with ad revenues safely tucked into the deal from the beginning. 200 Ridgewood, N.J. households will be able to get news, home shopping, games, banking & electronic mail over their tv sets. Among info providers are NYTimes, Newark Star-Ledger, 2 local dailies. 16 ad agencies placed buys for 80 clients.

The first national teletext service, KEYFAX, went into operation mid-Nov. It has a potential of 4,200 cable systems with 22 million subscribers via Ted Turner's super-station satellite. For under \$20, monthly subscribers can get 100 pages of info. Honeywell & Field Enterprises are among the owners.

Both videotex & teletext are 1-way systems. Teletext uses spare lines of tv signals, requires a decoder and presents a full page of info at a time on request. Videotex is distributed over cable and presents a rolling text by tuning to the channel. Some feel their emergence may delay 2-way systems such as Qube.

presstime, American Newspaper Publishing Assn's excellent magazine, has a review of teletext projects in its current issue. Headline proclaims, "Teletext could be THE new technology." (For copy, write prr; article explains difference between videotex & teletext.)

NEAT PHRASES  
DRIVE POINTS HOME

Best place for creativity in public relations is still in deriving words that express a point so forcefully or memorably that they truly reach an audience, i.e. are adopted into people's thought patterns about a topic. This is totally different from passing information by an audience. Some current examples of successful phrasemaking:

¶Conference Board of Canada describes economic outlook for '83 as a "statistician's recovery." "The figures will turn around but we won't feel any better for it," is their explanation. (In fact, they predict unemployment rising to 14% and staying high thru '86!)

¶Describing the convoluted arguments put forth in the MX missile controversy, a writer for the London Observer labels them "nuclear metaphysics" -- a neat conflict in terminology since nuclear matters are supposed to be pure physics. "The problem is that nuclear strategists have developed such arcane, complex ideas that deterrence theories have become a kind of nuclear metaphysics, rivaling the medieval debates about the number of angels that could dance on the head of a pin."

¶Burdines, Florida dep't store group, uses this forceful theme: "People who value value value Burdines." Reinforcement by triple repetition associates store name memorably with "value." Unusual stringing together of words invites rereading -- and additional impressions.

NEW AP HANDBOOK

"Bloated language" syndrome, often caught while trying to convert strangled diction into Plain English, is a professional hazard for many practitioners. Jack Cappon's handbook, The Word: An Associated Press Guide to Good News Writing, deals with this problem. His straightforward approach is extended shoptalk, formal & informal, with writers intent on improving their craft. 140-pg guide addresses such topics as story organization, leads, quotes, avoiding cliches & wordiness, and feature writing. (From AP News-features, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, NYC 10020; \$4 + postage.)

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PRACTITIONER ALERT: 1) WORKER DISCONTENT JUMPS FROM JOB TO EMPLOYER; 2) PARTICIPATION IN DECISIONS NOT FILTERING DOWN AS EXPERTS URGE; 3) LACK OF COMMUNICATION IS "ROOT CAUSE," GRAPEVINE TAKING OVER

In a new study, Opinion Research Corporation finds a "retreat to 1950s-style hierarchical management." It "poses a serious threat to reviving sagging productivity & boosting bottom-line performance."

"Today we see 69% of middle management complaining of eroding authority," explains William Schiemann, ORC vp, "of seeing too many decisions made 'at the top' that up to a year ago were made by them." Worse, they are now made by people unfamiliar with the particular problem. Employees resent this retreat to the "closed door syndrome" of the 50s. "For the first time, we see fewer than half the managers having good things to say about their companies."

Recent employee attitudes study brings to light these "sensitive & volatile issues":

1. Lack of corporate communication within the organization is cited by 5 of 10 employees as a "root cause" for sagging morale & declining productivity. Nearly 70% feel management "has lost touch" with them, leaving no choice but to tap the "company grapevine."

2. In 4 of 7 job classifications studied, there is a strong feeling that directives from the top are arbitrary, and policies administered "unevenly." Career advancement continues to rate high as a work value, but few find good things to say about their company's promotional practices.

3. Fewer than 3 in 10 workers think management is "responsive" to their needs; fewer than 5 in 10 believe their bosses are listening or interested. As a result, respect for line supervision has declined sharply. Unhappy workers, worried about unemployment, are turning to passive resistance: they no longer care about the company's needs. This, says Schiemann, "leads to a vicious cycle as management -- despairing of lowered productivity -- tightens controls, becomes more hard-nosed, more indifferent and uncaring. This simply aggravates the situation."

ORC reported in 1977 that American workers were "more unhappy with their jobs than at any time since the end of World War II." By 1980, job discontent had spread from blue to white collar workers. Today, of the 7 job classifications ORC recently studied -- managers, supervisors, professionals, technicians, sales, clerical & hourly workers -- most appear to be more unhappy with their employers than with their jobs.



What Does The Public-At-Large Think?

"All signs point to a basic and permanent restructuring of the traditional relationship between workers and their bosses," says Kenneth Schwartz, ORC vp & managing dir of the Public Opinion Index.

Using a national probability sample of 1,003 Americans aged 18 & up, Index finds that tho 48% of the public thinks unions are "too powerful," it is not ready to dismiss them as irrelevant. 1) 64% think unions serve to protect workers from mgmt excesses. 2) 7 in 10 believe high wages are responsible for making domestic goods more expensive. 3) 59% would like unions to make "no strike" agreements, agree to wage freezes & postpone additional benefits. 4) Many union members agree with some of the criticisms of union leadership: "unions don't care enough about increasing worker productivity," say 49%.

Index finds that workers are convinced "participatory management" will not only heighten their self-esteem but will increase productivity (54%), product quality (80%), worker morale (83%) & job satisfaction (80%), while reducing absenteeism (76%) & job turnover (75%).

But 96% think employers must also make concessions. 5) They should provide advance notice of plant closings (96%), 6) extend profit sharing to the workers (89%). 7) 60% of the public believes Big Business earns enough to raise worker salaries without passing the cost to the consumer in higher prices. 8) 50% is convinced management isn't making the same sacrifices it's asking workers to make to keep costs down.

"Recession or not, in today's attitude climate, both corporate management and technicians have an unparalleled opportunity to create a new working atmosphere. Competition from abroad has outdated the old, traditional adversarial relationship, believes Schwartz.

YANKELOVICH, NYSE SAY PRODUCTIVITY IS PR CONCERN

"I believe that, today, we may be at the point of a possible upsurge in productivity. But if it happens, it will come because of a new concern -- a new understanding of the 'people factor.'"

-- Dan Yankelovich, to Emhart mgmt conf. For a model of mind-stretching at such a conference, write vp John Budd for a copy of the proceedings booklet, featuring 7 world authorities who spoke. (P.O. Box 2730, Hartford, Ct. 06101)

"Worker participation in the decisions of an organization can stimulate employee productivity and morale. Worker attitudes can change dramatically when they are offered a piece of the action."

-- New York Stock Exchange study, "People and Productivity," which includes the first comprehensive survey of QWL & similar programs and their results. "Improved productivity was reported by two-thirds of all companies with such programs." (For copy, write Ofc of Economic Research, NYSE, 11 Wall St., NYC 10005.)

NEW IABC STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS VERIFIES ORC FINDINGS

The 1982 Employee Effectiveness Study verifies ORC's finding that communication in US & Canadian organizations is not what it should be. Items:

¶ Over two-thirds of 32,000 respondents say communication in their workplaces is not complete & balanced.

¶ More than half say mgmt does not act on employees' ideas & communication is not 2-way.

¶ Grapevine ranks as 2nd most important info source, after the immediate supervisor.

¶ Less than 25% say house publications are a major info source; and 55% say they get no info thru a/v.

Face-to-face information exchange is clearly what employees want. Asked to rank preferred info sources, they name immediate supervisor (91.2%), small group meetings (60.5%) & top executives (50.2%). Grapevine ranks 15th (9.3%), in contrast to its actual ranking of 2nd. Towers, Perrin, Forster & Crosby joined IABC in the study.

CREATIVE CONTEST IDEA BRINGS WORLDWIDE RENOWN

For the cost of two airline tickets a year, Harry's Bar & American Grill is becoming known on two continents. It sponsors the Imitation Hemingway Competition in which "one really good page of really 'bad' Hemingway can land you & a friend in Italy." Parodies of Papa's writing must mention Harry's "nicely." Now in its 6th year, contest is a natural to gain awareness, pique curiosity, stimulate cocktail party chatter -- and bring folks to Harry's LA branch to pick up entry blanks. Use of association method to link restaurant with literati meets marketing & reputational objectives. Winner gets dinner for 2 in Harry's Florence branch, roundtrip plane ride there & back. If a European wins, it's dinner at LA location. 1,300 entries poured in last year. Grody/Tellem Communications (LA) represents Harry's. (To enter by mail, write Harry's at 2020 Avenue of the Stars, LA 90067.)

| PRODUCTIVITY CLIMBS                  |      |  |                 |
|--------------------------------------|------|--|-----------------|
| IN SUBJECTS OF INTEREST TO EMPLOYEES |      |  |                 |
| ('81 ) '82                           |      | Subject                                  | Inter-<br>ested |
| (Rank)                               | Rank |  |                 |
| (1)                                  | 1    | Orgn's future plans                      | 93.3%           |
| (3)                                  | 2    | Productivity improvement                 | 90.3%           |
| (2)                                  | 3    | Personnel policies & practices           | 89.8%           |
| (4)                                  | 4    | Job-related info                         | 89.2%           |
| (5)                                  | 5    | Job advancement opportunities            | 87.9%           |
| (6)                                  | 6    | Effect of external events on my job      | 87.8%           |
| (9)                                  | 7    | How my job fits into the org'n           | 85.4%           |
| (8)                                  | 8    | Operations outside my dep't or div       | 85.1%           |
| (7)                                  | 9    | How we're doing vs. the competition      | 83.0%           |
| (13)                                 | 10   | Personnel changes/promotions             | 81.4%           |
| (12)                                 | 11   | Orgn's community involvement             | 81.3%           |
| (11)                                 | 12   | Orgn's stand on issues                   | 79.5%           |
| (10)                                 | 13   | How the org'n uses profits               | 78.4%           |
| (15)                                 | 14   | Adv'g/promo plans                        | 77.2%           |
| (14)                                 | 15   | Financial results                        | 76.4%           |
| (16)                                 | 16   | Stories about other employees            | 70.4%           |
| (17)                                 | 17   | Personal news (birthdays, anniversaries) | 57.0%           |

-- from IABC/TPF&C survey