

IT WORKS, PRR LEARNS FIRST HAND AT TELECONFERENCE ON TELECONFERENCING

What gives some Fortune 500 companies the leading edge? Teleconferencing, according to Connex International (Danbury, Ct). We participated in their teleconferencing seminar and learned about it first hand. 18 locations participated -- from NH to Florida to Calif. Ease of communication among all callers was impressive. Sound quality was good.

Major advantage is savings in time and money. Average teleconference at Connex costs \$250 - \$300; travel avoidance savings can be \$3000 - \$4000. Other advantages: 1) every 1 hr teleconference meeting saves 1-2 hrs travel time; 2) instant access to info; 3) higher productivity because of extra time, lack of fatigue.

Business applications for teleconferencing fall into 4 general categories: 1) internal comms, e.g. staff meetings, training; 2) external comms, e.g. press conference from out-of-the-way location; 3) international comms, e.g. meetings between company's domestic & international locations; and 4) crisis mgmt, e.g. brings key people together instantly. (For info on free teleconference seminar you can participate in, call 800/243-9430.)

Semantic Problem: Word "teleconferencing" is used to denote meetings held from remote locations by both telephone and interactive tv. There is quite a difference among the 3 basic types: 1) Audio only, most flexible form, involves several individuals or groups conferencing by telephone; 2) Audio-graphic or Augmented Audio uses slides, transparencies, films & videotapes sent out in advance to each conference location. For spontaneous transmission of visuals, real-time graphics devices can send still images down a second phone line; 3) Full-Motion Video requires microwave or satellite transmission. A video conference reverts to a "telecast" or "broadcast" if it is one-way with no interactive communication from the remote locations.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

DIED. James J. Cuddy (Pittsburgh), 51, vp/acct grp mgr, Burson-Marsteller. He had 27 yrs experience in the field.

ELECTED. IPRA ofers for 1982: pres, Sam Black (London, England); pres-elect, Goran Sjoberg (Stockholm, Sweden); sec'y general, Dennis Buckle (London, England).

PEOPLE. Sears Merchandise Group (Chi) names Donald Deutsch vp-pa...Sam Petok

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CASE STUDY

Problem: Large university in the hills of Virginia, 5 hrs drive from any of the state's large city newspapers, has difficulty getting press coverage. Since no reporter is willing to drive 5 hrs to attend a press conference, another way to reach the press is needed.

Solution: Hold press conferences by teleconference. Reporters are given one phone number to call from any convenient telephone. Many call in from offices & type as they listen. Others call in while "on the road" covering other stories.

becomes sr vp, comms, Rockwell International (Pittsburgh)...American Can (Greenwich, Ct) appoints Joseph Hays vp-pa...First Interstate Bank of Arizona (Phoenix) promotes Barbara Lambesis to mpr...W.R. Grace (NYC) names Antonio Navarro, corp comms div hd, to add'l post of sr vp -- first time co's comms exec attains this level...Creamer Dickson Basford (NYC) names Lee Nestor exec vp...C. Sumpster Logan becomes vp-corp comms, GTE (Stamford, Ct).

CORPORATE & ORGANIZATIONAL VIDEO: FAD OR TREND? BUDD PREDICTS WE'LL ALL BE "BROADCASTERS" BY END OF DECADE, SHARES PROS & CONS OF PIONEERING WITH FIRST TV ANNUAL REPORT

Satellites, new technology & deregulation have created incredible possibilities for telecommunications. Says John Budd Jr., vp-pr, Emhart (Hartford, Ct), "By 1990 US business will be a 'broadcaster' using private statewide and regional video networks to telecast corporate and public service programs." Aware of this potential & armed with survey results showing 45-50% of its shareholders want more product & less financial info, Emhart produced the first video annual report two yrs ago (pr 8/11/80). Along with obvious benefits, he shares these cautions:

1. TV can be a hazard to credibility because it involves "uncritical absorption" of information. "Video makes things come alive and adds a dimension to the company that you don't get from a flat printed page. We have no scripts, no teleprompters, no cue cards, no outside announcers, no names & no Hollywood music. The noises you hear are plant noises. The people you see talking are the people who run the operation." Budd stresses that production must be straight forward and believable. Tendency to ape commercial broadcasters can turn into a Hollywood production and lose credibility. "People are smart these days. It doesn't take them long to know they're being conned."

2. Avoid temptation to tuck in propaganda. Script for Emhart's video annual report closely follows the written. "We don't add anything that's not in print. The important numbers, whether up or down, are in there. The chairman's comments are essentially the same. Operating coverage is the same. We take some editorial license in that we don't feel obliged to cover the footnotes & the 10K material which is so repetitive," Budd told pr. Public relations dep't has control of both written & video content.

3. Treat video as supplement, not replacement. Emhart's video report reaches shareholders after the written report has had a chance to stand on its own. "If you send them out too close to one another, there is a tendency to ignore the printed and only look at the video. And that would be kind of misleading." Both serve important functions in presenting the company's total picture.

4. Test your distribution system, change as necessary. Emhart originally assembled a cable network. Working with nonprofit Center for Non-Broadcast TV, company matched zip codes of shareholders in major cities of 8 states having the largest shareholder population with zip codes of cable stations serving those areas. One-time network embracing 22 cable systems in 100 communities coast-to-coast was created.

"The vigor of telecommunications growth -- 24 new communications satellites to be launched by '86, 100 to 200 channels of programming expected within 7 years -- will reorder the priorities and the character of organizational communications," says Budd.

But, research showed too little penetration of shareholder audience, too much useless spillover. Focus is stockholders, Budd emphasizes, not public. This year company is distributing videotape to geographical centers where necessary equipment is available, bringing interested shareholders in to watch the program.

5. Need for self-discipline. So far, FCC says it will not interfere unless there is abuse, thus leaving the corporation as its own gatekeeper. "TV creates impressions and this is easily misused. A company can have a bad year and give the printed report very casual circulation. They could then hire a big name to do a video version, putting emphasis on glamour, burying the footnoted items. They'll leave the impression they had a good year."

Cost for Emhart's video project is about \$50 thousand per year. But Budd amortizes this over 3 functions: 1) produce & circulate to shareholders, 2) use footage at fin'l analysts meetings, & 3) show to employees thru company's informal video network.

CORPORATE TV AND THE '80s: WHAT BUDD FORESEES

¶Electronic annual reports, backing up the printed text as a regular vehicle. Perhaps as many as 20 this year alone.

¶Annual meetings carried live -- worldwide -- either by existing cable or by combinations of satellite, cable, local tv, public broadcasting stations.

¶Video magazines for shareholders and employees -- supplanting the weaker and supplementing the better of the in-house newspapers & tabloids now published.

¶Strategic corporate communications vehicles, pinpointing a state or region where an emergency or communications gap exists -- an environmental problem, perhaps.

¶Shareholders quarterly reports by cable directly to their homes or via scrambled signals over UHF. A decoder box unscrambles these signals for viewing.

¶Teleconferences between executives & brokers, analysts & portfolio managers, obsoleting the 2-hour luncheon presentation.

ONE REASON COLLEGES IN TROUBLE WITH PUBLICS: CHIEF PR OFCRS UNDERPAID, ADMINISTRATORS NOT TRAINED IN PR

Recent issues of The Chronicle of Higher Education reveal how undervalued public relations is in colleges & universities -- notwithstanding their great current need

for public understanding & support. Median salaries, reported by personnel ass'n, are only \$26,712 for chief pr execs. For universities, median climbs \$10,000 -- but \$36,000 is still \$2,000 below the \$38,000 median for all practitioners reported in prr's '81 Annual Survey of the Profession. Dirs, info ofcs earn \$23,408 & dirs, news bureaus, \$21,200.

Another indicator. Harvard's Institute for Educ'l Mgmt -- breeder of administrators -- lists many topics in its 13th annual prgm, but not public relations. Personnel policy, financial plng, labor rels, law & higher education, organizational behavior & "Introduction to the Marketing Concept" will be taught, among many topics -- but not from the viewpoint of public relations philosophy. Biz schools teach all these & more, but graduates' behavior on the job suggests they are seeking means of manipulating publics, not persuading them or winning their consent.

TOPICS OF CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE ADDRESSED IN CURRENT BOOKS

¶Competent speech-making is a necessity for pr practitioners, as detailed in Janner's Complete Speechmaker. Author Greville Janner is English and learned his speaking skills before a most difficult audience -- The House of Commons. His counsel appears in 3 sections: Book One describes construction & delivery, how to control audiences & technical aids. Book Two contains model speeches to be used as guides. Book Three is a compendium of Janner's favorite retellable tales -- stories, jokes & epigrams. Last section alone worth price of book. No nation understands the forensic arts like the British. (Available from Renouf/USA, Inc., Brookfield, Vt. 05036; 324 pgs, \$39.25)

¶Comprehensive guidelines for preventive employee healthcare programs are given in the new book, Managing Health Promotion In The Workplace. Programs are good employee relations and can significantly reduce massive health insurance costs plus hidden costs of absenteeism, disability & job turnover. Guidelines offer many alternative ways to help employees deal with such chronic problems as alcoholism, hypertension, smoking, weight control, stress, lack of exercise. Written by 8 health professionals with backgrounds ranging from business to research & gov't -- who are contributing their royalties to the Nat'l Ctr for Health Education for use in supporting workplace health promotion prgms. Manuscript was reviewed by 27 business, labor, education, gov't & medical org'ns; their comments are incorporated. (Available from Mayfield Publishing Co, 285 Hamilton Ave, Palo Alto, Calif. 94301; 300 pgs, \$19.95 + \$1.50 shipping & handling)

¶Suggestions for identifying & eliminating biases on race, sex, disability & other characteristics are given in Without Bias: A Guidebook for Non-discriminatory Communication from IABC. New material in this 2nd edition (1st published in '77) includes age discrimination; bias in the media; race, sex & disability updated; business writing & speaking. Also discusses equal opportunity laws in both US & Canada. Case histories, anecdotes & examples are used to illustrate. (Available from John Wiley & Sons, 605 3rd Ave, NYC 10158; 200 pgs, \$10.95)

Each of the following phrases contains a hidden bias:
- Mary, an epileptic
- nonwhite
- a well-groomed Black student
- culturally deprived
- employees and their wives
- confined to a nursing home

Can you identify the suspect connotation and, more importantly, can you remove it without sacrificing principles of traditional English usage?

¶For the pr professional who wants a general understanding of advertising, Hal Betancourt's The Advertising Answerbook is a useful, basic guide. It begins by explaining what an ad agency does & how to work with one. Then it takes you chapter by chapter thru the processes involved in putting together & placing ads. Discusses the use of various media, direct mail, popular adv'g methods and legal limits. Extensive resource list and glossary of adv'g buzz words. Betancourt demystifies the field with this easy to read & easy to understand guidebook. Good reference even if you know it all already. (Available from Prentice-Hall, Inc, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632; 214 pgs, \$16.95)