

EXPERT ADVISES DEFENSIVE STANCE  
FOR TV INTERVIEW/COVERAGE REQUESTS

"Television is the standard against which all oral communications are measured," explains Stephen Rafe, Executive TV Workshop (NYC).

"Words, themselves, account for only about seven percent of the total message the audience receives," he adds, "with voice accounting for about 40 percent and non-verbal communication, a whopping 55 percent." Here's his 12-point approach to dealing with a news interview request:

1. Ask reporters' credentials before agreeing to the interview -- particularly if the request comes by phone.
2. Ask their background and experience in dealing with the issue at hand.
3. Arrange a background, not-for-publication briefing beforehand to put the story in perspective & to find out whether others with opposing viewpoints will also be interviewed.
4. Try to avoid a taped interview to eliminate editorial distortions that could occur.
5. Request a live, or live-to-tape, interview so that your responses will stand as given.
6. If none of this is possible, insist that your stated position on the issue be used on the air. Reporters pursuing a balanced story should not object.
7. Tape your preliminary briefing with the reporters so that the ground rules are documented.
8. If reporters balk at this taping, ask why an ethical journalist would mind your having a record of the agreement. Ask whether there is a problem you are unaware of.
9. Remember, you have a right to communicate your views & positions with as much editorial balance as a person with opposing viewpoints has.
10. If you cannot obtain the agreements you feel are essential, question the reporters' motives, and even choose not to proceed. If you decline the interview, ask that your stated reasons for doing so be used on the air.
11. Should you proceed (and in most cases this will be better than the "empty chair" interview that could occur if you decline), rehearse. Learn to preface, or interweave, your responses to key questions with your position on the issue.
12. Learn to deal with techniques reporters use to elicit meaty quotes. Rehearse to avoid answers that can be taken out of context. Practice aloud, converting tough questions to positive points. Then hope for the best.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

AWARDS. Jeannette Paladino (vp/mgr, corp comms, Marsh & McLennan, NYC) receives WICI's Matrix Award in pr div.

PEOPLE. Seattle-First National Bank names Arthur Merrick vp/mgr, corp comms...Geosource (Houston) promotes Richard Rice to dpr & comms...Omni Exploration (Radnor, Pa) appoints James Moran mgr corp comms...Kathy Rand joins Golin/Harris Communications (Chi) as vp/acct

supvr...International Technology Institute (Pittsburgh) names Frank Catanzano dpr...Craig Lewis, CEO, elected chrm, and Vincent Duffy, pres, of Earl Newsom & Co. (NYC).

FIRMS. Judd Perkins opens own firm with same name at 730 Ruddiman, North Muskegon, Mich. 49445; 616/744-1246...John Maddigan forms Maddigan Communications, 345 Mt. Lebanon Blvd, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15234; 412/341-5310.

**pr reporter**

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CONSUMERS HAVE "INTERNALIZED THEIR RIGHTS," DEMAND MORE NOW;  
CONSUMER AFFAIRS SPECIALISTS EXPAND ROLES TO COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT,  
PUBLIC ISSUES, CONTRIBUTIONS: THE DOUBLE BOTTOM LINE

"Chilled perhaps by the blasts from Washington, but only temporarily dormant," is how Barbara Reuter, mgr cons affrs & corp support at Philip Morris, described the consumerism movement at the spring conference of Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. Concurring, Malcolm Sherman, Zayre Stores' gen mgr, said the basic concerns of consumers expressed in the late 60s & early 70s are still here. He finds consumers demanding more today: "They have internalized their rights & are very vocal about them."

But government's role is changing. Enforcement of consumer protection laws by federal agencies has decreased. Only a few states have picked up the slack. Sherman sees this as an opportunity for business to do a better job. He feels consumers will reward responsive companies.

Social Responsibility Role At Zayre, consumer affairs staff has responsibility for community affairs. Consumers are thereby served "not only in the stores but in their own back yards." One example: 3 yrs ago consumer affrs division selected the March of Dimes/National Foundation For Birth Defects as a major charity worthy of support. \$½ million donated by the company has helped the cause and enhanced Zayre's corporate image, Sherman says.

The "Double Bottom Line" As her title indicates, at Philip Morris Reuter is responsible for corporate support as well as consumer affairs. "The increasing complexity of the corporation's relationship with society makes it very difficult to isolate one kind of social obligation from another," she said. The buzz-word at Philip Morris is the "double bottom line." The 2nd line is "the generally intangible social consequences of all our actions." This social accountability bottom line is becoming more important, says Reuter, and helps determine the economic bottom line. Each year she gives the chairman a confidential "payments nonessential to business operations report," a form of social audit.

Scholarships are getting more support as PM changes its allocation of contributions: one-third each to health & welfare, education, arts & culture. Recognizing hardships caused by recession & budget cutbacks, PM is listening to other claims -- including those of employees & their children, who benefit from scholarship programs.

ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR SET BY  
ATTITUDES, I.E. PUBLIC RELATIONS

"The great problem of being a perpetual Bear is that you will never be happy, never really satisfied until the Great Depression comes."

-- Investment advisor  
Larry Williams in his book  
How To Prosper In The Coming  
Good Years



"With college costs rapidly rising & college funding of students dropping, corporations will inevitably have to increase their own educational funding," Reuter feels.

Beyond The Marketplace Marketplace "shortfalls" are the central cause of eroded public confidence in business, believes Fran Steckmest, pa consultant, Shell Oil. Consider this broadened view of marketplace performance, he advises, then take two steps: 1) learn about corporate issues that interrelate with consumer affairs; 2) exchange your information with others in the company so you can participate with them in the formulation of policies. He told prr the formal integration of consumer affairs with pr or pa is not the critical issue. What counts is interaction among persons with these responsibilities.

AP SAYS EMBATTLED COMPANY CHANGING NAME: "NOT TRUE," ONLY SEEKING NEW PRODUCT IMAGES, DPR TELLS US AMID A THOUSAND CALLS

Another reason to drop the over-worked, misunderstood word "image" from organizational vocabularies surfaced last week. Reporters don't understand it.

According to AP, J.P. Stevens is "about to restyle its corporate image after years of unfavorable publicity generated by bitter battles between management and union organizers." According to dpr James Franklin, "It's not true!" Stevens is involved in the normal review of packaging & positioning for different products, he told prr testily. His other phone was ringing -- again.

Wire service quoted another company spokesman: "We want to give the company a new look, a fresh start." Three ad agencies have been hired to "spruce up the image and suggest name and logo changes," AP added. While the company's labor record is hard to justify, would it have been able to bribe reporters to write about a new logo or name if "Norma Rae" had never been filmed? An "image" can get out of hand.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT: SOME CURRENT HYPOCRISIES OF THE MEDIA

"Wall Street Journal proves recidivist; we're "flacks" again. Lead item in front page "Labor Letter" column 3/16 is headlined, "Demand for flacks eases at some pinched firms, but salaries stay high." Story is based on poll by publicity-seeking recruiting firm -- but reporter Joann Lublin was taken in. Survey claims "about 36% of 177 major firms' CEOs plan to hire fewer public relations officials this year." Data deals with press & publicity functions only, which recruiter (one we never heard of as having public relations capabilities) may think is public relations. "Concensus feel the pr function is 'less critical' in tough times," says recruiter. Statement is rebutted by 1) record number of announcements coming to prr concerning new top level jobs, 2) reports from even hardest-hit areas that in current recession importance of true public relations function is increasing.

"Do as I say, not as I do" is clearly policy of NYTimes. Quick to rail at any "promotional copy," "fluff" or "hype" on the part of others, the 45th St. gang sure knows how to use it themselves. "New York Times Selective Guide to Colleges" must have been planned to grab attention. It attempts to rate colleges on a star system, the way restaurants are often rated: so many points for academics, quality of life, social life. Schools everywhere squawked loudly -- and press & public attention to the book bloomed while cash registers rang. Sophomoric rating idea in a volume written by the editor of the nation's major education pages is not only "hype" but "creative publicity seeking." Times management says it will remove paper's name

from future editions -- now that the volume is firmly enough established for annual editions to be issued.

EXAMPLE WORTH WATCHING: IN CANADA PUBLIC AFFAIRS ARISES TO WORK WITH GOV'T, NOT FIGHT IT OFF

Some visionaries now argue that the Reagan administration's all-out assault on gov't "intervention" may prove to be a last gasp -- ushering in a perma-

nent era of joint responsibility between public & private sectors. Many nations operate this way, e.g. Western Europe, Japan. A foretaste of this strategy may be seen in Canada. "Most Canadians do not question gov't involvement in the economy," writes Isaiah Litvak, prof. of biz & pub policy, York U (Toronto). Their concern is with the efficiency of gov't intervention.

One result of gov't-business partnership is the rise of public affairs, his studies show. He defines pa as many corporations do: "a gov't rels capability." "Corporate executives appear to operate in a vacuum when it comes to understanding the relationships between business & gov't in Canada." But they do not suffer from the near-paranoid fear of gov't expressed by US execs. Federal & provincial gov'ts intervene thru 1) exhortation, 2) direct subsidization, 3) protection of industries, 4) competition policy, 5) regulation, 6) public ownership. (Rhetoric aside, US gov't is in fact active on all these fronts, tho less on #6.)

But, "Gov't leaders are often equally guilty of holding naive stereotypes of businessmen, rooted in ignorance and political expediency." Bridging this perceptual gap is the role of pa, argues Litvak. "A key clue is the extent to which public affairs executives are involved in management decisionmaking." Senior pa ofcra serve on top-level committees, he finds, with a few appointed to the company board.

Oddly, tho the nonprofit sector in both countries has traditionally had a close partnership with gov't, pa ofcra have not arisen there to the extent they are in corporations.

<p>"Unlike Americans, Canadians simply do not start from the same point of visceral respect for a free enterprise system ... Corporate leaders expect and demand a more effective working relationship between business and government, and for this reason are appointing <u>a full-time officer to be in charge of this activity.</u>"</p>	<p>"Government and business must work more closely in the early stages of policy deliberations. The public affairs executive is an important intermediary for <u>making government intervention more workable</u>, if not less necessary. The onus for this rests not solely with business. Government owes it to Canadians to create a positive market environment in which business is not the adversary but the agent for solving economic problems and generating economic growth."</p>	<p>"Responding effectively to environmental change is a measure of <u>managerial effectiveness</u>. In an era of change and discontinuities, contingency planning, environmental monitoring departments and flexible project teams are among those methods proposed for organizations which wish to improve their reaction time to threats and opportunities, as well as to help anticipate developments in the environment."</p>
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