

DOES EXTRAORDINARILY LONG COPY
SELL, INFORM OR IRRITATE?

How long are your promotion letters? We're seeing examples of longer & longer copy. In response to one lengthy letter, a practitioner wrote to the sender asking for any bits of wisdom on its effectiveness. "Do these messages really get read by executives? Do they get read instead and acted upon by the executives' secretaries? We assume the letters must work -- and such letters do work for political fundraising -- but they seem to go strongly against the grain of conventional business correspondence wisdom," he wrote in his query. What he received in response was an even longer -- 11 pages! -- promo letter.

When prr called the letter's source for answers, Ed Shineman of Xerox Learning Systems told us: "We're always experimenting. There's no magical length. In fact, most of our promo letters, short & long, have been equally successful." He finds an 11-pager appropriate to introduce a new or strange product. "If people haven't seen a new product, the more you tell them about it, the more you sell. But I'd much rather mail a postcard if that would do the trick."

CONVENTIONAL BUSINESS CARDS
ERECT COMMUNICATION BARRIERS
BY OMITTING TWO VITAL ITEMS

For practitioners whose role is to serve employers & their publics, the first omission is: how do you want to be addressed? If your card reads "Richard William Hitchcock, Jr.," should we call you "Dick," "Rich," "Rick," "Bill," "Hitch," "Junior" or what? Letters must be sent to "Mr. Hitchcock" -- not a way to encourage friendliness.

Second problem area is phone number. If you work on issues, lobbying, media or other assignments where fast-breaking events can occur at any time, listing only your office phone prevents getting the vital calls that come after hours. Having an answering machine that shuttles calls won't solve this if callers don't try your number on the assumption no one will be there. Listing home phone or stating that number is covered 24 hrs a day is necessary if you want those calls.

Why is such essential communications data left off cards? Probably because it appears informal or unbusinesslike -- same reason many letterheads still don't give a phone number. In the Information Era, where rapid & direct communication is the byword, such reasoning seems indefensible. If these or other important info don't look right to you on the face of your card, put them on the back, e.g., "Please call me Dick. My home phone is...."

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PRACTITIONERS

¶Issue anticipation is getting more public attention. Articles in media ranging from the popular press to house publications recently have featured not only coming issues but methods of forecasting them. John Naisbitt has a new column, Trend Notes. Universal Press Syndicate is handling the brief, breezy entry which is appearing across the continent. Your Changing World by Edward Cornish, pres, World Future Society, deals with long-term trends in the style of that organization's magazine, The Futurist. One column noted that futurists are not "modern-day soothsayers" but "make educated guesses about what might happen in the coming years by studying current trends. They go by a wide variety of titles, from vp to issues manager." Another column said the computer will not make print media obsolete. Nor will tv as we know it disappear. It will become one element in "media rooms" every home will have. (Available from Sunfeatures, 7720 El Camino Real, Rancho La Costa, Calif 92008)

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AS MINORITIES GROW IN NUMBER & INFLUENCE, THEY BECOME VITAL PUBLICS
HERE'S A GUIDE TO SPECIAL MATERIALS & APPROACHES FOR REACHING THEM

25 of the nation's largest cities -- including LA, Chi, Detroit -- now have a majority population of blacks, Hispanics & Asians (see prr 11/19/84). Is our knowledge of these publics growing concurrently? Here is a roundup of sources/info you may want to dig into:

¶Black Public Relations Society: "Historically, blacks have not been very visible in the field. As individuals, we've not had access to solid job opportunities with major public relations firms. As firms, we've not had access to prime business opportunities. Most importantly, we've not had access to each other. BPRS is out to change this picture," writes Sharon Morgan (vp-pr, Burrell Advertising, Chi), BPRS' founder. Group is not intended to compete with established professional societies, but rather to be a network.

Begun in 1982, BPRS has about 100 members with chapters in Chi, LA, NYC, Phila & DC. Society offers PD seminars, info exchange, member newsletter. For info, write them at 664 North Michigan, Chi 60611.

¶PRSA's Minority Affairs Committee, headed by Connie Seals (pres, C-Brem Communications Corp, Chi), has a Directory of Minority Public Relations Practitioners (\$5 mbrs; \$10 nonmbrs). For copy, write to PRSA, 845 3rd Ave, NYC 10022.

¶Blackbook 1985: International Reference Guide (due end of February) gives extensive data on black organizations, achievers, media including: 1) convention schedule, 2) bd of dir members, 3) minority purchasing coun-

cils, 4) major civil rights & community org'ns, 5) nat'l education org'ns, 6) banks and savings & loans, 7) Nat'l Black Pastors Conference, 8) fraternities & sororities, 9) insurance cos, 10) mayors, 11) accounting firms, 12) cosmetic cos, 13) newspapers & mags, 14) political org'ns, 15) law ass'ns, 16) professional org'ns, 17) media org'ns, 18) major religious groups & their leaders, 19) scientific & research org'ns. (\$9.95 from National Publications Sales Agency, 1610 East 79th St, Chi 60649)

Foreward to last year's Blackbook epitomizes the situation:

"A new breed of black American has emerged who is impacting upon decisions and implementing policies at every level of American life. They are more willing to contribute economically to our future in America, more apt to reject the status quo, more assertive and aggressive, ready to seize every opportunity available and willing to create opportunities where none exist." -- Donald Walker, publisher

¶Dollars & Sense magazine, issued every 2 months, is written for the black consumer market which has an annual spending power of \$175 billion.



Most recent survey defines its readers as: 62.8% male, 37.2% female; median age of 36.5 yrs; median household income of \$34,263; 87.3% attended college, 72.1% are college grads, 31.2% have done postgraduate study. Same publisher as Blackbook (see address above).

¶February is Black History Month. In recognition, Miller Lite is sponsoring a 60-second tribute -- popular black musicians singing the black national anthem, "Lift Every Voice & Sing," with narration by Ossie Davis & Ruby Dee -- to be aired on radio stations across the US. Simple tag line at end of uninterrupted song is only reference to sponsor. Many other companies & employers also celebrate the month.

¶A typical problem: black administrators & faculty members face problems at predominantly white uni-

SPEAKERS BUREAUS AFFECT 2-WAY COMMUNICATION, FINDS STUDY OF UTILITIES' USE OF TECHNIQUE

speakers last year -- and had an opportunity to ask questions. 74 of 100 known bureaus responded to RCI Consulting Group's (Greenwich, Ct.) '84 fall survey. Some useful findings:

¶Strong top-management involvement: 1 of 3 sr execs personally helped brief members on crucial utility issues (vs. 1 of 7 reported in '81-'82 survey).

¶Audiences were: civic groups, 40%; grade schools, 12%; high schools, 7%; colleges & universities, 4%; biz & professional groups, 13%; senior citizens, 9%; church groups, 6%; women's interest, 5%.

¶Half the bureaus were launched in the 1970s; 40% in the 1980s. Oldest was created in the 1930s.

versities. 800 of them met at MIT last summer to develop strategies to increase their numbers & influence.

While the number of college-age students is declining, the percentage of minorities is rising. "College enrollment is going to depend heavily on minorities. Wise institutions would see that coming," noted one of the meeting's organizers.

Pool of black doctoral degree candidates from which faculty & administrators are drawn is shrinking: 4.9% in '76, 4.5% in '82. Since help cannot be expected from the Reagan administration, UMass-Boston's James Blackwell suggests a "grow your own" strategy: 1) pressing institutions to identify & encourage promising black students, 2) allocating more resources for black teaching & research assistants, 3) providing mentors for black grad students.

Survey of electric utility speakers bureaus finds over a million Americans heard more than 4,000

speakers last year -- and had an opportunity to ask questions. 74 of 100 known bureaus responded to RCI Consulting Group's (Greenwich, Ct.) '84 fall survey.

¶Of the speakers, 34% are volunteers; 37% were nominated by mgmt. About 1/3 speak on their own time; 42% receive neither compensatory time nor reimbursement of related expenses.

¶Most frequent topics were energy conservation, 27%; nuclear energy, 14%; electrical safety, 13%; rates, 11%; environmental issues, 8%; supplemental energy sources, 7%; utility economics, 6%.

¶A typical bureau has 47 members. Largest has 271 active members; smallest has 1.

MEDIA & INTERNAL RELATIONS INTENSIFY WHILE STAGED PUBLICITY EVENTS ARE REJECTED, FINDS SURVEY OF PRACTITIONERS

Respondents to pr reporter's 20th Annual Survey of the Profession indicate that both media relations & internal employee communications

programs received more attention from public relations dep'ts last year at the insistence of top management. "Our executives require positive media contact with editors from local radio & tv stations as well as national trade journals," explains the mpr for a consumer product company. "They also want to have the opportunity to act as spokesperson for their industry in public discussions and media ad campaigns." A vp of comms for a large conglomerate supplies one explanation for mgmt's interest in media relations: "Everyone wants to be the next Lee Iaccoca and CEOs believe they can be like him!"

While practitioners are stepping up their activities in the areas of media contact, employee communications, marketing assignments, and gov't relations, the word from management is "more bang for the bucks." Traditional public relations functions such as creating media events, developing advertising campaigns, and editing internal publications have been cut back in favor of aggressive, media-savvy, market-oriented public relations duties. An account mgr for a large NY firm says, "Clients are wisely questioning advertising and are instead considering constituency building as a more effective & cheaper means of communication."

Although some respondents understand management's cost-cutting strategies, others resent the attack. "You spend months planning a project under the direction of the higher ups and then you watch the work go down the tube with budget cuts and staff reductions," writes a dpr in an industrial company. Nevertheless, there are many pr professionals who insist that nothing is being cut from their budgets but "wish to hell something would slow down."

Within the last year, the following activities in my dep't/firm have been:

<u>Stepped Up</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Cut Back</u>	<u>%</u>
Media Relations	15.0	Publicity & Media Events	20.0
Internal Communications	10.0	Advertising	13.0
General Marketing	9.0	Publications	10.0
Government Relations	8.0	PR/PA Budgets	8.0
Advertising	7.5	Staff	7.0
Telecommunications	7.0	Nuts & Bolts PR Functions	6.5
Community Activities	6.0	Internal Communications	6.0
Organized Public Events	5.5	Community Relations	5.0
Publications	5.0	Travel	5.0
Issue Management	4.0	Attending Conferences	4.5
Product Promotion	3.5	Telecommunications	4.5
Financial Relations	3.5	Financial PR	4.5
Computer & Word Processing	3.5	Big Contracts With Large Firms	2.5
Speechwriting	3.5	Production Of High Budget Projects	2.0
Counseling	3.0	Projects Without "Bottom Line"	
Professional Standards	3.0	Impact	1.5
Fundraising	3.0		