

being that ineffable essence that enables a vital idea to take hold in people's minds.... Technology is a means not an end, and the goal of communicating an idea may not be more achievable simply because new means have been found to transmit signals more effectively."

"Technology has found a way to extend the benefit which previously was only possible through face-to-face contact. Electronics gives us a presence without actually being present. What we do with that

"It is the art of communicating rather than the technology that makes an idea come alive."

presence depends on our ability to project ourselves and our ideas to other people in ways that lead to greater efficiency, broader comprehension, sounder policies & more effective actions. The experiences of organizations which have introduced these programs, however, suggest that the ability to interact simultaneously with people in geographically diverse locations does not by itself enhance the power of an idea.... The value of new communications technologies is not in their electronic wizardry but in the possibility of improving human relationships around the globe."

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PRACTITIONERS

"Identifying minority-owned media, as opposed to media which may serve a market but are owned elsewhere, is made easier for radio & tv by a list available from National Ass'n of Broadcasters. It shows 19 Black-owned tv stations & 127 radio outlets. For Hispanic-owned, the numbers are 6 tv & 37 radio. There are 2 tv stations & 5 radio stations owned by Native-Americans; 1 tv & 2 radio by Asian-Americans; and 4 tv stations that are East Indian-owned (all by the same person & all in Wisconsin). For copy of list, write pr."

"Today's radical factor "focuses on rallies, t-shirts, bumper stickers & benefit dances" which is why they are less effective than their civilly disobedient predecessors. That's the view of Ganzalo Santos, a major force in Colorado radical politics for 16 years -- now returning to the East Coast to pursue a doctorate in sociology. He says today's radical leaders are guilty of 1) underestimating the potential of the public for support of their issues & 2) regarding activism as an 8-to-5 job rather than a 24-hr commitment. The societally-conscious folk today "tend to be very affluent, very white; if you don't watch out, the Brie crowd will get you."

"Encapsulated crisis communications plan covers 9 points: 1) Start well before a crisis. 2) Defining "crisis" is less important than knowing one when you see one, especially at a distance. 3) Get & give the facts -- as many as possible, as early as possible, as long as necessary. 4) Without good policy, good mechanics can become worthless or even counter productive. 5) Substance is crucial, but style counts too. 6) Decide early: Present the chief? Protect the chief? 7) Mind the emotions/intellect pendulum as a crisis unfolds. 8) Stay tight organizationally but stay loose tactically. 9) Keep the communications lines open after the crisis. (Tip sheet from Ketchum Public Relations, 1133 Avenue of the Americas, NYC 10036; 212/536-8800.)

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR READERS

Following our tradition, pr reporter will not be published next week -- to celebrate Independence Day & Canada Day. Our office will be closed from June 30 thru July 7.

"WE FIRMLY BELIEVE PERCEPTION IS REALITY. WHATEVER THE PEOPLE THINK, THAT'S WHAT'S REAL, AND WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT," SAYS CITY GOVERNMENT WHICH IS PIONEERING USE OF FOCUS GROUPS TO ASCERTAIN PERCEPTIONS

"We want an outside-in view of city government & its services. We did this thru focus groups. No other city, to my knowledge, is doing this," Mark Anthony, press sec'y to Columbus, O. Mayor Dana Rinehart, told pr."

Using the counsel of Shelly Berman Communicators, city of Columbus interviewed 30 people thru 3 focus groups. Groups were divided according to economic level. "We had an almost perfect cross section of this community in terms of race, gender & economic strata."

Key Findings Show Public Is Information-Poor

1. "People are not aware of the services the city provides. It's obvious we need to do a better job of communicating. There were people who didn't know where our parks are so had never been to one. That gave us the idea to produce basic info that we previously thought unnecessary." (This compares with Coke's study which found people also lack basic consumer info. See pr 5/14/84.)

2. Most important services:
a) public safety (police, fire, public health); b) keeping city clean; c) compassion for human services for disadvantaged. "They support these areas much more than they support programs for business growth & growth of the city. This is important to us because one of the reasons our taxes are low is we have strong business growth. And this pays for the services the people love. We're discovering they're information-poor about who pays the bills. So that's another area where we need to work."

3. Basic city services considered most important: a) quality drinking water; b) good street lighting; c) good street repair; d) crime prevention; e) control of hazardous waste.

4. Complaints/"hot spots" are all fear based. "Issues that provoke heated emotional conflicts are rooted in frustration, anxiety & fear." a) Snow removal -- "This is interesting to us because people from Chi, Cleveland, Mpls look at our snow removal with awe. Our public's perception is probably rooted in fear of driving on snow & ice." b) Street lighting -- "rooted in fear of crime." c) Clean &

"We gave them stacks of Monopoly money. Explained the function of all the city departments and told them to put down the amount of dollars they think should go to each department. These people, who think we have an understaffed police department and are afraid of crime, decided 22% of the city's funds should go to the public safety department. However, in reality, more than 50% of city funds goes to public safety. They undercut one of their 'hot spots' because they simply don't know how much we spend on police & fire. So we have to get more information out to them."



safe environment -- "rooted in fear of diseases. Amazingly we win awards each year for being such a clean city. Keep America Beautiful says we're one of the cleanest." d) Police protection -- "We're not a high crime city. But their perception is we're understaffed and they're afraid of crime." e) Street repairs -- "They feel repairs are generally inadequate. This is probably rooted in their frustration from being stuck in traffic jams at road repair sites."

Recommendations Based On Focus Group Analysis

1. City should take credit for what it does well. "We need to tell people what we do spend for services and the progress we've made & awards we've won for being a clean city."

2. Install info exhibits in City Hall where dep'ts can communicate goals & services.

3. Expand the Mayor's Action Line -- a facility with several phone lines, computer terminals & volunteers where people can call when they can't reach a dep't or don't know where to call. They give their question/problem/complaint to the volunteer who types it into the computer. All this info then goes to the appropriate dep'ts. They have 1 week to solve the problem or explain to the mayor why not. Mayor reads the Action Center's print-out each week. "This is classic public relations in that communication is 2-way. People know about the Mayor's Action Line and they like it."

4. Develop a program to sensitize city employees to public perceptions, to better understand taxpayers who come in with concerns, problems.

5. Develop a public relations program around police dispatchers. People in the focus groups felt the dispatchers weren't concerned about their problems. "They could do a better job if they knew more about citizens' anxieties, fears & perceptions and were trained to deal with people in the middle of a crisis."

INTERGENERATIONAL MARKETING, MASCOT, EMPHASIS ON BASIC INFORMATION HELP CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING SUCCEED

Wanting to show commitment to California, Pacific Bell & Post Cereals looked to Dudley-Anderson-Yutzy (Los Altos) for a cause-related marketing program. "We

came up with the idea to approach the state parks -- which have no money for marketing," Loretta Stagnitto, acct supvr, told prr.

Objectives Parks people thought the idea "terrific" and listed their needs: 1) public info pieces; 2) educational kits for schools; 3) a way to bring in nontraditional park users; 4) more attendance during off-season months. "The parks are bombarded during spring & summer but traffic drops off dramatically during the other months. Our message was you can 'pop into a park anytime' -- California weather allows it."

Tactics 1. Intergenerational marketing. "Only way children get to the parks is with adults. So if they never go to the park as a child, they'll probably never take their kids when they grow up. So if the parks can get the kids today to come, those kids will probably bring their families in the future. That's why we reached out to the schools."

2. Educational kit -- a junior park ranger program -- produced in cooperation with park rangers. Written for 4th, 5th & 6th graders. Sent to 5,000 California schools.

3. Four simultaneous junior ranger events. 400 kids came to parks in Sacramento, SF, LA & San Diego. Event, an extension of what they learned in the junior ranger kits, was put on by the park rangers. Children learned about the parks' wildlife, trees, history. "We coordinated the events & had media coverage. Kids & media work well together. We had a lot of media support for this program."

4. Invited & transported kids from inner city schools to the parks. It was the first visit to a state park for many of them.

5. Passport to the state parks. Broke parks down by region and described what is available at each. Offered this via proof of purchase seals from Post Cereals boxes.

6. Mascot -- Cally the Quail. Character is spokesperson in the junior ranger kit & on passport. "There are now 5 full-size Cally Quails and they make presentations all over the state. The parks have a rental program because the mascot is in such demand."

7. Two PSAs. 1 featuring the governor with Cally Quail & children. Other featured Jameson Parker from tv show Simon & Simon who donated his time. "We were afraid if the governor announced his candidacy for reelection, tv & radio stations wouldn't run his PSA. So we sent both out and let them choose. Turns out they were used equally. The governor didn't announce during the time they were running."

8. Pacific Bell set up 10-12 info numbers for the public to call.

9. Post Cereals sent out coupon mailers to 4.5 million homes promoting the phone numbers and offering coupons for 40¢ off park admission.

Result By the ultimate behavioral test, parks experienced a 20% increase during their off season.

MESSAGE STRATEGY IS THE ART OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, NEW TECHNOLOGY ONLY PART OF THE SCIENCE

"The impact of new technologies is so dramatic that the medium appears to dominate the message more than ever. But heart, passion, eloquence & imagination are still what count most in communicating an idea. Technology can never replace this," says David Finn. In an article titled "How To Communicate An Idea," his firm, Ruder Finn & Rotman, explains:

"A message that will capture the public's imagination or change the way people think, as was the case with Thoreau's Walden, cannot be created by engineering breakthroughs. The most advanced communications procedures will not bring into

POWER OF SEMANTICS ON PUBLIC PRIORITIES

There's a paradox in federal policy, according to author-educator Jonathon Kozol. "They say, 'Why throw money at a problem? Is that any solution?' But they never say that about the Defense budget. We 'allocate' money for Defense; we 'throw' money at other programs," he stated in a recent interview at Forest Hospital (Des Plaines, Ill.).

Kozol characterizes this attitude as "counter-productive, self-destructive parsimony." One effect has been creation of a permanent underclass of illiterate people. They are "the largest oppressed minority in the US -- and the only ones who can't write press releases." He sees this as "a situation of enormous peril to our cultural survival and our economic future."