

UPDATE: WE TURN TO 5 RESPECTED SPECIALISTS  
FOR GUIDANCE ON CURRENT STRATEGIES OF PRACTICE

"Those of us who survive in this business will be deep thinkers, articulate presenters, innovators & initiators, not just responders. Top communicators will be in constant evolution, continually challenged to find better ways to evaluate communications effectiveness, and to inform those who need to know about current achievements and future goals, techniques, programs & results.

"Success depends in large measure on practitioners' ability to monitor, evaluate, interpret & inform management of the necessity, value & benefits of the communications function." This is the assessment of counselor Jim Strenski (Public Communications, Inc.). Here are some of the specifics as seen by respected specialists.

ISSUES ANTICIPATION:  
2 CASES FROM CHET BURGER

"Prepare now for the crises you can be sure you'll face before long," counsels Chet Burger. This must include advance planning of the response strategies you can use. He illustrates 2 important guidelines as told to an American Cancer Society conference:

1. "If you're under attack, speak out & tell your story. If you don't, no one else will."

Example: Hooker Chemical's Love Canal. Legal document which transferred Love Canal to the city of Niagara Falls absolved Hooker from liability. Why didn't the company speak up when they were accused of being the worst polluter in the US? Said Hooker's pres: "Because our lawyer said to us, 'Shut up. Don't try this case in the newspapers. Why get smeared in the newspapers? Wait till it comes up in court. They haven't got a leg to stand on. We're absolutely in the clear: full disclosure, appropriate technology, release from liability.' So we didn't

say a word. And the result is that by this time, we can't go into a single courtroom in the United States without already having been convicted of being polluters."

2. "A free society depends on the idea that we have differences of opinion which we can discuss publicly & debate honestly. Each of us must appeal to the common sense and the good judgment of our fellow citizens in the hope that they will make intelligent decisions."

Example: Tobacco industry's "departure from open & honest discussion. When people have sued the tobacco companies for causing death from smoking, the cigarette manufacturers have had one answer. 'If you chose to smoke, you knew what the dangers were. You took your own risk. Now don't turn around and blame us.'

"At the same time, Gerald Long, pres & CEO of R.J. Reynolds told Insight magazine, 'I have not seen one piece of medical evidence that has been presented by anybody anywhere, that absolutely, totally said that smoking caused this disease or created it. I believe this.'



This from the head of one of the two companies that goes into court and says, 'You knew what the danger was, and you chose to smoke.'

— HELPING YOUR SUPPORTERS SPEAK UP —

Philip Morris Magazine, a glossy quarterly billed as the "first general interest periodical for smokers," jumps from 1.3 million readers (pr 5/19/86) to 5 million. It's distributed free to more people than get Time or Newsweek, at a cost of about \$1.75 million per issue -- or 35¢ per copy, a super bargain for PM.

Mag gets editorial assistance from staff of Saturday Review. And runs ads pitching PM brands of cigarettes & beer, giving the mag "credibility in the sense that the ads make it look more like a magazine," says assoc publisher Mary Taylor. Purpose of the mag? "To educate smokers to talk about the issue in a more informed way.... We feel in many respects we haven't had a fair shake (in the general press)...and it gives us an opportunity to put across our point of view."

PUBLICITY PLACEMENT NOW  
AS SEEN BY JONATHAN SCHENKER

While it's nice to get stories all of your own making, successful media coverage comes from following trends. Most media are concerned with trends in 9 subject areas: 1) medical/health, 2) home, 3) family, 4) education, 5) career/workplace, 6) money/finance, 7) religion, 8) leisure, 9) sex/gender, says media rels pro Jonathan Schenker (Ketchum).

By applying your organization's or client's agenda & activities to each of these subjects -- as well as monitoring the trends developing within these areas -- "you may realize new placement

& story possibilities." He recommends following ten items regularly to measure present & future trends:

1. Census Reports: How are demographics & lifestyles changing?
2. National Polls: Whether on politics, healthcare, social activity, polls tell you what the nation & special segments are thinking & doing.
3. Trade Media: The trades know & report what's new in their fields first. It's their business.
4. Geographic Media: Local pub'ns from key East & West Coast cities, as well as DC, tell what's happening in centers known for initiating national trends.
5. Advertisements: If it's for sale, it represents a need that has to be filled & probably has competitors.
6. Competition: If your competition is doing it, and they're in the business to make money, it could be an industry trend. If you're not doing the same thing, you could be a counter trend, which is also a story.
7. Sales Figures: Quarterly reports, annual projections tell what's selling in the country today and what R&D is working on for tomorrow.
8. Analyst Reports: Billions of dollars are affected by their predictions. You can be sure they try to be on target.
9. Europe/Far East: From clothing & cosmetics to hi-tech, small electronics & new packaging, it often happens there before it happens here.
10. People: Those with whom we share offices, our friends & families, especially when they are dispersed across the country, can be great trend barometers.

SOVIETS ARE EXPERT USERS OF PR

...because they tie their efforts to what's on peoples' minds. When 10 cosmonauts visited here, one told a news conference he had carried into space, on his recent flight, pictures of the fated crew of the Challenger. "I wanted those seven brave astronauts to go to outer space," said Vladimir Soloyov. "I've got to express my sympathy for the tragedy." Such unifying statements, in an era where US officialdom can only condemn most everything about Russia, will dramatize the contrast before the court of world opinion.

DE-POLARIZE LEGAL VS. PR,  
ADVISES BRUCE HARRISON

"Practitioners sometimes report not to their organization's or client's public relations manager, but to the lawyer." Often this results in avoiding positive positioning "lest it be construed (at some future date) as having implied that the product or service was without risk of any sort," contends public affairs counselor E. Bruce Harrison (DC). He feels the legal filter, in place to defend the org'n from future liability, is straining the practice of public relations. To keep "PR" from meaning "publicity reduction," he advises:

1. Learn to like lawyers. Lawyers have the power. The evidence: products, entire organizations can be killed by litigation protecting "victims." It's imprudent for us not to try to work with people who have the ear of the brass & the muscle of the statutes.

2. Look for ways to stand our ground. Help lawyers understand, case by case, that we are sensitive to public trends -- including trends that influence juries -- and that our marketing, writing & speech communication skills can be put to work effectively, within the legal constraints on products

& organizations. "We need to take some initiative to put us & them on the same side of the table," he told pr.

3. Wind down the Litigation Era. Support activities now under way to remove incentives from, and to put practical limits on, jury trial awards. The constituents are there to bring about change, since the litigation/insurance situation hurts just about everybody. Public relations people have the skills, and certainly the professional motivation, to mobilize these constituents.

ANNUAL REPORTS NOW FEATURE PEOPLE  
BUT ARE BECOMING CONSERVATIVE

"Nothing interests people more than people. People entice other people to read annual reports -- and believe them," advises the annual-report-producer Corporate Annual Reports, Inc. (NYC). Chrm's letter to shareholders, photos of people, quotes from middle mgmt, interviews with sr officers, customers' testimonials are ways for people to reach people.

Apple Computer's use of photos in its '86 AR is notable. They're well designed, thoughtful & compelling. All but one focus on people. Page 1 photo's perspective is thru circular opening in a piece of equipment, focusing on a person's face whose eyes are looking intently back at you, the reader. Next 4 pages carry similar size & similarly placed color photos -- all focusing on people.

Letter to shareholders is a 12-pg section using b&w photos of 1) exec staff, 2) corp achievers (called "Fellows"), 3) leading engineers, 4) CEO. People are central. Settings are stark, tho graphically appealing. No mahogany desks or oil paintings to pump up the prominence of the officers pictured.

8-pg section of testimonials from satisfied customers -- 1 per page --

uses half-page photos and a paragraph of copy to communicate each person's message. Again, lots of white space. And again, the eyes of all those pictured look intently out of the photo at the reader. (Copy from Apple Computer, 20525 Mariana Ave, Cupertino, Calif. 95014; 408/996-1010)

"Annual reports are coming up conservative on a preponderance of fronts," says Sid Cato in his 4th annual survey of ARs. After viewing some 700 annuals, he found:

1. 49.6% use photos on covers, down 3.7% from '84. That's an overall decline of 27.3% since tracking began in '82.

2. 84.2% use 4 or more colors. Since '84, when 94.4% did, the number has declined steadily -- 2.7% during the last year alone.

3. Number of colors used on covers (3.1) has declined 6% year to year. It's now at a 4-year low. "Indicative of a creeping conservative stance among organizations."

4. 37.1% use big type on the cover -- "a bullish indicator" -- up from 32.4% in '83. "One of the growing number of graphic/editorial techniques making the switch from the popular news media to the corporate suite, if eons belatedly."

5. 31.7% asks for readership, down 29.7%...and a whopping 59% falloff from '82. "A good annual report ought to actively ask you to read it, we contend. Just as the daily newspapers & weekly newsmagazines. Sadly, fewer than 1 in 3 does this." (More info from Cato, Box 14895, Chi 60614)

#### MATHEMATICAL EVALUATION WON'T WORK

"Public relations is not the same type of function as sales, production, purchasing, accounting, personnel & transportation. These functions lend themselves to measurement with numbers. Numbers that fit increasingly with our computerized business styles. Public relations measurement is clearly more challenging. There is real danger that the more effort made to quantify pr results, the more emphasis may be placed on superficial...and the more difficult it will be to make progress against the real problems," says Jim Strenski.

Instead, public relations monitors the social, political, cultural & environmental areas and will continue to "at increasingly sophisticated levels. Listening & viewing outposts, consistent monitoring of press & electronic exposure, filtering, sifting & evaluating messages will become accepted practice."

#### NEGATIVE ROLE MODELS: ARE THEY HELPFUL?

We've been reminded that Herb Schmertz (pr 1/18/82) is sometimes seen as one. Certainly he attracts -- seeks, some say -- publicity for & about himself. But also for his beliefs regarding pr strategy. (But Edward L. Bernays & others are no slouches on that score.) His running fight with the Wall Street Journal, strident ads & counter-productive pugnaciousness have been fully reported. A recent Manhattan, Inc. story suggests Mobil was pushed to take this stance by its Saudi oil suppliers. In any event, the real question is whether negative role models aren't just as instructive as positive ones -- maybe more so, since psychologists of education say it's easier to learn from errors than successes.

#### WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

RETIREES. Frank Davis as vp-comms, Koppers (Pittsburgh) after 25 yrs. Bob O'Gara will succeed him with title of mgr - comms svcs dep't.