

¶Americans throw away 75% of their advertising mail unread, according to recent study from Newspaper Advertising Bureau. Households are getting about 1/3 more ad mail than they got in '82, but the discard factor is also up -- about 20% more tossed out today than in '82. (Info from Nick Bloom, NAB Research Dept, 1180 Ave. of Americas, NYC 10036; 212/704-4560)

ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR PRACTITIONERS

¶Turkey dinner for 2,000 needy families, served right in their homes, is orchestrated by Best Western Americana Inn of St. Cloud, Minn. Owner Bill Foussard began program 18 years ago, serving 3 families with meals prepared in his mother's kitchen. Today, volunteer crew of 1,000 coordinates "Thanksgiving-Meals-on-Wheels" program for 9,000 mouths -- largest of its kind in country. Food is donated by residents & companies in surrounding communities at estimated value of \$30,000. Recipients appreciate privacy of program & opportunity to enjoy holiday meal in their own homes rather than in community hall with strangers.

¶Movie audiences are new market for video news releases via West Glen's "Popcorn Report," new audio-visual magazine to be distributed to motion picture theaters. Flat fee of \$17,500 (\$35 per showing) covers national distribution & a minimum of 500 theater play dates. New tape-to-film technology permits easy, inexpensive transfer from 3/4" videotape. 9-minute Popcorn Report consists of 4 individually-sponsored segments. (Info from West Glen, 1430 Broadway, NY 10018; 212/921-2800.)

¶Are you familiar with COMMUNICATE!, the electronic information service for advertising & public relations execs? Offers subscribers access to electronic mail, bulletin board, conferencing, over 20 different news, business & industry-related databases. (Info from Adv/PR Info Network, 508 State St., Annapolis, MD 21403; 301/267-7627.)

¶Non-dues revenue ideas for associations include: 1) sale of generic publications with organization's logo imprinted on cover; 2) sell merchandise through catalogs; 3) do consulting based on organization's expertise; 4) sponsor an annual event or exhibit; 5) sell database names; 6) sell research.

¶Your logo is not image, it's perception, hence graphic presentation is an organization's visual projection of its position. Corporate identity specialist Steve Downey of Downey, Weeks & Toomey (NYC) recommends not making a name change unless really important. Also suggests that adopting initials is a quick way to oblivion, unless your important publics are already using them informally.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. Officers of Women in Communications, Inc (WICI): pres, Sharon Watson, Watson Communications (Dallas); pres-elect, Karen Carnahan, Carnahan, Smith & Gunter (Portland, Or); vp-mbrshp, Ginger Purdy, Ginger Purdy Advertising & Public Relations (San Antonio); vp-progs, Michelle Edwards (Miami); vp-student afrs, Terri Helbling, NCR (Dayton).

HONORS. U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, named "Communicator of the Year" by National Association of Government Communicators for his efforts in informing the public about AIDS. John Budd, svp-corp comms, Emhart, gets 1987 Merit Award, Conn. Valley Chap/PRSA. Betty Jane Stearns, evp, Doremus Porter Novelli, receives Outstanding Achievement Award from YWCA of Metro Chicago.

pr reporter

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APPLYING TECHNIQUES OF CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY TO RESEARCH: WHAT PRACTITIONERS CAN LEARN FROM THIS BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE APPROACH

Observation of tribal behavior & rituals has more to offer public relations than traditional market research does, Steve Barnett, head of Ruder, Finn & Rotman's (NYC) research subsidiary, told prr. Barnett and his 5 fellow researchers all hold PhDs in cultural anthropology -- there's not a single market researcher among them.

Key tools of the anthropologist -- like other behavioral scientists -- are observation & analysis:

A. Observation -- "We try to be a fly on the wall, just observing & recording without making judgments." Techniques used include: direct observation, videotapes, camcorders & other kinds of recording devices. Researchers put aside their own mental & cultural orientation in order to observe everything as if it were an unknown ritual in a strange land.

B. Analysis -- is made from the standpoint of symbolic meaning, i.e., what do products, services, images or events mean symbolically to the person. What values influence their behavior?

As an example of how anthropological & traditional marketing research see the same situation differently, Barnett cites a case involving apples. Only difference between apples & other fruits that traditional research was able to suggest was based on high fiber content. Barnett's approach involved: 1) photographing people's refrigerators to see where they kept their apples; 2) watching people eat apples; 3) recording people shopping for & buying apples to see how they selected them.

Results of apple films were compared to range of taped fruit-eating behavior, demonstrating that: apples are not a gentle fruit; they challenge the eater, have to be attacked to eat. Research hence found way to symbolically differentiate apples from other fruit, which was used in creative positioning.

Societal trends Barnett has observed that forecast changes in consumer behavior & attitudes:

1. Move toward physiologically-based causation -- rather than psychological -- for mental & emotional states, a trend Barnett believes will have broad impact on the way foods, drugs & other products are perceived. More value is now being placed on

"What passes for research in public relations & marketing is most often trendy statistical gimmicks or 'after-the-fact' kinds of studies in which a person is asked what they did or thought & why they did it. Anthropologists know that people can't answer objectively; in most cases, they can't even reconstruct their thoughts well. What they give you is rationalization, selective memories, or whatever they think makes them look good."



substances, rather than interaction. This changes the way public thinks about: rights of adoptive children, abortion, racial & sexist differences. "Hormones, enzymes, brain chemistry, body rhythms, allergies, inherited tendencies -- each takes temporary center stage as controlling our intelligence and emotions. Parents are told they have less control over their children's development than they thought. Aberrant, even criminal, behavior is attributed to substances (e.g., the "Twinkie defense").

2. Change from lifestyle consumption toward performance-based consumption. "American consumers are becoming more interested in presenting sharply different aspects of themselves to different audiences at different times & places. The public theater of consumption -- consumption as multiple performances -- means thinking about consumer products & services as props that aid in creating characters. Semiotic research that pays attention to how symbols are positioned in a performance can tell us how messages are coded and decoded -- even when performers & audiences cannot."

THE TIN PARACHUTE: A SEVERANCE PLAN THAT PROTECTS EMPLOYEES IN EVENT OF A TAKEOVER

loss in restructuring. Dubbed "Tin Parachutes," sums of money involved for each employee are substantially less than golden parachutes awarded to upper echelons, but mechanics & conditions which activate both types are similar, claims Diana Robertson of Wharton School.

"When takeover rumors begin, employees are concerned about the likelihood of being fired and about their prospects for new employment. The existence of a tin parachute means that employees don't have to be thinking about rewriting their resumes, or how they will finance their children's educations. Instead, they can focus on job performance, knowing that the tin parachute reduces the probability that they will be fired. If they are, tin parachute provides a financial cushion which allows them adequate time to secure other employment."

Though some organizations adopt tin & golden parachutes as poison pills to discourage hostile takeovers, plans are also seen as socially responsible policy -- which can also boost employee morale & productivity in midst of rumored or real takeover. Only 7% of companies surveyed have tin parachutes (as compared to 46% which have goldens). All those were instituted within the past year, hence none have yet been tested in actual takeover. Herman Miller, Diamond Shamrock, Mobil, America West Airlines, Accuray are among those with tin parachutes.

Wide variations exist in formulas for calculating length & amount of benefits, but average is about twice that of usual severance pay. Criticism of tin parachutes, depending on how constructed, is that a) they may not be activated in friendly takeovers, or b) they may be implemented only to justify the more generous goldens awarded to executives. (For copy of paper write prr.)

Tho not much talked about, handful of companies have quietly initiated plan to protect all employees against job

Big question: how to balance needs of employees with interests of shareholders? Tho shareholder interests have dominated management decisions, current concerns about productivity indicate attention to employees is imperative. If tin parachute boosts productivity, shareholder interests are served, even if costs subtract from short-term profits during critical transition period. Another factor is laws in several states saying stakeholders have rights, too, not just stockholders.

MEDIA WILL CARRY HEALTH INFO ONLY SO LONG AS IT HELPS SELL ADS OR AUDIENCE: TV DOC ART ULENE

This reality requires both the health educator & pr practitioner to stringently guard the quality of material. The self-described "provocative" spokesman for better health prioritizes his "Today Show" content on a) public's need to know, b) ease of knowing, i.e. a good story.

It's not as easy as it sounds: "I've never been able, in 12 years on tv, to figure out how to do a story on the common cold" that met these criteria. He asks 4 characteristics of submissions: 1) news value or uniqueness (gets few); 2) helpful even if not news (usually there); 3) truth (the major problem); 4) good story (so-so). Too many are poorly written or not fun to read, he finds.

Other factors he considers: 5) applies to significant segment of the audience; 6) includes self-care behavior; 7) good visually. In marketing his health info cassettes, Ulene finds it doesn't pay to go to media until, first, have "done their story for them" & second, anticipate their questions & objections -- & have answers for them.

Trends: a) more gee whiz science stories, b) tighter targeting, with items that apply to smaller segments of population, c) more behavioral suggestions such as breast self-exam on air, with audience invited to join in, or participative weight loss campaigns.

Public relations has the info, he has access to media, so he urges joining together on health education. Call him at 312/840-3001 with national stories, he urged PRSA Health Section/Hospital Academy audience.

- ERAS OF HEALTHCARE HISTORY SHOW WHY EDUCATION NOW PREMIER
1. Infectious Disease Era: people died from infection, avg. life expectancy 45. Ended with rise of sanitation & public health measures.
 2. Pharmacological Era: beginning c. 1950, avg. age leaps to 65. Antibiotic, cardiac, psychotherapeutic drugs.
 3. Era of Mechanical Medicine: transplants, bionics, dialysis etc. beginning c. 1970. Average life expectancy up to 70.
 4. Information Era: today, avg. age past 70 but could be 85 if applied what is known about lifestyle. Enemy is degenerative diseases plus lifestyle disorders, so cure is information & behavior change.

USEFUL RESEARCH FINDINGS

"Most loyal & thorough" readers of daily newspapers are those age 50+ finds survey by National Press Foundation and American Association of Retired Persons. Of the 167 editors who responded (approximately 24% of top 700 dailies), over 40% publish special section or page for older readers. Primary content: stories on health, medicine & Social Security; human interest features; activity schedules. 4 of 5 editors want more news & feature material for older readers on consumer issues, housing, state capital news, business, travel. (Info from NPF, Nat'l Pres Bldg, Suite 1282, Washington, D.C. 20045; 202/662-7350.)