

Ten-year-old national center -- Youth Communication -- is the editorial & production headquarters for YNS. It produces the biweekly report YNS News, and a weekly computer on-line service, YNS News-Line. These are providing corporations, commercial newspapers & school papers insights into teenagers.

Another pr opportunity: Center also coordinates a variety of journalism & business education & opportunity programs to help track teens into communication careers. Minority programs are particularly strong. Welcomes joint projects, involvement by businesses, other organizations. (YNS News, \$89/yr; YNS News-Line, \$250/yr + on-line charges. More info from Youth Communications, 2025 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Ste.501, Wash DC 20006; 202/429-5292)

"Organizations can benefit by subscribing and gaining better understanding into the teenage market. What teens themselves report their peers are thinking & doing -- not what adults interpret this to be. Or by giving a gift subscription to a school in their community," a spokesperson told prr.

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶Settling a lawsuit with pr aplomb is rare -- but GTE did it. Case involved workers who claimed exposure to chemicals. While noting the company "firmly believed" there was no cause for action against it, "continuing the legal action would have been difficult for the plaintiffs & their families, time-consuming & costly for GTE, and divisive for the community as a whole."

¶Weekly VNR from Journal of the American Medical Ass'n gets widespread usage by tv stations across the country. ABC, NBC, INN, CNN, Chicago Superstation WGN & 200 individual stations report using the newsfeed, reaching 50 million tv households each week. "The overwhelming interest in the JAMA Report confirms our confidence in the ability of video news releases to effectively communicate important health & medical information to the public," says Wendy Borow of AMA. VNR's timely news breaks every Thursday announcing story to appear in next day's issue of AMA's Journal. Orbis Medical News (Chi) is VNR producer & distributor.

¶Hunt for Florida's biggest cockroach is publicity-getter for Miami's Alert-Lear Pest Control, but not for beach where winner was found. Contest gained scores of newspaper articles & dozens of reports on tv & radio. TV feature reporters with mini-cams in tow, embarked on their own cockroach hunts. Winning entry was 53 millimeters; won \$500 prize and a trip to national finals in DC. Florida's cockroach beat out 2,000 others capturing 1st prize in the Combat Great American Roach Off. From the beginning, publicity & contest arrangements were handled with tongue-in-cheek, mock seriousness. Everyone involved -- reporters, publicists, employees of the pest control company & contestants -- pursued the contest with zeal, while taking the opportunity to make fun of its absurdity and their involvement in it, explains Steve Silber of Ronald Levitt Assocs (Coral Gables).

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. Chairman of Council for Advancement & Support of Education,

Cyrus (Russ) Jollivette (vp univ rels & sec'y, University at Miami).

pr reporter

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NEW RESEARCH ON OLDER MARKET IS STUDY IN MESSAGE STRATEGY, AUDIENCE TARGETING, PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT (& MISMANAGEMENT): "ONE OF THE TOUGHEST NUTS TO CRACK IN THE HISTORY OF MODERN MARKETING"

Your most experienced employees & managers, including many role models; your retirees; the fastest growing consumer sector; a major cadre of opinion leaders on every topic -- these & other publics critical to every organization share one characteristic: they are no longer chronologically young.

Bottom line, says David Wolfe, founder of the National Ass'n of Senior Living Industries, cracking the "tough nut" of people 55 & over requires this strategy:

1. Eliminate age as a way to understand & reach the older market, he told American Demographics. This should be self-evident in the simple fact the group commences at 55 -- young by today's standards. Instead think in terms of traits or motivations as you would for any market. Get rid of the "aging" stereotypes.
2. Cognitive age is what matters. The group perceives itself as younger by several years. Asked how old they think they would be if they didn't know their age, 3/4ths say 75% of their actual age.
3. "Being experiences." They are not persuaded to act, use a service or buy a product because it's touted for their age group. Instead, they are looking for "being experiences" -- intangible things like interpersonal relationships, philosophical introspection, seeking out & contemplating the joys of living. They want "good grist for their human development mills." Elder hostels is a prime example.
4. "Anti-being experiences." Reminding people of their vulnerability & mortality -- which emphasizing age does -- is an "anti-being experience." The housing industry ignores this advice. Says Wolfe, "Senior housing developers usually place the word 'retirement' prominently in their ads, ignoring a 1977 Roper survey that found only 5% of retirees want to live among people their own age. The ads turn off 95% of the market."
5. Proper motivational appeals. "Many ads for senior housing focus on a life of full-time leisure (which goes against the deeply ingrained work ethic of our society) and emphasize vulnerability ('we will take care of you'). Prospective buyers get an image of a dependent, nonproductive life, both of which hurt their self-esteem." More persuasive is the concept of "gateways to personal growth & development."



Independence Is Top Concern Among Older Adults

So finds \$300,000 Lifestyles And Values of Older Adults study by SRI International. 3,500 adults 55 & older were surveyed to determine their attitudes. Some findings:

1. 98% prefer to live in their own homes.
2. Most consider themselves physically healthy, active & independent and like to do things their own way. 93% feel maintaining their self-sufficiency is extremely important.
3. 86% do most things without help from other people. They do feel, however, their children's opinions are important. 65% of adults 75 & older rely on their children's advice when making important decisions.
4. 91% of adults 75 & older say their privacy is among those things most important to them in housing.
5. 52% of 55-64 yr olds feel they were forced to retire.
6. 73% of the entire surveyed group express a distrust of advertising. 43% say ads put down older adults (Wendy's "Where's the beef?" ad is an example, says Wolfe. Clara Peller may have been humorous to many, but seniors were insulted.)
7. 43% of those 75 & older dislike the term "golden years"; 51% dislike "leisure years." These & terms like "senior citizen," "retiree" are age based and convey "anti-being" messages.
8. 75% want to be represented by spokespersons who are closer to their own age. (More info from NASLI, 125 Cathedral St, Annapolis, Md. 21401; 301/263-0991)

AS PR INCREASES IMPACT ON DECISIONMAKING, & IS EVALUATED QUANTITATIVELY, HERE'S AN ORGANIZATION TO CONSIDER

behavioral & computational approaches. Encourages members to be a) concerned with major administrative problems & solutions, b) versed in tools of the quantitative & behavioral sciences that can identify & resolve organizational problems.

90% of 5,000 members come from academia, 10% from public & private organizations. \$48/yr membership for US & Canada (\$52 international) includes subscription to quarterly journal, Decision Sciences; 5 times yearly newsletter, Decision Lines; regional workshops; annual meeting, this year in Boston Nov. 23-25. (More info from them at University Plaza, Atlanta 30303-3083; 404/658-4000)

Decision Sciences Institute is a professional society concerned with organizational decisionmaking. Emphasizes scientific, quantitative, behavioral & computational approaches. Encourages members to be a) concerned with

Institute faced public relations problem recently. Name was American Institute of Decision Sciences -- acronym AIDS. Exec dir Carol Latta told pr rising use of the acronym AIDS denoting the disease was only secondary reason for name change. Primary reason was "we broadened our scope internationally so American was no longer appropriate."

"AGGRESSIVENESS & DEMANDS OF THE MEDIA HAVE CHANGED PUBLIC RELATIONS IN WASHINGTON"; REFLECTIONS OF A CRISIS SPECIALIST

Herb Hetu was counselor for public affairs to 1) Tower Commission investigating the Iran/Contra affair; 2) space shuttle Challenger

accident investigation; 3) Packard Commission on defense management; 4) Kissinger Commission on Central America; 5) MX Commission.

He reflected for prr on his years in the city of politics -- "the communications capital of the world" -- and on his service in 5 Presidential Commissions. "You can't be here without an interest in politics & world affairs because they drive everything in this city."

"In the last several years there has been a greater appreciation for the fact that if you're going to operate in a democracy, you're going to have to be responsible to report what you're doing. It sets our country apart." Satisfying media's general info needs is "routine but keeps you very busy."

Hetu feels Washington is "the most exciting place to be in the world...it's the heart of the action. If you're not having fun at what you're doing, you ought to move along. And I'm still having fun in Washington." He's now vp comms, Aerospace Industries Ass'n of America.

"In each of the Commissions, first thing we'd do is have a policy session on public affairs. That would be the agenda item. The Commission members would decide how or if they were going to deal with the press. Generally they'd prefer not to talk to the media and want me to answer all the queries. I was the delegated chief spokesperson. And once you've established yourself as chief spokesperson, it's incumbent upon you to be available & to know what you're doing."

To make this possible, "I required that I be able to sit in on all the hearings & deliberations; that I be free to come & go and have the confidence & access to the chairman of the Commission." It gave him credibility with the press and enabled Hetu "to be perceived as a real player not only with the Commission members but by others in the White House and in whatever departments & agencies we were working with. That's vital."

Because he was "in the know," if there were a rumor or leak or a query "I was able to handle it. I didn't have to run to the boss every time I got a phone call and I got thousands of them during the Tower Commission. A lot were late night calls from media people. The Washington Post would come out at 11pm with a story and then I'd get calls from all over the country about it. But you have to be available."

YOUTH NEWS SERVICE (YNS), NATIONAL WIRE BY & ABOUT TEENAGERS, NOW AVAILABLE; FIRST REAL VOICE FROM INSIDE THIS MARKET

Its 8 bureaus (Chi, NYC, Oakland, Wilmington, Portland, Cleveland, LA, Toronto) are staffed by teen reporters who cover teen life -- issues,

attitudes, health, entertainment, fashions, school, current events. 5 of the bureaus produce newspapers. Another will begin publishing Feb '88. Oakland produces a national youth radio program broadcast on 25 NPR stations.