

In Jan '86, a flag was aboard the ill-fated Challenger shuttle with Christa McAuliffe -- 1st teacher in space. It was one of the items recovered following the explosion. Two weeks ago, Learning & Liberty flags from the 50 state capitols were ceremoniously raised at NSPRA's 34th annual seminar and the recovered flag was presented to NSPRA by NASA.

To personalize the program, Learning & liberty Awards for "outstanding contributions to education in our democratic society" were given to: Chevon Baccus (pub info specialist, Brevard Cty School Dist, Rockledge, Fla); Richard Williams (sr vp, educ mkt dev'l, ServiceMaster, Downers Grove, Ill); Christina McFarland (flag's designer, Southland Corp, Dallas); Patrick Jackson (counsel, Jackson Jackson & Wagner, Exeter, NH).

¶ Florida's 5% tax on services is constitutional, finds a non-binding statement from the Fla. Supreme Court. "Governor and many businesses have been waiting to hear the court's finding. It'll take the wind out of the sails of many planned law suits," Deanne Roberts of Roberts & Hice told prr. She has been closely following the issue for PRSA's Counselors Academy.

Roberts says most pr firms will opt to pay monthly tax on a cash basis, not accrual as was reported in 6/29 prr. Cash basis allows firm to pay state after client has paid firm. "I can't imagine choosing the accrual method."

ITEM OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ Ouch! Public relations staff demeans public relations by calling opponent's action "a cheap, grim pr ploy." American Medical Ass'n is asking doctors to send their Congressmen obits from smoking-related deaths. Probably a pretty effective tactic, if docs will do it. Tobacco Institute issued response using the phrase quoted above. Wish they'd found other words for their rebuttal.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

AWARDS. Bert Hochman (assoc dpr, Lever Brothers, NYC) receives PRSA/NY's John Hill Award for his pr leadership, service to PRSA & the community.

Don Ferguson (vp-pa, Manville Corp, Denver) receives Presidents Award from Nat'l School PR Ass'n.

PEOPLE ARE SUSPICIOUS

...about how business operates. That's one of 31 major trends shaping the future of biz, reports the Roper Organization's new monthly, "Public Pulse." "Business has received virtually no credit for the millions of new jobs created in the past few years or the very low inflation rate. Instead, public opinion gave it all to the Reagan Administration. Thus the ultimate irony: when the free enterprise system works, government gets the credit.

"Despite public receptivity to more education about business issues and a desire to be better informed, American companies have not been seen as taking the lead. Business does a good job promoting itself to the investor community but a poor one in solidifying its relation with consumers & voters. Result: potentially massive swings in public sentiment on issues like regulation, taxation, the environment." Antidote? More public relations activity to build a solid base of public support. (\$247/yr; 205 East 42nd St, NYC 10017; 212/599-0700)

pr reporter

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BEHAVIOR, NOT COMMUNICATION OR EVEN ATTITUDES, IS THE BOTTOM LINE; SCHOLARS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AT LAST START TO WORK IN THIS AREA SEPARATING COGNITION (KNOWING) FROM ACTUAL BEHAVIOR (DOING)

After all is said & done, motivating or reinforcing or modifying behavior is & must be the goal of public relations activity. Anything less is "soft," as our critics complain. Merely communicating with a public or checking whether messages are received, or reporting feedback -- these are only steps along the road.

The journey is not successfully completed until desired behaviors occur. Yet nearly all the basic research on which the field is based -- especially communication theory -- deals not with resultant behaviors but with cognitions, i.e. what went on in people's heads & hearts as a result of a public relations program.

Now that the behaviorist psychologists have shown that behavior doesn't necessarily follow heads & hearts, the old body of knowledge is thrown into question. (Practitioners must look to those portions of the public relations BOK derived from psychotherapy, managerial studies, organizational behavior, which track behavioral outcomes.)

A new book by well-known researcher Richard Winett attempts to link communication with behavior. Information & Behavior: Systems of Influence (Erlbaum, \$29.95) only partially succeeds -- because, as the author notes, "behavioral systems is an emerging, rather than fully developed, approach." But he makes some points practitioners must take into account:

3 behavioral goals may be sought by public relations:

1. Immediate or short-term behavior, most possible when the idea is already accepted or there is a time-certain for action, like voting; reinforcement or awareness is what's required.

2. Creating positive latent readiness for anticipated future behavior, then preparing for (or creating) a triggering event to unleash the behavior.

3. Preparing for or defending against unexpected or externally-directed triggering events (issue anticipation).

1. Until now research has been concerned with cognitions -- what goes on in people's heads when they receive information or communications. Such studies "leave us with a consumer lost in thought; rarely do we see the flow thru from stimuli, to cognitive processes, to actual purchases."



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2. The real question is, "What was the immediate & longer term behavioral effect? For instance, a) Do violent tv shows affect children's behavior? b) Does information from a doctor change our health behaviors? c) Does a multimedia campaign spur the purchase of low sodium products?

3. In promoting food products, as one example, evaluating a) shopping behaviors & b) settings in which the product may be used are more helpful for practitioners than looking at information processing.

4. "Social learning theory," which Winett uses, combines with diffusion process (pr 1/6/86) to sharpen the focus of what we can learn about motivating behavior. Each recognizes that influences are both external or cultural (institutions, politics, economics, organizations, rules, norms, media, settings, contingencies, interpersonal, group) and internal (cognitions, affect, memory, knowledge, attitudes, behavior).

5. This postulates a non-linear approach, as opposed to the simplistic, linear, stimulus-response approach of much communication theory.

The book is murkily written, for other scholars. The examples of application are primarily in healthcare or social marketing. But the direction set by this volume is critically important for public relations.

One cautionary note: Winett feels behavioral scientists may see marketing as "an appropriate umbrella for their work," rather than public relations.

One practitioner who has begun preaching the gospel of not relying on conventional communications is Bob Dillenschneider, H&K CEO. In talks to the Counselors Academy, NSPRA & other groups, he warns against "lots of communicating which doesn't work." Too much tactics (process), not enough strategy (outcomes, i.e. behavior). He defines 5 targets for pr activity:

- 1) protection & enhancement of assets,
- 2) a social/economic/political climate that permits an organization to exercise its franchise,
- 3) protection from embarrassment,
- 4) damage control,
- 5) ways to bedevil the competition & divert their attention.

While some may cavil at #5, at least it is a behavioral outcome!

COLOR PSYCHOLOGY STUDIES FOR DIRECT MAIL USEFUL FOR ALL PRINT MATERIALS

Color in direct marketing can "predispose the customer's receptivity to the offering," Jo-Von Tucker, Tucker Assocs

(NYC) told attenders at Montreux Direct Marketing Symposium & Exposition. Here's her advice:

Colors Most Acceptable To Consumers

1. Red, an action color.
2. Yellow denotes happiness & sunshine, provides a glowing kind of frame for products.

3. Primary blue & green are favorites. Blues of sky & water bring a tranquil feeling.

4. Earth tones receive an implied trust factor because they are found in nature.

"Generally, the deeper the density of the color, the more trustworthy it appears to consumers."

5. Deep purple lends a regal quality.

6. Black provides a good background because of its depth of color & neutrality.

Colors Not Well Received By Consumers

7. Bright orange is a dangerous choice because it denotes violence. It can anger the viewer.

8. Bright, harsh pink is irritating. People subjected to it over a period of time become irritable & nervous. A pale, pastel shade, however, is good for a backdrop.

9. Lime green can elicit a feeling of nausea.

A background of various colors tends to be distracting, diverting attention from the product being featured.

UPDATES ON ISSUES PREVIOUSLY REPORTED

¶ AIDS is the 3rd most important employee concern, just behind job security & retirement benefits, finds a recent survey of personnel officers. Responding to this concern, Personnel Journal is forming an "AIDS In The Workplace Information Clearinghouse," due to be operational by Labor Day. Info will be available on education, legal, insurance, employer policy issues -- as well as names of consultants, attorneys & related professionals who specialize in this area. An advisory board is also planned. Mbrship will include personnel & human resources execs, educators, legal, insurance & social policy advisors. (To contribute, write Personnel Journal, 245 Fischer Ave, B-2, Costa Mesa, Calif. 92626)

¶ To change public apathy toward education into support, NSPRA launched its "Flag of Learning & Liberty" program, (pr 11/4/85). Symbolic flag -- linking public education to an effective democracy -- was raised in each state capitol on July 4, '85. Additional flags were purchased by schools, PTAs, corporations to build on the program.