

•A brief pause can be an attention-getting device, writes Bureau of Business Practice in its training publication, "Creative Selling." People have a way of not listening when someone else is doing the talking. Hesitating for a moment before continuing forces your audience to take notice. This is especially useful just before making a major point. (More info, BBP, 24 Rope Ferry Rd, Waterford, Ct. 06386; 800/243-0876)

•Accreditation is now mandatory for new members of PRSA's Counselors Academy beginning January 1. Vote approving the bylaws change was the largest in the Academy's history. Of its 1,047 members, 585 votes were received; 495 voted in favor of the change.

•Update on Florida's fast-approaching 5% service tax (see prr 6/8): "State has just given clarification that practitioners may opt to pay the tax on a cash or accrual basis," Deanne Roberts told prr. So now payment to the state may be made either when clients are billed or when their bill is paid. "I can't imagine anyone not choosing to do it on an accrual basis."

•Opportunity for worldwide exposure. World Ship, "largest ship ever, will function as the first world exposition to travel year round to ports & peoples everywhere." Theme will be "Discovering Other Peoples," with commercial and national exhibitors presenting variations on that theme. Plan is to visit up to 150 ports within 2-3 year global circuit. Space for 175 exhibits. Ship will provide restaurants, shopping, 2,000 seat theater and a 2,000 seat cinema. Maiden voyage, summer 1992. Tho operating on a for-profit basis, a share of its profits will go to worldwide organizations that care for people in need. "Within its efforts to spread goodwill & contribute to world betterment, it has plans for establishing a nonprofit foundation, a free books bank, and quite possibly ... World Ship II." (More info from Milton Feinberg, Managing Director, Les Expositions Beaumont, CP-992, CH-1001 Lausanne, Switzerland; phone (021) 39.41.10)

•New way to interest potential donors, and raise funds, may be for NPOs to give seminars on skills their supporters or staff possess. Cystic Fibrosis Foundation chapter held a seminar on "Sound Business Planning Ideas for the Rest of the Decade: Strategic Planning '87 and Beyond." Four professional firms (law, accounting, brokerage, financial planning) donated time to put on program. Funds went to CF research. Upscale attenders are excellent prospects for both CF and presenters.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

PRACTITIONERS-TEACHERS. Nancy Wolfe is another senior practitioner who has turned to teaching: she will carry a full course load at U.Tenn-Knoxville. Meanwhile, she is continuing her own practice in Winston-Salem. Zoe McCathrin, long-time practitioner, now teaching full time at Kent State University.

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 open for business, however.

pr reporter

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MC LUHAN SUCCESSOR TELLS CPRS CONFERENCE: THANKS TO TECHNOLOGY "PR" NOW MEANS "PERSONAL," NOT "PUBLIC," RELATIONS

The ease of interfacing one-on-one with anyone and anything all over the globe has replaced mass markets with individualism. Consequently, practitioners need to switch from talking to large groups & start listening to individuals -- with less getting attention for products or organizations & more giving attention to key opinion leaders.

These are among the implications of "The Electrification of the PR Profession" seen by Derrick de Kerckhove of the McLuhan Program, U. of Toronto. Supporting this thrust is Heather Reisman of Paradigm Consultants, who sees "The Management of Change" as a reversion to paying attention to individuals:

- externally: "Gone is the mass market that supported Madison Avenue."
- internally: with employees "very concerned with satisfying their personal goals," organizations cannot "continue to play a parental role."

"It is television that perfected the notion of 'mass man' and the idea of 'mass media.' But computers bring in the 'speed man.' Mass man was homogenized, and ran the risk of being quite depersonalized. The new 'speed man' of computerland reacts to people and emphasizes differences," finds de Kerckhove.

To understand these new conditions, de Kerckhove reviews the shift between spoken & written communication in human history. One is a socializing activity, the other solitary. "Left to its own devices, the written word is not meant for human communication but for solitary confinement." Thus the succession over time of:

1) Spoken communication, beginning with Rhetoric in ancient Greek society, with the rhetoricians being "the first pr professionals" and, incidentally, "subject to a formal training";

2) Thru the rise of printing which "silenced the spoken word" so that "anything worth mentioning was written down." In the 19th century, "people endowed with the gift of gab were harshly judged by the literati as con artists and smooth talkers."

3) Electrification again gave importance to spoken communication thru, first, the telephone, then radio & finally television. "After centuries of silent information-processing, suddenly the world was beginning to hear again."

4) Computers are again written communication, used in isolation by individuals. But they are different from previous written communication because they are not a mass but a personal medium -- consider the term "PC."



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WHAT IT ALL MEANS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. Wherever situated in the organization, computer-era practitioners are consultants. This job "is discreet & inward-oriented." The consultant "reveals trends and suggests methods of time, space & people management. The target audience is always one person at a time, and the consultant listens."
2. Consultants depend on reputation "which goes from mouth to ear" -- individual, personal communication springing from relationships. Networking is the bread and butter. In this sense consultants reflect how organizations must operate.
3. "To survive, the new pr professional must change the meaning of P from Public to Personal." New responsibilities involve allowing people from different sectors to interface with each other. This means a return to interpersonal skills -- away from mass media skills.
4. "Today, at the heart of frantic movement, we can afford to slow down and pay attention to people. That is a welcome future."

JIM & TAMMY FAYE SAGA SHOWS AGAIN POWER OF BUILDING TRUST, WILLINGNESS OF PUBLIC TO FORGIVE WHEN ASKED

Has scandal hurt them with true supporters? Not on your hymn book. The key is to admit you made a mistake and ask people to forgive. After you've built the trust. So

now we see the Bakkers about to reenter televangelism -- at least, thousands are working to help them do so -- despite actions & lifestyle that seem to fly in the face of the tenets they preached (literally).

The message for organizations is to build trust as the only weapon useful when issues arise. The best issues anticipation program can't work without a corresponding safety net of trust to catch those issues that will from time to time slip thru.

But building trust is the type of long-range activity out of vogue with today's quick-results executives. Ironic: in a time of surprise takeover attempts & other out-of-the-blue attacks, the one known way to build a defense is becoming unpopular. It runs counter to "downsizing."

Neil Eskelin, PTL vp-pr, told prr that despite the intensity of the incident, its tone is all in a day's work. "In tv ministries, we're constantly dealing with a skeptical public asking probing questions about our leadership's lifestyle or on-air fundraising. The controversy hasn't changed the type of questions being asked, just the volume."

Strength of the trust built by the Bakkers is something to behold. Columbus, O., humor columnist Mike Hardin tellingly explains what should be the depth of their undoing -- but isn't: "The reason I have not written about Jim & Tammy Faye since March is that I can't outdo them. I can't write satire about a subject that is self-parodying. Humor, I ask, where is thy sting when today's jest pales in the face of tomorrow's PTL news release."

PERSONAL MEDIUM (DOCTORS) REMAINS KEY HOSPITAL RELATIONSHIP TECHNIQUE

"Patients don't go to hospitals, they go to doctors," says Andrea Eliscu, pres of Medical Marketing (Winter Park, Fla.) She advised hospitals to market the quality & experience of their physicians rather than

some new program. Consumers are beginning to investigate alternatives and ask more questions, but they still depend on their doctor's advice, reports American Demographics. Recent research by National Research Corp (Lincoln, Neb.) confirms this.

"Some consumers flock to the new alternatives immediately. These early adopters tend to be young, with high incomes and a college education. They are more likely to be women than men. Others accept alternatives only after everyone else has. Most people fall in between. Once people choose a healthcare provider, however, they prefer to stay with it," writes Joyce Jensen sr vp of NRC.

Since 1983, NRC has surveyed 1500 consumers yearly to find out how they learned about a particular hospital, how they view healthcare advertising, and how they feel about doctors. Consumers past experiences with a hospital have remained an important source of info. Word of mouth, however, has declined in importance as advertising increases. (Tho' other studies find the opposite.)

22% chose their hospital completely on their own. 52% let their doctors choose. 18% chose among hospitals suggested by their doctor or asked their doctor to choose. 12% went to a particular hospital because of health insurance requirements, an ambulance chose it or it was the only one in the area.

A doctor's opinion is most important to the elderly, women, high school grads & those with low to middle incomes. Women are more likely to consider cost than men. But, like the elderly, they do not want to give up quality for lower costs. 6 out of 10 times, women choose which hospital a family member will go to.

Early adopters of new healthcare alternatives know about more hospitals than other consumers. They are more likely to read or hear about hospitals and they notice more hospital advertising. Wellness programs are an important source of info for this group.

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PRACTITIONERS

- "You can forget about getting fair & balanced coverage from the media," broadcaster Ed Needham of CFRB told CPRS conference. Why? "It's savage out there and you will only get media coverage if you aggressively go after it. There aren't news programs anymore -- there are only programs competing for ratings. We are all victims of our technology."

HOSPITAL CHOICE	
(Importance ratings of hospital selection factors on 1-10 scale; mean scores)	
Factor	Overall Sample
Medical staff quality	9.46
Quality emergency care	9.15
Nursing care	9.04
Complete services	8.87
Newest equipment	8.79
Dr's recommendations	8.78
Courteous employees	8.48
Pleasant surroundings	8.13
Cost of care	7.52
Treated there before	7.29
Convenience to home	7.26
Family's recommendation	6.83
Private rooms	6.16
Friend's recommendation	6.11
-- American Demographics	