

The party of change is seen as NDP -- leading in consumer & environmental activism, labor disputes & aid to education, it also ranks high on tax increase, recession & stock mkt crash.

Conservatives score high on stock mkt climb & low on crash, recession, inflation, and educational aid. Liberals get such low ratings on almost everything they are painted as do nothings. High in only 2 categories -- inflation & aid to education.

AS TV CLUTTER INCREASES,
WILL MARKETTEERS LOOK ELSEWHERE?

TV (challenged by the post office) has been deemed by many to be the "junk bin" of communication clutter (pr 8/22 & 10/10). Since FCC's deregulation of commercial quantity in '84, the medium has become even more overcrowded. Yet communicators still consider it a powerful message-sending channel ...or do they? Is tv losing its glow?

Abandoning Television "For Now". Audi of America & GMC Truck are dropping network advertising, according to Ad Age. "Even the best shows, demographically, deliver such a small percentage of our target audience," says Audi's Anthony Kirton. GMC's Bill Middlekauff adds, "We want to talk directly to the audience the networks didn't afford us a chance to talk to -- the truck enthusiasts."

The move coincides with a study by Maritz Marketing Research (Detroit) indicating 53% of car & truck customers look to newspapers when selecting dealers, compared to 21% who look to tv. The study also says buyers rely on classifieds for factual information e.g. price, warranty info & specific make.

¶Fred Danzig, ed Advertising Age, Says Creativity Is The Key: "Advertisers are trying to dominate that 60-second pod. It's in the hands of the ad agencies to find a way." Danzig told prr that network clutter has always existed. "'Clutter' just became a buzzword during the Olympics, when a lot of columnists who don't pay attention to advertising said, 'Look what they're trying to throw at us.' This is nothing new. It's been going on for 15, 20 years." He notes the FCC's deregulation as evidence that "the government feels there's room for more clutter."

¶Mary Catherine Kilday, FCC: The gov't ceased efforts to clean up tv clutter hoping broadcasters would regulate themselves. "We leave the number of commercials per hour up to their discretion," she told prr. "We believe competition in the marketplace will provide a better regulator than we ever could. If a station packs in too many commercials, the audience will be turned off & the station will be adversely affected."

ITEM OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶Atlanta Practitioners Explore Their Own Racial Biases as local chapters of PRSA, IABC & Black Public Relations Society form Interassociation Council. Already, IAC has produced a study finding that more than whites, black practitioners believe minorities in pr suffer professional disadvantages. Notable, too, is whites' perception that clients trust them more than minority practitioners. Study, which prr will examine in-depth, is available from Rob Martin, USA 856 Drawer 1734, Atlanta, Ga. 30301.

PLANT CLOSING BILL MEANS PR HAVOC FOR COMPANIES,
OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRACTITIONERS: WARA JOINS SARA

The Worker Adjustment & Retraining Act (WARA), passed by Congress in July, takes effect next Feb. It requires companies to give employees & community 60-days notice prior to plant closings & layoffs of 50 or more workers. "Closing plants has never been an easy task," says Steve Wilson, Wilson/Gravelle Communications (Columbus) -- & neither have RIFs. "The bill will extend an employer's worst pr nightmare." Wilson, whose practice specializes in crisis management, warns organizations of the challenges:

1. Disgruntled Workers may cause problems. "If they know 60 days in advance that they're being let go, problem employees could write letters to the editor exposing company policies & practices, divulge trade secrets, even sabotage products." Wilson says security must be stepped up;
2. Remaining Employees (in the case of layoffs) could fear they're next, distrust the company, causing a sag in morale, production;
3. Community has more time to mull over upcoming economic impact. "Politicians who've had differences with the company, reporters, editors, have more time to milk the story, highlighting its negative impact on the public."

The opportunities are there for pr, Wilson told prr, since companies will need coaching. "The negatives can be countered by:

1. proper planning, 2. communication, 3. demonstrations of concern."

He notes that before WARA, practitioners usually encouraged companies to give employees & community ample notice of layoffs & closings, offer training sessions, meetings with the community, etc. In '89, organizations may be forced to heed the advice.

The Debate Over WARA: Who Will Benefit? Yeas Proponents say the bill has been a long time coming. "It's about workers, their families, & their communities..." says Mass rep Silvio Conte. "...about the hard reality of business in America where fewer than 19% of organizations give more than a month's advance notice of shutdowns or mass layoffs." Indeed, the General Accounting Office reports 1/3 of all businesses with 100 or more

SARA Title III, requiring disclosure of chemicals & toxics, will start getting reactions early next year, say experts. Now WARA complicates that calendar. Wilson predicts WARA, appropriately called "WARN" by some, will be lively for the next few years -- regardless of the economy. "With organizations continuing to restructure, merge, streamline, acquire, this bill will come into play frequently."

employees give no notice at all. According to Amer Society for Personnel Admin, 36% give less than 2 weeks, 50% less than a week.

Nays But opposition, including Pres Reagan, fears it might actually hurt the workers by creating unemployment -- small businesses will be afraid to expand. Other cons include the inevitability of heavy litigation and costs, legal burdens for the employer. "No matter what regulations are promulgated, there are certain to be employee challenges where less than 60-days notice is provided," says ASPA.

The WARA makes exceptions for certain situations -- natural disasters, unforeseeable circumstances, faltering companies seeking capital or business -- most employers will not be eligible for special consideration. For them, the bill carries penalties of up to \$500 per day for each day of violation -- to a maximum of 60 days or \$30,000.

AMA/CONTROL DATA STUDY FINDS COMMUNICATION IS WHAT SMOOTHS MERGERS

Half the 109 affected companies studied report at least 1 of 4 serious problems resulted from merging: a) high employee turnover, b) lower productivity, c) reduced profitability, d) lost market share. What could be

more serious? The antidote is timely, comprehensive communication between managers & employees, according to a pre-release of the findings in the Minneapolis Star Tribune. (Study will be published as an AMA bulletin.)

When given little info, employees become anxious. Key managers leave. A basic area of concern is benefits/compensation. 30% of the companies did reduce work forces. The sponsors offer their views on avoiding the problems:

Pat Delaney, Control Data: "If they did enough planning in the front end and take employee feelings into consideration, and what kind of information will keep them informed, you stand a lot better chance of avoiding these problems."

E.R. Greenberg, AMA: "There are 3 components to the 'company in transition' communications issue: 1) the decision to keep employees informed, 2) the process & procedure to keep them informed, 3) the method of gathering & analyzing information."

2 MORE DEMOGRAPHIC CATEGORIES AID SUPERTARGETING

1. "Yuffie," The Yuppie That Never Was. New book, Too Smart To Be Rich, by Patty Friedmann says Young Urban Failures, who number in the millions, showed great promise in high school & college but have since fallen by the wayside. They are the table-waiting artists, the perpetual students & the health store employees with doctorates. When targeting a yuffie public, note they earn around \$10,000 a year, own stereos more expensive than their cars & never prepare anything that takes longer to cook than it does to eat. Famous yuffies include Gandhi, Einstein, the Duke of Windsor & Zorro.

2. And Let's Not Forget "Woofers," or "well-off older folks," the ones who've received so much hype lately. Healthy, wealthy & wise, they comprise the fastest growing demographic & most powerful consumer group (pr 8/15). "Marketeers must have their strategies well-defined when approaching the woofers market," says Bill McDonough, Good Impressions Newsletter. "Terms like security, quality, and reliable are more important to them, and you'd better be able to back up your claims." When it comes to purchasing, remember -- woofers don't succumb to peer pressure and take their time before making a decision.

STEREOTYPES MARK RESPONSES TO ANNUAL SURVEY QUESTION; DESPITE BADLY MIXED ECONOMIC RESULTS OF REAGONOMICS, PRACTITIONERS FEEL ELECTING CONSERVATIVES MEANS PROSPERITY

Before going to the polls, consider these responses to prr's Annual Survey question: "Which of the following events are more likely to occur if a Democrat or Republican becomes the next president; if a Conservative, Liberal, or NDP becomes Canada's next prime minister?"

	United States			Canada			
	Dems	GOP	No Diff	Consv	Lib	NDP	No Diff
Tax Increase	49.6%	4.6%	36.7%	20.5%	9.6%	23.3%	31.5%
Recession	25.6%	15.0%	46.7%	8.2%	4.1%	26.0%	42.5%
Inflation	40.8%	8.8%	38.3%	8.2%	21.9%	13.7%	42.5%
Stock Market Crash	12.6%	11.0%	60.2%	6.8%	4.1%	21.9%	47.9%
Stock Market Climb	8.0%	35.3%	39.7%	31.5%	8.2%	1.4%	37.0%
Rise In Consumer Activism	58.5%	11.4%	18.5%	19.2%	6.8%	30.1%	27.4%
Rise In Environmental Activism	64.7%	8.9%	15.6%	15.1%	12.3%	32.9%	23.3%
Rise In Labor Disputes	29.1%	30.1%	27.7%	21.9%	4.1%	31.5%	26.0%
Rise In Anti-Trust Actions	45.4%	14.2%	25.8%	17.8%	4.1%	23.3%	32.9%
More Aid To Education	68.0%	5.7%	15.8%	9.6%	20.5%	35.6%	17.8%
More Health Coverage For Needy	72.5%	2.2%	14.6%	Not Applicable to Canada			

Implications, United States

A Demo win would bring change -- by wide margins, in all categories, good & bad. Respondents predict tax increases (49.6%) & inflation (40.8%) thru a Democratic victory. It is apparent most practitioners surveyed feel financial security is best insured by a Republican administration. Yet on specific questions about the economy, they see no difference between the parties in whether stocks rise or crash, or there is a recession?!

Activism, however, will thrive under the Democrats -- with well over half anticipating more consumer & environmental lobbying. 72.5% believe more health coverage will be available for the needy; Dukakis has gotten that point across. 68% say there will be more aid to education if he is elected. Almost half predict a rise in anti-trust actions. GOP gets low ratings on all these.

The GOP leads in only one category (& then by a statistically insignificant margin) -- rise in labor disputes. Republicans are seen as status quo.

Canadian Implications

Most significant is "No Difference" column, which leads the others in highest percentages. Canadian practitioners feel party won't influence tax increase, recession, inflation, stock mkt crash or climb or increased anti-trust actions. Column ranks high on all other issues as well.