

2. The News & Observer (Raleigh) editor noted now few reporters asked for texts of his speech -- & how this led to misquotes. His reporters are reminded to ask for prepared texts.
3. New York magazine's editor says being covered "makes my pencil a little more attentive when it hovers over a cute line which is a throwaway line to the writer but in fact may wound somebody very much. I take a lot of that stuff out."
4. Newspapers, at least, have expanded corrections policies or added ombudsmen. "My sensitivities, which I hope were reasonably well-developed to begin with, have been heightened by the process of being written about," says the editor of the Dallas Morning News.

The 2 Most Mentioned Complaints of Editors

1. Reporters come with preconceived notions of what they're going to write, so "the interview is based primarily on the effort to elicit information & response that fits into that story line."

2. Simple inaccuracy: "The first time I read a story about myself, I could not breathe properly for five minutes," says Eleanor Randolph of Washington Post Writers Group. "My first name was misspelled and" etc, etc.

Of Related Interest: The process of learning media faults by being the subject of coverage is increasing as reporters get on tv shows. How many "meet the press" venues are there today anyway? Writes Randolph: "The most infuriating part of the news business is the show business that goes with it. Most reporters hate it, some resist it, but most shrug at the 'reality'. It no longer pays to be a faceless writer who does the job, avoids the excess publicity that comes with television & shuns pancake makeup." The DC bureau of the Chicago Trib has a media consultant whose job is to get its reporters on the tube. My oh my!! (copies of articles from prr.)

SURVEY LISTS BEST PR UNDERGRAD PROGRAMS

Maryland, San Diego State, Florida, San Jose have the best pr education programs, according to a study by Marquette U (Milwaukee). "We surveyed prominent PRSA members -- outstanding educators, textbook authors, former chairpeople. Of 116 questionnaires, we received 70 back," Bill Baxter, chrm dept of adv'g & pr, told prr.

The question: "Besides your own, which 2 colleges would you recommend to a prospective student of pr." 28 schools were cited as having the best curricula. Other top mentions were: Boston U; Ball State; Syracuse; Cal State Fullerton; Ohio State; Southern Cal; Wisconsin-Madison. "Probably the first consideration was visibility. Ray Hebert & the Grunigs are at Maryland. In San Diego there is Glen Broom & Allen Center. In San Jose, you have Dennis Wilcox."

In general, respondents say the best curricula have a mix of 1) solid pre-professional training 2) broad-based general education 3) dedicated faculty 4) strong academic credentials. Also important: 5) experience in the field, 6) internship opportunities. Survey respondents included 8 past chrm of PRSA's Educators Section, 6 winners of PRSA's Outstanding Educator Award, authors of 4 of the field's leading texts.

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AFTER 5 FAILED ATTEMPTS TO WIN VOTER APPROVAL OF TAX HIKE, COMMUNITY COLLEGE APPLIES BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE -- AND SUCCEEDS

Last year, it looked like downsizing time for Macomb Community College (Warren, Mich). 35-year old, 32,000-student school, which depends on tax dollars, had suffered the brunt of inflation and declining state support. It had to turn to taxpayers for additional funds. But blue-collar, ethnically diverse Macomb County is the hotbed of the state's anti-tax movement. "Between 1976-1986, the school mounted and lost 5 attempts to increase its tax base," Cathy Ahles, vp college rels, told prr. "By '88, the college was struggling to maintain operation. We faced the certainty of declining quality, reduced enrollment & low employee morale. All signs indicated a pretty dismal future for the college."

MCC, which had no public relations program until '86, decided to try once more to win voter support -- this time applying diffusion process. This meant recognizing 1) info and communication alone can't persuade, 2) personal contact by peers can, 3) so opinion leaders of target publics are key focus, not mass messages.

Research Existing data and original research were used to develop major strategies:

| <u>METHODS</u> | <u>FINDINGS</u> | <u>RESULTING STRATEGIES</u> |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Phone survey of 500 county residents | They support MCC, but are anti-tax | Publicize projects, not tax increase |
| Phone survey of 300 community leaders | Support new BA program, facilities upgrade | Mount separate ballot proposals |
| Field reports, focus groups | Proposals confusing to citizens | Use simple ballot titles & language |
| Previous election analysis | Larger voter turnouts best for MCC | Propose issues during presidential election |
| Legal review | State law prohibits advocacy of "yes" votes | Public info effort only |
| Census data | Diversity, low educ levels | Segment appeals |
| Communication theories | Persuasion requires personal contact | Use endorsements, speeches, events |



- Goals a) Increase the perceived value of higher education
b) Successfully pass 2 ballot proposals

Target Audiences a) Decisionmakers -- taxpayers; b) Those directly impacted -- employees, students, alumni, vendors, donors, county decision makers, business owners; c) Those who influence discussion on ballot proposals -- senior citizens, ethnic groups, news media.

Theme "This College Is The Community...Our People, Our Problems And Our Future."

Budget Incorporated with on-going comn activities, plus \$90,000 set aside for the program -- & a substantial amount of volunteer effort.

Execution a) Endorsements: from 26 community, business, media, labor, educational & prof'l groups -- names were printed on brochures and used in speeches. Also, endorsements from Bush, Reagan, and Dukakis lent credibility. "MCC was the only college in the country to host all 3. We carefully studied the acceptance speeches of the 2 candidates and invited them, hooking them with their own words -- 'Please come to MCC during National Higher Education Week in October and tell us how you plan to become the 'Education President.' The visits 1) endorsed our cause, 2) amassed a number of people, allowing students to work the crowd with literature, and 3) gave us extensive media coverage."

- b) Half-Day Seminars: attended by 70 key business, community, gov't & media leaders. College prez unveiled study explaining community's need for an educated workforce.
- c) Activities, Special Events: faculty dinners; student activity days (during "chalk blitz," students covered campus sidewalks with vote messages); voter registration drive yielded 940 new registrants.
- d) Internal Comn: bi-weekly newsletter mailed to 1,800 employees; factsheets were distributed; the college prez personally solicited staff support. "We couldn't have developed this level of competence and camaraderie with 1 or 2 prep sessions. For years, we kept employees informed about the school's financial situation -- they were intimately familiar with our plight."
- e) "Speaker's Connection": made speeches to 58 target org'ns.
- f) Adv'g, Promos: letters, buttons, posters, voters guide, media placement in newspapers, alumni mags, legislative newsletters, direct mailings.

Evaluation Goals were realized: 1) the perceived value of education increased among 14% of the residents -- in Jan '88, 79% felt college educ was important, after the campaign, 93% thought so; 2) ballots passed 55% to 45%, and 56% to 44%; 3) public was made aware of theme & program -- "Phone survey 3 months after the campaign revealed 19% of residents recalled the campaign theme, and 61% agreed with it. Half remembered receiving direct mail, 50% recalled newspaper ads. 97% of those who attended presidential visits voted 'yes' for at least 1 proposal, and 92% of those who heard one of our speeches supported us."

"Now there is an unbelievable amount of support coming from the community. Employees are motivated, can't wait to get to work. Students are excited because we're spending millions to upgrade the college! We're establishing a bachelor's degree center, for which we'll have a partnership program with other universities -- students will be able to get degrees from Wayne State U & Detroit U without leaving campus. A \$90,000 investment in this community rels program netted \$32 million in new resources for the college!"

| <u>1986 Campaign</u> | <u>vs. 1988 Campaign</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Complex Message | Simple Message |
| Abstract Title on Ballot | Concrete Title on Ballot |
| Mass Media Approach | Group, Individual Contact |
| Promotion Approach | Issue-Based Approach |
| Small Implementation Team | Large Implementation Team |
| Mass Advocacy | Selected Advocacy |

"There isn't an extensive body of knowledge on how a small college can increase its tax base. But our research told us how certain elements of our past campaigns were erroneous. This time, we kept our message super-simple. The first 5 campaigns included sophisticated discussions about taxing and funding. The committee now understands how this has limited value."

(For more information, contact Ahles at 313/445-7244.)

MEDIA ACCURACY & FAIRNESS GET BOOST
WHEN JOURNALISTS BECOME PUBLIC FIGURES,
ARE REPORTED ON BY OTHER JOURNALISTS

"When I contrast what I read in the newspaper with what I know to be the case from the inside...(there's) a lack of completeness, lack of balance, outright error...carelessness." Statement by angered practitioner? Nope. By the publisher of the Miami News. Here's one from ex-Gannett chmn Al Neuharth:

"There is a cynicism, rather than a skepticism, that prevails, and it results in something other than a balanced approach." His statement was based on coverage of USA Today by other media. And did you know that Norm Pearlstine, mng ed Wall Street Journal, & ex-pres Lou Boccardi of AP, use tape recorders when they're interviewed to avoid being misquoted.

"It makes you more understanding of people who call in and say, 'Everything you wrote about me was out of context,'" says editor Bill Kovach. "It's terrific to be written about because then you get a real sense of what it's like for the victim you impale," adds Seymour Hersh.

Starting last summer with a long feature by LA Times media critic David Shaw, several articles have appeared examining the affect on media people of being covered by the media. Some examples & resulting new editorial policies:

1. USA today prohibits the use of unnamed sources because so many were used, usually with erroneous info, in reporting about it.