

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

"Upcoming Conference On Database Marketing promises to prepare practitioners for inevitable revolutionary developments. Several trends, e.g. demographic shifts, decentralization, growth of telephone media are changing the marketing business, says Nat'l Center for Database Marketing. Its 2nd annual conference (June 5-7 in Chicago) outlines implications of 32 such trends, offers specified seminars e.g. "Target Marketing for Healthcare" & "Canada: Untapped Profits Thru Publicly & Privately Available Databases." (Info from NCDM, 916/292-3000)

"More Friends Of Dolphins Suddenly Appear, promising products are "dolphin-safe" or "dolphin-friendly." Alpo Petfoods took out full-page ad in NYTimes to say it's the first major pet food manufacturer to ensure products are caught by methods unharmed to dolphins. New logo shows 3 dolphins diving over the brandname. What is it about this cause that makes everyone want to plug in? And why now? What are ramifications if American fishermen have to leave US waters while foreign fishing boats without US laws take advantage? Will celebrities throw concerts & benefits for "Fish-Aid"? Stay tuned.

ANOTHER QUALITY STORY When it comes to quality, American Express -- **THIS TIME FROM AMEX** (NYC) is in a unique situation. "We're over 150 yrs old," vp cons afrs Peggy Haney told prr. "Quality has always been an integral part of our efforts, especially when you consider the nature of our business -- finance & travel." But in the past 15 years, AE acquired IDS and Shearson. Singleness of purpose became a challenge. "Jim Robinson became the chairman. He asked execs to set up a quality assurance program. One of the big issues was how to maintain standards. We found that each new company brought with it individual strengths, but we had to refocus."

Haney outlines two corporate-wide programs designed to instill the quality mission in employees:

1. **"Putting People First"** -- 2-day workshops for about 100 people from various parts of the country & company. Led by a trainer, they stay together in one hotel and participate in a variety of discussions, activities, small focus groups. "There's a great deal of response, discussions of personal feelings. It stresses self-esteem, their importance as an individual. They're trained to focus that self-esteem on internal and external customers."
2. **Quality University In Phoenix.** "It is set up like a little university and has a quality curriculum. It puts people first, looks into employee problems such as burn out, etc."

"At AE, service quality has and will continue to be our competitive edge," says Haney. She quotes Robinson: "Quality is the only patent protection we've got."

pr reporter

The Weekly Newsletter of Public Relations,
Public Affairs & Communication

603 / 778 - 0514

Vol.33 No.23

June 4, 1990

**HOW TO MAKE MASS MEDIA WORK FOR YOU:
RESULTS FROM HARVARD'S DESIGNATED DRIVER CAMPAIGN SHOW THAT
SUPPLEMENTING PROGRAMS WITH PR BRINGS DESIRED EFFECTS**

Reams of research discount mass media's ability to instill behavior change (pr 5/29/78 & 1/31/83). Even so, Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) announced plans in '88 to insert "designated driver" messages into dialogue of popular tv shows like "LA Law" & "Cheers," then supplement them with a battery of PSAs. At that time, prr spoke with: project's organizers; a media scholar; a behaviorist; advocacy group leaders -- to see if such an effort would reap success (pr 10/17/88).

Now HSPH has issued a special report based on the progress of the Harvard Alcohol Project, plus analyses of similar campaigns. Thrust seems to be that randomly rotated, arbitrarily directed mass media messages are in vain and that pr strategies must be incorporated for change to be effected. It's as tho communicators are finally ready to consider the 2-step flow process of behavior change.

HARVARD ALCOHOL PROJECT IS UNIQUE ...because it is not diffuse in its efforts & utilizes such tools as research, partnerships, etc. Tho results are hard to tally -- other societal factors are at work -- it appears the public is heeding the message. "So far there has been a very sharp increase in use of the idea," ctr dir Jay Winsten told prr. "78% of a national sample stated they'd noticed designated driver messages inserted in the programming."

Winsten says in 9/88, 62% said they put the idea to work. By 6/89, that figure was 72%. Among males -- the highest offenders -- it went from 54% to 71%. "Even if data is skewed by people wanting to give the most socially acceptable answer, it reflects a trend of public opinion about what is socially acceptable. Social norms are definitely changing." Tho behavior may be result of a variety of influences, 95-98% of mass-mediated material on subject came from Harvard.

"If the public health community knew too little in the 70s about modern advertising strategies, today it knows too little about public relations. Indeed, health advocates are just now discovering and applying a variety of public relations strategies that are finding increasing currency in the commercial sector."
-- HSPH Special Report



**FINDINGS SOUND
FAMILIAR TO PR**

1. **Research** to understand the target audience & to ensure sound design of campaign materials. For Harvard, Saatchi conducted surveys & focus groups and shared findings with tv networks. "Research was enormously helpful in targeting."

2. **Media Partnerships.** "Don't rely on traditional PSA methodology, i.e., random rotation. We found our messages to be most effective if they were station/network-driven." In standard campaigns, PSAs are often thoughtlessly placed & randomly targeted. If networks or stations are involved from the beginning, more concern is given. For instance, Boston's WBZ produced PSAs using recognizable newswoman Liz Walker as a spokesperson. Messages were aired 3 or 4 times a day. The station saw project as an asset because it established it as a good corporate citizen.

3. **Corporate Partnerships.** "At Christmas, we approached Boston's Hard Rock Cafe. Not only did they offer free soft drinks to designated drivers, they raffled off prizes including an expense-paid trip for 2 to London's Hard Rock Cafe." Since it was a holiday story, Winsten alerted AP for nationwide coverage. "We told media from other areas about similar events in their parts of the country."

4. **Grassroots Partnerships.** "Establish formal links with local advocacy groups, service organizations & school/community groups. Learn how decisions get made, what the advantages are to become a partner for a campaign."

5. **Commit To The Long-Term.** "Most mass media campaigns fail because they are short-term & have unrealistic expectations." Behavior change is characterized by a slow process of erosion & accretion rather than by sudden upheaval & conversion. Mass mediated campaigns succeed only when they a) address an issue of ongoing public concern; b) incorporate both the consumer orientation of commercial marketing & research-based principles of behavior change.

6. **Keep The Focus Long-Term.** "For example, anti-drug/alcohol messages should first target grades 5 & 6. Reminder campaigns should be phased in later."

Goals of a mass media campaign should be to: a) stimulate interpersonal communication; b) generate support of opinion leaders, spouses or peers; c) create broad changes in perceived social norms; d) enhance formation & effective implementation of related school or community-based programs; e) recruit participants & community volunteers; f) announce availability of materials & program activities; g) reinforce face-to-face instruction provided by these programs; h) generate & then publicize important changes in public policy, e.g. sobriety checkpoints.

-- HSPH Special Report

7. **Identify Audience.** Differentiate according to geographic, demographic, psychological, other problem-relevant characteristics, then target appropriately. HSPH messages were designed for young people, partygoers. But campaigns which address severe problems stemming from self-concept & life experience would have negligible impact conducted in this way.

8. **Construct Messages** according to audience's current levels of knowledge. HSPH messages acknowledged existing beliefs, strived to inhibit adoption of a specific behavior.

Winsten stresses that a lot of money is not always necessary to implement a successful nationwide campaign. "Our project teaches how partnership & ingenuity can be a substitute for cash. We received \$100,000,000 worth of airtime on a \$500,000 budget." HSPH will next tackle teen alcoholism. Messages cannot be casually inserted into programming, so strategy will change. As for Harvard Alcohol Project, there's no end in sight. (Copy of report from Ctr for Health Communication, HSPH, 677 Huntington Ave, Boston, 02115; 617/432-1038)

FIRMS NETWORK OUTLINES MEGATRENDS FOR 1990S At their April conference, reps of PR Exchange International, network of 40 firms from around the globe, forecast major trends they feel will significantly impact the profession in the coming decade:

1. **Double Bottom Line** -- senior managers will have to demonstrate ability to impact the social as well as the financial bottom line of their organizations;

2. **Employee Communication** will be paramount. Workers will want a sense of involvement & ownership, will be increasingly concerned about the ethics & social values of their employers. Their involvement is key to quality & productivity, and pr can serve as the catalyst;

3. **Sub-niche Marketing.** Mass media will become less cost-effective as society & business becomes more complex. Media will become highly specialized, targeting well-defined audiences;

4. **Nontraditional Marketers,** e.g. law firms, healthcare, colleges, religion & nonprofit organizations, will increasingly turn to pr. So, firms will hire staff with diverse backgrounds;

5. **Localized Globalization.** Practitioners in Wichita & Peoria will be required to understand international marketing as well as their NYC & LA counterparts -- because everyone, even smaller markets, will want a piece of the international pie.