

determine issues of importance to that community. License renewal documentation is a thing of the past" -- thanks to an FCC friendly to media.

Bosco says legislation is needed which will maintain these principles:

1. Broadcasters must operate in the public interest;
2. Citizens should be able to participate in licensing decisions;
3. Fairness & diversity must be assured in ownership, employment, access.

Bosco indirectly blames advertisers: "We face a crisis in the broadcast industry. Ratings battles & marketplace economics have replaced legitimate public interest standards."

**NPOs & others hurt by recent FCC rulings are getting another shot at them.**

**OLD "WHAT IS PR" DEBATE DAMAGES FIELD AGAIN; 2 WHO SHOULD KNOW BETTER**

Fellow newsletter editor Jack O'Dwyer now says, "communication made directly to the public," referring to grassroots campaigns -- is not pr because "it does not go thru

the filter of either a reporter, security analyst or government legislator (sic)." (He is often more a savvy circulation promoter than serious commentator, so he may not mean this.)

His rationale: "There is no cross examination by any of these **expert representatives of the public** (emphasis added) & also, no chance of 3rd party endorsement, when pr has its greatest impact." Grassroots campaigns are therefore "advertising." What, then, are employee communications, OL campaigns etc. etc. etc. -- the whole thrust of contemporary, personalized pr? And what qualifies journalists et al to be judge & jury?

O'Dwyer writes that pr is an "industry" so it needs a trade ass'n of the big firms rather than a professional society of individual practitioners like PRSA or its Counselors Academy. Does this help pr attain stature -- or put it down?

**"TRACKING SYSTEM" CONFUSES THE GOALS**

Ayer PR (NYC) promises to prove the value of public relations with new "pr evaluation tool." "AyerTrack eliminates the subjectivity of previous evaluation systems by applying advertising data, readership & target audience info, as well as quality analysis, to pr placements to provide a quantity measurement of results [emphases ours]." Release also says "it has long been acknowledged" that pr cannot target as efficiently as advertising (oh?) and that clients find evaluating pr results too subjective. By measuring the data, AyerTrack provides an overall "PR Impact Score" on a scale 1-100.

There's a big difference between pr & publicity; even savvy publicists no longer tout ad dollar & readership numbers as demonstrating accomplishment. Nor do advertising pros. As Leo Burnett's pres said (pr 8/13/90), "The Holy Grail will no longer be an ad recall score. The question will be, 'Did it persuade you to act?'"

**"THE BEST OF PR THINKING" ALLOWS LITTLE GUYS TO WIN CALIFORNIA UTILITY WAR AS PLANS FOR MERGER GET SCRAPPED; PROOF AGAIN THAT PUBLIC OPINION PREVAILS -- IF PRODDED**

It began 3 years ago when S. California Edison announced plans to merge with San Diego Gas & Electric (pr 9/18/91). It ended last month when the Public Utilities Commission unanimously voted against the merger. It's being called a David & Goliath story, a feat which couldn't be done -- Cal Ed is wealthy and wields weight in Sacramento. Tho public opposition was strong, no one had much money to fight the plan. Nuffer Smith & Tucker jumped into the fray on a pro bono basis. "It was a matter of taking a look at the issue and seeing that the community didn't like the way things were going," Kerry Tucker told pr. "People said we were crazy because Cal Ed was spending millions. We had to apply the best of pr thinking."

**ENUNCIATING THE CASE AGAINST IT; A USEFUL MODEL**

"The town has few **headquarter companies**. SDG&E is one. Utilities don't just generate electricity -- they spend a tremendous amount in the community." Also at risk:

1. **Jobs.** Merger would've put at least 1500 out of work.
2. **Community betterment.** Moving hq would've meant less aid to the community. "They said they were going to continue to contribute, but everyone knew if they were located in Rosemead, it was very unlikely."
3. **Emotional hot button** was notion of the "Los Angelization" of San Diego. It evoked images of pollution, traffic, etc. and no one wanted that.
4. **Increased rates.** The utility promised LA rates would be higher, SD rates lower. Appealing -- but rate discrimination, so not allowable.
5. **Giant utility** would've been the result. Many were frightened of how much weight it could wield, reminded of the 30s' utility trusts.

"No one was really for it, tho **most people didn't give a dang at the beginning**. I think the only ones ever for it were the SDG&E shareholders." They were for it because merger meant stock price would go up.

**COALITION FORMED; VISION STATEMENT**

A law had been passed stating the merger couldn't take place if the results were anti-competitive. "That was the issue," explains Tucker. "We had to prove it would be anti-competitive." His firm formed Coalition for Local Control, comprised of members of chamber, developers, Sierra Club, the mayor's office, labor unions, consumer groups.

The game plan was revised several times, but driven by the same **vision statement**:

1. "That San Diego will have preserved its **quality of life** & controlled its own destiny."
2. "**SDG&E will remain healthy**, local & investor-owned; will be supporting the community with civic leadership & philanthropic support; will enhance its record of effective management."
3. "**SDG&E rates will continue** to be competitive with other S. Cal utilities."

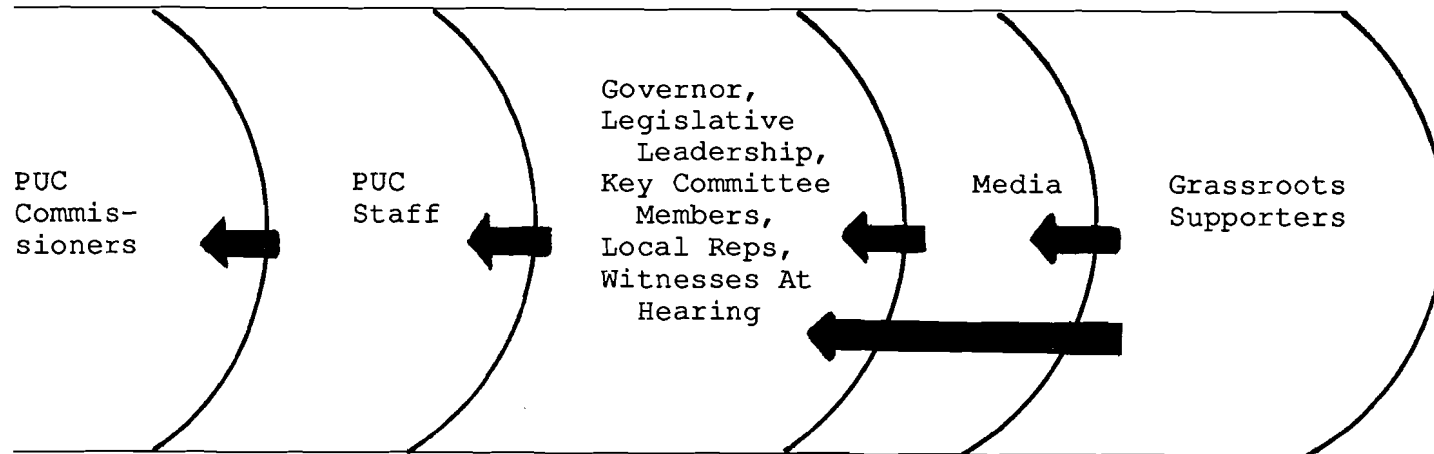
"This was all based on **not attacking SDG&E**," Dave Nuffer told prr. "We decided it best to focus our attention on the evil ogre to the north" i.e., Cal Ed. Tho SDG&E had made some pr mistakes in the past, and even tho it was pushing for the merger, wisest tack was not to alienate it."

**MISSION, THEN ISSUES MANAGEMENT PLAN** "Our mission was to mobilize a groundswell of support among stakeholders & convince the majority of Commission members (3 of 5) to rule against the merger," explains Nuffer. Coalition 1) figured out its data base, how new data would be collected, what resources were needed. Then 2) identified the issue at hand. Who is driving it? Who has a stake? How polarized are the positions? **Stakeholders were identified as...**

¶ **Drivers:** those groups considered most active participants, e.g., mayor, elected officials, ratepayers, unions, enviro groups.

¶ **Secondary:** those supportive but not drivers, e.g., taxpayers, military bases, civic & business organizations, other utilities.

Next, **key influencers** were outlined in concentric circles:



Multi-level campaigns were constructed specifically for each circle, utilizing basic tools -- one-on-one contact, petitions, direct mail, mass media messages, a lot of grassroots & community lobbying.

**MENDING FENCES AFTER VICTORY** Tho coalition tried not to alienate SDG&E, there was bad feeling. "This was going on since January '89. Things get ugly when they drag on so long," says Tucker. Add fact SDG&E generated opposition in the 70s when rates were among the highest in the US & residents were asking 60 Minutes to investigate. But local papers are calling SDG&E a "Prodigal Son" & offering the olive branch.

"The feeling is there will be **no retribution** against us, but they want to make sure this doesn't happen again," SDG&E's Dave Smith told prr. "It really kicked the beehive that we said we wanted to merge." Fence-mending with the community is already starting. "We're ready to sit down with the mayor & hammer out all of our concerns," says Smith.

**ISSUE OF WHO CONTROLS AIRWAVES NOT DEAD; SCHOLARS SAY PUBLIC NEEDS SACRIFICED TO AD DOLLARS; DOES IT MAKE MEDIA LESS CREDIBLE?**

Agreed: two behaviors tv can motivate are couch potatoism & inertia.

But 2 recent commentaries by media scholars go further to a) **decry** its effect on values and b) **demand** greater public involvement, less control from the marketplace.

**MEDIA EFFECTS EXPERT LEO BOGART**

In a Gannett Fndn paper, he claims media's corrosive effect on values stems from its total dependence on advertisers. Product promotion, not info & enlightenment, dictates. Result is rampant materialism. Would media be more useful to pr if it were more issue-based?

"Commercial culture perpetuates the social & economic structure by making its principles the dominant & unquestioned ideology...lulling the masses into a mindless acceptance of the status quo...inhibiting the ability of creative people to express themselves by subordinating their talents to the demands of the market." Other charges:

1. **Advertisers aim for big audiences, mid-to-low level intelligence**, which gives rise to...
2. **Glut of vulgarity & violence**, celebrated to maximize audiences for sale. "Left to its own devices, the public drifts toward amusement rather than enlightenment." Media capitalizes on this rather than leading the way toward intellectual betterment. (But consider PBS, C-Span, A&E, etc.)
3. **Cable is as bad as network**; viewers pay for an array of programs designed to meet advertisers' perceptions of what they ought to like.

Comparing it to the rise of enviro issues 2 decades ago, Bogart feels current squall over media content will become an issue of political debate.

**CATHOLIC CHURCH CALLS FOR GREATER PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Penn. bishop Anthony Bosco, testifying before Congress, feels deregulation has taken airwave rights away from the public, "rights regarding a media source which plays a key role in shaping the values of this society.... Gone are the requirements for community ascertainment to