

talent; b) pr info sources by country; c) overseas news org'ns in Chi; d) Chi-based suppliers of international services; e) Chi-based international org'ns; f) bibliography of international directories & books. (\$10; non-mbrs \$25; from Chapter's ofc at 30 N. Michigan Av, Chi 60602; 312/372-7744)

✓✓ **ACADEMIC RESEARCH CAN BE USEFUL TO PRACTITIONERS.** Tho academicians think in semesters and can't respond to research needs ASAP, "if the pr professional has more time than money, and we can meld our academic interests with the practical needs of the professional, there can be a role for academics in public relations research that goes beyond theory building & getting tenure," explains John Luecke (U of Wisc - Whitewater). "As an academic, I am currently involved in several research projects for clients that **will yield valuable information for them** -- and will provide me with an opportunity to examine various public relations issues." Do you know your friendly nearby academic researchers? And remember: they control "slave labor" known as students & graduate assistants.

✓✓ **WANT TO SPEAK WITH FOREIGN ORGANIZATIONS DURING TRAVELS ABROAD?** PRSA sponsored Trans-Atlantic Public Relations Roundtable in Paris last month brought together pr org'ns from Britain, France, Belgium, Poland, US, as well as IPRA & the European PR Confederation (CERP). "In a world where even the most local pr activities can have global implications, it is critical that we find ways to work with & thru each other," says Larry Pintak, co-chair of PRSA's International Committee. Task forces will focus on each major region, formal relationships have been established with groups on every continent. (To take part call Pintak at 202/628-3373, Nana Booker (int'l cmte co-chair) 713/439-7581, or Jill Weiner at PRSA hdqtrs 212/460-1480)

✓✓ **TOP BRANDS ARE ENTERING THE INFOMERCIAL FIELD** -- GTE, Bell Atlantic, Club Med, Saturn, Volkswagen, Volvo, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdales, Nordstrom, Avon, Kodak, Corning. The question, says Roger Selbert in Future Scan (Santa Monica), "is whether infomercials are poised & ready to transcend their downmarket image for upscale & brand name marketing." His response: "Absolutely: as top brands enter the field, quality will be the watchword; production values will rise concomitantly." Depending on the source, annual infomercial-related sales are between \$750 million & \$2.2 billion. Research shows 55% of all Americans have seen an infomercial in the past year, 8.5% have used the 800-number to order products, 19% have purchased products in a store based on an infomercial. "That last point is crucial, for if infomercials are to have a future as bright as their proponents attest, their biggest impact may not be in direct sales but at retail."

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

DIED. Tony DeLorenzo (Bloomfield Hills, Mich) on May 15 of a heart attack. He was 78. With GM for 30 yrs; 23 yrs as vp-pr -- 2nd person

to hold that office. Chosen "PR Professional of the Year" by PR News in '69. Retired in '79 to open his own firm.

SAFETY CAMPAIGN VALIDATES MENDELSON'S & BEHAVIOR THEORIES: COMMUNICATION + RESEARCH, LED BY COALITION, AFFECTS BEHAVIOR

In 1988, South Carolina's traffic death rate was 3rd in the nation. A campaign -- "Highways Or Dieways? The Choice Is Yours" -- was created to **change driver behavior**. 5 years later, the program developed for SC Highway Dep't by Fisher Communications (Columbia) has dramatically reduced the death rate (by 38%), is being reproduced in other states, has won numerous awards -- including PRSA's Bronze Anvil 2 years running -- and is still going strong.

CONTINUOUS RESEARCH TIE LETS COMMUNICATION WORK

"We've done research in every phase of this campaign since it began" in June '88, Kevin Fisher of Fisher Communications told

pr. 1) "We do pre-campaign developmental focus group research around the state where the concepts & story lines are tested. 2) On the backend, we do statewide phone opinion surveys that measure awareness & evaluation of the campaign." Focus groups are just now ushering in phase 5.

[This is the strategy postulated by Mendelsohn in his famous '65 paper -- the first to show that mass communication might influence behavior under certain circumstances. His topic was also highway safety. (Copy from pr)]

Initial research (public opinion & statistics reporting causes of accidents) showed the root of the problem was poor driver attitude. The worst offenders: 16-30 yr olds. Objective of the campaign is to modify driver behavior using a powerful psychological weapon.

OVERWHELMING COALITION IS KEY TACTIC

1. **Network of opinion leaders.** "We gathered everybody interested in traffic safety -- from private sec-

tor, industry, gov't agencies, etc. They've really made a difference from the word go. It wasn't just another special interest something-or-other. It showed a **huge broad base of support** from groups statewide." [The 4-step model for mass behavior change begins with a campaign by a coalition so broad that target publics feel everybody has their eye on them. (Copy from pr)]

2. **Psychologically modeled PSAs overtly backed by the coalition.** "Behavior modification requires psychological impact. These PSAs are extremely powerful, memorable -- to achieve that impact. When we started, we had difficulty getting them on some tv stations. Several declined, saying



they were too powerful. Our network of opinion leaders flooded the media with letters urging them to run the PSAs in prime time spots." Each PSA begins with: "You chose to drink & drive (or ignore the speed limit, or whatever the issue is). This is the next 60 minutes of your life." Then 60 minutes are compressed into 30 seconds -- quick, jumpy b&w cuts, "most camera work is hand held," of the accident scene & afterwards -- while a clock is ticking away in the lower corner of the screen. "It tells a story, a vignette. We've done interesting, even spectacular stunts. But they're secondary to the human emotions you feel thru people in the aftermath of the accident. What you see on the faces holds the greatest power. That's what makes them successful."

3. **Coalition special event** kicked off the campaign. Two bus loads of people representing 100 organizations traveled one day from 6am - 7pm to every major media market in the state. Rallies with speakers were held at each stop. People from the buses held up signs showing their organizations' support. "It showed to the public & media the power, strength & breadth of support to try to do something about South Carolina's traffic safety problem."

Phase 2 kicked off by transferring PSAs to 35mm & premiering them at movie theaters around the state. Audiences of 4-500 watched PSAs, listened to speakers. Event received a lot of media coverage.

Last year, campaign kicked off with a satellite feed from public tv station in Columbia to every media market that could be connected. PSAs & speakers were satellite-fed to media, who then called in questions.

4. **Use real people.** A) PSA last Christmas was called Silent Night. "We got permission from families to show photos of people killed on the highways that year." Names & hometowns were displayed with photos while an instrumental version of Silent Night was played. News conference announcing this included a woman & her baby who survived an accident that killed her husband & son "with emotions beyond belief."

"We try to show that these PSAs aren't just dramatic scenarios. They all really happened. That's why they're so effective. Everybody sees themselves because they feature things we're all familiar with. The very first spot starts off with a young woman in her 20s, in a hurry driving down the highway putting on lipstick while looking in the rear view mirror. Then she ends up thru the windshield. And we get letters from people saying 'I've done that. It's so true.'"

B) A police officer was sent to an accident. It was his son who died in his arms. This police officer has spoken at a press conference & at high schools about his experience, even reading a poem he has written about it.

C) Last Nov, Fisher did a spot where there was a collision & car exploded into flames. "We found somebody this happened to. He's badly burned & disfigured but very dignified, speaks with great eloquence. He spoke about his experience in connection with the debut of that spot."

D) This week a new spot on child safety seats is being released. A couple of people whose children were seriously injured because they weren't in child safety seats are participating in the news conference to release the spot & push the next phase of the campaign.

[This is cognitive dissonance at work. Belief system -- "I'm really a safe driver so nothing will happen to me" -- is penetrated by personalized evidence this attitude is faulty. (See prx 6/29/92)]

EVALUATION "Something is working & the campaign is certainly part of it. People tell us in statewide surveys & focus groups about its effectiveness. There is widespread support for it. As recently as 3 months ago, 94% said it should continue." 91% of drivers surveyed feel the campaign is an important factor in the death rate reduction; 90% say the money spent is a good use of public funds.

RESOURCE FOR PRACTITIONERS SEEKING HARMONY IN DIVERSITY

"Multicultural Communications: A Bibliography" has been published by PRSA to help "communicate more effectively with today's multicultural audiences," says editor Debra Miller (Florida International U, North Miami).

102-pg bibliography contains **more than 500 annotated citations**, including newspaper & magazine articles, books, documentaries, films & tv programs. Subject areas include: 1) cultural diversity, 2) intercultural communications, 3) prejudice, 4) myths & stereotypes, 5) cultural context, 6) ethnocentrism, 7) cultural heritage, 8) ethnicity, 9) discrimination. (\$25, nonmbrs \$35, plus \$3 shipping/handling; from Colleen McDonough, dir educational afrs, PRSA, 33 Irving Pl, NYC 10003-2376; 212/460-1466)

"To effectively practice any aspect of communications in our diverse, multicultural world, communications professionals must become more culturally aware and more sensitive to diversity. Those who are uncomfortable doing business across cultural lines will find it increasingly difficult to compete."

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PROFESSIONALS:

NOW COMPUTER SOFTWARE CAN HELP YOU REACH WIN-WIN OUTCOMES. "Negotiator Pro" from Beacon Expert Systems can prepare you step-by-step for negotiations. It will lead you to "work better with a team...and to learn the insights of the leading negotiation theorists (like the difference between 'interests' & 'positions')." Available thru Business Ethics Network Catalogue, P.O. Box 14748, Dayton, Ohio 45413

INTERNATIONAL PR RESOURCE GUIDE has been published by Chi/PRSA. Includes a) review of the challenges of international pr programs & the 3 golden rules in initiating them -- 1) be flexible, 2) do research, 3) use local