

Children's Hardcover Book	_____	x \$15 = _____
Adult Hardcover (fiction)	_____	x \$20 = _____
Adult Hardcover (nonfiction)	_____	x \$25 = _____

List includes paperbacks, mags, music cassettes & CDs, books on cassette, videos, pamphlet/map, miscellaneous. At bottom, a total line is drawn with the words "You borrowed \$_____ worth of library materials today." Customers' tallies were compared with the library's computer-generated statistics for that week. Results:

- 23,972 visits were made to the library at its 9 locations & 1 bookmobile
- 34,116 library books & other items were borrowed
- If customers had to purchase such items instead of borrowing them, they would have paid \$497,600
- The average patron checks out approximately \$65 worth of books/materials each visit (noting tho that not all customers borrow; many come to use reference books & other library services)
- In 1994, customers borrowed an annual total of 1.7 million items. If they had purchased instead of borrowed them, they would have paid more than \$23 million

At bottom of "savings" tally sheet is this note: "Each Brown County resident, on average, pays \$20 in taxes for a full range of library services for a year." Moral: "Save your bucks. Borrow your books!"

ITEM OF IMPORTANCE TO PROFESSIONALS

ISSUE ANTICIPATORS READ THIS: Anyone who needs to know what the right-wing fringes are doing/thinking should read *Media Bypass* -- "the uncensored national news." Good addition to the assigned reading list for members of Issue Anticipation Teams. Some of the material may puzzle or bother you -- but that's why today's far out groups need to be followed as issue generators. (1-800-4-BYPASS; \$29.95, Can. \$39.95)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. Steve Lee (vp, Halcyon Assocs, Dallas) receives Texas PR Assn's Golden Spur Award for his contributions & accomplishments in pr & TPRA -- its highest accolade bestowed upon any member.

Andrew Stern (CEO, Sunwest Communications, Dallas) receives Outstanding

PR Practitioner Award from TPRA for contributions to the profession.

Sharon Long McNerney (mgr, Nuffer, Smith, Tucker, Sacramento) receives highest award given to a dietitian for career contribution to the profession from Calif Dietetic Ass'n.

USE RESEARCH -- BUT REMEMBER THE LIMITED CAPABILITY OF POLLS

Survey data can be misleading. Gay Campbell, dir comty rels, Tacoma Public Schools, surveyed voters 3 months prior to an election to find interest/support on a technology measure. 70% of respondents said they felt technology was needed in the schools, they supported it & would vote for it. "We have to have 60% yes here for a measure to pass" -- so the polling numbers seemed comfortable. But, it failed in the election.

Afterwards, district surveyed again to discover reasons for measure's failure. "A greater percent told us they supported the measure than had voted that way at the polls," she told *pr*. "What this says to us is that people probably tell you more of what they *think they should think* & what they would *like to think*. They are more positive in their poll response than they are when they walk into the voting booth."

LESSONS LEARNED

1. **Reluctance to say no** to a "worthy" idea, like supporting schools or children. But the climate in Washington, according to recent research, is people are afraid of losing their jobs & unwilling to spend money or raise taxes -- "afraid they could lose their own income & then have taxes that are unbearable for them."
2. **Ask questions differently.** "We should have asked what they think *other people* will do as well as what *they* will do. My experience is that the truth is somewhere in between the answers to those two questions."
3. **People's feelings change.** Original survey was done in November, election was in February. "We should have done a benchmark survey in between. You have Christmas. Then our tax valuation statements come out the first part of Feb. Things that can change how people feel."
4. **"It's a way of building relationships,** of listening to the public. Maybe surveys are more important for that than anything else."
5. **Surveys need to test your relationship with your public.** "We have to structure our questions to see what that relationship is & be searching for that relationship as much as we're searching for hard data about how people feel about any one issue."
6. **What you get is what you get.** "We can build the questions, triangulate the questions, we can do all kinds of things. But sometimes there will be emotions & conditions that change, that make our data not as good as it might be." Thus the need for *ongoing* relationship building.

7. **Increase in absentee voters brought more negative votes.** State put in a motor-voter registration & many of those people went for permanent absentee ballot. "They are overwhelmingly negative voters. People who walk into the polls in our town are 80% yes voters. Absentees the first time out were 66% no. We had an upsurge in one year going from 3,000 absentees to 10,000. And, those absentees were not in our survey since they weren't registered at the time we did it."

8. **Knowing surveying's limitations.** "Sometimes when you have really good luck with a pr technique you keep doing it, assuming that it's going to work forever. But the population is changing. For one thing the number of unlisted phone numbers is incredibly high, so it's hard to find the people you need to find. Getting mail surveys back is incredibly difficult. And with focus groups, what you have is the opinions of 10 people & that's what you have. Altho they're randomly chosen, you can't universalize your findings." [Some disagree; see pr 5/31/93]

BUT THEN AGAIN... Campbell reports many good results from surveys. "I've seen school boards place something different on the ballot than they originally intended because they've listened to a survey, & win."

In an election in Oregon she asked in a survey, "How do you want information on this measure?" Respondents requested information come from the school district because they believe it more than the media. "We had not intended to do an every-household mailing. We had limited funds. But we did, making it clear in the mailing we were doing this because voters asked us to. They were grateful. Not a single person called to ask 'why are you wasting taxpayer money sending this out?'"

"I'm in a different school district now, but I continue to ask how people want to receive their information. That's a good way for me to test how credible the district is. If respondents say they want information from the newspaper, then I know they're not seeing us as a source of straight information."

Of Related Interest:

ARE PEOPLE MORE UNPREDICTABLE NOW? OR IS POLLING PASSÉ?

French presidential election is another case. Polls never even hinted at the upset in the first round of voting, according to the International Herald Tribune. Surprise first-place-showing by Socialist Jospin led to accusations by Conservatives that "public opinion polls predicting a clear victory by (Conservative) Mr. Chirac had skewed the outcome." Presumably because party didn't work as hard, and voters took outcome for granted.

Pollsters rationalize that higher-than-usual number of undecided voters made predictions difficult. Also noted that protest votes for 6 lesser candidates could be

Power of polling is a matter of faith there. It isn't allowed the final week of campaigning [so people won't vote herd instinct but true feelings].

greater than usual. Chirac won the final election May 7 -- but that's a whole new arena since then there are just 2 candidates.

Note: Chirac's turnaround was due to "shunning high office to work the grassroots full time," according to US News & World Report. "I left the corridors of power to meet the French," Chirac says. This reinforces the maxim of always campaigning as if you are behind.

HOW DO YOU BEAT THE HFH FACTOR?

The first H is "Ho," the last is "Hum" & the f word you can guess. Barry Gibbons -- former CEO of Burger King, a consultant & exec in residence at UMiami biz school -- says the world is full of HFH. "Look around & you'll see things & people that are OK, but nothing special. They do a job but leave no ripples in the water." In The Miami Herald, he offers these examples on beating the HFH factor:

- "A couple of years ago, I went to the Caribbean for a holiday, booked at short notice with a major hotel chain. In the bedroom was a sign on the dresser saying 'Please look under the bed' -- which intrigued me, so I did. I saw another handwritten sign, saying, 'Yes, I clean under here as well -- Rosie.' Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful. No HFH here, but a strange thing did happen. I forgot the brand name (despite the millions of dollars spent on advertising) & I remember it as Rosie's Place & recommend it frequently."
- "At one time I was responsible for about 2,000 bars in England, & we figured it would help us beat the HFH factor if we got our bar staff to learn customers' first names. So we had a competition to see how many names one person could remember -- thinking 25, maybe 50 would clean up the prizes. The winner reeled off 400, & then we found out that the bar where she worked was (surprise, surprise) wonderfully successful."
- "Burger King once missed a sandwich out of a drive-thru order (No! really?) & a frustrated customer telephoned to complain. The restaurant manager then got the sandwich delivered to the customer's office within 10 minutes, which makes a nice customer service story -- if a little on the HFH side. What made it different was a knock on the customer's door at lunchtime the next day, with the restaurant manager there saying: 'Sorry about yesterday. Have lunch on us today.'"

These are the behaviors that make the difference between customer satisfaction & customer delight -- a charge pr should be leading.

CREATIVE MONEY-EQUIVALENCY CHART MAKES POINT MEMORABLY

Money speaks in a very personal way to most people. So, for National Library Week, Brown County Library (Green Bay, Wisc) designed a way for customers to "check out their savings." Using a 3 1/4 x 8 1/2" tally sheet, patrons could add up how much they would have spent if they'd bought the materials & books they just borrowed from the library. Tally sheet lists items, each is assigned a price, eg: