

communications. It is the most important work I do. And it is the one place where I must, & do, continually refine my skills."

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ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

Putting a human face on the subject remains unsurpassed, as the Distance Education & Training Council shows with its 24-pg salute to its outstanding grads for '96. First 2 pages give info about distance education. Remaining pages tell the stories of the winners -- 1 per page with a photo of each. It's straight human interest. Winners represent more than 3 million correspondence students now studying with DETC schools. As the copy says, "Distance study's story is best told by the achievements of these 22 outstanding graduates."

pr described U Missouri's journalism sequence as "it ain't pr" (pr 4/8). Responding, Brad Carr, dir media svcs & pa, NY State Bar Ass'n (Albany) & a "Mizzou alum," offers another view: "My gosh, another fuzzy-headed disciple of the Denny Griswold school of 'PR is a management discipline & ought to be taught in the Business Schools.' C'mon, you need a reality check. PR is a part of AEJMC accredited sequences in Schools of Journalism. Please, for the sake of those PRSSA students who are our future, let's not fill them with a rose-colored glass view of the real world. The reality is that if you can't write, you can't get a job in pr. Really, it's very simple. All of this self-flagellation that is practiced by the pr trade publications obscures the real fact that the way you earn your right to 'sit at the table' is through your creativity in putting words on paper."

Some "relational words" to offset military/machine age words (pr 4/1) are offered by Llyle Barker, mgmt comn consultant (Columbus) & retired head of USArmy pa:

teamwork	building together	merging paths
central focus	humanizing	corporate cooperations

"In my consulting efforts, a term I frequently use (altho it is not in Webster's dictionary as a verb) is 'empathizing.' I think that term reflects the importance of always considering the impact of our plans, objectives, programs, literature & communications efforts -- with our internal & external publics, rather than the message, being predominantly important. That concept fits perfectly with behavioral public relations."

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. John Luecke (comms lecturer, U of Wisc - Whitewater, & acct supvr, Andrews/Mautner) receives PRSA/Wisc's Dorothy Thomas Black Memorial Award for his professional contributions.

Patrick Mangus (sr vp & assoc dir, Ketchum PR, Pittsburgh) named '96 Renaissance Communicator by PRSA/Pittsburgh for professional & community involvement.

STRATEGY: PREACH TO THE CHOIR WITH A QUIET CAMPAIGN

Mason (Mich) 21st Century Committee was formed to improve community life -- first, by passing a proposition to improve schools. Its strategy is a model for the new world of behavioral public relations:

- 1) run a targeted, quiet campaign;
- 2) use volunteers to identify "yes" voters, your "choir";
- 3) employ face-to-face appeals to get them to the polls;
- 4) without stirring up "no" votes.

It had been 21 yrs since voters agreed to fund school improvements. Well-financed opposition, headed by landlords, hoped to avoid tax increase.

RESEARCH • Phone survey of 435 registered voters -- basic data that helped with message development & tactics.

- Secondary research helped with development of strategy: a) reviews of past successful & failed bond campaigns; b) discussions with nearby school districts which had recent successful bond campaigns; c) precinct-by-precinct analysis of turnout in the past 3 failed ballot campaigns -- which helped predict turnout & target resources.

STRATEGIES & TACTICS • Community volunteers funded, directed & executed entire campaign. Budget was set at \$10,000;

donations were solicited. School had no involvement in the activities of this committee, nor did it give money to it, Jack Pyle, of Face-to-Face Matters & one of committee's 12 members, told prr. One school board member was involved & the supt came to talk & listen a couple of times, but essentially the committee worked independently. "The school let us take the lead. They did what they wanted to do which was basically to put out a newsletter."

- Kept a low profile with little or no mass communication to the entire community. "Focusing on face-to-face was hardest for people to do. Everybody kept saying 'we've got to have meetings,' until we had our first one which was a failure. Half the number we wanted showed up & half of those were committee members & spouses. Printed invitations had been sent -- we should have called to get attendance. We talked about the importance of face-to-face. This was the biggest learning event for the committee. We held no more big meetings from then on."
- Used a targeted, one-on-one campaign to identify "yes" voters & get them out to vote. Ultimately had 200 volunteers who each identified "yes"



voters. These 2,332 "yes" voters were entered into a database -- unfortunately, notes Pyle, without demographic info "so we can't establish relationships among them or know if they have kids in high school or grade school. That's something we want to work on in the future."

- **Phone bank** was organized to call "yes" voters to remind them to vote. Precinct watchers were set up at the polls. As people came in to vote, a committee member checked them off its list of "yes" voters. As the day progressed, those not checked were called.
- **Developed key messages based on primary research findings.** These were printed on cards for volunteers to use in recruiting "yes" voters, hand out at speeches & use for audiences at school events.
- **Created a speakers bureau & trained members to speak at community groups using 3 key messages & personal stories to inspire support for schools.**
- Won editorial support of the two most influential newspapers, **but did not run a media campaign.** Editorial briefings were held & editorials were printed supporting passage of the proposition.
- **Helped team get past urge to respond.** Anticipated & responded to opposition activities, but **didn't get into a public fight** -- which would draw attention to their claims. Opposition ran some negative ads "about some things unrelated to the campaign." In an effort to keep committee members from wanting to respond, pointed out that even many of them (who are highly interested) had missed the ads. Asked them to start listening to influentials to hear what they were saying. Discovered others weren't seeing the ads either. It removed the urgency to respond.
- **Overcame early gaffe.** Early in the campaign, supt wrote a letter to staff members about their internal needs related to the proposition. It got leaked & appeared as a front page story. Committee members were upset & wanted to respond. "We talked a long time before we decided to not respond" sticking to the planned low profile strategy.
- **Involved students as symbolic messengers,** especially in election day activities. They produced a video that aired on local cable tv around the clock, placed yard signs, drove voters to the polls, on election day held car washes & campaigned on the streets.
- **Bulletproofing:** All billboards in town were purchased for voting month to assure positive messages would appear, as opposed to past elections.

Study of school bond issues over a 1-year period shows targeted get-out-the-yes-vote campaigns are 80% effective, notes Pyle.

RESULTS Proposition 1 passed with 51% -- but only by 93 votes. However, turnout was up 9% from the previous high. The 452 additional voters were virtually all "yes" voters. There were only 3 more "no" votes than in the previous election. It affirmed the targeted public relations strategy of face-to-face communication. The committee realizes

it hasn't really won community support for schools (with only 51% of the vote), intends to continue working for schools & other community issues.

SOLUTION TO "OVERKILL" VOLUME OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Ask them how they want to receive information. Ask about tools, about feel, about timing & place of receipt. And compensate for noise by always, always asking for feedback, Richard Kline (pres, Shandwick USA) & Betsy Buckley (exec vp) explained at a Conference Board/IABC program. Ways to do this:

- **Include a fax back in every piece of print communication** (including memos). One company reported a 36% increase in recorded employee readership of & high interest in its newsletter after starting this process.
- **Provide Q&A time in every face-to-face session,** whether individual or group. Insist on this in teleconferences.
- **Make sure a response mechanism is built in** if you set up a CEO line (voicemail or e-mail). One CEO surveyed said he answers (with the help of his comms dep't) 35 messages a day.

Shandwick surveyed 42 Fortune 100 & Fortune 500 companies on the topic of communicating with the workforce of the future in preparation for this program. Other findings:

- **Frustration with technology:** Only 15% say there is any comms training for use of e-mail or voicemail. 37 companies have a web site, 17 of these have some form of directed employee comms to the site; 7 have intranet operations. "These tools work, but they take training, especially of segments of the workforce who haven't quite arrived at the digital age."
- **Comms audits recommended.** Analyzing how well the pieces convey key messages & at what cost per employee. One surveyed company, after doing an audit, reduced the number of its newsletters from 83 to 10, at a savings of \$1.5 million.
- **Human, face-to-face communications** is not out just because technology is in. "We need to continue to treat the communications with our people with the same level of attention as we treat communications about our products," says one surveyed CEO. Skip-level meetings, team-member forums, exec lunch briefings ("mentioned in 16 interviews as a tool, with 4 offering them via video-conferences at multiple sites"), 360 degree reviews, cascading communications ("now happening at a raging-river pace") all help bring about face-to-face connecting.
- **Repeating info is critical.** Many learned the rule of 7 ("it takes 7 repetitions before something is heard"). One company pres has a rule of 22 -- that it takes 22 times before someone both hears something & acts on it.
- **Role of the CEO.** One of those interviewed ("& this is typical of the clients we work with") report: "I spend 15-20% of my time on