

info. Just out are stickers covering July thru Dec. Responses have been "enthusiastic," reports chapt pres Kay Kendall. (More info from Kendall at 713/667-7736 or e-mail kkendall@ibt.tamu.edu)

## HUGE OLYMPIC OUTLAYS RAISE OLD PR STRATEGY QUESTION

Tho billions may see the names, logos & product pitches of sponsors -- and those just trying to capitalize on the huge audience -- is there one among them who isn't already a household word? What, then, can this awareness accomplish, since they're already so well known? Considerations pro & con:

1. More vital yet, what desired behaviors toward the products or companies will -- can -- be stimulated? The body of knowledge is clear: awareness motivates little if any action, especially as in this case where it's really re-awareness.
2. How then show positive bottom-line impact for big big bucks?
3. For Kodak or Coke, whose products will be on site, & totally germane to a photogenic event in muggy Atlanta, behavioral result is likely. Their customers are being hit at point-of-sale or point-of-use.
4. How much of this is mostly-macho pandering to athletics? Or pushed by sports promo pros who don't get put to the hard tests because of the fun of the games & the mass worldwide audience? Would that employee relations or focused community relations & philanthropy -- activities that research shows are the major value adders -- got both such funding & so little green eye-shade quibbling about costs.
5. Example: GM spent \$10 million for sponsorship, \$52 million for ads & \$1 million to completely cover 30 trucks in chrome -- so they'll be visible in tv coverage of opening ceremonies. But will potential customers be lured to the real product? GM isn't adding the chromies to its truck line. And who'll be watching for trucks at the ceremony?
6. The games will be on everybody's tongues (well, many people's). But will sponsors be, or advertisers?

Sports is so entirely a commercial activity now it's predictable more people will just lose interest in them. Are pr people behind this madness?

- Meanwhile, only 10% of consumers say they're more inclined to buy products because they're Olympic sponsors, an AP poll finds. 3% are actually less inclined. The other 87% just don't give a rap.
- **However**, if sponsors use the event to bring big customers, dealers, key opinion leaders to the games or linked events -- as a triggering event to build relationships -- maybe they are worth the dough.

## WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**HONORS.** Bill Jones (Philadelphia Electric Co.) receives President's Award, its highest, from NSPRA for

"outstanding contributions to educational pr."

## STRATEGY NOW #2: PR IS FORCED TO CONFRONT DETERIORATING SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

20 years ago, when prr's current editors took over, Swiss consultant Jean Jacques Wyler asked the VII Public Relations World Congress (prr 7/19/76):

1. "Where does public relations stand, with the world shaken by political & economic crisis, big business under the critical gun, & social communications, as well as international understanding, more difficult?"
2. "It is generally thought we are essential to the purpose & functioning of modern society, but perhaps there is also thought we can be done without? **Are we considered not good enough?** Have we attributed too much to the product, & too little to our organizations? Are our communication methods only one-way conveniences? Is dialogue lacking? Have our statements been ambiguous, or inaccurate? Are our standards on a level with the responsibilities we must assume? And, finally, are other people replacing us as specialized communicators, & are we close enough to the decisionmakers?"

These questions could've been asked this week. Tho the profession has grown considerably since then, it has not successfully addressed such basic issues. Compare -- 20 years ago:

- Manos Pavlidis, international counselor, called for "a multi-disciplinary focus," saying, "corporations can no longer be content to simply explain their activities in terms of traditional income statements & balance sheets. They must begin to measure & communicate their activities in terms of social & political development goals."
- PR icon John Hill noted that "the most visible & highly important tool of public relations -- communications -- is perceived by many as the whole of public relations. Communications & publicity are also tools of politicians in election campaigns, of governments in propaganda & countless groups in adversary postures. They can be used for good or bad causes...."
- "We in the community of bigger businesses **must be more accessible to our customers.** We must identify with them & their needs. We simply must serve them better." -- Thomas Murphy, chairman, General Motors



- "PR types are continually fretting about their image to their various publics, & about their professional titles. I suggest the so-called professionals stop talking & start doing. Public relations has earned its reputation by virtue of its acts, not its voice. Let's clean up our act & the term public relations person will elicit the respect that we all desire it to carry." -- William Ennis, dpr, Shimano Sales Corp

#### NO UNIFYING PR ORG'N MEANS NO STRONG VOICE

The next year National Communication Council for Human Services merged with PRSA, bringing combined membership to 8,500. But the trend

fizzled, despite many attempts. PR still does not have a single, strong, vocal professional society.

- It remains a Balkanized field, seemingly more concerned with the petty affairs of this ass'n or that one, than in creating a powerful integrating entity that can bring the essential pr philosophy to resolving the world's problems -- and maybe avoid the socioeconomic revolution many observers now say is coming.
- As Paul Alvarez said in his Schrantz lecture (pr last week): "Polarization is happening in the US. White supremacists are seeking out sympathetic colleagues & sharing information on making bombs. On the other side of the spectrum, left-wing activists are using the net to plan boycotts of companies & disrupt their business. This all can be done without any attempt at dialogue or debate with people of opposing viewpoints. Anyone who disagrees risks getting 'flamed.'"

PR's negotiating & reconciling skills must be brought into play now, to influence the environment in which humankind lives & practitioners must work.

#### ANY ORG'N CAN BE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE -- WITHOUT MEGABUCKS

Valuable projects can make an impact in a cost effective way. Mary Ann Pires, who for 25 yrs has helped organizations forge relationships with third party groups, finds opportunities for her clients "often thru non-cash, volunteer activities." Benefits are multiple:

- useful relationships are developed
- organization is seen as a responsible corporate citizen

Letting it be known you are interested can be a big first step. As a result of a previous relationship with Consumer Federation of America, Pires was invited to join the Consumer Literacy Consortium (CLC) -- a 25-mbr group drawn from corporate, gov't & nonprofit sectors. Because CLC is sustained solely by member support, Pires asked NYNEX to sponsor her involvement. NYNEX is 1 of 10 companies invited to sit on the consortium.

#### PROBLEM ADDRESSED

Millions of middle- & lower-income people & the working-class poor lack basic knowledge of how to make sound purchases. Many don't even know where to get guidance. CLC set

out to 1) define "essential consumer knowledge" & 2) disseminate it thru a pamphlet -- "66 Ways to Save Money." To come up with the 66 ways, CLC:

- Ranked all consumer products by the amount of consumer spending;
- Surveyed consumers about products for which they most desire pre-purchase info;
- Examined the potential consumer savings for all of these products;
- Used these 3 criteria to select a final list of 28 products;
- Consulted info sources & CLC mbrs for money-saving ideas & tips;
- Spent 1 yr discussing & researching before agreeing on final set of tips for each of the 28 products;
- As motivator, included potential dollar savings in most of the tips;
- Used simplified language as much as possible.

"The direct cost for the part NYNEX sponsored was less than \$20,000. You don't have to have a multi-million dollar campaign & a full service firm to do worthwhile things."

**Step 2:** Pires spearheaded an effort to get the pamphlet translated into Spanish, bringing in the National Council of LaRaza -- which serves over 3 million Hispanics. NYNEX funds it. As a result of this cascading involvement, NYNEX will begin working on partnership activities with LaRaza.

#### SOLELY PR

400,000 copies of the pamphlet have gone out "without a penny of paid advertising, & it's just beginning to pick up steam. We've used all kinds of outlets" -- the distribution systems of the various members, Consumer Info Ctr in Pueblo, Colo, consumer ed & high school teachers, military distribution system, various computer databases including the Internet, consumer credit counselors, financial planners, librarians, consumer & community leaders, cooperative extension service agents. All are now potential partners for her client from this project.

"This is genuine social responsibility. It doesn't help NYNEX in the hard-boiled, cause-related marketing sense. NYNEX wants to be seen as a responsible corporate citizen & this is the kind of stuff you do when you really mean that."

#### ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **Semantics Is Part of GM's Urban Development Issue.** When company abandons its longtime, famed world HQ in New Center (Detroit) and moves to the riverside towers of Renaissance Ctr, it will upgrade one failing urban area -- but potentially harm the other. Worse, RenCen was built by Ford. Will changing the area's name help? Roger Lennart, then a young pr staffer for Ex-Cell-O Corp, won the \$5,000 naming contest with the Renaissance Ctr moniker. Counselor Stacey Smith thinks the choice is obvious: change to *GenCen*. Retains the feel, alters only one letter, introduces GM into the name & sounds vaguely foreign -- vital for today's global businesses.

¶ **Day-glow orange stickers go on your calendar** to remind you of upcoming meetings. PRSA/Houston sends these to members. Stickers are small (1 3/4" x 3/4") so can be stuck right on the calendar in the square for the day of the meeting, include time, speaker or subject, phone number for