

whose place in society's hot seat for several years has tested their methods by fire:

1. **Phone surveys still best.** Some survey methods are more expensive than others. Mail surveys are less expensive than telephone surveys but, "if you have issues that demand a higher response rate & precision," Griffith says telephone surveys are more effective. Ed Sloat of Glendale (Az) schools prefers telephone surveys as well because "we get really good data." Still, refusal rates can be very high -- tho they're often lower for a local entity like the school.
2. **Researchers' bias: Surveying a sample audience, instead of everyone, is less time-consuming & provides more accurate info.** Many districts believe that politically they must survey all parents instead of a representative sample to collect info. "Board members love the qualitative info, but I always say don't make your judgements based on comments from the report," says Sloat. Griffith agrees. "When we survey high schools, I want to do a sample," he says.
3. "But principals have a hard time convincing people that sampling works. (Congress doesn't think so, per its Census vote -- prr 12/5/98) They want everyone to have a say." And while researchers love "projectible" data, things change so rapidly today that some even question whether any of today's findings are useful tomorrow.
4. **It takes a long time for routine data collection to be accepted by staff & administration.** Surveying can't be done once, says Griffith, but may need to be implemented several times before surveys are recognized as significant. Some staff & administrators are resistant to feedback. (More from Griffith at 301-279-3845; Sloat 602-468-6077)

## ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **PRSA's National Environmental Conf. moved to Nov.3.** Planned for June 7, but HQ mailing screwup caused registration snafu. Same program & top level speakers, covering the critical enviro issues of the day. Title: Communications: Our Renewable Resource. (Info or registration, 212/460-1459.)

## WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**HONORS.** Dave Meeker (evp, Edward Howard & Co, Cleveland) receives John S. Knight Award for "exceptional service to the community thru com'ns" from Buckeye Chapter, SPJ.

Shel Holtz, Holtz Communication + Technology (Concord, CA), to be awarded IABC's Chairwoman's Award at the Int'l Conf. June 21 in DC. Award is given to IABC mbrs who

have given their time & talents & have diligently worked behind the scenes for IABC at the int'l level.

**DONATION.** Ex-Proctor & Gamble CEO Ed Artzt gives \$2 million to U Oregon's Schl of Jlsn & Com'n, from which he graduated in '51 & which he credits for teaching him "to organize his thoughts quickly & communicate them directly & concisely" -- leading him to the chrnm's post at P&G.

## BREAKING THRU THE CLUTTER: COLOR IS A MAJOR TOOL, SOMETIMES

A Xerox ad claims: "Knowledge is communicated 55% better. Invoices are paid 30% faster. Customers' recall is 80% greater" when color is used in documents. How much of this is The Truth, and how much just true enough to qualify for ad copy?

Research cited in support:

1. **Attention getting power of color** has evidence dating back decades. In '70, Newspaper Advg Bureau investigated effects of then-new color newspaper ads as measured in several studies.
  - One-color ads got 69% maximal greater notice than b&w in one study. Full color showed an increase of 78%, & 1-color 58%, in another study. Over a range of studies, 1-color improved notice between 10% & 58%; full color between 30% & 78%.
  - Women were more attracted to color than men, in some earlier studies by individual newspapers, by a difference of 50% or more
  - Reading of copy blocks increased by 50% or more when they appeared in color

With color becoming more familiar, & in some cases the norm, in the period since this research, its power may have declined somewhat. No studies suggest, however, that it does not get increased attention.
2. **Color speeds reading time.** A mgmt consulting firm's study of biz execs found a 70% overall savings in reading decision-type documents.
  - Inexplicably, students in the same test saved only 46%
3. **Printing forms in color makes them easier to use.** Business Forms Mgmt Assn found employees work faster, readers quickly determine which parts apply to them. If forms are then filled out in black, analyzing or tabulating them is easier & faster since responses are differentiated from the questions.
4. **Highliner pens are a practitioner's friend.** Everyone uses them for emphasis or to get attention to relevant points. Auburn U. study found students reading articles with highlighting recalled 25% more than others reading the same info in b&w.



**COLOR IS PHYSIOLOGICAL,  
NOT PSYCHOLOGICAL**

Color is the first element to which we respond when we see anything. Wagner Institute for Color Research estimates this

first color impression accounts for 60% of people's acceptance, or rejection, of what they see.

Color is an emotional experience, so "the psychology of color" operates on all audiences -- from boards of directors to customers to children. Except that, as a review in *Marketing Communications* notes, the proper term is physiological: "the science of normal functions & phenomena of living things".

- This is what makes it so powerful -- and why it applies to items seen on paper, in the round or on computer or tv screens equally
- 83% of what we learn is thru our eyes. DoD studies show we retain 35% of what we see & hear vs. 10% of what we read & 20% of what we hear

**CAUTION: DOWNSIDES ALSO EXIST**

1. **Too expensive-looking or glitzy** documents or brochures can make some readers feel they're being "sold". One or 2 colors used for emphasis can make these pieces effective, in keeping with the citations above

- 2. In Powerpoint & similar presentation modes, overuse of color, especially in meaningless eye candy, is a major deterrent (pr 9/28/98)
- 3. Colors mean vastly different things in different cultures. Black signifies death in Western cultures, but it's white in Asia (t&t 5/25/98)

It's too easy to go overboard with color printers on our computers, color copiers, Powerpoint, the ability to visualize final effects on our screens & other hi-tech wonders now available.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON THE POWER OF COLOR**

- 1. Learning, retention & recall accelerate by 55 to 78%
- 2. Comprehension improves & increases by up to 73%
- 3. Willingness to read increases up to 80%
- 4. Recognition increases up to 78%
- 5. Motivation & participation rise by up to 90%
- 6. Error count is reduced from 55 to 35%
- 7. Sells products & services more effectively by 50 to 85%

**"INCLUSIVITY" NOT "DIVERSITY"; HISPANIC MARKET DATA TELLS WHY**

"Diversity" calls to mind groups left out. "Inclusivity" connotes everyone being left in. Some things practitioners should be aware of:

- 1. **Merrill Lynch finds Hispanic market reaching "critical mass"**. Triggering event was a list of new-home buyers in Los Angeles County. Of top 10 names, 9 were Latino. Only one that wasn't was Kim, an Asian-American surname. ML's view: the creation of wealth is occurring among these groups. So, need for investments & financial planning can't be far off.

Small-business creation is part of the trend. To build relationships, ML put \$77 million into a 3-yr pilot to lend to the Hispanic market. Called Southern Calif. Partnership for Economic Achievement.

Hector Cantu of Dallas Morning News reports when financial firms enter a market -- rather than the usual food, beverage & personal products mfrs -- it means the market has arrived.

- 2. **"Diversity is not a quota system,"** says Bob Ruggles in urging pr & other "media professions" to be inclusive. "It is not affirmative action with all that term may connote. It is the simple, honest recognition we serve an astonishingly complex society.

"And if (pr is) to serve it well, we have to work as hard at recruiting, educating & hiring as we do at the other business aspects of our profession. To do less diminishes our value in a world where communication is once again a fascinating frontier."

Ruggles, Fla A&M dean, is The Freedom Forum's administrator of the year.

Some idiotic ideas still attach themselves to humankind's quest for tolerance. Some academics now label women "gyno-Americans". Semantically, terms like this only serve to reinforce the perceived dominance of white males -- hardly what the authors have in mind.

**STUDYING SKEPTICAL PUBLICS (LIKE SCHOOL STAKEHOLDERS)**

Under siege for 15 years, schools realize they must understand their stakeholders (pr 1/11). But today they are the epitome of mistrusted org'ns -- not entirely distrusted, but seldom given a Willing Suspension of Disbelief. The Colorado disaster etched this feeling in stone for many.

Their research need has become gigantic. The approach being taken has lessons for all organizations:

- "You just can't get people who are content to respond" to research today, notes Dr. James Griffith, a senior evaluation specialist for Montgomery Public Schools (Md). Unless parents are really upset about their child's school, they will be less likely to return a survey received in the mail, he & other school researchers find.

Situation is similar for almost every orgn's research. How do practitioners deal with it? Some thoughts from school researchers --