

PERSUASION TRENDS: ADS NEED TO TAKE NEW DIRECTION, & ARE

Trend trackers Brand Futures Group (NYC), subsidiary of Young & Rubicam, has outlined new directions in advertising methods. "As consumers get better at tuning out conventionally delivered messages, marketers are seeking greater impact for their money," says BFG's Marian Salzman. "Strategists try to shake the status quo to create a buzz."

- **Sneak Attacks:** In Great Britain, advertisers are using alternative media, such as bus tickets and -- believe it or not -- heat sensitive stickers attached to pub & club urinals. "Tasteless, perhaps, but such campaigns are expected to produce profits." US marketers are following the toilet paper trail, posting ads for Noxzema skin care, Sony Music & Salem cigarettes at eye level inside stall doors & above urinals in restaurants & bars. Also new products flashed on ATM screens; & "floor billboards," i.e., messages below the feet of supermarket shoppers.
- **Great Outdoors:** BFG says outdoor advertising is the reason the US communications industry is growing at a rate second only to telecommunications. Ads for Skippy Peanut Butter were carved into the sand at a New Jersey hot spot. Since Carolina residents are adamant about keeping their beach towns ad-free, businesses are trying to rezone inland land for industrial use so they can put up billboards.
- **Holy Clients!** Unlikely new clients are using outdoor persuasion. Catholic archdiocese of Milwaukee used grants & donations to run a billboard & radio campaign featuring slogans such as "Work with the World's Greatest Boss" and "Wanted: Doctor of Souls." Archdiocese of Lansing, Mich., handed out posters featuring two priests in dark sunglasses: "Join the Real Men in Black."

ITEM OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **Assumed resistance to spending on schools is debunked** by the NPR/Kennedy Schl/Kaiser Family Fdn study (pr last week). Another example of gap between politicians' rantings & public opinion. The findings:

- **Strong support for education reforms** -- even if it means higher taxes!
- **3/4th would be willing to have taxes raised \$200/yr** to pay for specific measures to improve community schools
- **55% would pay \$500/yr;** only 16% say they wouldn't pay even \$100

Some pr pros believe in education enough to change careers. Larry Baker, vp-pr Associated Adv Agcy (Wichita), started last month as an elementary teacher at Emerson Open Magnet Elementary. Kodak's Jerry Engel made a similar move several yrs ago. PR is, after all, a teaching profession -- as shown by the number of teachers who have successfully moved into pr.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. Richard Mau named to Arthur Page Society's Hall of Fame as its 15th inductee. Was chief pr

ofcr for 3 Fortune 500 companies -- Sperry, Raytheon & Rockwell.

ARE WE USING THE WEB TO BEST ADVANTAGE? TWO STUDIES FIND NEED FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT MAKES A GOOD WEBSITE

Practitioners are not fully exploiting the Internet and are, as a result, missing important opportunities to serve their clients, 2 studies say.

- Survey by Emerald City Interactive (NYC) finds **pr firms are not taking full advantage of their own websites**, often leaving out valuable client & industry info -- which may be a heads-up for others' sites as well
- Study by Tsantes & Assoc (Silicon Valley) shows many **websites lack pr contact information**, frustrating reporters & other users

Both areas present opportunities for practitioners to enhance their value to clients/employers & their relationship with the media.

LITTLE MORE THAN ON-LINE ADVERTISEMENTS

Emerald City, which specializes in new media innovations & techniques, surveyed the sites of 20 top-earning pr and 20 top-earning investor relations firms as prelude to designing a website for a pr client. It found most sites simply supply a type of "on-line" advertisement for the firms. "We were shocked to discover that the vast majority of them are nothing more than 'sell your firm' brochures," pres Douglas Blecher told prr. The firms, in effect, used the sites for promotional purposes only. [Many other org'ns are guilty of the same]

SUB-PAR SITES: REPORTERS' LEADING COMPLAINT

The focus of the Tsantes study was on high-tech reporters' use of the Web. Most are frustrated by company websites and a leading complaint is that they fail to list pr contacts.

Survey went to 80 reporters, yielded a 66% response rate of 53. It was aimed at those covering high tech at business, computer end-user & electronics pubs. A key finding was that reporters are becoming increasingly Web savvy, with most using it exhaustively for research; a significant 15% report using the Web for more than 20 hours a week, 37% are not satisfied with company website information. Lack of readily available press contact info was the chief complaint, followed by poor design and lack of product information.

"The press are increasingly using the Web to obtain & post real-time information," says pres John Tsantes. "This puts pressure on the pr community to monitor the various sites the press are accessing thruout the day, as well as look at both print & online versions." He says Web usage has increased for the press, but it's clear practitioners have to stay current & leverage opportunities created by the Web.



WHAT MAKES A GOOD WEBSITE? RESPONDENTS ARE LOOKING FOR:

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| a) Corner room that lists contact info & announcements | d) Product info |
| b) General contact info (address, etc.) | e) Ability to download |
| c) Easy access to info | f) Archived press releases |
| | g) Audio clips of speeches |

Some good sites mentioned by respondents include Intel, Microsoft, IBM, Sun Microsystems, Apple Computer & Advanced Micro Devices. "All of these sites have similarities, including a search engine within the site, a virtual press room, and an archive of press releases."

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PR FIRM SITE?

Emerald City evaluated them according to the following

criteria -- which with a little interpretation can apply to all sites:

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| a) Active or temporary | e) Background info on clients |
| b) Interactivity capability | f) Access to EDGAR or other on-line info |
| c) Client listing (provided the client wants to be out front) | g) Hyperlinkage to client websites |
| d) Client press releases | |

Emerald City found few top-billing pr/ir agencies offer interactive info on clients. Edelman and Ogilvy provide a combination of interactivity & client info, but no links. Dix and Eaton has no site, and both Porter Novelli and Manning Selvage & Lee had sites under construction.

"It's hard for me to say what (other pr firms) should be doing, but our client felt they could increase their pr/ir offerings if they offered more resources on their site," says Blecher. His client, ir firm KSCA, opted for an interactive website newswire designed for members of the news media & investment community seeking timely press releases & client profiles.

Company plans a follow up survey to find out if any of the pr firms have become more interactive since the first study. (Emerald City survey from 212/779-3999; for Tsantes survey, 408/369-1500)

TIPS ON A PR BASIC: PREVENTING WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

It is a thorny problem for practitioners, by a) creating an uncomfortable work environment which lowers employee morale & impacts productivity; b) resulting in lawsuits that can damage an organization's reputation, relationships & financial well-being. Judgments can cost millions.

Every year, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission deals with 75,000 to 80,000 employment discrimination claims. It's a common problem, Patrick Nichols, dir r&d, Corpedia (Mesa, Az) told prr. "Everything from inappropriate jokes to pervasive discrimination."

HOW CAN PR HELP?

Practitioners can work with management to implement this 10-step action plan:

1. **Unbiased treatment.** Never treat certain employees less favorably than others because of their affiliation with a protected class such as race, religion, ethnicity, gender, age, pregnancy, military service, national origin or disability. Such treatment can be subtle, like deciding not to send an older secretary to a computer class because of a subconscious notion she's beyond learning about technology.
2. **No retaliation.** Don't retaliate against an employee for filing discrimination complaints. "Punishing employees for filing complaints or for cooperating in the investigation of a complaint is illegal."
3. **Eliminate illegal screening practices.** Illegal discrimination can often occur when an orgn's policies or employment testing have an unfair & negative impact on a protected class.
4. **Hire, fire & promote without bias.** Decisions must be based on legitimate, legally justifiable reasons -- never on personal opinions or bias.
5. **Set the example** for appropriate behavior. "It's important, especially for managers, to set the example for proper conduct in the workplace and to firmly express the orgn's intolerance to inappropriate discriminatory conduct." Performing every aspect of your job in a fair & impartial manner will continuously reinforce these sentiments.
6. **Regularly confer with employees** regarding discrimination concerns. Keep a close eye on your workplace by making regular tours. This enables you to limit the occurrence of discriminatory/other inappropriate behavior.
7. **Never ignore inappropriate** comments or behavior. Take immediate action against any discriminatory conduct -- no matter how minor it may seem. "By ignoring such behavior, you are condoning it."
8. **Involve employees.** Share the responsibility of maintaining a discrimination-free workplace with employees. Encourage their involvement by being available to hear grievances.
9. **Make reasonable accommodations** for employees with disabilities & religious needs. Construct a special workstation for someone with a wheelchair. Allow a half-day for people observing Good Friday. These actions greatly improve productivity & morale and reduce liability.
10. **Encourage diversity.** Teach employees the benefits of a multi-cultural workforce. "Promoting diversity not only improves the nature of your work environment, but can strengthen the quality of work as a whole." Rather than ban Christmas wreathes, for example, hang menorahs as well.

¶ OF RELATED INTEREST

Jewish Organizations in the DC area regard Dec. 25th as "Blessing Day." Volunteers help Christians enjoy their holiday by filling in for them at jobs. They also perform other community service acts such as bringing presents, desserts, games, etc. to residents of shelters, hospitals, senior centers, etc.