

MORE ITEMS . . .

Holland-America Cruises involved no public relations personnel in the Prinsendam rescue, reporter for the Anchorage Times told prr. Could easily have been the Prinsendam disaster. Media got their info from passengers, Coast Guard. Company CEO flew to site, refused to say much. But he and other top execs were "ministering to passengers' needs," as Anchorage Daily News phrased it. Ship's crew, captain, medics have been criticized by some survivors and officials. Will company use professional help during, after official investigation? Real hero was supertanker Williamsburgh which picked up & cared for stricken passengers -- but press reports did not mention which oil company owns the ship.

Videotape is being used widely to communicate with employees, informal survey at IABC conference shows. Whether produced by staff or vendors depends on slickness required. Respondents agree, as one put it, "it's easier to get someone to watch something on television than it is to get them to read a newsletter." Booklet discussing survey results available from Ketchum MacLeod & Grove Public Relations, 4 Gateway Ctr, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

AWARDS. Colorado Chap, PRSA, awards 1980 Gold Picks to Johns-Manville Corp for ongoing in-depth investor rels prgm, also winning special grand award; Johnston Group for ongoing prgm for Wyoming Coal Info Cmte, & pub'n for Petro-Lewis Corp; Del Calzo & Assocs for energy conservation prgm for US Dep't of Energy, & for new graphic theme for Kent Country Denver Day School; Entercom, Inc for info folder for Climax Molybdenum Co & for poster-mailer "The PR Game" for Colo. Chap, PRSA.

Dorothy Gregg, Celanese Corp (NYC) receives 1980 International Organization of Women Executives Leadership Award... PRSA selects 3 to receive highest individual awards: Harold Burson, Burson-Marsteller (NYC) receives Gold Anvil Award; H. Frazier Moore, School of Journalism & Mass Comms, Univ of Ga. receives Distinguished Service in Teaching Award; Lloyd Turner, Tandy Corp (Fort Worth) receives Paul M. Lund Service Award.

ELECTED. Inside Canada Public Relations Limited elects officers at its 29th annual meeting: pres, J.J. McKeage (J.J. McKeage & Assocs, Halifax); sr vice pres, Ed Martens (Wordsnorth Communication Services, Winnipeg); exec dir, Louis Cahill (Ontario Editorial Bureau).

1980-81 officers for New England Chap, PRSA: pres, David Estridge (Children's Hospital Med Ctr, Boston); vice pres, Marcelle Farrington (Sun Life Assurance Co. of Canada, Wellesley Hills, Mass); vice pres, Robert Newbert Jr. (Duffy & Shanley, Providence); sec'y, Jaime Haines (Conn Gen'l Life Ins, Hartford); treas, Thomas Whelton (Alliance of American Insurers, Boston).

1980-81 officers for Detroit Chap, PRSA: pres, Dale Jablonski (The Dale Corp); pres-elect, John Casey (MG & Casey); treas, Donald Danko (Nat'l Bank of Det.); sec'y, William Quigley Jr. (GM).

PRSA announces appointment of prof'l devel cmtte to serve through 1981 headed by Charles Newton Jr. (dir, plng & devel, Ruder & Finn, NYC). He was vice-chrm of the 1980 cmtte.

MERGER. Creamer Inc. (Providence) & Horton, Church & Goff (Providence) sign agreement to merge effective Jan. 1981. Creamer Inc./New England becomes largest adv/pr firm in NE. Exec mgmt will be: John Horton, chrm & CEO; Kingsley Meyer, vice chrm; Robinson Trowbridge, pres; Harry Case, Robert Lynch & George Stockman exec vp's.

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PR FRATERNITY GIVES NEWSPAPERS HIGHER SCORE FOR ACCURACY THAN DOES GENERAL PUBLIC, BUT IS LESS CONFIDENT OF BROADCASTERS

Fewer than half of the general public say that, in their own experience -- in things they have known about personally -- their newspapers have gotten the facts straight. In contrast to this January Gallup poll finding, pr reporter's Annual Survey finds 75.5% of practitioners saying newspapers tend to be accurate in matters relating to their company or industry. Even the more severely criticized electronic media are rated as accurate by 57.2% of practitioners.

These more positive attitudes would be explainable if the ideal relationship described by a Chicago pr firm head prevailed: "I deal with the same group of media people... They know me; I know them. We have mutual trust and respect through the years." Since almost 6 out of 10 (59%) of our sample are former journalists or broadcasters, understanding of the media may account for sympathetic attitudes.

Those who rated the media as inaccurate speak of media bias, distortion and sensationalism. A federal public affrs officer expressed these strong feelings: "Newspapers in this country are virtually always inaccurate because of haste -- complex issues treated superficially. It's a myth that newspapers report in-depth. TV is inaccurate because of a built-in bias. Many stories are only newsworthy if an advocacy position can be taken for the emotional side -- 60 Minutes, 20/20, etc. are great examples. Although

ACCURACY OF MEDIA -- BY INDUSTRY GROUPS

Practitioners, who both ought to know & are often the victims, rate media accuracy surprisingly high -- considering the amount of complaining they do on the topic.

Industry Group	Percent Who Say Newspapers Are Accurate	Percent Who Say Electronic Media Are Accurate
PR Firms	75%	53%
Ad Agencies	78	56
Other Consulting	75	38
Banks	67	44
Consumer Prod Cos	74	64
Industrials	73	39
Conglomerates	79	64
Transportation	77	69
Utilities	81	59
Hospitals	69	73
Educational	83	67
Trade/Prof'l Ass'n	75	47
Other Nonprofit	73	70
Government	81	81
Average	75.5%	57.2%



they frequently take my side of the conflict, I would be happier with an unbiased, but accurate, report."

Electronic media are rated lower in accuracy by all industry groups except hospitals. As shown in the table, 73% of hospital respondents score electronic media as accurate vs. 69% for newspapers. As community organizations, hospitals are usually covered by local tv & radio, and these are seen as doing a fairer reporting job than the networks. Fewer than half of banks, industrials, consulting firms & ass'ns say radio-tv reporting is accurate. Amazingly, 81% of gov't respondents claim broadcasters are accurate -- the highest of any category. What about all those bureaucrats & officials who keep telling us they were misquoted?

CONSENSUS WEAKENING ON  
PROFESSIONAL MEDIA RELATIONS NORMS,  
TOUGHER STANCE IS CONFIRMED

Almost 2/3rds (64%) of respondents choose the first of five media relations practices -- "Always cooperate with media requests" -- as reflecting their prevalent behavior. An exec

ass't to a state commission of education felt so strongly about this professional norm that he said: "Anyone who doesn't check #1 is in the wrong business." A Detroit dpr commented: "Serious for me to believe you are asking these questions" (about unconventional practices).

Altho still prevalent, the traditional norm is being questioned and replaced or supplemented by other practices. "Always cooperate with media requests" was qualified by such statements as "Always cooperate to varying degrees with all requests" and "Make that 'legitimate' requests." Choice #3 -- "Prepare for possible defense if you suspect unfair reporting" -- was combined with the first by almost a fourth (23%) of respondents. This extension of the prevalent norm indicates a reaction to the "new journalism" -- subjective investigative reporting.

The changing media environment explains the adoption of other media practices by a few practitioners. About 1 of 20 checked practice #2: "Only cooperate with reporters willing to take time for the whole story." A Salt Lake City industrial dpr explains: "We do not always cooperate with electronic media queries or requests after being badly burned by certain outlets."

A token number of practitioners checked the extreme practices -- which others found repugnant. About #4, "Ask to see final draft of article/tape if you suspect unfair reporting," a pr firm head exclaimed: "Never! Under no circumstances." Yet one dpr from Pittsburgh checked it and a few checked all the first four choices or just #1 and #4. About #4, these said: "Rarely needed if properly planned," or "Case study article only."

Only one practitioner checked practice #5: "You can't win so don't go out of your way to cooperate." This pr officer with 25 yrs experience displayed his view of the media world when elsewhere he said that the main problem or opportunity facing pr was: "To refuse to cooperate with situation that gives credibility to popular nonsense."

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

"A public issues subsidiary believed to be the first of its kind in Canada has been launched in Ottawa. The Public Issues Group, a division of John Doherty and Co. will assist business and government clients in identifying emerging political and social issues and developing appropriate responses.

Managing partner is Guy D.D. Stanley, Ph.D., award winning business writer with Canadian and international public affairs experience. Dr. Stanley is also an educator in the field of "issues management." Doherty is an affiliate of Inside Canada Public Relations Group.

"Speechwriter's Newsletter is new semi-monthly from the publishers of The Ragan Report. Inaugural issue has articles on step-by-step speech preparation, speakers' bureaus, how to organize a meeting, info sources for speeches, in-depth reviews of the process followed by two award-winning speechwriters & their products. (\$82/yr from 407 S. Dearborn, Chi 60605.)

HOW THE WORLD'S BIGGEST VIEWS CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

General Motors' income is larger than all but a few nations. If anyone might be able to ignore public opinion, GM is the one. The following postscript to the company's 10th annual Public Interest Report states GM's position:

"Informed choice is not only the foundation of every democracy, but the basis for a free and fair market system. With each choice -- to buy or not to buy -- customers "vote" for or against General Motors' products. GM and its competitors strive to win customers by advertising and otherwise informing their choices. Through competitive sales, the extent of our success -- along with the reputation earned by our products -- becomes part of the public record.

"Similarly public is the financial account which General Motors renders every year to stockholders. Based on this information, those who own the Corporation are informed about its financial progress.

"Oversight of all General Motors business is vested in its Board of Directors responsible for representing, not just one, but all of GM's many constituencies. General Motors' by-laws charge both management and the Board with eliciting information about the state of the Corporation, and with

reporting it as needed -- to stockholders, dealers, employes and the public. As noted, under the law we report our activities extensively to government.

"In the end, however, General Motors' 'license' to continue doing business does not depend on government approval as much as it does on the Corporation's overall acceptability to the public at large. Even when the informed choices of customers and stockholders bring success in the marketplace, General Motors could not long survive should the strong current of public opinion turn against it or its policies.

"That current is formed in part by people who have never purchased a new GM product -- and perhaps never will. General Motors' first report to the public was based on the belief that informed choice is the proper foundation for public opinion about its activities. This principle underlies the continuing purpose of this Public Interest Report: rendering GM's account to the society in which it operates."

(For copy of Report, write Thomas Mullen, dir pr planning, General Motors, Detroit 48202.)