

ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR PRACTITIONERS

¶15 Chicago foundations have formed fund to help non-profits cope with energy squeeze. More than \$500,000 has been allocated to finance conservation measures in the form of grants, 3% loans & no-interest loans. Fund helps to fill gap in gov't aid programs. Many nonprofits "have fallen through the cracks" of gov't assistance, according to Eugene Scanlon of Chicago Community Trust.

¶Prudence still succumbs to financial temptation for the average American, according to recent study probing credit attitudes & habits. 70% of 1807 adults agreed that "bank credit cards make it too easy to build up debts." Despite recent credit squeeze, however, credit cards remain popular convenience: 71% hold at least one card; over two-thirds of these use their card at least twice a month, and one-third of these report using cards five or more times a month. For more info, contact Response Analysis, Research Park, Route 206, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

¶Today's managers prefer authoritarian leadership to participative and bureaucratic management styles, shows survey of more than 50,000 executives by management training firm MNO Programs International (Columbia, Mo.). Observation was based on votes cast in response to role-playing seminar which exhibited all three styles. Asked to choose a president of hypothetical firm, participants chose the authoritarian figure. Participants explained "The complexities of the business world today require this kind of immediate and decisive leadership," according to MNO pres. Dr. Don Webb. Findings contradict worldwide movement toward post-democratic decision styles where consensus is the key. For more info write MNO, P.O. Box 98, Columbia, Mo. 65205.

— ADVICE TO PRACTITIONERS FROM TOP MANAGEMENT —

1. Are you telling the public only what you want them to know...what you think they want to know...or what they really want to know?
2. Do you make an effort at personal contact with your various publics, including the media? Or are you -- so to speak -- staying in the rose garden and issuing press releases?
3. Are you consistent in your efforts with the press? Is there continual contact, or only when you have a problem and need cooperation?
4. Are you offering advice and counsel to management?
5. Do you truly think of yourself as a professional? That your role, your job, is every bit as important as the legal or other staffers? If you do, and it shows, you'll have the confidence of management, and you can operate successfully now and in the future.

-- Charles Kittrell, exec vp, Phillips Petroleum,  
keynoting the 1980 PRSA Institute

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

PEOPLE. At T.J. Ross, William Gaskill is chrm & CEO, David Frank is pres & steps up to chrm emeritus; Gordon Sears chief operating officer.

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3 KEY NEWS ITEMS: COURT EXPANDS ORGANIZATIONAL SPEECH,  
U.S. CHOOSES CANADIAN COMPUTER-FED TV SYSTEM,  
WALL STREET JOURNAL SAYS NICE THINGS ABOUT PUBLIC RELATIONS

June events, taken in concert, provide virtual prediction of the future of public relations. Each is culmination of growing trend:

1. U.S. Supreme Court gave organizational free speech another lift by permitting utilities to use bill stuffers to speak out on issues. Strong 7 - 2 vote struck down N.Y. Public Service Commission order prohibiting discussion of "controversial issues of public policy" in customers' bills, since they are "captive audience." Justices decided this infringed on First Amendment rights of utilities, infringing freedom of speech. Anyone who doesn't want to read the company's viewpoint, stated the Court, can throw the material away. Decision is setback for environmental groups, conservationists & opponents of nuclear power which supported ban on use of stuffers.

In companion decision, justices voted 8 - 1 to strike down a N.Y. order barring utilities from advertising to promote use of electricity. "Commercial free speech" has received increasing support from current Court.

2. Canada's Teledon electronic information system was selected for Public Broadcasting Service test of futuristic tv. Like competing British & French systems, it provides huge library of data via tv sets -- from used car ads to Smithsonian Institution library. Washington trial involves 60 test homes served by WETA-TV, PBS affiliate. Blue ribbon sponsor list includes Nat'l Science Found., Corp. for Public Broadcasting, Nat'l Telecommunications & Information Admin., and HEW. Canadian system is also under test in 2,000 homes in 6 provinces. NYC, L.A., Chicago & Dallas may get future tests, Teledon makers announced. British Teletext has been under test by KSL-TV (Salt Lake) for over a year. Teledon reportedly offers more finely-detailed pictures. (See prr 1/1/79 & 8/21/78.)

3. "Work in PR Now a Route to Top Jobs" read WSJ headline June 24. After series of damning articles, this is a switch. "Beset by organized consumer and labor groups, antagonistic politicians and the press, companies are channeling more talent into public relations, offering PR people fatter paychecks, and handing out loftier titles," article reports. Also mentioned is rise of publically active CEO & importance of public relations advisors. However, WSJ still perceives practitioners as "shield between the public and the corporation."

Quality of practitioners is also attacked: "Executives say that the majority of the people now in the profession aren't capable of handling the tasks required these days." Writer implies that best practitioners were plucked from other professions such as Mobil's ex-lawyer Herb Schmertz. (If you missed article, write prr for copy.)



KNOXVILLE'S '82 WORLD'S FAIR COMBINES ENERGY SYMPOSIA, URBAN RENEWAL, ENTERTAINMENT TO PUT SECTION OF BOOMING SOUTHEAST ON MAP

An internationally sanctioned exposition, a forum for mingling whimsy and serious purpose, a world's fair may be the ultimate

special event. 1982 World's Fair, set in Knoxville, Tenn. expects 11 million visitors, participation by organizations & gov'ts from around the globe.

For exhibitors, says marketing vp Sandy Quinn, "It is a unique way to reach the general public, or a specific public in a pleasant, uncluttered, relatively uncommercial setting." Public interest groups & church organizations as well as corporations are planning exhibits.

Because it depends on consent of the host city as well as on participation of responsible organizations, Fair must have a social conscience. "Whenever you're going to go into a city and turn it upside down and create this gigantic thing in the middle of it, there's always a credibility problem," says Jeff Brein of Quinn, Brein & McCarthy marketing firm. "If you're dealing with a major corporation, they want to know everything about you, your people and objectives, and the community before they're going to attach their name to it."

POSITIONING A REGION VIA A FAIR  
"This event, coming in a region of the country which for generations has been considered a quiet area of American life and traditions, is not only surprising, but offers a new insight into why this entire section is emerging as the most dynamic and attractive investment opportunity in the Nation."

Goal for Knoxville is to convert 70 blighted acres adjacent to Univ. of Tenn. campus into productivity. "We really went after an urban renewal project," Quinn told prr, "and asked ourselves 'how can we do it and pay for it in a free enterprise way?'" Fair will leave parks, lagoon, restored historical buildings -- not empty, useless site. Fair Pres. S.H. Roberts, Jr. is former vp-urban & public afrs at U of T.

Theme -- energy -- is natural for the area, home of Oak Ridge labs & TVA. Besides exhibits, series of symposia on energy issues by leading international experts will be held. First is set for this fall. Financing, usual bugaboo, was solved by \$25 million revolving term loan from 45 banks, headed by Chemical Bank (NYC).

To maintain entertainment attraction of fair, theme is interpreted in broad sense. "Energy can be creative energy, human energy, too," says Quinn, "so that if we have the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, it will fit in just as well with the theme as demonstrations of solar energy."

MT. ST. HELENS ALSO A PUBLIC RELATIONS DISASTER; EMERGENCY PLAN LACKING

Importance of designating single information source in a crisis is reinforced by information bungling following eruptions of Mount St. Helens. Seattle Times calls it "The Other St. Helens Disaster: Public

Relations Breakdown." Public faced weeks of conflicting information, managerial rivalry, recalcitrance & ineptitude.

Reporters were tossed like hot potatoes between state agencies -- sheriffs' offices, U.S. Forest Service, Red Cross -- which either denied responsibility for releasing information or gave conflicting reports. Rumors & frustration were generated by a missing persons list which fluctuated inexplicably, uncertainty over goals of rescue efforts & even who was in charge.

Apparently, federal gov't is better organized for dealing with disasters than Washington state. Federal Emergency Management Agency was brought in 6 days after first eruption, generally gets high marks from reporters for rumor-squelching.

But reporters' troubles weren't over. State restricted access to the "red zone" -- 1500 sq. mi. area around the mountain. Passes were issued on one-day basis but not given until day after application. Reporters had to specify routes, mode of travel & duration of stay. This created impossible situation for reporters -- who need to get to scene of story when it's happening. Also, boundaries of "red zone" were kept "secret" for a time, which raised question of how public could observe entry restriction.

Press conference intended to explain restrictions went unannounced, was held in inconvenient spot. Result was that few attended. State gradually eased up, issued 30-day permits. But restrictions are still onerous & being challenged constitutionally. Times concludes, "the Mount St. Helens public relations disaster continues unabated."

SAYS CHURCH'S SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ROLE WILL GROW, OTHER INSTITUTIONS WILL JOIN

Ten years after Episcopalians began movement by asking GM to quit South Africa, church groups are increasingly

vocal on social responsibility. There is "growing realization in Protestant denominations, Roman Catholic orders and dioceses that the gospel requires much more of the church than comfortably collecting dividends & monitoring stock performance," says Tim Smith of Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. He sees other institutions joining the fray in the 80s:

1. Churches will work in closer, more effective coalitions.
2. Trade unions will discover the power of the proxy as a means to influence management.
3. Universities, unions, foundations & public pension funds will file pertinent resolutions.
4. Selective & wholesale divestment of stock will be used as means of opposing such practices as bank lending to South Africa.
5. There will be aggressive, angry counterattacks against church action.
6. More corporations will build social responsibility criteria into their decision-making process.
7. There will be a growing number of cogent, convincing & critical questions about the economic system itself.

REMINDER:  
It's not too late to contribute your insights & information to pr reporter's 16th Annual Survey of the Profession. If you're still holding on to your questionnaire, please fill it out and send it along. If you've misplaced yours, write or call our offices; another will be on its way to you that day.