

THINGS PROFESSIONALS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Foreign execs fear U.S. inflation far less than their American counterparts. According to survey by Bliss, Barefoot & Assocs (NYC), more than 60% would either "not change" or would "increase" their commitment in U.S. Most have lived & worked in countries where double-digit inflation is not new. Other reasons for confidence include "faith in 'free' enterprise system & appreciation of U.S. political stability."

Do you need a "poll" -- or a "survey"? Howard Schuman, dir. Survey Research Center (Univ. of Mich.) notes that commercial organizations like Gallup and Harris take polls while academic institutions like his conduct surveys. While polls tend to focus on single questions, Schuman believes real difference lies in semantics. "Poll" is short word derived from ancient Germanic term referring to "head," holds wide general appeal. "Survey" has two syllables, French/Latin origin. It conveys greater refinement, thus appeals more to educated ear. Not surprisingly some commercial organizations are switching to the term "survey." (For copy of article in AAPOR newsletter, write prr.)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

PEOPLE. Susan Closter-Godoy named dir, pub rels & adv, Newport College - Salve Regina (Newport, RI)...Fraser/Assocs. (D.C.) names Merrill Rose dir, corp cons svcs...Alan Akerson appointed pr counselor, Fleishman-Hillard (St. Louis)... General Motors (Detroit) appoints William Quigley dir, field opers for pr staff...Harvey Hubbell, Inc. (Orange, Ct.) names John Brandt dir, fin pub rels ...L.A. Board of Public Works appoints Patricia Smith pub info dir...Lonza Inc. (Fair Lawn, NJ) names Karen Slifkin mgr, adv & pub rels...James Bradley joins Mitchell Mann Advertising (Manchester, NH) as acct exec & pub rels counsel... National Life Ins. Co. (Montpelier) names William Start dpr...Michael Shenkman joins National Fire Protection Ass'n (Boston) as pa specialist.

VICE PRESIDENTS. Laurie Kohler Halladay, Fleishman-Hillard (St. Louis)...David Lucas, R.D. Bailey & Assocs (Phoenix) ...Barton Sotnick, vp-comms & pr, Bank of N.J. (Maywood)...F. Norbert Kraich, vp-pa, Bill Rolle & Assocs (D.C.)... Donna Cunningham Babecki, Harshe-Rotman & Druck (Chi)...Walter Sperr, Richard

Weiner, Inc. (NYC)...Christopher Ebner, sr vp, Ketchum MacLeod & Grove (NYC) ...James Rollans, vp-investor rels, Dart Industries (L.A.).

Since becoming chief executive, I, like so many other CEOs, have found that I spend an increasing amount of time dealing with the world outside our company. I have learned -- sometimes the hard way -- that it is not so much what the facts are in any given circumstances, but what the public "perceives" as fact. In this context, I suggest that the press -- the media -- can be a mirror for us, reflecting an outsider's point-of-view. If their report is less than satisfactory to us, perhaps we have to improve our communicating as much as we like to think they should improve their reporting.

-- T. Mitchell Ford, chrm & pres Emhart Corp., at Connecticut Business Journalism awards banquet.

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AS FREE SPEECH/FREE PRESS ISSUES PROLIFERATE,  
PRACTITIONERS JOIN JOURNALISTS IN FIRST AMENDMENT CONGRESS;  
76% IN GALLUP POLL IGNORANT OF BASIC FREEDOMS

First Amendment freedoms are what make possible our pluralistic, democratic society. Yet there is evidence the public is withdrawing support from the First Amendment. Public relations practitioners have tremendous stake in this issue. First Amendment is the foundation of the court of public opinion, the basis of public relations practice.

In this era of public participation, why would Americans question the system that makes it possible? Commentators cite the following: 1) advocacy journalism, biased reporting, group-think White House press corps; 2) more interest by media companies in profits than in fulfilling their Fourth Estate function; 3) single issue pressure groups, representing small minorities, stall public decision-making with outrageous staged events & high pressure lobbying; 4) large corporations & institutions unbalance public debate with high cost campaigns which their questioners cannot match -- and pass the costs along to the public; 5) religious groups hide behind tax exemptions and self-righteousness to tell the rest of us how to conduct public policy.

Gallup's study, conducted for the First Amendment Congress, polled 1,532 adults. 32% said that present restrictions on media "are not strict enough." Only 17% said they were "too strict." Another 32% said "about right." This contrasts with 1958 research which showed 58% would disapprove of placing greater curbs on what newspapers print, and only 21% would approve stricter regulation. 76% did not know what the First Amendment is. Even among college educated, only 42% did know. A majority of those polled felt media do not accurately report events.

WICI pres. Barbara Haas cites a Penn State Univ. survey which found 67% of that state's legislators think the media are unfair. These are the officials who could enact press & speech controls -- and they have a "mental set" for just such regulation. She sees self-regulation as the answer -- e.g. ethics codes with enforcement clauses similar to PRSA's. There are at present several important First Amendment issues reflecting this situation:

1. court decisions affecting reporters' notes & testimony
2. court decisions banning press & public from trials

PR'S CHARTER

"Do you know those 45 extraordinary words?" asks Jean Otto, First Amendment Congress chairman:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

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| 3. debilitating amendments to Freedom of Information Act | 9. privacy rights & new interpretations of libel   |
| 4. commercial free speech                                | 10. reforms of the legal system (such as the Omnibus Crime Bill) which would provide jail sentences for such activities as "demonstrating within 100 feet of a courthouse" |
| 5. media concentration & profit-orientation              | 11. potential FCC regulation of "electronic newspapers"  |
| 6. Fairness Doctrine                                     |  |
| 7. radio deregulation                                    |  |
| 8. lobbying reform                                       |  |

What Is the First Amendment Congress?

A group of media organizations concerned primarily with press freedom organized last year to investigate the problem. Two congresses were held, from which the major recommendation was that the public be "educated." Subsequently, public relations organizations have been meeting with the Board of Trustees to organize a massive public relations campaign on behalf of the First Amendment. Media groups include Society of Professional Journalists, Radio & Television News Directors Ass'n, Amer. Newspaper Publishers Ass'n, UPI, Associated Press Managing Editors, Amer. Society of Newspaper Editors, Nat'l Ass'n of Broadcasters, Nat'l Broadcast Editorial Ass'n, Nat'l Newspaper Ass'n, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, AP and Nat'l Conference of Editorial Writers. PRSA is involved, representing itself and a consortium including Nat'l School Public Relations Ass'n, Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, Academy of Hospital Public Relations and Amer. Society for Hospital Public Relations. Women In Communications, long concerned with these issues, is also working with the Congress.

ISSUES WATCH:  
SEC URGES MORE SHAREHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN CORP. GOVERNANCE -- OR WILL REGULATE

Three yr. staff study of corporate governance issues, about to be released by SEC, calls for strengthening accountability thru shareholder involvement. If progress is not forthcoming, Commission's statement warns, "additional rulemaking ... and perhaps legislative proposals may be necessary."

Major sore spot is whether shareholders are able to nominate candidates to board of directors. SEC feels this is "significant" in determining accountability. 1979 proxy statement disclosures showed only 29% of 1200 corporations had nominating committees. Of those only 3/4 actually considered shareholder nominations. In contrast, audit committees, composed of independent directors, are widespread so SEC does not expect to take action there.

Corporate political activities may also come under increasing gov't -- and public -- scrutiny. Study urges soliciting public comment on number of issues arising from Supreme Court decision in First National Bank of Boston vs. Belotti. (Court ruled shareholders may decide "through the procedures of corporate democracy, whether corporations should engage in debate on public issues." See pr 10/29/79.) Comments would include whether there should be special requirements for corporate disclosure of political expenditures. Also, whether shareholder proposals for corporate political activities should be handled differently than other shareholder proposals.

Beefed up social reporting may loom on SEC horizon. Study opposes mandating disclosure of "more specific categories of so-called socially significant information."

However, it asks for green light on developing rule proposal that would require companies to tell shareholders where to obtain environment compliance reports.

Report will be in print & available this month. Testimony to growing gov't paper burden, it will number some 700 pages.

ADVERTISING, PUBLIC RELATIONS MERGER MANIA CONTINUES:  
DOREMUS AGREES TO WED BBDO INTERNATIONAL

Executives at Doremus & Co., nation's 8th largest public relations & advertising firm, have agreed in principal to acquisition bid by \$1 billion-plus ad agency, BBDO International. If approved by Board of Directors, stockholders & SEC, merger will become 5th marriage of major ad agency & pr firm within past couple of years.

Under agreement, Doremus would continue to operate as independent subsidiary. Chrm. Franklin E. Schaffer & Pres. Barry McMennamin will still head operations. Headquartered in NYC, Doremus has 8 regional offices, London branch & network of affiliates. According to a spokesperson, the publicly owned company hopes move will "help attract large investments." Gross billings for first 6 mos. of '80 were \$50,769,000. Net income for same period totalled \$313,000.

BBDO Int'l ran substantial public relations operation until 1970 when it closed shop citing lack of profitability. Current capabilities are limited. Doremus is "hoping new parent company will refer some public relations clients."

PRACTITIONERS AS "RENAISSANCE MEN":  
IT TAKES PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY, POLITICAL SCIENCE;  
NOW ADD HISTORY TO YOUR LIST

Sense of historical perspective is listed by many commentators as badly needed ingredient in practitioner's background. For starters, the cliché that history often repeats itself seemingly holds true. Dr. Joel Tarr, prof. of history & public policy at Carnegie-Mellon Univ. (Pittsburgh), advocates using past to help solve policy problems. He believes business, as well as gov't, will find it strengthens decisionmaking.

In NYTimes article, Tarr says arbiters of public policy are often almost exclusively lawyers & economists. He believes lawyers lack historical perspective, economists deal in too much theory & statistics. He says historians have as much to contribute.

If he can convince business & gov't to agree, it may mean jobs for unemployed history scholars -- in an area which calls for public relations professionals.

PRSA president Pat Jackson told Milwaukee press last week he believes it will be essential for practitioners in the '80s to achieve an historical perspective. Business is just realizing that it rests on the public's consent. "But if corporations knew their history of the 18th & 19th centuries, in England & the US, they'd know there were tremendous legislative struggles just to get the right to form corporations. There's a tremendous amount we can learn from history."

Several universities now have programs or courses in applied history. Among them are Carnegie-Mellon, Univ. of California (Santa Barbara) and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government which recently introduced a course called Uses of History.