

ship eligibility requirements. This was a primary recommendation of the Lesly task force on the Stature & Role of Public Relations. To carry out this & other proposals in that report, Awad appointed 15 senior practitioners to a President's Advisory Cmte. When he related this to the semi-annual joint boards meeting of PRSA & CPRS, 1st vp Don LaBelle of the Canadian society responded with this humorous depiction of the field: "Public relations is a non-tactile, semi-sensuous, quasi-scientific process relative to the communications function."

In place of tips & tactics, this week you will find a readership survey. It is planned as a how-to guide ... as well as to solicit information & opinions which will make pr reporter better able to serve your specific needs. The survey is based on latest techniques for such questionnaires. While answering it, note the strategies & formats employed to gather candid, useful information from a broad constituency. We hope it will be useful as a resource for your own surveys. But please don't keep this questionnaire for that purpose. If you'd like one or more clean copies for your files, write a note in the margin. They will be sent by return mail.

JAPAN, ARAB NATIONS CAN TEACH US ALSO
SOME BASICS ABOUT PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS,
SAYS IPRA PRESIDENT

last week. This means "being open to the culture of our neighbors." For instance, we must approach the Islamic world "without aggressivity." The Koran teaches one of the basic lessons for practitioners: "The duty to listen comes before the right to speak." From the Japanese we can learn how "to create harmony within a group." Other memorable points in an excellent short address:

1. "Public relations practitioners are the only ones whose mere existence is justified by listening to others."
2. "Up to now we have been mainly concerned with commercial oriented information." Now we need "intelligence oriented information" which "gives attention to the ability of our publics to understand. We must no longer expect to put out information to please our peers & employers; we must only put out useful information adapted to the understanding capacity of our publics."
3. "Free access to non-digested information is meaningless. The worst inflation we suffer from is the inflation of information."
4. "The most powerful energy of the contemporary world is neither petrol nor atom. It is information."

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. Foundation for PR Research & Education officers for 1982 are: pres, E.N. Brandt (sr counselor-pa, Dow Chemical, Midland, Mich); vp, James Fox

(pres, Fox Public Relations, NYC); sec'y-treas, John Felton (vp corp comms, McCormick & Co, Hunt Valley, Md).

Vol.24 No.45
November 23, 1981

SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS, A TOUGH FIELD, EXHIBITS RISING SKILLS,
BEGINS TO CONVERT BRAINPOWER OF EDUCATORS TO WINNING PUBLIC CONSENT

School practitioners face one of the stiffest challenges in public relations today. Consider: 1) staffs are small or nonexistent; 2) practitioners must handle everything for a wide range of publics; 3) everyone is a stakeholder (voter & taxpayer) in the schools, but a smaller percentage are customers (parents) as youth population declines; 4) since historically people blame contemporary "decline of civilization" on teachers, not parents, harsh attacks occur regularly, especially from right-wing groups fearful of "mind control"; 5) cost-cutting mood hits schools hard since they are usually largest expense of local gov'ts; 6) any increase in costs must be put to the voters, not passed along in price hikes a la corporations or tuition rises a la colleges.

Despite this scenario, or because of it, stature of school practitioners is rising. Many are now ass't supts, equivalent to vp. Jobs offer unusual ability to sharpen skills, as school practitioners have personal interaction with a wider range of publics than professionals in other sectors experience. An example is the pres-elect of Nat'l School PR Ass'n, Bill Banach of Macomb Intermediate School Dist (Mt. Clemens, Mich).

1. His Communication Services group handles sophisticated internal & external communication programs as well as management & staff training for 21 school districts. Also "forecasts societal trends that may impact education," according to its printed annual program which is distributed to employees, press & public.

2. A marketing program, based on management-by-objectives, is "flying like you wouldn't believe," Banach told prr. "Everyone -- everyone! -- is supporting it," predictable because it was designed by participative process. Objectives are a) to make parents aware of programs in reading, writing, arithmetic; b) to involve educators in the marketing effort; c) to motivate teachers & staff to implement ideas that will improve schools.

AT THE FOREFRONT
OF A UNIFIED PROFESSION

Due to their high and very local visibility, school practitioners play a vital role in the struggle to win public acceptance for public relations. When they are threatened with job loss or budget cuts as "frills," the profession suffers in esteem. When the voting public demands more information & participation from schools, their abilities determine how pr is perceived by thousands who will never meet or interact with a corporate practitioner. Movement of ex-school practitioners to top jobs in other sectors shows the group's professional status. Examples: Bill Henry is now vp-pa, Health Industry Mfrs Ass'n (DC). Ann Barkelew has just been named vp-corp afms at Munsingwear (Mpls). Deane Haerer is dpr, Stanley Consultants (Muscatine, Iowa).

3. Employees form communication teams. Teachers, administrators, bus drivers serve together. Internal teams work to achieve One Clear Voice communication within a school. External teams communicate with the public. Teams undergo regular training, devise their own projects ranging from newsletters to involving senior citizens or local industry in the schools.

4. Targeted communication vehicles are deployed. An "idea series" offers think pieces to teachers in an attractive, illustrated, 11x4½ format. Magnetized message for families attaches to refrigerator doors. Message pencils go to students.

5. All programs are based on research, most of it conducted by the dep't. District-wide attitude survey, released publicly, formed basis for marketing plan. Volunteers scan publications from Harvard Business Review to Field and Stream for emerging issues, good & bad words on education. "The Scanner," a monthly, reprints the findings.

6. Graphics is modern, well used. Marketing effort has as theme an apple with a big number 1 on it. It appears everywhere. Mailing labels feature a photo of an appealing grade-schooler busy on the playground. Telephones have 2-inch red circles pasted on them, reminding callers "Our reputation is on the line."

SEMANTICS MAY BE HOTTEST PR TOOL AS AOPA JOINS THOSE CONCERNED ABOUT MISLEADING EFFECT OF NAMES

Called them "air traffic controllers" leads to "the great misconception that someone, other than pilots, actually controls aircraft," claims Aircraft Owners & Pilots Ass'n (DC). It has asked FAA to officially change the name to "air traffic coordinator." What they really do is coordinate traffic movement -- and then on only 20% of the flights, says AOPA. Other 80% operate without them, are flown by AOPA's members in smaller planes.

Calling them "air traffic controllers" leads to "the great misconception that someone, other than pilots, actually controls aircraft," claims Aircraft Owners & Pilots Ass'n (DC). It has

Recent issues of prr have reported an increasing number of cases where semantic change has been sought to clarify public perception. Royal Bank of Canada started calling its sr. mortgage mgr "ombudsman," gained recognition for concern about families under pressure from high interest rates. Fowler-McCracken Commission avoided "reindustrialization" with "innovation & productivity." David Stockman revealed "supply side" sells better than "trickle down." Jack Kemp passed his "jobs creation" act which failed as "capital formation." U.S. gov't retitled "public information officers" as "public affairs specialists." And ye editor got upset when the Standard Occupation Manual listed pr under "Artists & Entertainers." As a speaker at PRSA's 1981 Institute said, "Words are change agents."

FREUDIAN SLIP

Noting agreement among PRSA conference speakers that business will not fund the nation's social programs, last week's issue stated, "Russia feels they shouldn't." That should have read "Rusher" -- meaning William, the well known conservative spokesman and ardent anti-communist.

HOW TO SURVIVE THE PR JUNGLE: DON'T GRAB ALL THE CREDIT

NY counselor Chester

Burger gave a PRSSA seminar advice on the qualities that make the difference for survival in public relations:

1) Good professional skills. 2) Broad perspective on society, intellectual curiosity about the environment, sensitivity to problems. Don't be superficial with "headline"

answers. 3) Narrow viewpoint of the industry in which you are employed. 4) Personal relationships, specifically with supervisors. Career depends on your boss. His or her subjective evaluation and not the objective quality of your work is what's important. Make your boss look good. Specific example: Chet began working as a page at CBS and in 14 years was appointed Director of News. However, he was fired because he grabbed all the credit and was only concerned with his own ambitions. Therefore, he maintains that people get fired if they irritate their bosses.

ANOTHER PRACTITIONER NAMED CEO: DICK RISK AT S.W. POWER ADMIN.

Richard B. Risk Jr. has been named the 4th administrator of the Southwestern Power Administration (Tulsa) since its founding 28 yrs ago. SPA is a gov't owned utility serving 6 states. Job is equivalent to deputy ass't cabinet sec'y or 3-star general. Most recently exec dir of Oklahomans for Energy & Jobs on leave from pr responsibilities at Public Service Co. of Okla., Risk, 39, has a background in industry & Air Force public affairs posts. Nominating him, Sen. Don Nickles wrote: "His public affairs background uniquely qualifies him for the position, as many of the administrator's responsibilities lie in conveying electric & hydroelectric mandates to people of diverse interests." At Public Service Risk was spokesperson during the Black Fox nuclear plant protests (pr 12/3 & 24/79).

IMPORTANT ITEMS FROM THE PRSA CONFERENCE

"Consumer education rather than consumer regulation" is the motto of White House counselor Mary Elizabeth Quint. She reinforced previous reports of the move to self-regulation in consumer protection. She feels we are "now witnessing revolutionary changes in the domestic social policy of the United States government."



New housemark by Garrett/Lewis/Johnson (Atlanta) unveiled at the conference.

"PRSA will become a "cooperating organization" of the Fowler-McCracken Commission. "Renewal of America in the 80's" is theme, with significant involvement of White House, federal departments, Congress, business, academia & diplomats. Other cooperating organizations include the Conference Board, Foreign Policy Ass'n and Advertising Council. Study of economic revitalization by blue blue ribbon group will be completed next year.

"Consider using printers at meeting site, rather than shipping. Costs may be reduced. Transportation foul-ups are eliminated. Last minute changes are possible. Programs for PRSA's big honors banquet never arrived from air freight, so biographies of major award winners and names of citation winners were not available. But by using a local source, Soodik Printing, publicity dir Kathy Hyett produced a well-received daily conference newspaper with few problems.

"An official PRSA definition of public relations will be proposed during '82. Lack of a generally accepted formal definition was decried by several speakers at the conference, from incoming pres Joe Awad's inaugural to Assembly debaters on member-