

EDITORS WANT PHONE CALLS FROM EXECS BUT WARY OF MEETINGS, SURVEY REVEALS; STILL SUFFER FROM SAME GAFFES BY PRACTITIONERS

Surprisingly, 71% of business press editors think phone calls from execs are a good idea. 61% want to receive more than they do now, finds a survey by Simon/Public Relations (LA). Study of the likes, dislikes of business & financial editors & reporters also finds editors are less enthusiastic about meeting with execs -- "depends on the importance of the company to my readers."

Regarding story queries, 70% prefer them written. Less than a third have no preference between written or phoned. 57% approve phone follow-up to a query, but others indicate a call could hurt consideration. Forbes bureau chief offers typical reply: "Let the editor respond if he or she is interested."

Only 15% of respondents give pr firm people good marks, but 2/3 believe a majority of company pr people are "helpful, efficient and knowledgeable." While the reason for this is not readily apparent, David Simon surmises: "The company person may have more answers at his fingertips and be able to reach executives faster to set up meetings, phone interviews or get answers to questions."

Editors responding suggest these guidelines; that they are familiar indicates many do not yet practice them.

DO	AVOID
1. Know your industry company and needs of the publication inside out.	1. Stonewalling, misleading or lying to an editor ("a fatal mistake").
2. Make fewer, but better quality, approaches.	2. Trying to place same story in several publications.
3. Include all pertinent info in releases.	3. Phoning at deadline.
4. Don't waste editor's time.	4. Confusing consumer news with business news.
5. Know you client better.	5. Burying the news peg in deference to client's name: "Joe Blow, pres of XYZ, announces..."
	6. Over-selling.
	7. Interposing yourself between editor & source inside company ("the absolute worst").
	8. Proposing inappropriate stories.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. Women In Communications officers for 1982-83: pres: Susan Chilcott (pub'ns dir, Univ of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls); immed past pres: Carolyn Johnson (assoc prof, dep't of comms, Calif State Univ-Fullerton); pres-elect: Lynn Haskin (assoc prof, journalism, Penn State Univ, Delaware County Campus).

RETIRING. Scott Cutlip, dean, Univ of Georgia School of Journalism & Mass Comn, will relinquish his deanship in June 1983 and will serve as visiting professor.

DIED. John J. Bell (San Francisco), 46, sr vp corp comms, Bank of America; named one of top 10 in corp pr by BusinessWeek magazine.

Vol.25 No.44  
November 8, 1982

CHANGING A NAME RISKS LOSING QUALITIES BUILT INTO THE OLD ONE BUT MORE & MORE ORGANIZATIONS ARE DOING IT; PR CHALLENGE IS TO ESTABLISH A NEW IDENTITY WITHOUT LEAVING PUBLICS BEHIND

What's in a name? To public relations practitioners, everything. Those one or more words are the cornerstone of an organization's identity. Changing is serious business but an increasingly common occurrence. pr reporter talked with 3 banks undergoing name changes. "Few people realize the enormity of a move like this," concludes Harold Webster, vp corp comms, Northwest Bancorporation (Mpls).

Tho each ended up with shorter, simpler names, "moving toward a common identity" is the primary motivation. "We have a variety of images," explains Barry Allen, First National Bank of Boston's vp, dir corp comms. "We decided to pull them under one umbrella called Bank of Boston." Webster, whose bank will now be Norwest, concurs and adds another reason: "It's difficult to implement a single strategy until we can act as a unified organization. We're competing against monolithic national organizations. We want to impress our customers that we, too, are capable of acting as a single-punch organization."

Rhode Island's Fleet Financial Group has an additional motivation. "Our old name, Industrial National Bank, caused a great deal of confusion. Internationally the reaction was 'What industry are you associated with?' In the Midwest there is a generic type of bank called an industrial bank," Elaine Weeks, mktg svcs mgr, told prr.

Take It Slow & In Stages Bank of Boston is using an evolutionary strategy. "We haven't made it a big, dramatic, jarring, revolutionary thing. Very much a staged program -- everything in stages."

- 1. No big announcements but quietly changing advertising, brochures, communications to the new name.
- 2. Next step is a "linkage" campaign "to show that First National Bank of Boston and its affiliates are under the wings of the Bank of Boston." This will be their theme for 6 months.
- 3. Legal name change takes place in March but won't become effective until May 1. "It takes a lot of time to change signs, forms, business cards, stationery. We need that time."
- 4. A major comms effort will take place from May to July -- "an absolute blitz. We'll unveil all the signs at the same

When others are shortening & modernizing names, why stick with a moniker like Modern Talking Picture Service? Especially in an age of satellites, microwaves & videodiscs? "Because we were there at the beginning" when talkies were the breakthrough. Celebrating their 45th anniversary, MTPS's heritage is an important part of their identity. Their name declares it.



time. That's when Bank of Boston will become reality.

"to show people we're contemporary & innovative at the same time." Type face has also been contemporized.

5. Bank's 200 yr old logo, the eagle, has also been changed -- contemporized

Employees First -- Details Are Critical

Northwest Bancorporation announced its name change & the reasons for it, but major thrust has been with employees: slide shows, films, brochures, briefing sessions, newsletter articles. Once shareholder approval is formally voted, signs will be unveiled, advertising & promotional activities launched. Groundwork to change signs & forms is underway. An exhaustive audit of all signage in every location became a catalog. It pictures every sign with basic info: 1) Need city clearance or easement to change sign? 2) Owned by landlord or bank?

"There's no way you can accurately predict the kinds of problems you'll have -- logistical problems and the time it'll take to resolve them," cautions Allen. "Just trying to find out what's on the door of an office in Zimbabwe, or the stationery used by an affiliate in Portland, Oregon. You'd be surprised at how many different kinds of stationery, business card styles or uses of our eagle there are."

Keeping Your Roots

"We're making a very conscious statement about who we are by the way we're using our name," says Allen. Some are dropping the word bank from their name because "they're anxious to show they really aren't a bank; that they're in a number of businesses. We want to maintain the identity we've got because we like it." Allen doesn't believe that creating a "polysyllabic name, then having to explain what it means" is effective. "We're bankers first. We're in a lot of other businesses, but they're an outgrowth of our banking business." And they're keeping Boston in their name. Unlike many banks who feel being identified to a city is limiting, they feel its a positive identification factor. "Boston is an international city-state almost. It's a financial center of the world. There are advantages to being associated with it."

NAME CHANGES ARE EXTREMELY POPULAR ACTIVITY

572 organizations changed names last year; 257 of them are banks, reports Anspach, Grossman & Portugal (NYC), marketing communications & design consulting firm. First half of '82 shows a 49% increase with 424 organizations changing names; 209 of them banks. It's the 2nd highest number of changes on record, the firm reports.

IF A NAME CHANGE IS DESIRABLE, HOW DO YOU MANAGE THE CREATIVE PROCESS? HOW ONE EXPERIENCED FIRM DOES IT

The name change process is "a tremendous experience" that helps shape a pr professional, claims Norwest's Webster.

"It's thoughtful & agonizing. I had the misconception that you sit a number of people around a table & brainstorm. And because you're so witty & clever you come up with a wonderful name that everybody is in awe of. But when you put the problem to logical examination, you'll see it can't work that way. There are so many variables. Almost any name will encounter some difficulty. You have to consider who you are, what you're trying to do, and come up with a name that works."

Jackson Jackson & Wagner, a public relations firm specializing in application of behavioral sciences, applies these techniques to the creation of names. It has named

retail stores, corporations, products, parks, public interest organizations, hospitals, even a university. Stacey Smith, associate counsel, says "Our process lies in a scientific model that organizes values, qualities, ideas & direction. Exhaustive lists are compiled to capture the objectives of the name. A technical screening process allows potential names to be discarded or retained because of actual qualities, not because of someone's gut reaction. No final decision is made until field research is done."

"Third party objectivity of an outside committee or firm is practically mandatory in a naming process. Organizations have a difficult time seeing themselves objectively enough to clearly define the essence & qualities that are crucial to the process."

THE PROCESS OF MANAGING A NAME SELECTION

1. Define the Essence: Those beliefs & activities which make the organization what it is.
2. List the Qualities ...which the name must have to successfully represent the organization (or depict the product's unique properties).
3. Identify Perceptions & Expectations ...that the name should create for those who will come in contact with it.
4. Create a range of possible Expressions ...of the above factors, coordinated in 1) words, 2) sounds, 3) graphics. Never make decisions based on the word alone without seeing & hearing it in its working environment.
5. Free Associations/ Brainstorming: By using categories, lists & computer studies appropriate to the areas defined above, generate as many names as possible without making any evaluation. This is the raw material, so a large quantity is desirable.
6. Screening: Pass each potential name through 10 to 50 screens that scrutinize negative & positive qualities. For instance, look at each name: a) denotatively; b) connotatively; c) behaviorally (how will people really use it, e.g. will it lend itself to a nickname?); d) environmentally (try it out in as many applications as you can); e) thru the 5-step editing process, which reveals 1) appropriateness, 2) meaningfulness, 3) memorability (philologists like to call it "mnemonics"), 4) aural & graphic acceptability, 5) believability.
7. Research: Pretest the finalists thru interviews with key publics. Use flip cards, videotapes or cassettes to show graphic & aural treatment. While respondents' opinions are important, familiarity will alter them quickly. Determining how well names communicate desired values is a more useful research objective. Focus groups or advisory panels may also be valuable -- especially to gain participation of inside audiences.

(See 10/3/77 t&t for more info on name changes, or write for a copy.)  
10/31/77