

these claims is medical journals where findings can be analyzed. But the public's hunger for medical info is changing this accepted procedure. Firms representing docs need to be sensitive to this controversy.

TIMING IS CRITICAL IN A STRIKE, WHICH MEANS WORK IS DONE BEFOREHAND ...AND HOPEFULLY THROWN AWAY

Continental Airlines told prr. An 8 1/2 x 11" black & white brochure asking & answering questions about the strike was printed 3 days prior to the Friday-midnight strike deadline. Cover reads: "We're Still Flying. Questions and Answers About Service, Safety and Our Commitment to the Air Traveler."

Brochures were available for passengers flying early Saturday morning. And what if the strike hadn't occurred? "We would have very delightedly thrown them away."

Objective was to address questions immediately, giving passengers an understanding of the issues and possible effect on them. Also to relieve congestion at the ticket lines from passengers asking questions. "It all has to do with communicating with our customers which we feel is critical. And to do it as quickly as possible because more questions come up in the first few hours. If they're not answered immediately, they snowball."

Q&A brochure was the only passenger document prepared. Continental communicated with its travel agent community in advance. On Thursday they issued the contingency flight schedule by mailgram, thru the automated reservation system and by personal calls & phone. Ads were placed in a number of key market areas on day strike began. "We knew what our flight schedule would be in the event of a strike and we were able to meet that commitment."

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. New officers for 1983-84 National School Public Relations are: pres, Dave Smoker (dir student svcs, Albuquerque Tech/Voc Institute); pres elect, Bonnie Ellison (pub info dir, Northside Independent S.D., San Antonio); Mid-East region vp, John Butterfield, (ass't to superintendent, Worthington City Schools, Ohio); South-West region

"We worked right up to strike deadline in negotiation to try to avoid it, but at the same time we went down dual paths, preparing for the potential," Bruce Hicks, sr dpr,

Materials dealt head-on with items most apt to be on customers' minds. It asked & answered such questions as:

"How can you make sure your flights will be safe with 'new' people doing critical mechanical maintenance work?"

"Will I be taking on the role of 'strike-breaker' by continuing to use Continental Airlines during a strike?"

"How is Continental Airlines operating when one-sixth of your employees are on strike?"

"What specifically are the disputed issues between Continental Airlines and the International Association of Machinists union?"

vp, Pamela Gardner (pub info ofcr, Rowland Unified School Dist, Rowland Heights, Calif); North-East region vp, Sandra Koon (dir comty school rels, Rush-Henrietta Central School Dist, Henrietta, NY).

DIED. Charles Caudle, 64, creative dir, Carl Byoir & Assocs (NYC).

THE BIGGEST NEW AREA OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IS SPORTS PROMOTION AND THERE'S MORE THERE THAN MEETS THE EYE: PRODUCT VISIBILITY COMPETES WITH ISSUE MESSAGES, FUNDRAISING IN THIS MASS MEDIUM

Use or promotion of sports 1) has become a major part of many organizations' publicity efforts, 2) is integral in employee relations programs, 3) helped a leisure-oriented society discover several new athletic activities, 4) encouraged several public relations firms to add sports divisions or capabilities, 5) spawned a new degree program in sports information at -- where else -- Univ. of Southern California. What are the implications for practitioners & their employers?

Because of the mass entertainment nature of sports today, some questions arise:

1. Is this serious public relations or just a bunch of jock executives finding a way to ride their hobby-horses? Athletics is part of the human lifestyle. Anthropologists say it always has been. Therefore, to ignore individual or organized sports in public relations planning is to ignore part of human nature -- the bottom line of the profession.

The time senior execs devote to such efforts as raising funds for the Olympics or university sports programs is in itself indicative of the hold sports has on people.

2. Is sports useful only for publicity & promotion? To build awareness or maintain name identity, association with a sports event or team has obvious benefits. As far as persuading anyone of anything thru sports, that's more difficult -- if it is possible. Yet practitioners are finding payoffs that go beyond simple visibility. It builds relationships by providing enjoyment, as participant or fan. Sports sponsorship provides both the opportunity for enjoyment & the information to heighten it.

3. What types of involvement are possible? Almost unlimited in variety, using athletic events in your program can range from the good old softball (or other sport) team or fitness programs to owning a piece of a major sport. Some look on sports & the crowds they attract as a medium to be exploited for conveying product or other

Bike racing is emerging as the next popular American sport. Long a favorite in Europe (famous Metropolitan Opera basso Ezio Pinza became a singer after building his lung capacity as a bicycle racer), it offers: 1) the most physically fit athletes of any sport, 2) clean-cut, youthful, wholesome competitors, 3) exciting photo/video opportunities showing multitudes of speeding helmeted racers pedaling within a few inches of one another's bikes, 4) a sense of danger because of the close-packed field and the speeds attained on such light machines, 5) special interest from millions of bicyclists of all ages. Coors, Southland (7-11 stores), Milk Promotion Board, Budweiser are among sponsors thus far.



messages. For some organizations, participation is social responsibility -- such as backing the local team or stadium. Ads in programs or elsewhere, airplane banners over crowds, tie-ins with teams, sponsoring events (like the many golf & tennis tournaments) are a few angles.

4. Is sports promotion for businesses only? No, it can be an important community relations opportunity for nonprofits. One hospital sponsors a tennis tourney on its own as a fitness education project. Another gets a local industry to sponsor a tournament in the name of the hospital, with gate receipts as a fundraiser. Special Olympics for the physically disabled have served several purposes for rehabilitation agencies.

5. Are there guidelines for getting into sports? a) What publics do you want to reach -- internal or external. This decision alone answers most of the questions. b) Old established sports like football & baseball bring mass audiences, primarily Middle America. New or less well-known sports require learning, curiosity & a sense of adventure, so bring higher caliber audiences. Odd events like stair climbs don't draw crowds but often get the ink plus the loyalty of participants & their friends. c) Avoid getting caught in the current amateur vs. professional fight. National Collegiate Athletic Ass'n & the Olympic Cmte are among many battling this out. Boston Marathon -- made into an international event by Will Cloney, a public relations practitioner who volunteered his time -- lost him over an argument about covering costs of participants which some feel make them pros. d) Use your imagination: the angles are countless. e) Many say their own bounce-offs are the biggest benefit, e.g., if you sponsor a golf tourney, start offering golf lessons in the schools.

Another side to sports public relations is that taught at USC, applying the principles of the field on behalf of a team or event. At first glance this may seem strictly a media relations job -- & not too difficult at that since every medium these days has a desk or dep't devoted to the smallest details of athletics (a luxury practitioners in few other areas have).

However, reports from the field see it differently. When Louisiana Downs (Shreveport) opened its season, Corey Johnson, dpr & mktg, noted that thoroughbred racing is not an easy sport to understand. "Our research has found that the fan requires more information. So we want to educate the people in the sport & simplify their day at the track." Racing is

a participant as well as a spectator sport due to wagering. "Our job is to give the public more knowledge of racing so that their time at the track will be more enjoyable."

USC's "SPIN" curriculum -- for "sports information" -- combines basic liberal arts with physical education (e.g., physiology & socio-psychological aspects of physical activity) and mass communications (e.g., basic print & broadcast journalism, principles of public relations, communications law & history, etc). A special core curriculum consists of 6 courses: sports info mgmt, sports comn, sportswriting, impact of sports information on society, directed research & a practicum. (More info from GFS 308, USC, LA 90089)

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

Rebuilding the infrastructure will replace defense as the reigning political issue if notable accidents continue. Blackout of NYC's garment district during Market Week was caused by a 68-year old water main which broke and shorted the district's power lines, causing a massive underground fire. Weeks earlier a section of Connecticut turnpike viaduct collapsed, causing death & injury -- and raising a ruckus when traffic flow including heavy trucks was re-routed through nearby Port Chester, NY. Residents of that working-class city claimed they were unfairly treated since the most direct detours should have been through the wealthy town of Greenwich, Ct. Term "infrastructure" originated in sociology to describe social organization, is used by economists to describe physical systems like highways, transportation, buildings. Subject is important to practitioners. Economists point out that more & different types of business & nonprofits may benefit if money is spent on infrastructure rather than defense.

The Association Method is one of six recognized persuasion techniques. Its usefulness is demonstrated by recent report of the Commission on Excellence in Education. To associate its position on funding of education with standard arguments for defense spending -- the major competitor for federal funds -- report states that the US has "been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament. If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war." To associate its position with the Commission's, National Education Association uses this quote from the Commission's report in its materials.

Public affairs practitioner John Paluszek stresses pr's role as counselor. "Lawyers move into public affairs because they can convince the boss to take advice. Public relations people have to become more convincing. If the boss calls you in to write a release, he thinks an issue is important. Here is your opportunity to assert yourself and deal with it on a broader basis."

More & more physicians are using public relations reports WSJ. Gov't predicts by 1990 US will have 70,000 more doctors than it needs. With competition stiff and publicity no longer taboo, many are hiring public relations firms. They can advertise but few do. They find media appearances more credible -- and less easily identifiable by critical colleagues, article reports. Critics' main concern is that publicized claims & cures will mislead the public. That the proper place for

PUBLICITY FIRM SAYS IT GRAPHICALLY

"We're celebrating our agency's (sic) 5th anniversary this month. One of the reasons we have made it to this milestone, we think, is that we have always sought to be straightforward in all of our dealings with the media on behalf of our clients. Recognizing that media and client interests don't always coincide, we have tried to honestly convey the points of view of both sides in our communications with you and with our clients.

"So, when we saw a parody of international traffic sign language we decided to use it on our memo pad as a reminder of what you can expect from us now and in the future."

-- Richard Ogan, pres Interchange Inc. (Chi)

