

¶Among the reasons for choosing a particular news program -- anchor persons, 47%; liberal view, 19%; conservative view, 6%; objective, 62%; thoroughness, 61% -- thoroughness is the main reason given by 51%. 26% say objectivity.

¶Suggestions for changing tv news include: less sensationalism, 28%; more depth, 15%; rid bias, 15%; more world news, 12%.

¶76% think coverage is, on the whole, fair; 24%, unfair. Groups most mentioned as unfairly treated are blacks, women, Jews, Hispanics. But no one group was predominantly mentioned.

¶62% feel gov't should be allowed to limit news coverage. National security is the reason most frequently cited. Survey was conducted in July during the TWA hijacking in Lebanon which may have affected responses.

¶63% believe people in the midst of personal crisis should not be interviewed. Invasion of privacy is the main reason. A majority of the 27% who say they should be interviewed say consent should be obtained first.

¶Most-watched news programs are ABC/Nightline, 28%; NBC, 27%; CBS/60 Minutes, 16%; CNN, 5%; MacNeil/Lehrer, 3%.

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶Humor in communications is alive in the upper Midwest. North Dakota's in-state tourism campaign uses billboards with these messages: "Stay in North Dakota; Custer was healthy when he left." ..... "You are entering Minnesota. Why?" ... .... "Montana is closed this week." How's that for creating a good feeling and obtaining memorability?

¶Unequal treatment of former cancer patients is a problem organizations must face. Attitudes & myths that surround the disease often contribute to a subtle form of discrimination. "Don't be lulled into thinking that basic fair employment practices will fend off charges of unequal treatment," says Barbara Leeds of Cancer-Care, a service agency that counsels cancer patients, their families & employers. It's up to management to set an example by promoting a positive & realistic attitude, she told Employee Relations & Human Resources Bulletin (Bureau of Business Practice, Waterford, Ct.). Educational programs are an effective way to start. To make discrimination more than just poor policy, H.R. 1294 seeks to make it illegal. 50 house members strongly support it.

With such a small percentage watching the MacNeil/Lehrer Report on PBS, how many viewers' attitudes match their actions? Or are they hooked -- against their better judgment -- on news as entertainment. Mark Russell, the well-known political satirist, has this to say about it:

"A nauseating word has crept into the language without an invitation -- 'infotainment.' This describes the new primetime news shows where they boogie to the headlines. The news directors of tomorrow are hard at work learning how to choreograph a famine -- to be packaged and syndicated as 'Lifestyles of the Poor and Starving.' Accordingly, I have seen the newspapers of the future -- and they are coloring books. Infotainment. It could lead to George Shultz making a video. The aim of these shows is to entertainingly and electronically inform those viewers who look at a film of the bombing of Hiroshima and say, 'Wow -- great special effects.'"

# pr reporter

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EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION IS USING INTERACTIVE VIDEODISC TECHNOLOGY;  
LETS EMPLOYEES CONTROL INFO NEEDS, GIVES FAR MORE DATA INSTANTANEOUSLY

Already used in commercial settings -- guiding customers thru merchandise in a store, product info from a manufacturer -- it's now being used to communicate with employees at Chevrolet-Pontiac-Canada Group of General Motors (Warren, Mich). "To our knowledge, we're the first," Sharon Sarris, employee comms mgr for pa, told prr. "It's not the only way we meet our employees' information needs but it's a pretty creative use of that technology -- because it allows employees to control it."

Info Offered. C-P-C's Communication Center offers employees a combination of personal computer, videodisc & monitor in a unit it calls T.C. -- after the old Town Crier. T.C. provides:

1. Fast-breaking company news;
2. Calendar of company events;
3. Feature stories about C-P-C people, programs, products & events;
4. People poll where employees' opinions are solicited.

"People poll" segment, changed regularly, asks questions like "Should smoking be banned in the building?" Answers are automatically tallied and reported. "It's not scientific so it doesn't automatically change policy. But it's good input."

How It Works. All info is accessed by the touch of a finger. "Employees who want to see what's happening touch one of the four areas listed on the screen. If they touch the 'news' box, 8 headlines will appear. For more info they touch the headline box and up comes the article. We update the news at least daily so employees aren't reading old news -- that's really important." Because of frequent updates, news is just character-generated info. But music & a background add interest.

Videodisc technology, on the other hand, provides more graphics. For example, one "features" segment (changed weekly) ran a Chevrolet ad that was only shown in California "because that market tends to be a little different. None of our Michigan people had seen it. It's an interesting way to provide info for our employees."

Employees Like It. First pilot model is in headquarters hallway. "We wanted to do one to see reactions. When first introduced, we demonstrated it and handed out evaluation cards. We got very positive feedback. 99% said it's easy to use. 90% got useful info from it. We're continuing to monitor it. We're also experimenting with the terminal. It might have to be lowered. We want to be sure handicapped people can use it, too."

Next phase, already approved, is to expand to 10 more units in C-P-C's building by the end of the year. Still in the planning stage are units for other locations



next year. "It's not cheap technology, but there's a commitment to doing it." (More info from Sarris, 313/575-8873)

AS SCHOOL OPENS, SO DOES MASSIVE CHALLENGE TO ITS PR STAFFS...BUT UNPARALLELED EXPERIENCE MAKES THEM SOUGHT BY OTHER SECTORS

Of all institutions, schools are most under siege by disaffected publics, most regulated, often least well-funded, have worst

labor relations. But -- this experience makes them a happy-hunting ground for recruiters.

They are generalists who handle all facets -- from planning strategy to pasting up newsletters. They are well educated: 30% have a BA, 39% a Master's, 9% a specialist degree, 15% a doctorate, according to National School Public Relations Assn's latest member survey. School practitioners aren't in it for the money: only 13% make \$50,000 or more.

Budgets are small requiring dollar-stretching inventiveness. For pr activities which practitioners directly supervise (excluding salaries/benefits), 11% have no budget; 51%, less than \$25,000; 17%, \$25,000 - \$49,999; 5%, \$50,000 - \$74,999; 10%, \$75,000+.

pr asked several professionals whose backgrounds were in school public relations how it helps them in their positions today:

"I can't think of anything I've done in the business world that doesn't relate almost totally. I made the transition easily because school pr involves solid practice & principles that apply no matter where you work. I still do analysis, planning, communicating & evaluation. The biggest difference was I had to learn a whole new business and a new vocabulary. PE was physical education, not price/earnings ratio. In some ways, it was easier to close a Munsingwear plant or the downtown-Detroit Hudson store than it was to close a school." -- Ann Barkelew, vp-corp comms, Dayton Hudson (Mpls)

thru my work in school public relations. Contacts with the mayor, community agencies, political folks within the community were all made while I was representing the school. So when I went out on my own I had a lot of people who were very supportive of what I was doing and who continue to assist me today." -- Joanie Flatt, Joanie Flatt & Associates (Mesa, Ariz)

"I got a breadth of experience from using all of the public relations techniques & tools and working with all the media. I received a generalist background by virtue of the fact that I did everything because I was frequently very short staffed. Now that I'm out in my own firm, I know how to do all the pieces of a total public relations plan as well as execute the plan." -- Dave Smoker, Dave Smoker Communications (Albuquerque)

"It gave me a good basic grounding in all areas -- internal communications, external publics & community affairs, tax levies & bond issues which are the political arena, newsletters, even advertising. There was no staff. Bud-

"In school pr you counsel the board & the CEO and serve a number of the superintendent's immediate staff. You handle all the collateral work, too -- from program brochures to newsletters to bringing different groups together to accomplish an objective including political campaign management.

"My place in the community as an activist & a leader was established

gets were never great. I did a lot on my own -- carried a camera everywhere I went. It gave me hands-on experience that today is important

in directing others." -- Nancy Calvert, dir pr & adv'g, Electro Motive Div of GM (LaGrange, Ill).

CABLE & PUBLIC TV GROWING, BROADCAST TV DECLINING, STUDY FINDS

Advertising-supported cable has the fastest growing audience today. Tho far behind broadcast tv viewership, cable has increased its audience share since the previous year's survey. Broadcast tv has decreased (excluding public tv which continues to grow). That's according to statistics gathered from Oct '84 to March '85 by A.C. Nielsen. Weekly viewing in all tv households breaks down this way:

|                                 | Oct '84-March '85<br>Hrs:Mins | Share     | Oct '83-March '84<br>Hrs:Mins | Share     | % Change<br>In Shares |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| <u>Cable Services</u>           |                               |           |                               |           |                       |
| Satellite Networks              | 3:48                          | 7         | 2:59                          | 6         | +17%                  |
| Superstations                   | 3:13                          | 6         | 2:33                          | 5         | +20                   |
| <u>Total Ad-Supported Cable</u> | <u>7:01</u>                   | <u>13</u> | <u>5:32</u>                   | <u>11</u> | <u>+18</u>            |
| Pay Services                    | 2:43                          | 5         | 2:38                          | 5         | NC                    |
| <u>Broadcast Services</u>       |                               |           |                               |           |                       |
| Network Affiliates              | 35:37                         | 68        | 37:23                         | 71        | -4                    |
| Independents                    | 8:08                          | 15        | 8:13                          | 16        | -6                    |
| Public                          | 1:54                          | 4         | 1:43                          | 3         | +33                   |

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ALL WATCH TV NEWS BUT LESS THAN HALF CALL IT PRIMARY SOURCE; WILLING TO SUSPEND 1ST AMENDMENT PRIVILEGES

Television is the primary source of news for only 41%; 59% cite other sources as primary -- newspapers (44%), radio (9%), mags (5%),

wire service (1%). That's from an attitude & opinion survey of 120 young professionals (ages 25-36) in Southern Connecticut -- potential opinion leaders -- conducted by Fairfield U's Grad School of Corporate & Political Communications. All those surveyed watch tv news: 36%, 1-3 times/week; 48%, 4-7 times/week; 16%, 8+. Other findings:

69% are satisfied with tv news coverage. Reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction include: too sensational or violent, 20%; useful, 15%; quality format, 12%; biased, 10%; too entertaining/creates news, 10%; not comprehensive, 8%; inaccurate, 7%; too negative, 3%.

Topics rated important for news coverage include: international news, 94%; gov't, 92%; environment, 84%; health, 84%; economics, 82%; weather, 69%; crime, 66%; arts & entertainment, 61%; sports, 50%; human interest, 37%. 71% feel coverage of these topics is good; 13%, not good; 15%, not sure.