

¶Computer software enables organizations to monitor any wire service and be instantly alerted to reports on company products, people, issues & competitors. Electronic News Processing system (ENP) uses the IBM Personal Computer. It compares every incoming story with a list of up to 50 key words that the user wants to monitor. System sorts & stores material for retrieval or printing later. Coding system for sorting includes over 20 categories. With a telephone modem, it can also be connected with on-line data base services. Bulletins & urgent stories make the ENP system issue an audio alert and display the title of the story on the computer screen. (For more info contact Jefferson-Pilot Data Systems, 501 Archdale Drive, Charlotte, NC 28210; 704/525-3901)

¶The design of graphs counts for at least as much as their content. Make graphs easier to read by identifying each bar in the graph with a label or symbol rather than a key. When keys are used, readers waste time looking back & forth between the key & information in the graph, reports Kaleidoscope, a pub'n of KSK Communications. Also, by placing figures directly beside the bars on your chart, the reader can more easily see quantities and how they compare. The rule for easy reading is not to require unnecessary eye movements.

¶Issues pushed by feminist movement could be an inevitable agenda for society since they tend to reflect leanings of enlightened publics. Concise review of these issues appears in Ms. magazine for March entitled, "If Women Had A Foreign Policy." Intro predicts "As the world grows smaller and the feminist movement grows larger, women's politics are emerging as the international politics of the 21st century." List includes hunger, peace, health, literacy, the economy, the environment, refugees. "The world's problems are women's problems" since they are a majority of the human species and the base of the economy in a large part of the world. "Women can influence foreign policy right now. Support the Palme disarmament strategy by buying Swedish goods, and the Papandreou de-escalation plan by buying Greek goods. It could be called a girlcott...."

¶Update on PRSA's proposed Technology Section: Petitions were filed on January 7, but still have to be approved by the Section Council and subsequently the Board -- "before we can do any real recruiting & planning," says Joel Strasser. A sub-committee has been created for the formation of the Technology Section and volunteers are being sought. If you're interested, write Strasser at P.O. Box 203, Tallman, NY 10982.

#### PLAN YOUR PRINTING TIMETABLE

Since most printers get busier as the year progresses, projects produced in the 1st & 2nd quarters are likely to be less expensive. That's the advice Richard Joutras of Bradley Printing gave in prr's 2/18 article on building rapport with your printer. But here's another point of view.

Writes A. Newell Garden, dpr, Raytheon (Lexington, Mass.): "I think a printer's workload depends entirely on the type of work he solicits and the type of customers he serves. I think it is an over simplification to suggest that all printers are less busy in the 1st half of the year. Printers specializing in high quality, 4-color work are frequently committed to 3 shifts from the 3rd week in February to the 3rd week in March producing annual reports. An optional job at that time would probably be bid quite high."

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#### ABORTION DEBATE PROVIDES CASE STUDY OF AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY, USE OF PERSONALITY PROFILES IN WORKING WITH PUBLICS

From the viewpoint of the democratic society -- foundation of public relations philosophy -- the abortion debate now raging, & even turning violent, boils down to this: In a free society, is it right to stop one group from behaving in a certain way because another group disagrees with that behavior?

Throughout history, tribes & nations have shown distrust of individuals to run their own lives by making laws prohibiting certain actions. When those actions harm others -- such as robbery or murder -- laws protecting fellow citizens seem reasonable. When potential harm is confined to oneself, freedom-loving people have considered such laws oppressive.

The abortion debate provides practitioners an ongoing case study of this basic social issue -- which translates to the workplace & marketplace very directly. Why do certain employees, customers, shareholders or public officials behave the way they do on some issues? Psychologists identify the "authoritarian personality" as a factor that must be considered when dealing with groups or publics. Basically, persons of this type seem to be low in self-confidence. They like rules, perhaps fearing what they might do without such substitutes for willpower. They also like rules as a way of controlling others, whom they generally do not trust to do what is "right."

The traits ascribed to authoritarians include:

1. Heavy stress on conventional behavior.
2. Extreme deference to superior authority.
3. Rigidity of thought & intolerance of ambiguity.
4. Close conformity to group norms.

Relying on opinion polls to support your case can be risky business -- as the abortion issue illustrates. 1/28 prr reports a NYTimes/CBS News poll showing only 13% of the public in favor of banning abortions and an ABC poll at 11% -- contrasted with 10% a decade ago. But a Gallup poll reported in 1/14 Newsweek shows 58% would support a ban on legalized abortion "except in cases of rape, incest & danger to the mother's life (up from 50% last fall)." If studies of the same issue during the same time period can result in such divergent numbers, public confusion, even irritation, is predictable. In its next public confidence study, NORC should ask how the public feels about polling & pollsters.

When group norms are threatened by change, authoritarians rebel. The Pro-Life movement rebels against the 1975 court decision that struck down laws banning abortion. Similarly, some workers may rebel against new technology or changes in established policy.

One important aspect is "the kind of information sufficient to induce a change of attitudes," as Roger Brown phrases it in Social Psychology. For authoritarians, urging by an authority figure can swing attitudes. For non-authoritarians, this will not be enough. Thus some who go to extremes & bomb abortion clinics have said, "God made me do it" & "It was a gift to Jesus."

Personality Profiling This & other personality types are detailed in a book useful to practitioners, Effective Management & The Behavioral Sciences (ed. Wm Dowling, Amacom, \$8.95). There Kenneth Boulding states his case for two basic personality types, authoritarian & reconciling. "The first has a large core of values that he identifies with his person; the existence of differing values he regards as a threat to his person. The reconciling personality identifies his person not with any particular set of doctrines, but a learning process, a search for truth, and an interest & concern for the welfare of others."

Sociologist Kristin Luker has attempted to create personality profiles of women (only) on both sides in the abortion issue:

Pro-Choice Activist

44 years old  
Married to a professional  
Works outside the home  
Has college degree  
2 children  
\$50,000 family income  
Sees herself as husband's equal  
Views the unavailability of abortion as limiting her competitive chances in the world  
Issue is equally economic, psychological & physical

Pro-Life Activist

44 years old  
Married  
High-school education  
3+ children  
\$30,000 family income  
Doesn't work outside the home  
Believes in traditional sex roles  
Sees motherhood as her highest mission in life  
Issue embodies some class-based resentment of higher-status women

CHANGED NEWSLETTER LOOKED GREAT TO PR PROS, RESEARCH SHOWED CHANGES WERE WANTED, BUT STILL ACCEPTANCE FACES HURDLES

"Friendly Forum," begun in 1938. Last September it went from "just a paste-up done here with no design in mind" to a large, easy-to-read, design-oriented publication with more useful information and less who's who news.

Its 12 1/4 x 16 1/2" size, large pix & heads, easy-reading open-space layout, down-home tone is impressive. And it strongly communicates, e.g., Jan. issue's full front page announces "We have to out-smart the competition" in bold gold letters on black background. So pr asked Cheryl Lennox, com'ns ass't, for details.

Survey done prior to change indicated employees wanted their newsletter to give them more than employee info & social activities -- tho they didn't want that info cut either. Medical info was popularly requested. First issue of new format re-

ported on survey findings and listed what the new Forum would provide: continued coverage of employees & activities, "bigger & better pictures," health info, "insights into the way our company runs," & "features on departments that are moving ahead."

Along with the look & content, its name was changed. "Friendly" was dropped, leaving just "Forum" for the new publication's title. "It'll still be friendly, but we thought just plain Forum would more accurately reflect its purpose, which is to be a vehicle for open discussion of matters that affect us all," reads the explanation in Forum's 1st issue.

"We should have changed the name entirely. Then it would have totally cut that connection. Now readers still think it's the Friendly Forum, just not friendly anymore." But Lennox reports no plan to change the name again. "We'd like to give it at least a year in its new format before we start fooling around with it again."

After 5 months with the new format, "we just did a quick & dirty survey to see what the employees think. The response was good. Everybody told us they read it. Some strongly disagree with things. But we want them to be reading & thinking and to come to us with their disagreements. A lot like the design. They say it's easier on the eye. I think we're slowly winning them over."

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PRACTITIONERS

¶Most of the corporations involved in charitable giving receive little or no public relations benefit, says Barbara Lorber who heads Hill & Knowlton's new Contributions Strategies & Communications Group. "More than \$3 billion was given in '83 but only a few companies are known for their philanthropy. They are the exceptions that illustrate the anonymity of the rest." She recommends 1) defining giving objectives -- what you hope to accomplish by contributing, what audiences you're trying to reach; 2) then formulating policy to meet those objectives. Lorber's group will help create a good "fit" between corporate donors & organizations seeking assistance.

¶Says a CEO: "The integrity of this corporation is based on communications. Part of my main goal is to build an organization where people always are in contact and we have to respond to them," explains Judy George, Scandinavian Design's president. She knows almost all 600 employees by name. That's one of the ways she successfully monitors the corporate pulse. "When you go through a period of fast growth as Scandinavian Design has done, you have to work to keep that hands-on feeling. We're afraid of losing touch." To stay in touch, George checks in with the company's 50 stores at least once a month, by phone or in person. "The people in the stores tell me what I need to know to make decisions. The stores are the front line of our company and can make or break us."

Practitioners responsible for anticipating issues should ask their Congressman to be added to the mailing list for the Congressional Clearinghouse on the Future's newsletter, What's Next? Only members of Congress can authorize additions to the list. The newsletter contains valuable info on emerging issues. National School Public Relations Assn's "Scanner" recently reminded school issues managers to get on the list.