

Next step was to work with the Council's president, a volunteer who was to lead the press conference & field media questions. Because she was inexperienced in this role with the press and because they expected difficult questions, an emergency media training session was arranged for 7am, just 4 hrs before the conference.

Conference was attended by all major media. There they were given the Council's position on the cookie tamperings and the Council's pres took the opportunity to talk about current Girl Scout programs -- increasing awareness of its social outreach. She introduced the new fundraising prgm, asking area businesses to help. Donations were presented, which closed the conference on a high, optimistic note. Media focus turned to the excitement & satisfaction of the community rallying around the new fundraising effort.

Fund drives were begun by both major newspapers and area businesses. Result was \$150,000 in contributions and another \$150,000 in a previously denied forgivable loan. Overall, nearly 90% of the deficit was recovered, and all major Girl Scout programs were able to continue. Public relations crisis plan won a Golden Trumpet award from Publicity Club of Chicago.

"HOW TO MAKE BIG IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SMALL PR SHOP"

That's the title of a new book designed for aiding practitioners in small operations -- 4 people or less. Although the 116-pg manual is focused

around college public relations, its tips can be applied by all practitioners. "Most small shops have one big problem -- too much to do and too little to do it with," the author says. So the book covers a variety of tasks that people in small pr shops are responsible for.

Several pages of tips, from A to Z, are included. Book contains examples of job descriptions and priorities for more effective 1) organization, 2) policies & 3) guidelines, plus 4) routine jobs like collecting & disseminating information externally & internally. Book uses limited text, a wealth of sample forms & questionnaires to help ease the burden of those who must tackle a broad range of jobs. (\$16.50, CASE Publications Order Dep't, 80 S. Early St, Alexandria, Va. 22304)

NATIONAL ADS ON RADIO UP 18% SO PUBLICISTS GETTING ON AIR, TOO

Radio, with a growing audience & insatiable need for consumer material, is a growing target for publicity and marketing. Services

exclusively for radio go beyond the typical electronic release to the preparation and distribution of actual shows aimed at consumers. For instance, J&J Ziehl (Greens Farms, Ct.) will prepare material for broadcast in three formats: a 4 1/2 -minute feature called "Around the House," a 4 1/2 -minute live interview called "Consumer Hotline," or a 1 1/2 -minute news brief called "Consumer Update."

For \$500-\$1,000, depending on number ordered, Joan & Joe Ziehl will prepare a program for your approval, and distribute it to over 1,000 stations, 275 of which use the shows regularly. Afterwards, you receive a report detailing stations airing the show, estimated audience reached, number of impressions, cost per 1,000 impressions (typically, around 19¢). Discounts are available for multiple shows. Their promo material sells radio very effectively. (800/451-4453)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

PEOPLE. James Fisher, pres, Council for Advancement & Support of Education

(DC), announces his resignation effective August 31, 1986.

# pr reporter

The Weekly Newsletter of Public Relations, Public Affairs & Communication

603 / 778 - 0514

Vol.28 No.30  
August 5, 1985

REAGAN'S OPERATION HAS PUBLIC EDUCATION BRIGHT SIDE: SHOWS CELEBRITIES STILL VALUABLE FOR CREATING AWARENESS, IN HIS CASE FOR "THE CANCER NOBODY TALKS ABOUT"

How do you communicate on a subject that's taboo? When the details bring embarrassment, fear, ego defense? Colorectal cancer, for instance. "We've been concerned about communications on colorectal cancer for a long time. Surveys of clippings to see what types of cancer were being covered by the press always showed breast & lung at the top of the list, colorectal at the bottom. Even some of our educational material describes it as 'the cancer nobody talks about,'" Irving Rimer, American Cancer Society, vp-pub info, told prr.

Lost Cause. ACS met with medical science reporters last year to get their views. These "top level journalists" concluded it would be difficult. No news in it; no advances. "Only way to break this story was if it happened to a well-known person, like Betty Ford's breast cancer or John Wayne's lung cancer. So along comes President Reagan and turns it around."

SEMANTIC TREATMENT FOR FEAR OF CANCER

What barriers does the word "cancer" cause? Study for a Florida hospital determined public's knowledge and attitudes differ about the words "cancer" & "oncology." When asked if the word "cancer" scares them, 63.5% said yes. Only 15.4% said the word "oncology" scares them. Less than half (46%) had heard of the word "oncology." Of those, 25% didn't know its meaning; 75% defined it generally by linking it to cancer. Since oncology is the study of all tumors -- malignant or not -- it's a more positive, less frightening alternative to the word "cancer."

Battling Taboos. During the time his operation was headlines, ACS' phones were besieged by the media. Its medical representatives backed up the President's story with information about the disease. "We saw this as an opportunity to break down taboos. The President's intestines were being exposed thru diagrams, they were talking about his bowel movements & stool blood tests. That was the kind of breakthrough we were looking for -- opportunities like never before to talk about this cancer."

Serendipitous. ACS began a 3-yr public education program on colorectal cancer last September. Its affiliates around the country were sent films, posters, leaflets, educational materials for presenting programs to businesses, clubs, churches, social & civic org'ns. Special ongoing program was developed for American Ass'n of Retired Persons -- a vulnerable, high-risk group. "Now we're encouraging our affiliates to take full advantage. Don't slacken the course; intensify."



Privacy, Taste Problem? Is it proper to report on very personal details of the President's illness? "It's not only proper but it's a golden opportunity to create public awareness & understanding of a disease that has been shrouded in all kinds of taboos. We won't comment on the President's condition because we don't feel that's proper: treatment is the responsibility of the attending physicians. But we've used the opportunity to broaden public understanding of the disease and we intend to take full advantage from here on in."

Results. A quick survey was done around the country on July 15-17 to measure shifts in attitudes toward the disease. In '82, only 15% of Americans 40+ yrs felt they needed a stool blood test; 11% thought they should undergo a proctoscopic exam. Survey found 62% would now ask for the test, 48% for the exam. A major shift.

In a study of physician attitudes toward early detection of various forms of cancer, ACS discovered considerable resistance to early detection tests of colorectal cancer. "We featured the July findings in our medical publication that goes to over 400,000 doctors and we're going to use that as a wedge to bring about change."

Continuing Benefit. "We'll have to educate year after year after year to really bring about a change in public behavior. But everytime the President goes in for his 6-month checkups, the press will watch very closely, and we'll have another opportunity to report on the subject."

AIDS, another taboo disease, might find its window of opportunity for harnessing public attention -- & commitment of research funds -- in the announcement of Rock Hudson's fight with the disease.

However, while linking with celebrities brings recognition, instant awareness, it can also backfire (see prr 12/24/84). What do you do if your celebrity is linked with a scandal? Or loses appeal? Promotion experts recommend studying the celebrity's personal history assiduously.

In conjunction with its yearly "Taking The Terror Out Of Cancer" seminar, North Florida Regional Hospital (Gainesville) did a colorectal screening program. Eckerd's Drug Stores provided free Hemocult test kits to customers and advice on how to use them. ABC affiliate WCJB-TV promoted the program and did a 5-part news series on colorectal cancer. Hospital offered free lab work. Program ran last 3 weeks of June. 7,000 kits were distributed. 1,900 were brought to the hospital for lab work.

"We closed the program on July 1. Then President Reagan's cancer was announced. And people began calling, wanting to use the kits. So on Wednesday after Reagan's surgery we re-opened the program. 1,200 more kits came in. We're bringing in volunteers to help with the paper work. As long as there is a kit in the pharmacy, they will give it out. And as long as people bring them here, we'll process them," Marilyn Tubb, dir mktg & comm, told prr.

PLANNING A GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY? THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN SHEER HYPE

Public relations objective must include remaining friends with the community who will endure construction-inconveniences afterwards, as well as drawing attention to the site. Here's how Westcor (Phoenix) handled its new office building:

"Our dynamite plunger was 'window dressing' -- a dramatic-looking apparatus made more so with a large 'Danger! Do Not Touch' sign. The company chairman lit a flare, igniting a 'snake,' which sizzled across the ground in a 'Y' to burn through two lines tethering clusters of giant balloons. As the balloons went aloft, they exploded into two aerial bombs. This signaled the dignitaries to push the plunger. A dynamite blast (radio controlled from a distance) kicked up a little dirt and a great deal of colorful smoke. At the same time, 2,000 balloons were released from the blast site. It was noisy, graphic & colorful. We're still getting comments on 'the best ground breaking ever,'" reports Emma Louise Philabaum, vp comty rels.

Printed invitations to a continental breakfast at 9:30am & the ground-breaking ceremony at 10am were sent to neighborhood leaders, investors, representatives of the real estate community and other dignitaries, including the governor & an ambassador (who spoke at the ceremonies).

"Since we knew the construction & excavation would cause dust & disruption of traffic in the neighborhood, we hand-delivered a flier to some 300 nearby homes and to every worker in adjoining office buildings." Flier tells about the new building, benefits to the area, precautions being taken for safety, and ends with, "We also recognize that nothing can control all the dust. Therefore, as good neighbors, we're enclosing a coupon for a discount car wash at Paradise Valley Car Wash."

"We've received letters commending us as 'a caring company' and, to date, no complaints about construction 'spill over' into the neighborhoods."

PUBLIC RELATIONS PROJECT SAVED CHICAGO GIRL SCOUTS -- LITERALLY; CASE WHERE PUBLICITY ENGENDERED BEHAVIOR

Information or publicity, alone, cannot as a rule motivate either decisions or behavior. But where a pre-existing behavior or loyalty is disrupted, publicity can heal the wound. It did for the Chicago Girl Scouts during its cookie-tampering debacle. Astounded & frightened, the public refused to buy the cookies, cutting off the Council's major source of income, putting its credibility in question, discouraging & confusing the children it serves.

At the height of the crisis, GS Council asked the Edelman firm to help it prepare for a press conference it had called -- for the following day! It hoped to 1) stop damage being caused by rumors & fear; 2) present Council as a forward-looking, united group; 3) enlist community sympathy & support for a new fundraising effort -- the Chicago Girl Scout Challenge.

Favorable coverage led to a sympathetic understanding of the Girl Scouts' plight and a call for help. The public's hostile, suspicious attitude was changed back to one of caring & support by the combination of positive action by the lead donors & forceful communication.

To start the Challenge, calls were made to members of the Council's Board, all of whom represent large businesses, asking for donations to be presented at the press conference. By the end of that day, \$14,000 was pledged.