

or equity characteristics. 2) If company appears undervalued, determine how it is perceived in comparison to the reality. 3) Then target messages at closing this perception gap. "You can't guarantee the company will not become a target to a raider, but you can make it less a bargain and obtain for your shareholders a higher price."

Dick Cheney of Hill & Knowlton feels it's essential corporate directors show they are acting on behalf of stockholders in everything they say or do -- not just when a takeover or crisis is on the horizon. He advises CEOs: "Waste no time in making sure that the company you serve has the kind of public relations adviser who can make a meaningful contribution to your councils of war. Involve him in the decisionmaking process, give him a meaningful role in your crisis planning now while he and his skills can best be put to use."

Cheney cites Mobil's bid for Marathon as an example. Marathon's officers might have been portrayed as entrenched management depriving stockholders of a good price for holdings. Instead, an aggressive pr campaign countered this perception and made a case against the merger, "thus strongly influencing the court proceedings."

TODAY'S MARKETING PUBLIC RELATIONS
"BREAKS DOWN RESISTANCE
TO THE SPONSORED MESSAGE"

of Golin/Harris Communications (Chi). To see how manufacturers & service companies use marketing pr, Harris' firm underwrote a survey of 286 marketing mgrs by Ball StateU prof Tom Duncan. He found:

1. 3 of 4 use marketing public relations.
2. It's effective in areas traditionally the responsibility of advertising.
3. It's especially effective in building awareness & brand knowledge.
4. Importance is increasing because it a) is cost effective, b) breaks thru clutter, c) complements advertising, d) increases credibility of the message.

Used To Introduce A New Product Harris cites these examples of creative marketing prs illustrative of where the practice is today: Campbell Soup needed an event to make its entry into the dry soup mix category newsworthy. In the 60s, Andy Warhol's well-known painting brought attention to himself & the Campbell Soup can -- tho mgmt at that time didn't understand the value of the attention. Today's mgmt is aware of the value of publicity and commissioned Warhol to paint the new dry soup box. His work was unveiled at the Whitney Museum and "reported widely in the print & broadcast media."

Revitalizing Old Products Quaker came up with the idea of a "who killed J.R. for 9-yr-olds." It removed the Cap'n from the Cap'n Crunch cereal box he has occupied for 23 years. Result: "Where's the Cap'n" campaign. Clues were given to help solve the mystery. Live searches were staged, it was talked about on kids' shows, disc jockeys delivered clues on radio. "Where's the Cap'n" record & music video were developed.

Harris notes publicity works only when the org'n has a total public relations outlook. "It works best for org'ns that put a premium on their relations with the public. It works best in concert with good advertising for good products marketed by good companies that are responsible to and responsive to the consumer."

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RESTORING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE, FORECASTING, STICKING TO ESSENTIALS
& SEEKING NEW STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS ARE KEY ISSUES
FACING CORPORATE COMMUNICATORS, PAGE SOCIETY SURVEY FINDS

Leading public relations professionals are once again -- or still -- concerned with some basic, longstanding issues, according to a survey by Arthur W. Page Society of its 100 members -- top pr pros, corporate communicators & academics. Among the open-ended comments:

Building Public Confidence

"The most significant issue we face is restoring public trust & confidence in American business; the flip side of that charge is easing the constraints on business. American business has benefited, by tax incentives & union accommodations, from the public's desire to get the economy rolling and make America competitive in world markets.

"We have a situation now of alleged frauds in the defense industry, large companies not paying taxes.... This 'bad press' will come home to roost as soon as there's a hiccup in the economy. We need to act now to restore trust in business." Edward Block, sr vp-pr, AT&T (NYC)

"From the public's perception, the issue is reassuring the public that business is worthy of its trust, and concerned for the customer and the long-term economic development and interests of the country. From the internal communications perspective, the issue is building the necessary bridges with employees so they have confidence in the business, and a feeling of involvement in the issues facing the business." Jean Handley, vp personnel & corp

Membership in the Arthur W. Page Society is by nomination only to practitioners holding positions with policy-making authority. Its purpose is to raise professional standards by encouraging organizations to follow the principles of its namesake (early vp-pr at AT&T and considered the founding father of public relations by some):

1. Be attentive to the public.
2. Tell the truth -- as professionals & as organizations.
3. Ensure the company does, as well as tells. Page was fond of pointing out that the public's perception of an organization is based 90% on what it does, 10% on what it says.
4. Manage for tomorrow. In 1938, Page foresaw the possibility organizations would be blamed today for acts of yesterday that seemed acceptable at the time.
5. Help organizations recognize that public relations controls its fate.
6. Interject the best of public relations character into the organizational character. Rather than a firefighter, be a pathfinder.

rels, Southern New England Telephone (New Haven, Ct.)

Relationship-Building Strategies

"We face one major issue that we've always faced: How to appropriately identify our company's aspirations and goals, and have these accurately & clearly reflected in the news media. Media perceptions of business increasingly are distorted and adversarial. We can't change public perceptions solely by advertising & 'PR'; perception is a function of the day-to-day performance of the business." Samuel Petok, sr vp comms, Rockwell International (Pittsburgh)

"One issue is telling a positive corporate story more effectively. It seems the opponents of the corporate world always take the moral high ground, be they environmentalists, whoever. We must come off the defensive." Ellis Brandt, sr counselor of pa (retired in '86), Dow Chemical (Midland, Mich)

Professional Challenges

"One aspect of communications work that poses problems is that it is infinite, rather than finite. Unlike data processing, you can't define its boundaries. As a result, when times are good, corporate communicators tend to take on activities that -- while good & useful -- are not essential to the productivity of the business. Corporate leaders tell us they want communications work that focuses more sharply on those things that are absolutely essential to the success of the business." Chet Burger, sr partner, Chester Burger Co. (NYC)

SOME USEFUL DATA ON THE HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION POLLUTION

Vying for attention among the "clutter" of messages, it's sobering to heed these data. Tho the figures apply to paid commercial messages, the implications apply to all communications:

"Strategic planning for identifying & dealing with all corporate issues should involve corporate communications. Thus the gut issue for professionals is to be on the cutting edge of key issues and earn a place at the policy-setting table. If you're not around that table when corporate issues are addressed and planning is done, you're a second-class citizen." Betsy Plank, ass't vp-comty afrcs, Illinois Bell (Chi)

Forecasting

"It seems the threat -- & reality -- of terrorism will reach the corporate world in 1986 to a greater degree than before. That requires an increased business ability to straddle cultures & understand international issues." Ellis Brandt

"One sleeper issue is the rash of corporate mergers & acquisitions which is diminishing resources -- both executive & financial -- available to meet community needs." Betsy Plank

"Corporations & their communicators must begin to take demographics into consideration. For some time we've been observing a change in American society: The growth of Hispanic, Black & Asian populations in major metropolitan areas; increasing minority purchasing power; the movement of people from one area of the country to another. These have effects that should be anticipated.

"Communications technology is also changing, almost faster than we can keep up with. Not enough corporate communicators realize today's media want their information ready to air or print. The explosion in communications technologies requires a change in our thinking." Alan Scott, prof, UTexas (Austin)

"Typical family of 4 is exposed to 1,518 messages in a 15-hr day just from advertising. That includes print, broadcast, billboards, but not direct mail. Of these 1,518 ads, only 80 make some conscious impression. (From a study by General Foods, based on an imaginary family in White Plains, NY. Still being cited, study was done in 1957. Imagine what the total must be today.)

"Daily exposure for the average male is 285 advertisements: tv (35), radio (38), mags (15), newspapers (185), outdoor messages (12). Average female is exposed to 305: tv (48), radio (45), mags (20), newspapers (182), outdoor ads (10). (From a 1970 study by BBDO aimed at "demythologizing" the 1,518 figure.)

"The average American adult is aware of 76 advertisements a day in the major media -- 36.3 during the day, 39.6 in the evening. (From a 1968 study for the 4As, which wanted to get surer statistics.)

Whether the correct over-communication figure is 1,518 or 76, people have become most adept at screening out the pollution. Evaluation research reveals only 15% of messages that make a conscious impression stimulate either a positive or negative effect. Thus, of 1,518 messages, 80 made an impression, 12 had an effect ...and (in the words of the researcher) "incredibly, 3 of these 12 make a negative impression."

FINALLY, A PUBLIC RELATIONS CAREER DIRECTORY WRITTEN BY PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS

job in public relations?" Or who are thinking about making a move themselves. A must for school libraries & students eager for info on jobs in the profession.

Introduction is by old pro Kerryn King. Sections include: a) where to practice, b) specializations, c) how to get the job you want, d) databank of organizations, jobs, internships. Authors tell about their own specialties: Ron Solberg, computers; Mary Ann Pires, corp pr; Herb Kassner, gov't pr; John Bailey, associations; Shirley Bonnem, health-care pr; Jonathan Schenker, media rels; Ron Rhody, fin'l comms; Brad Whitworth, employee comms; and more. 22 chapters are contributed by practitioners. Section on getting the job you want is helpful reading for newcomer & veteran alike. (\$24.95 + \$3.50 shipping & handling to Career Publishing, 505 5th Ave, Ste.1003, NYC 10017)

INTEREST IN ACCREDITATION HEIGHTENS

A record 83% (of 214 candidates) passed the PRSA Accreditation exam last fall. Since program's inception in the mid-60s, more than 4,000 have become accredited. The Society is noticing a "steadily increasing number of people taking the exam each time it's offered," Donna Peltier told prr. '86 exams will be given April 13-27 and October 5-19. Reasons attributed to record numbers include: aggressive promotion, improved preparation materials, more equitable exam, sounder feedback mechanisms, stronger chapter support. "This record pass rate is more than just a number, it's a sign of momentum," believes PRSA pres Tony Franco.

"COMPANIES CAN BE UNDERVALUED BECAUSE OF PERCEPTION GAP RATHER THAN PERFORMANCE GAP"

of company to "peer" companies -- competitors or those which share similar financial

So believes John Jurgensen of Georgeson & Co. Thus investor relations should 1) compare the value