

should use the least restrictive method to achieve their goals. To explain its position, ACLU published "AIDS and Civil Liberties." Written in Q&A format, briefing paper covers a number of issues, including the employment rights of persons with AIDS. (From ACLU's Public Info Dep't, 132 West 43rd St, NYC 10036)

WATCHING RETAILERS GRAPPLE WITH LABOR SHORTAGE
GIVES OTHERS AN EARLY-WARNING EXAMPLE

"There's a labor shortage. (See prr 6/27/83.) It's a major problem for retailers in many areas

of the nation -- and it will get worse for the next decade," says James Williams, pres, National Retail Merchants Ass'n. His prediction is based on 2 studies.

1. Oscar Ornati's (NYU) report on demographic development & labor forecasts in retailing thru 1995 shows that the 16-24-yr-old population has been declining since 1980. Forecasts point to a continuing decline of half a million yearly for the next 6-7 years. Some areas are already feeling the impact severely -- Boston, northern NJ, Atlanta, Los Angeles, DC & San Francisco.

2. NRMA's own survey found:

¶Shortages occur mostly at minimum wage levels.

¶It's more difficult to retain people who work evenings & weekends than full-time day schedules.

¶More difficult to keep those on a lower wage scale than higher.

¶Easier to hold older than younger employees.

¶As difficult to retain female employees as male.

88% of retailers say despite severe recruitment & retention problems, they continue to rely on walk-in candidates as their primary recruiting source. A few report use of employee incentives, employee & customer referrals, private employment agencies, job forums, career nights, school co-op programs. (Copies of both reports from NRMA Research & Planning Dep't, 100 West 31st St, NYC 10001; 212/244-8780)

Human resource & public relations experts have long believed retail workers are a potential crisis point. And that retailers should therefore be leaders in employee relations & internal communications. Accompanying crisis of poor customer service (prr 2/23) makes this a prime area for application of public relations techniques & philosophy.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. PRSA's 1987 Section Chairs:

¶Association: Jack Blake (dir, info/pr, Credit Union National Ass'n, Madison)

¶Corporate: Bruce MacDonald (dpr, General Motors, NYC)

¶Counselors Academy: Bruce Rubin (Bruce Rubin Assocs, Coral Gables, Fla)

¶Educational & Cultural Org'ns: Donald Cannalte (dpr, UColorado-Boulder)

¶Educators: William Ehling (Chrm, PR Dep't, SyracuseU)

¶Financial Svcs: Kirk Hallahan (sr vp-pa, California League of Savings, LA)

¶Utilities: Stanford Wallace (vp corp comms, Panhandle Eastern Pipe Line, Houston)

¶Gov't: Elizabeth Kellar (dir, comms, International City Mgmt Ass'n, DC)

¶Health: Frank Karel (vp-comms, The Rockefeller Foundation, NYC)

¶Hospital Academy: Paul Taylor (corp vp-comms, St. Raphael Corp, New Haven, Ct)

¶Investor Rels: Winthrop Neilson (managing dir, Krone Comms, Harrisburg, Pa)

¶Pub Affrs: Edward Grefe (chrm, International Civics, Harrington Park, NJ)

¶Social Svcs: Jerry Alan Bergman (dir, mktg & comms svcs, Boys Clubs of America, NYC)

¶Tech: Joel Strasser (sr vp, dir, tech div, Dorf & Stanton Comms, NYC)

¶Travel & Tourism: Kathleen Schoch (dpr & adv'g, Hyatt Regency Atlanta)

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WHEN DECIDING WHETHER & HOW TO RESPOND TO AN EXTERNAL ISSUE,
"OVERNIGHT" RESEARCH CAN FIND OUT WHAT PUBLIC OPINION REALLY IS;
CASE STUDIES SHOW HOW DOWNRIGHT INEXPENSIVE IT CAN BE

Portland (Ore) Public Schools used "overnight" surveys -- public opinion gathered quickly even if not literally overnight -- to help shape solutions to 2 potentially explosive situations. Bill Garbett, dir pub info & comms, explains:

Example 1:
Showing That Loud Critics
Are Not Majority Opinion

"On Jan 30, we opened our first teen clinic in a neighborhood high school. Media had a field day, spurred on by some local religious groups. Our department commissioned an over-the-weekend survey to assess

general public attitudes on the issue of teen clinics. 300 homes within our schools' boundaries were surveyed using the random-digit-dial method of telephone prefixes with a confidence factor of $\pm 5.6\%$." The findings:

1. "Have you recently read or heard anything about the Portland Public Schools?" Only 9% mentioned the Roosevelt H.S. teen clinic -- which shows how little impact even major emotional media coverage can have today. 89% of those with top-of-head knowledge approved of the clinic.

2. "Have you heard or read about the Roosevelt H.S. teen health clinic?" 64% Yes of which 74% approved; 36% No. When probed, awareness was high -- but a majority approved.

3. "Do you approve or disapprove of the clinic?" 77% approved (includes approvals from above); 16% disapproved; 7% didn't know.

Found Message Was Missed. "Respondents showed that even tho the health clinic concept was heavily supported, our message about its services was not heard. They directly tied the clinic to birth control and not to health services in general -- the opposite of our message strategy. They made no distinction between dispensing, prescribing or counseling for birth control, altho our messages heavily emphasized there would be no dispensing."

One way to hold costs down, which is particularly applicable to over-nighters, is to use executives or employees to do the phone interviews. While they need some training, there's no reason they cannot be as objective as outside callers. Usually a professional researcher offers training over a light supper, going over the questionnaire in detail and making sure callers understand the reason each question is being asked and the type of responses that can be expected. This person then monitors the calling, which is done between 7 & 9pm. A few calls may be ruled invalid -- but that happens with research firms, too. One advantage: there's no substitute for a manager actually hearing the voice of the public.



Results: 1) "Survey findings given to panel members & the news media prior to a public hearing (after clinic opened), combined with statistics from the first month's students' use of the clinic, halted public protest & media coverage. Cost was \$950." 2) "School board members & county commissioners (clinic operators) held public hearings months in advance of opening additional clinics which resulted in minimum media coverage. Opening day for 3 additional in-school teen health clinics generated only 4 media stories."

Example 2:
Fighting Off Unfair
Media Coverage
By Not Responding

"Six weeks prior to last month's tv rating sweeps, one station's investigative reporter began interviews about school district minority teacher recruiting. The week before the sweeps, the 1-night story grew to a week-long series, 'Reading, Writing & Racism.' A series of 5 reports, promoted daily by the station, covered much more than minority teachers & featured extensive interviews with 2 critics of the district. Internal reaction was hot! Our department commissioned a 350-household survey of residents living within the schools' boundaries using random-digit dialing of telephone prefixes with a confidence level of + 5%." The findings:

1. "Did you watch the 10 O'Clock News on Channel 12 last night?" Yes, 19%; No, 81%
2. "On how many nights did you actually watch the 10 O'Clock News?" 1, 26%; 2, 23%; 3, 17%; 4, 12%; 5, 14%; 7, 9%
3. "Do you recall any news reports about Portland Public Schools?" Yes, 44%; No, 56%
4. "What do you remember about those reports?" (Asked of the "yes" respondents.) 24% didn't know; 52% gave an accurate description of 1 or more segments; 24% gave responses not from the series.

Results: "Only 4.3% accurately recalled the stories. Because of this, internal demands for letters & on-air responses were pre-empted, thus saving a public relations debacle by generating even more coverage of the issue. Cost -- \$1,450."

ARE CORPORATE SPEECH WRITERS
PHRASEMAKERS OR POLICYMAKERS?

"The increasing importance of advocacy spokespersonship suggests that the speechwriter's role as policy synthesizer or co-formulator may also be growing," writes prof Jack Cassidy, San Jose StateU, in his paper, "The Role of the Corporate Speechwriter in Public Policy Spokesmanship."

Cassidy polled 20 respondents representing 15 large corporations & 5 ass'ns. Objective was to find evidence that "issues speechwriters" perform an "amplified task" beyond that generally ascribed to corporate speechwriters. Key questions & results:

"True, many simply articulate the speaker's position. Others must synthesize the organization's viewpoint from the often disparate opinions of experts. Some even serve as their client's 'alter ego,' helping to formulate policy on public issues."

1. Do you actively seek to identify public issues that may warrant inclusion on spokesmen's speech agendas? ("We wished to learn if 'issues writing'

demands that practitioners be proactive & strategically oriented, attributes not required for general corporate speechwriting.") Yes, 70%; No, 30%

2. Do you participate in prioritizing issues to reveal prospective speech topics? ("It is plausible that the issue writer's responsibilities give him/her influence as an issue gatekeeper, helping to set the speech agenda rather than merely taking assignments from it.") Yes, 55%; No, 45%

3. Do you analyze prospective speech issues? ("Analysis here means clarifying the forces driving the issue, its present status & likely future course, who the key stakeholders are, their positions on the issue, & so forth. It is important to know if speechwriters do, or utilize, such analysis because it provides a basis for formulating more effective speech positions & strategies.") Yes, 45%; No, 55%

4. Do you present to spokesmen alternative positions for prospective speeches &/or recommend a specific position? ("In other words, is the issues writer a phrasemaker or policymaker?") Formulate/recommend position = Yes, 70%; No, 30% Formulate/recommend strategy = Yes, 70%; No, 30%

60% vs. 40% recommend & direct implementation of speech strategies. But fewer than 1/3 evaluate results. "Without evaluation, the cost effectiveness of issues spokespersonship programs is unclear, and probably well below potential." Notes one respondent: "We took a rough statistical look at the likely impact of the CEO's speeches by type, forum, venue, etc. Showing him the apparent cost ineffectiveness of his speaking schedule enabled us to get him to cut it back significantly and make fewer, but higher impact, speeches." (Free copy of Cassidy's paper from him at Dep't of Organization & Mgmt, School of Business, San Jose StateU 95192)

2 PUBLICATIONS HELP ORGANIZATIONS PREPARE
FOR ANY ISSUE THAT MIGHT ACCOMPANY A.I.D.S.,
ALSO TO MEET EDUCATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Tho written for specific audiences, these should be useful to any organization because they come from deeply concerned sources:

1. American Hospital Assn's AIDS kit recommends instituting a clearinghouse for AIDS planning & monitoring. Initial activities (for hospitals) should include developing a policy covering treatment of AIDS patients, employees who contract AIDS, employees who refuse to care for AIDS patients. Kit provides facts, legal issues & financial implications to assist in the process.

Also included is a section on communications strategies -- internal & external. Among its list of key audiences, AHA lists school children "because they actually are a source of influence & information for their parents. Children today are sophisticated, and it is likely they have heard of AIDS. They should be informed of the facts." 7 case studies, tips on evaluating your organization's programs, list of resources & a bibliography round out the kit. (\$20 from AHA, 840 N. Lake Shore Dr, Chi 60611; 312/280-6000)

"Many people, especially our youth, are not receiving information that is vital to their future health and well-being because of our reticence in dealing with the subjects of sex, sexual practices and homosexuality. This silence must end." -- Surgeon General Everett Koop

2. American Civil Liberties Union's AIDS policy is based on 2 principles: a) fear of the disease does not justify discrimination, b) public health policies