

3. Delegated authority: Bechtel's labor relations staff members have the responsibility & authority to negotiate agreements & resolve disputes. By positioning staff members thruout the world, Bechtel stays in daily contact with key union leaders at every level.
4. Honesty: "We've always been honest & straightforward with unions. As a result, we've always been able to staff the jobs, resolve problems, ensure unions stand up to their end of the agreement & produce what we say we will for our clients -- a quality job."

Bell has been practicing labor relations at Bechtel for 31 years. His candid approach provided inspiration for the corporation's commitment to "people before projects" (pr 6/27).

SENIOR WORKERS CAN
MAKE GOLDEN EMPLOYEES
SAYS SERVICE INDUSTRY

When the labor pool began to dry up a few years ago, organizations, as a last resort, tapped the senior sector to fill jobs. Now many companies, e.g. Zayre, McDonalds, Marriott, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Bay Banks, Dominoes Pizza consider senior workers indispensable.

"They know how to anticipate customer needs," Linda Hanson, dir human resources, Roy Rogers restaurants (Bethesda) told prr. "With a young person, well, sometimes they do and sometimes they don't." "Seniors provide great role models for the younger employees," says Gregg Reynolds, vp-pa, Kentucky Fried Chicken (Louisville). "Plus they bring expertise & know-how to the job. We're now recruiting 1500 of them to be assistant mgrs. It's an excellent pr move."

Could the trend spread beyond service industries -- or will retirement & health benefit inflexibilities prevent that? Are seniors, as often suggested, more in tune with a simpler, less-demanding era of employee relations, motivation & productivity? Stay tuned.

URGENT ASSIGNMENT

PRSA or someone can help the reputation of the profession in high places by offering the U.S. Office of Personnel Management a description of what a public affairs (gov't term for all pr classifications) job is. As the Reagan administration ends, its political appointees are, as usual, flocking to permanent civil service positions. Often, folks getting jobs seem unqualified. And, reports The Washington Post, this most often occurs in pa jobs:

"A significant number of the conversions (to permanent status) are into public affairs jobs, which lack a standard job description or set of educational or technical criteria. Public affairs offices around the gov't are studded with veterans of political jobs in past administrations, both Democratic & Republican."

Naturally, the Post goes on to describe several pa officers whose qualifications seem dubious. One went from a temporary job in the White House mail-answering room to regional dpa for a NOAA division. She got the job in non-competitive hiring. Simple qualification rules would offer fairness to applicants, gov't agencies & taxpayers.

pr reporter

The Weekly Newsletter of Public Relations,
Public Affairs & Communication

603 / 778 - 0514

Vol.31 No.41
October 17, 1988

CAN AWARENESS PROVIDED BY TELEVISION CHANGE BEHAVIOR?
RESEARCHERS OFFER SOME QUALIFYING OPINIONS ON
THE HARVARD-HOLLYWOOD DESIGNATED DRIVER CAMPAIGN

According to established theory, tv cannot change behavior. Some researchers, and sometimes the industry itself, maintain that it can. The medium continues to be glutted with messages, both nonprofit & commercial. Its effectiveness, however, remains highly debatable. What can it do for practitioners?

Action For Children's Television "Of course tv can change behavior," Peggy Charren, pres, told prr. "It's idiotic to think that it can't. TV advertising dollars depend on behavioral change. Without it, the industry would go out of business. There would be no tv." She cites anti-smoking PSAs shown during the 60s & early 70s. "Smokers who had children knew how effective those PSAs were. Their children were terrified that Mommy & Daddy would die of lung cancer." Charren says the PSAs were so powerful that cigarette companies were willing to go off the air in order to end them. "It was worth it to them so that all they would have to deal with was their own message on the side of the box."

Harvard Alcohol Project Amazingly [or is it typically?], tho hooking up with Hollywood & the tv networks to "change social norms about drunk driving," (pr 9/19) its research did not explore whether tv can influence behavior. Rather, it studied how to use tv to target teens & young adults. The very choice of an advertising agency (Saatchi & Saatchi, NYC) as a researcher indicates the power of the medium was assumed.

Saatchi & Saatchi It commissioned a psychologist to interview teens & young adults to discover "what was really driving their drinking behavior." Extensive questioning indicated: 1) they are trying to break away from parents; 2) they perceive drinking as a pleasure & react defensively to reminders that they must act responsibly & think of consequences; 3) they are struggling with a paradox -- you must be grown up to drink, but alcohol makes you act childlike; 4) they have a "dissociative response," i.e. "it will never happen

"Raising awareness does help," S&S's Kelly told prr. "Change may not happen tomorrow, but it has to start somewhere." This, of course, is standard Diffusion Theory. But Kelly redefines the project's goal: to get target audience (teens & young adults) to think into the future; to consider the consequences of their actions. Is this a step beyond awareness? Can media push us there?



to me." Kelly says it was thus decided not to try to keep them from drinking, but keep them from drinking & driving. Also, setting up an authoritative figure to preach about the dangers of drinking would be the "kiss of death." "We had to get away from the adult image & break thru the barrier." Dialogue was therefore inserted into programming & role models accepted by youth were used for PSAs. Another instance where ad agency research is ahead of what pr typically does.

Researchers agree on 2 points: a) if cognizance/awareness is the goal, it can be achieved via tv; b) but behavior modification occurs much later, if the public turns the appeal into social reward/punishment.

Joshua Meyerowitz Media scholar & author of No Sense Of Place, says by itself, awareness is ineffectual in changing habits. "But what it can do is bring the subject out of the television set & into other forums for discussion. Attitudes will change & people will eventually respond to real-life cues & pressures." He says the militancy of non-smokers & current frankness on the subject of safe sex both are the result of strong public comm campaigns. Awareness leads to discussion...which creates social pressure...eventually fostering change.

Jim Grunig While his research dispels the influence of mass media (pr 5/29/78 & 1/31/83, t&t 2/7/83), he cautiously says the designated driver messages could be effective in reaching the target audience. "There are active & passive publics," Grunig told prr, "and mass media is most effective in reaching passive audiences." He says parents of teens, comprising an active audience, would be very receptive to designated driver programs & seek out information. But they would look to sources other than mass media. The teen, however, who has more time & watches a lot of tv might retain the information. "Especially if it is repeated enough."

Grunig emphasizes, however, that message retention does not guarantee change. "When you're addressing a passive public, the best you can expect is to get the idea across and hope it will become relevant." He notes that the project's goal -- getting people to "think into the future" -- is a particularly demanding one. "If you can isolate a habit that is relatively simple & repeat the message enough, behavior may eventually change. But designating someone to drive ahead of time is a more complicated behavior."

Meyerowitz sees tv as greatly influential because it's a medium by which people check their behavior. "People look to tv to see the way others think they should act." He says society uses tv to help form attitudes & cultural norms. This phenomenon raises problems when dual, contradictory messages are sent -- e.g. for years Hollywood has celebrated the funny drunk. Movies (Arthur, Blind Date) and sitcoms (Moonlighting) poke gentle fun at drunk people -- who are often shown sitting behind the steering wheel. "When tv provides positive images of drunk drivers, people get the message that society also approves of this behavior."

Grunig says the psychology of "sneaking" messages into program content may be effective, but he questions the use of role models. "I'm not sure how much difference it makes who gives the message. If it's repeated enough, the audience will remember it. As a father and a boyscout leader, I know it doesn't matter whether or not it came from Michael J. Fox."

Tough messages against drinking (e.g. scare tactics depicting death) are largely ineffectual because they demand too great a cultural leap:

"People are more afraid of being ostracized than they are of killing themselves. The most frightening tactic of all is telling them their behavior is socially unacceptable."

LA Law, which is participating in the designated driver program, is already notorious for double messages on safe sex, says Meyerowitz. "Characters are always hopping in and out of the sack with each other, & occasionally one mentions a condom."

NEW TECHNOLOGY FROM NIELSEN MAY GIVE TRUE TRACKING OF VNRs & PSAs

This month Nielsen Media Research begins year-long testing of SIGMA (SIGnal Monitoring Analysis) service. The electronic method of verifying usage could end the days of usage reports, phone calls & reply cards from broadcasters on whether or not a VNR or PSA was aired.

System electronically monitors all nets, independents & cable stations. It identifies previously encoded VNR or PSA signals. When one is aired, the code is captured by meters & relayed overnight to the Nielsen computer. Broadcasters are logged into a data base along with city of origin, time & date of broadcast, program duration & title. SIGMA users receive a report showing VNR/PSA performance.

"We will be able to estimate audiences, verify airtime & demographics," mktg exec Dan Raehill told prr. "I don't think anyone will be able to produce anything better." Nielsen says the system can benefit users by providing accurate data; and tv stations by cutting back on paper & phone work.

BECHTEL'S BELL OFFERS INSIGHTS ON LABOR RELATIONS AS WORKING WITH UNIONS BECOMES TREND

Bechtel (San Francisco) has offices worldwide, boasts of precedent-setting agreements & on-time construction resulting from a positive approach to unions. Bechtel deals mainly with the hard-bargaining building trades, can counsel practitioners challenged by union difficulties.

Globalization fosters special challenges in labor relations. How does an organization adapt to the wants & the needs of unions in Jakarta when they may differ greatly from their Gaithersburg, Maryland counterparts? The negotiator must be able to adapt.

William Bell, svp & mgr of labor relations, safety & health, shares his formula for successful labor relations:

1. Sense of camaraderie: "We've always approached organized labor as a partner in our projects, not as an adversary. We each have responsibilities to our constituencies, but we both have a common responsibility to the client. I've always found labor responsive to that view.
2. Strong personal contacts: "We're now facing a shortage of skilled labor in some parts of the US. We couldn't do the job we do for our clients without close, effective relationships with leaders of the construction trades."