

Other Considerations Plant Tours: Tho they combated the initiative in Maine, they were excluded from the Mass. campaign: Unlike the Maine plant, Rowe (except on a very limited basis) & Pilgrim had never conducted plant tours -- the time to start was not during the campaign; allaying fears was not the goal.

Semantics: Critical task is fighting for the right ballot wording. "A 'no' vote is always better." Also, messages referred to "electrical," not "nuclear" plants.

SUPERMARKETS HOPE CUSTOMERS SAY "KEEP THE CHANGE, HELP THE HUNGRY" In cooperation with the Salvation Army, Shaw's Supermarkets feeds the hungry by keeping customers' change. Signage, other promotion urges shopper to say "keep the change." Cashier rounds it up to the nearest dime (higher upon request). Several chains across the country are using the idea.

"Response has been excellent," Mike Poore, dir adv'g, told prr. "We've been doing it since September. As of 11/26, we've raised over \$38,000." Poore attributes the success of "Change For The Hungry" to:

- A. participation -- Compared to fundraising via can near the register or collection box by the door, this encourages upfront, active involvement & a statement "Keep the change!"
- B. local disbursement of funds -- "It's more 'close to home.'" People can see where their money is going."

PR Benefits are tremendous. "It's an effective way to demonstrate concern for those who are less fortunate; generate publicity for the store. The program is more upfront than our other non-profit commitments."

Poore says program is not likely to continue indefinitely. "These things lose their effectiveness if they're maintained on an ongoing basis. We plan to keep it going thru the holidays & raise at least \$50,000."

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

Are People More Candid With Computers than with other people? So says recent study at Duke U. People will more readily answer embarrassing questions via computer than face to face with a therapist. Implications for research are keen. To insure accuracy in your study & honesty in your respondents, let the software do the asking. Details in a future issue.

Canadian Mag Says Learn From Negative US Campaign. Citing low US voter turn out -- 50% vs. 75% in Canada -- MacLean's encourages readers to heed "how vicious advertising -- & a conspicuous failure to address the issues -- can cause a loss of respect for the entire process." Editorial also finds Americans gun-obsessed, resulting from "seeing their country as the last frontier"; calls US press corps "the 'bores on the bus': earnest Harvard grads who sip white wine -- occasionally; are in bed, alone, by 11; trade baby pictures."

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NONPROFIT PR MUST INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY, MOTIVATE BEHAVIOR CHANGE, FIGHT OVERCOMMUNICATION NOW, SAYS LONGTIME LEADER IRVING RIMER, RETIRING AFTER 30+ EVENTFUL YEARS WITH AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Public relations in NPOs has come very far -- but its challenges today & in the future will require state-of-the-art skills, the longtime vp pr of ACS told prr in an exclusive pre-retirement interview. How he sees it:

His Challenge 25 Years Ago "The greatest obstacle in '63 was trying to communicate medical knowledge about the effects of cigarette smoking to the public. We had trouble getting our PSAs on the air. Broadcasters were under intense pressure from their great beneficiary, the tobacco industry. Finally the FCC said that for every 3-4 cigarette ads there would be 1 anti-smoking message.

"The situation was unique. We were facing the opposition of a giant industry. 46% of the population smoked. We were confronting a major socio/econo/political/medical problem. We had to operate in the media, legislative & educational arenas. It created a pr problem for many organizations."

Tobacco continues to refute the data -- not admitting (except for the forced warning label) a relationship between smoking & health. "Clean-air bills are fought tooth & nail. The industry responds to our Great American Smokeout with Great American Welcome -- participating bars & restaurants welcome smokers & nonsmokers to relax in harmony, showing they can get along together.

"But the public has lost trust, confidence. Most damaging to the industry is recent evidence about the harmfulness of secondary smoke. Also, the industry was forced to make available memos which discussed strategies on how to cast doubt, cynicism on the medical findings. In a democratic society, this is the wrong way to go with the public. And denial is the worst thing possible."

The State Of NPO PR Today

Professional: Years ago, people in top nonprofit positions were second handers, volunteers with other primary jobs. Only national organizations had top pr counsel. This situation has vastly improved. If you look at hospitals, health-

"PR counsel must be the 'Socrates' within the organization. As the purveyors of public opinion, they must be critics & challengers and ask the most uncomfortable questions. They should not engage in popularity contests -- if they do, they're not doing their job. They must be seekers of the truth, and convey that truth, no matter how difficult."



care facilities, welfare agencies today, top-flight talent is represented. This is due in part to increased competition & maturing boards of directors.

¶Communicative: The field has learned to listen to the public, form messages accordingly and appeal to constituencies.

¶Self-Aware: We now recognize the need for NPOs to have an identity.

¶Research has become ubiquitous, a way of life. It reveals the public's knowledge & awareness, how behavior can be influenced & what obstacles exist. We can't be successful without first listening.

¶Sophisticated in dealing with controversy, gov't relations.

¶Allianced: The Heart Ass'n, Lung Ass'n & ACS comprise an effective coalition with 5 million volunteers nationwide. In certain programs, you cannot go it alone.

¶Creative: It has become obvious that top-flight talent is needed to create the messages that impact all segments of the population. It's necessary to use the best that's available. That usually means going out-of-house.

PR Challenges, Present & Future

1. Escalating Medical Costs: Technical developments are expensive, not provided by insurance. They must be made available for the average person. Example: mammography can find breast cancer at the most curable stages. The challenge is to push thru legislation mandating that this detection service, which saves lives & reduces need for drastic surgery, be there for all women.
2. Preventative Medicine must be promoted not only to the public, but to physicians, the food industry, the restaurant business. We know lifestyle contributes to susceptibility to disease, lowering cholesterol reduces the risk of heart disease & of cancer. But changing behavior is a major challenge.
3. Care For The Poor: especially children & the aged. This includes communicating info, since the very poor have no access. Lobbying for social action, legislation is required.
4. Sensory Overload: Communicators, pr, environmental & health programs have created a better informed public. There is a wealth of available information. Sara III & other mandates require disclosure of harmful elements in emissions, even foodstuffs. The down side is that the cup runneth over. The public is inundated with messages on AIDS, smoking, drugs, drinking, child abuse & other causes.

SUCCESS IN CAMPAIGN FOR A BALLOT MEASURE MEANS FRAMING ISSUES, CONTROLLING SEMANTICS, SAYS FIRM THAT WON 2 NUCLEAR BATTLES

Question 4 on the Massachusetts ballot called for closing the state's nuclear power plants -- Yankee Pilgrim & Yankee Rowe.

Shutdown was denied as residents voted to stay on line. Bob Deis, vp, Winner, Wagner & Mandebach (LA) & campaign mgr, Citizens Against the Shutdown Initiative (Boston) says ballot measure campaigns differ from political campaigns & product promotion. He tells prr how his side combined science & art to gain a 68% to 32% victory.

Science In Strategy "In March, statewide telephone surveys determined environmental concerns, feelings on nuclear energy. A campaign attempting to dispel mythology about nuclear power surely would have lost. Recording public opinion allowed us to frame issues -- which is how Bush beat Dukakis." Appeals highlighted:

¶Economic Impact: Pulling the plug on the plants means rate hikes for residents, compensation for plant owners. "Do you want to pay for this?"

¶Environmental Impact: "No free lunch." Taking Pilgrim & Rowe off-line means coal burning, pollution, greenhouse effect, acid rain.

Computer surveys of 50-100 people revealed public response to these themes. Evaluations were conducted on a monthly, later weekly, finally daily basis.

Art In Use Of Tactics 1. Timing. "To fight a similar initiative in Maine, we waited until June to begin campaign because we didn't want to be in the spotlight too long, or to peak too early. Mass. had several other issues in the news so we started in February."

2. Grassroots Appeal. Recruited leadership group of academics, community leaders, scientists. No politicians at first.

3. Advertising. Messages had to appeal to environmental sense, reason. Tho ads were expensive & intricate, they couldn't look "slick." Used credible spokespeople e.g. Nate Tufts, leading environmentalist, Dr. Melvin First, Harvard prof.

4. Mailings were sent, via computer demographics, to: swing voters; union voters; liberal/environmentalists; hospital admin; scientists; engineers. Also, general mailings.

5. Highlights -- Rowe had been on-line without problems for nearly 30 years. We emphasized its safety record. "Why close a safe, well-run plant?"

In Deis' opinion, the initiative failed because its sponsors: 1) 'preached to the choir' rather than to swing voters -- the audience that would have made the difference; 2) used controversial ads which irritated viewers who wanted information, not horror. "According to surveys, their educational Ralph Nader ad got the best response." Two of the ads -- one featuring a child with leukemia, another in which a doctor says radiation at Pilgrim is poisoning workers -- received little air time. CASI complained about their content to broadcasters, who deemed them tasteless & boycotted them. "The ads basically accused Pilgrim of murder," says Deis.