

1. Behavioral science software program. While practitioners need easy access to research findings, reality is that it's awkward to get to -- & difficult to fathom academic jargon. Compiling the info in a book doesn't work, either, due to unwieldy length & problems in updating. Solution is software making summaries of research instantly accessible. Program being developed will include everything from the Hawthorne Studies to the latest psychographic research. Designed to be user-friendly, program will allow selecting subject from menu, which then brings up highlights of all research done to date. Anticipated completion is 1990.

2. Prepaid Basic Public Relations Service for mid and small size organizations would work like prepaid legal assistance. It could offer mutual benefit to small clients by making professional counseling available; & to counseling firms by letting them serve such clients at affordable cost -- as well as introducing their work to a broadened client base. Mainly preventative, pre-set system would include: 1) short-form pr audit, 2) 6 hours of counsel yearly; 3) crisis management master plan. It is particularly aimed at the thousands of organizations which seldom have the budget to hire or retain counsel, but badly need services.

Will it work? Is it economically feasible? 1-year research project to find out involves 100 firms worldwide. Guidelines propose working with clients with annual gross incomes under \$200,000. They would pay \$1,800 annual fee. (See pr 10/5/87 for Marketing Methods' franchising program.) (To participate, contact: Roy Leffingwell, IPR-SSRC, PO Box 4034, Honolulu 96812; 808/536-7677; research participation fee, \$150)

#### ROLE-PLAYING SOFTWARE AIDS IN PR TRAINING

Success of software which teaches journalism students how to cover major news events has prompted Lehigh U. pr prof Carole Gorney to develop a corresponding program for pr students -- and as a professional development tool for practitioners.

Students play the part of an oil company pr representative responding to a crisis. Computer screens lead the student thru the scenario: 1st screen briefs them on company background, type of community, etc.; 2nd screen advises them a reporter is calling for info on a pipeline leak. Events in the scenario then unfold, influenced by student's preceding decisions & questions.

300-400 questions lead thru situations such as facing the media, dealing with a recalcitrant CEO, handling negative news. E.g., "Your CEO refuses to cooperate with the press. What arguments do you make in favor of a candid approach?" Process is designed to culminate in a project, i.e. preparing for a press conference, designing a long-range plan, etc.

Plan is to market program to other universities, corporations, counseling firms as a training device. Includes authoring tools making it possible to vary the scenarios. (Contact Gorney at Dept of Journalism, Lehigh U., University Center No. 29, Bethlehem, Pa. 18015; 215/758-4176)

#### ITEM OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

Need for increased professional recognition continues to amass. Wells Fargo last month broke up its 35-member corporate communications dept, assigning public relations to finance & internal comms to personnel. Is there a link between being called a communications dept -- i.e. a technical service unit -- & such downgrading? Vp-mpr Betty Lattie told pr reporting relationships are not the key. PR went to finance, she says, because shareholders have been identified as the bank's "number one public."

# pr reporter

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IN BUYING DECISIONS, WOMEN COUNT MORE THAN EVER.  
PROOF: EVEN MOTORCYCLE INDUSTRY WOOS THEM NOW

Increasingly women count -- & are being counted. Their rise in the labor force gives them greater knowledge & funds for family decisions. At same time it causes employers to reach out with childcare, pregnancy leaves, flexible hours. Retailers & service providers (from healthcare to education) pay maximum attention to what women want. Chrysler spokeswoman Ann Lalas notes that women directly influence 81% of all car purchases.

And -- even the motorcycle industry is wooing women in an effort to enlarge its market. "Women are choosing paths that were exclusively male territories. Perhaps more than ever before, they are a prime influence in the buying decisions of family members," explains Joanee Antista of Doremus Porter Novelli (LA) -- developers of the marketing program.

Industry meeting last July, to find ways to increase the market, launched Discover Today's Motorcycling committee. Its first program -- \$400,000 funded by Honda, Suzuki, Yamaha & Kawasaki -- will focus on women for 3 reasons:

- 1) It makes an important statement that motorcycling has undergone major changes.
- 2) Women will affect the image of motorcycling; generally considered more cautious than men, women riders will make a positive statement about motorcycling.
- 3) Mothers & wives have influence over whether those close to them get involved in motorcycling.

In developing the program, Doremus Porter Novelli did a) man-on-the-street interviews to determine feelings about motorcycling in general; b) one-on-one interviews with riders & people who used to ride to find out why they got into it and why they stopped; c) dealer survey.

"The program's effect on men was one of our major considerations. We didn't want to alienate them because they're such a huge market. But in the research we found they want their wives or significant others to ride, too. So we'll be focusing on riding couples & families later in the campaign," acct exec Betsy O'Brien told pr.

Evidence of women's expanding clout in decisionmaking is "Marketing To Women." New monthly presents lifestyle info about women by reviewing secondary studies as well as original research. (\$145/yr; P.O. Box 834, Oneonta, NY 13820-9953)



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Program Tactics 1. Background seminar for press, especially female journalists. "Originally we were going to teach them how to ride. But in our inquiries there wasn't as much enthusiasm for that as there was for just background information." 1-day seminar will take place next month.

2. "Major special event" called Van Buren TransCon. Cross-country ride celebrates the 2 Van Buren sisters who drove from NY to California on motorcycles in 1916. They were also the first 2 women to ride any kind of motor vehicle up Pike's Peak. 4 women will lead the TransCon, 2 chosen by the Committee and the other 2 chosen thru an essay contest sponsored by American Motorcyclists Ass'n. Event will raise funds for Juvenile Diabetes Foundation. To enter, riders & passengers must each raise \$25 for JDF.

Event kicks off in NYC May 1st. After stopping in DC, Chi, Dallas for parades & local celebrations, ride will conclude in LA June 5th. Closing ceremony includes parade, rally, antique motorcycle display, obstacle course to test riders' safety skills, celebrity fashion show. Donated items will be auctioned to raise funds for JDF.

3. News bureau. "We're developing stories on women & motorcycles. To build enthusiasm among the industry & riders, we held a press conference in early December. Now we're getting phone calls about the TransCon from all over the country. Response has been incredible."

4. Promotional kit of Discover Today's Motorcycling items for dealers & aftermarket people to sell. "That will also get our message out."

5. Ad campaign. Bozell Jacobs Kenyon & Eckhardt is donating its time; Peterson Publishing and Diamandis Communications are donating space valued at \$500,000.

IABC'S ABRUPT DECISION LAST WEEK TO STOP EXPLORING AMALGAMATION

.... with PRSA & CPRS ... may be poor message strategy for that organization. PRSA made it clear -- both in its 1980 & 1987 approaches -- that its goal is increased professionalism. One unified society for this purpose has been PRSA's stated vision for 3 decades, because this will benefit democratic society in which members practice. IABC sees instead a competitive marketing opportunity. This seems to ignore the social contract any profession must have -- and which pr has been slowly attaining.

Recent statements show the difference. PRSA pres. Dwayne Summar wrote IABC chair Jean Cormier 1/27: "Our longer-term mission is to unify the profession ...not to consolidate other organizations." Cormier's 2/18 statement ending merger discussions said the decision was based on "the recent marketing research study" of members which showed "there is a distinct & special need for IABC in the marketplace." The question now is whether IABC will join North American PR Council & cooperate with its 14 member societies on joint accreditation, uniform ethics code, integrated professional development & other unifying projects. Despite continual invitations, until now IABC has refused. Perhaps the new spirit of cooperation between chapters, leaders & members -- which Cormier says the merger move prompted -- will bring IABC into NAPRC.

LESSON FOR TRADE, PROFESSIONAL ASSNS: ACCOUNTANTS ARE USING PUBLIC RELATIONS TO CHANGE THEIR "NERDY" IMAGE

Says a biz mag: "The media routinely portray accountants as Caspar Milquetoast types -- timid, unimaginative, unassertive, cautious. No fun at all. 'It's a dog-eat-dog world,' says Norm, the accountant character in the popular television series 'Cheers.' 'And I've got Milk Bone underwear.'" The program:

1. After months of lobbying, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants convinced US Postal Service to issue a stamp commemorating the profession. One-time special edition of 160 million stamps was distributed last September.

2. AICPA represented the profession in the '87 Tournament of Roses Parade on New Year's Day with a float portraying the Marquette & Joliet expedition...and won a trophy for best depiction of American life.

3. AICPA pitched the idea of a serious tv series about an accountant or accounting firm. Ass'n has been contacted for advice on developing a script.

4. "Late Night With David Letterman" has invited AICPA's vp-pr Bill Corbett to talk about what it's like to work for CPAs.

5. \$1 million ad campaign will tout the profession.

6. "Journal of Accountancy" now includes articles on how CPAs can improve their public image.

7. Mass. Society of CPAs encourages members to be more visible thru community service & public office.

8. Conn. Society spotlights in its monthly newsletter members who have offbeat interests. Also in Conn., after serious lobbying effort governor proclaimed Certified Public Accountants Week in Sept.

9. Involvement in community service is included in employee evaluations at Coopers & Lybrand. It's weighted equally with client service & marketing accomplishments in considering advancement at the firm.

10. Firms are promoting the profession among college & university students thru technology programs & career seminars.

11. More & more women & minorities are joining the profession, breaking down the white male stereotype.

RESEARCH PROJECTS WORTHY OF NOTE

Two projects underway by The International Public Relations-Social Science Research

Center continue trends that are impacting the practice:

Public opinion surveys show CPAs are perceived as honest, conscientious & intelligent, says Corbett. According to an '86 poll of the general public & biz community, CPAs ranked #1 among the professions for their ethical & moral practices. Accountants received a 90% positive ranking. (Ass'n is leading the professions with its tough new ethics code -- see prr 2/15.) "The basic problem is that CPAs have failed to capitalize on the good reputation they have with specific groups."