

NON-PROFIT'S ANNUAL REPORT
CARRIES ADVERTISING;
COULD HARBINGER TREND

National Multiple Sclerosis Society introduced ads in its annual report. "It is unusual," admits Shirley Silverberg, editor. "It may set a new trend in annual reports." MS Society chose to use advertising because, as with many NPOs, budget is tight. "We treat this as an AR in every editorial consideration. We took advertising so that money does not get diverted from services."

The ads are targeted to people with MS, professionals who treat MS & donors. This works because AR is spring issue of quarterly mag. "I haven't heard from our readers about it one way or the other," she told prr. "Usually they write in to complain if they don't like what we're doing."

Disclaimer is used: "MS Society does not endorse products, services or manufacturers." Small number of reports are printed without ads for use in fund raising presentations to foundations or corporations.

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

Public relations seems to be the profession-of-choice for grads of journalism & mass communications programs. "Professional communicators & educators agree that the pendulum has swung from adv'g to public relations, and journalism has lost some of its allure since the heyday of Woodward & Bernstein," reads a news release from the comms dep't of Rochester Institute of Technology touting its pr prgm. Recent USA Today article reports that newspapers are finding once prestigious internships difficult to fill as more up-and-coming communications professionals opt for public relations. Ohio State J-School's study of grads from US journalism & mass communication prgms found number who looked for full time jobs with newspapers declined as did the number who majored in news editorial prgms (from 22% in '86 to 18% in '87). Number of grads taking jobs with ad agencies or dep'ts also declined. Percent finding work in broadcasting or pr firms/dep'ts remained stable. More students chose work in non-traditional areas of mass comms than in previous years -- e.g. video production. Highest median starting salary is in pr -- \$16,744 -- according to study.

How far can you go to be "punny"? An org'n is promoting its internal photo contest with this line: "Get loaded and shoot something." It did get prr's attention...but not favorably.

When Vogue fired longtime editor Grace Mirabella it illustrated a familiar fact. As she put it: "They are in the communications business but they don't know how to communicate." Her husband heard on a tv gossip show that another person was being brought in to replace her. She called chairman S.I. Newhouse at home and he confirmed it. Neither he nor anyone else had spoken to her beforehand.

Why it takes Big Picture methods to get media interest (see lead article) is shown by survey conducted of Washington media events. John Adams Assoc found over 1,000 scheduled events aimed at the press corps between 4/20 & 5/17. 150 news conferences were mainly held by non-gov't groups, such as associations & coalitions; only 36 were held by gov't agencies. Weds. is preferred day, with as many as 72 competing for attention. 10 a.m. is most popular time, followed by 2 p.m. & 9:30 a.m. National Press Club most liked location. Preferred hotels are Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, Washington Hilton, Omni Shoreham, J.W. Marriott. Other locations ranged from the zoo to Iwo Jima Memorial. D.C. press corps numbers 8,000.

pr reporter

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WITH NEWS & INFORMATION DELUGING AUDIENCES TODAY,
MANY ATTEMPT "BIG PICTURE" MESSAGES OR FORMATS
TO BREAK THRU THE CLUTTER. DOES IT WORK?

Audiences are swamped with messages -- so much so they're starting to ignore them. Communicators are responding by sending out big, bright, all-encompassing formats that can't be missed -- or at least are hard to overlook. They reach out & grab the senses, give more than is necessary. Or big picture messages are used to raise the appeal to that which is held precious, striving to be in the "big picture" of life itself.

Mail campaigns demonstrate the trend. In an attempt to cut thru the clutter, some adopt the tactic that packaging is primary. The humble news release, tho clear & concise, hasn't much chance of standing out next to the high-color, glossy press kit that contains a scratch & sniff card, free eats or comes in a giant box.

Need for Big Picture tactics, in a vastly overcommunicated society, suggests a re-definition of the objective of public relations: To make your product/service/organization/idea a factor in peoples' daily lives.

Big Picture packaging has one or all of these characteristics:

- A. Big & bright: 1) North America Press Syndicate says it always sends communiques shaped to illustrate the theme of the message -- e.g. a target-shaped pamphlet on target marketing, or an actual menu listing media opportunities as entrees & appetizers.
 - 2) Media Link Communications (New York) offers a holographic mail package "to enhance the message & stimulate curiosity." Hologram, printed on a document inside the envelope, shows thru a diecut window -- doubling response, according to Media Link studies.
 - 3) Hardees used the "giant size" approach for both its light oil & raisin campaigns. Shiny, colorful boxes containing press kits were sent to media thruout the country. The boxes, bulky in both the mail & trash pile, scream for attention. Inside were of course raisins & a jar of light cooking oil, respectively.
- B. Incorporate small messages into one big one: Gulf+Western, Raytheon & Best Western Hotels are examples of companies that put out glossy quarterly magazines. Large, full color, look too expensive to throw away. Actually they consolidate releases into a far more attractive package which only needs to gain attention once -- rather than the several attempts the individual messages would have made.



- C. Appeal to the senses, such as the scratch & sniff card. Hardees' press kits contained musical recordings and the food items. Cone Communications (Boston) used confetti & a noisemaker.
- D. Link minor items to major ones: The magazines feature broad topics but always in association with company products or businesses readers might not care as much about if reported on specifically. Best Western carries extremely appealing travel & leisure articles -- highlighted with mention of BW accommodations. Raytheon magazine features articles about history, sports, the arts -- but always projects Raytheon sponsors.
- E. Often big picture messages are sent via special events. Ketchum pr engaged industrial editors in a promotion called "power partying." Dressed in party attire, sr. acct exec K. C. Horn surprised editors with a desk-side celebration for hi-tech client Du Pont. Editors were presented with a cake, sparklers & press kit -- definitely hard to ignore. "We had to elevate ourselves above the industrial noise," Horn told prr.

Are The Tactics Effective? Jerry Singer, dpr, Hardees: "The boxes catch attention. Media outlets are cluttered with mail every day from companies trying to get their name in the paper. The boxes have eye appeal." And are cost-effective. "From an investment standpoint, it's a great way of publicizing and getting people interested without spending a lot of advertising dollars." But does it work? Hardees has had a record-breaking past few years.

Horn says: Consumer promotions are unusual in the formal hi-tech industry, but the desk-side party really added a human level to the corporate personality. "It helped to create a relationship between editors & the client." Were the parties well-received? "Definitely. You have to do something to call attention to your client's products. It may help to send out a pile of mail, but nothing is better than a warm body walking in. They got warm & fuzzy that they received a cake and that we took time to come to them."

Wendy Black of Best Western credits the magazine with changing corporate image. Replacing a publication called "Hoofbeats," which was only distributed within the hotels, BW Quarterly responds to the company's international growth. It shed the cowboy connotation which had branded them for so long. "We did a communications audit to find out our needs. We discovered we needed an 'image piece' to dispel the roadside 'mom & pop' reputation." Black says the magazine is so full of travel ideas it's distributed in tourism centers everywhere. "It is not a hard-sell piece, but rather a soft-sell vehicle."

Big Picture communication doesn't always succeed.

Gulf+Western's Larry Tavcar told prr the magazine has been put on "temporary" hold for re-evaluation. It was competing with too many other company publications. Raytheon's colorful beauty has met its demise, according to Kenneth Tokarz, comn. specialist.

And some gimmicky promotions have met with cynicism & disgust rather than enthusiasm. The Wall Street Journal cites one example in what it calls the "trend toward the bizarre" -- a blood (paint) splattered news release by Pat Hoyt Associates (Houston) promoting a blood recycling machine. Not only was the release ill-received by the media, but client Biodynamics was also turned-off. Says CEO John V. Hargiss, "That's just not us. But the cow is out of the barn."

DOES YOUR ISSUE ANTICIPATION AGENDA INCLUDE ROBOTICS & NEURO-NETWORKS -- SCI-FI NAMES THAT MAY FIND A HOME IN THE WORKPLACE?

Already, robots are drilling holes into skulls of brain surgery patients because they can do more precise work. They also do dangerous tasks like handling AIDS contaminated fluids, clearing asbestos out of pipes, disposing of nuclear waste... and decorating chocolates. According to research by Roberta Minifie at U Florida, robots will comprise 75% of the manufacturing work force in the not-too-distant future. The implications are that humans will be re-trained for more advanced decisionmaking jobs.

But will they? Don't forget neuro-networks. This new technology is making progress in mimicking human brainwaves. Hecht Nielsen (Calif) is using neuro computers for credit card analysis. Global Holo-netics (Fairfield, Iowa) employs machine vision in quality control. The computer receives a video of the product on the assembly line & is able to screen out the defectives. The goal of neuro-networks is to effectively replicate an individual's thought processes so their presence is not necessary.

Looks like everyone's job is in trouble. Except pr. We'll be necessary to explain all this to everybody -- and somehow bring about consensus.

GLOBAL WARMING: TRENDS TO LOOK FOR IN PREPARING FOR RESULTING ISSUES BATTLES

Some managements don't want to hear this. The impact on presently successful products, policies or mindsets is too great. But scientists say it's not a question of if, but when -- & how much greenhouse effect will occur. "There's nothing we can do stop it," Mark Mills, pres Science Concepts (D.C.) told prr, "but we can prepare for it, & curtail some of our activities to minimize the effects." According to Mills, there are certain factors any organization, or individual, should consider:

- * Support for other energy sources, such as electric, solar & much-maligned nuclear. "There are congressmen who had been anti-nuke but who are now saying 'we need nuclear power.'" But this runs headlong into public fear of toxic substances.
- * Possible legislation encouraging use of alternative energy by taxing those who burn fossil fuels & offering tax credits to those who convert. Bill "has already been proposed."
- * Change in automobiles -- one of the biggest emitters of CO2. Reagan administration decreased fuel efficiency requirement from 27.5 mpg to 26 -- without considering greenhouse effect, says EPA. Use of light rail may increase. Transportation pools become vital.

Many industries could benefit, as Across the Board mag pointed out last May. Others will suffer, unless they anticipate & plan ASAP. Other possible developments to consider: global warming should take the heat off fuel bills but ruin air conditioning budgets; fishing industry, blessed with a longer season, could thrive. But rising sea levels could cause beach erosion, & toxic waste sites near the ocean could be inundated. Tourism could boom or fail, depending on seasons catered to. Hardly an organization or practitioner will escape.