

Getting the attention of & persuading unconventional risktakers is most challenging, since they don't use media -- and lack religious affiliations, concern for health & confidence in even a source as viable as the Surgeon General. They need another unconventional to be the message source, e.g. Grace Jones promoting safe sex. Ferguson told pr that data on unconventional is sketchy and research on them continues.

(For copies of study, contact Ferguson or Valenti at U of Fla College of Journalism, Gainesville, 32611; 904/392-6660.)

FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES ARE TAKING ROOT AS EXECS REALIZE WORKFORCE IS CHANGING

According to a study by Olsten Temp Services (Westbury, NY), the 9 to 5

work day is rapidly becoming passe. Survey of 500 corp execs nationwide found 75% would consider hiring employees who want a special work schedule. Significant finding since only 33% say they would've considered special scheduling requests 5 years ago.

Survey also shows:

1. A shortage of support staff was indicated by all respondents -- 65% claim they had to see more candidates to fill a secretarial position than a year ago.
2. Qualified managers are also becoming hard to find -- 55% had to see more candidates to fill a spot than a year ago.
3. Both male (79%) & female (69%) execs say they would be more likely to hire someone who is currently employed as opposed to someone who is unemployed.

Execs have reformed their thinking about employee needs, says Laurie Drucker, counselor with G.S. Schwarz which helped conduct the survey. "They're responding to all the talk about the 'mommy track' and the pressures faced by working people." Why is it more difficult to find secretarial and managerial support these days? Is the labor shortage that severe? Drucker thinks the long decried deterioration of US educational system may be coming home to roost.

Study is first in a series on workplace trends & issues. (For more info, contact Olsten, 1 Merrick Ave, Westbury, NY 11590; 516/832-8200)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. Institute (nee Foundation) for Public Relations Research & Education 1990 officers: pres, Stephen Kaye (vp, corp comms, Illinois Tool Works, Chi); vp's, Robert Carboni (vp comms,

Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance, Milwaukee) & Mary Ann Pires (principal, The Pires Group, Elmsford, NY); treas, Chester Lasell, (vp Corp comms, Deere & Co, Moline).

pr reporter

The Weekly Newsletter of Public Relations,
Public Affairs & Communication

603 / 778 - 0514

Vol. 32 No.47
November 27, 1989

WHEN DO INALIENABLE RIGHTS INFRINGE ON OTHERS? IS EVERYTHING COVERED BY THE FIRST AMENDMENT? OR DO SOME MESSAGES & MEDIA PERHAPS NEED CHECKING?

Free speech is under fire. Attacks are aimed at tv, ad, music, tobacco & alcohol industries. Symbolic acts like flag burning provoke strong opposition. Politicians' outcry against various forms of artwork is keeping certain pieces out of exhibits. The natural -- or at least all-American -- reaction to such encroachments is alarm. But many now argue some regulatory initiatives are justifiable.

The issue directly concerns public relations. The research maintains that media's effect on behavior is minimal, it's becoming apparent that certain kinds of media -- those which require focused attention/participation -- may indeed incite negative behaviors:

Pop music influences adolescents. Struggling for independence & identity, teens seek symbols to distinguish them from mainstream culture. Parents' Music Resource Center (Arlington, Va.) admits increase in teen violence & drug use is traceable to socioeconomic factors -- but says glamorization by media exacerbates problem.

"The 3 main causes of teen death are: 1) drug/alcohol-related accidents; 2) suicide; 3) homicide," notes exec dir Jennifer Norwood. "Groups like AMA & American Ass'n of Pediatrics can't cure these new 'childhood diseases' & look to societal factors. Media, with its graphic portrayal of 'violence-as-fun,' is definitely involved. It's a much larger socializing factor for children than ever before."

1700 junior highschoolers surveyed by RI Rape Crisis agree it's okay for a man to force himself on a woman if: they've been dating for over 6 months (65% of the boys & 57% of the girls); or if he'd spent a lot of money on her (25% of the boys & a sixth of the girls). "We, as a society, need to look at messages our children are receiving," says Wendy Kusuma Allen, comm rels coordinator. "If we assess the level of violent sex presented thru media, perhaps we can find at least one source for the findings..." i.e. that respondents accept violence on a personal level in their relationships. Also, "acquaintance rape" is now epidemic. Psychology Today says 70-80% of rapes are perpetrated by dates, colleagues or others known to the victim.



¶Also under scrutiny, 900 Numbers -- OK'd by the Supreme Court in July, despite Congressional push for a ban (pr 9/25). "Free speech is an underpinning of a free society..." says Christian Science Monitor. "The demand for this kind of titillating message must wane. We can't expect government to set standards that society is unwilling to set for itself." Court ruling implicitly summons greater discipline & awareness from parents.

But when before have parents had to worry about such easy access to such hard-core stuff? Among videos, music & dial-a-porn, kids can choose from a cornucopia of raw material. Playboy is one thing -- but no 50s mom ever had to worry that her kids, struggling with puberty & sexual identity, were listening to throaty messages about farm animals -- or watching the uncut "Caligula" on the upstairs VCR.

Result: Regulatory Groups Proliferate Angry Michigan mom Terry Rakolta led a boycott against racy series, "Married With Children" (pr 3/20). She now heads Americans For Responsible Television. Nat'l Coalition on TV Violence also calls for boycotts, grades shows according to violence & alcohol/drugs consumed. Now it wants to ban 2 new series which takeoff on "slasher" films.

Parents' Music group focuses on lyrics that communicate potentially harmful health messages. (Example: Guns 'N Roses tune, "I used to love her but I had to kill her. I had to put her 6-feet under. I can still hear her complain.") Norwood cites greater awareness, especially on the part of parents. "They are becoming more active. Now there are restrictions on certain activities by bands at concerts & many record stores."

Philip Morris would feel brunt of restrictions in its beer & tobacco businesses. Company's current institutional campaign celebrates -- a bit prematurely, no doubt to get a beat on others -- bicentennial of Bill of Rights in 1991. Will this be seen as public service...or self serving? Does it matter?

First Amendment Protection People For The American Way decries what it calls spreading attacks on "children's freedom to learn." It documents state-by-state cases of attempts to ban books from school libraries. "The attacks are a nationwide, not a regional, phenomenon," it says. Controversial books include everything from Catcher In The Rye & Huckleberry Finn to manuals on witchcraft.

What deserves protection under the First Amendment? If not everything, who decides? If restrictions are introduced, what beside current "offenders" might be caught in the net?

Of Related Interest...

STUDY PROFILES RISK TAKERS, THEIR BEHAVIORS & BEST WAYS OF COMMUNICATING WITH THEM

Communicating health risks, e.g. AIDS, smoking, drugs, alcohol,

& driving hazards, may be pr's biggest 90s challenge -- because the protagonists are hard to reach. Mary Ann Ferguson & JoAnn Valenti (U of Florida) researched health attitudes and behavior of risk takers. Data were

gathered from surveys, lab & field experiments on 1,323 subjects. Age & marital status seem consistent -- young, single people are more likely to take risks. Also, 5 categories of risktakers emerge. The following chart (read vertically) shows probable characteristics -- where nothing is marked, no startling relationship occurs.

	<u>Adventurous</u>	<u>Physical</u>	<u>Impulsive</u>	<u>Rebellious</u>	<u>Unconventional</u>
Sex	M	M	F	M	M
Church Attendance	high	high	low	low	low
Attitudes Re Health	positive	positive	negative	negative	negative
Feel Control Over Health	yes	yes	no	no	no
Need For Cognition	high	high	low		
Media Used	radio	radio	tv	radio	
Health Info Source	physician EPA	EPA, AMA Surg Gen			no confidence in Surg Gen

Researchers' concern is how practitioners can reach this public with messages about risk avoidance. Since they tend to be young & rely more on radio than tv, a novel radio spot or placing a message within a popular song may be best way to get thru to them. But moving beyond the attention stage of communication varies with type of risktakers & will depend on other structural aspects of the message such as source credibility & content.

¶Both adventurous & physical risktakers are concerned with health & will process related info. They are thoughtful & respect expert sources. Risk behaviors include travel to exotic places, waterskiing & parachuting.

¶Impulsive risktakers are more difficult to reach. They feel negatively about their health, activities include smoking. Instead of using a novel appeal, messages may have to be embedded in other stimuli, e.g. a soap opera. Also, they can be targeted via family members. Example: they may be motivated to quit smoking if they see secondary smoke as harmful to their children.

¶Rebellious risktakers include speeders & smokers. They also respond to messages targeted at significant others -- since they don't want to be told directly what to do.