

posure plus school education programs increase AIDS awareness & foster positive attitudes towards victims, they have little effect on prompting preventive behavior.

Most powerful influence may be peer pressure. According to Cornell prof John Bishop, a primary reason for America's school problems is "peer pressure against studying hard." He tells Nat'l Ass'n of Secondary School Principals that peers discourage academic success because "if one student does well, it comes at the expense of another -- students are judged against each other instead of by an external standard." If correct, this suggests practitioners targeting the youth audience should re-think traditional methods of mass persuasion.

To create positive peer pressure to study, Bishop suggests:

1. A cooperative incentive structure in which rewards are based on the performance of the group, not each individual;
2. But individual accountability where everyone's maximum effort is necessary for the group to succeed;
3. Medals, trophies & school letters honoring academic achievement as well as athletic success. "They should be formally awarded at ceremonies held during the evening, when parents can attend";
4. Prominent bulletin boards where pictures of the most recent winners & reasons for recognition should be posted.

RISK PERCEPTION LINKED TO ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOR GAP

An everyday example of the difference between attitude & behavior -- the kind clients and CEOs readily understand -- is provided in a current medical journal. Studies in Seattle find that tho 94% of parents do not believe 5- and 6-year old children can reliably cross streets alone, 1/3 of parents nonetheless allow kindergartners to do so -- and they allow first-graders to walk alone to school.

This paradox is linked to parents' risk perception hierarchy. Most understand that pedestrian injury is more likely for children than drowning or being in a house fire. But the majority of parents incorrectly perceive the risk of pedestrian injury to be lower than riding in a car or on a bike.

The key to solving such situations, say the U Washington researchers who conducted study, is understanding the "developmental limitations" of the at-risk group & the accuracy of risk perception by the "management" group, in this case, parents. To reach them will require an all-inclusive approach -- not mere communication or warning -- including training, community education, modifying the environment or technology, legislative changes & improved enforcement of safety violations.

DO BIG PROGRAMS LIKE TEXACO'S OPERA BROADCASTS PAY OFF? CAN THEY MOVE PRODUCT? REALLY WIN OVER OPINION & POWER LEADERS? OR JUST PLEASE ART-LOVING EXECUTIVES?

This month, Texaco celebrates its 50th anniversary of sponsoring Metropolitan Opera broadcasts -- probably the best known & one of the longest commitments of a commercial enterprise to a social benefit. But in the new world of hard-headed, bottom-line public relations, what desired behaviors can such an activity really motivate? Who benefits besides the charity receiving the funds?

Study Results Opinion Research Corp. finds that visible & ongoing pr programs can generate business & help organizations weather crises (pr 9/26/88). But "good neighbor" acts -- demonstrations of concern for environment, local community & employees -- are most effective. Funding arts & cultural activities is much less effective.

Legacy: "Opera has had an image of being an elitist art. But thru radio broadcasts, we were able to bring this art to the people. This has helped build audiences for local and national opera houses and has helped to establish the Metropolitan Opera as the national opera."

Why, then, have oil giants Texaco & Mobil made art their most visible public service? Mobil adopted PBS, "Petroleum Broadcasting System," as its pet cause in 1970, is still sole underwriter for "Masterpiece" & "Mystery" theaters. Is the behavioral appeal to purchase oil? Or are these organizations simply interested in improving the cultural climate?

Texaco's Rationale Largely Image In '40 "It was good publicity," Mike Keenan, mgr corp adv'g, told prr. "At the time, radio was the only mass medium. Funding the Met had much more impact then than it would if it were started today."

Texaco found its commitment to the arts created an alliance. "We became so associated that if we were to stop sponsoring it, people would think we were going out of business. When we filed for bankruptcy pending the Pennzoil deal, people wrote to us asking if we were going to drop the Met."

Key constituents who are impressed with Texaco/Met:

- A. Opera Lovers, many of whom tend to be opinion leaders (but not all opinion leaders are opera lovers).



B. Shareholders & Business Associates, who see it as a positive cause.

C. The Public. "People see we're doing something to pay society back."

D. Customers. "We found those who are aware of our support of the Met are 2 1/2 times more likely to buy our oil."

"... By A Grant From Mobil Oil Corporation" "We started to fund PBS programs before there was really a network," Peter Spina, gen mgr, corp, pub & gov't rels told prr. "It was a period when people were calling tv a 'vast wasteland.'" [And the attitude of the public tended to be anti-business.] Spina feels "Mobil became identified with the programs, and identified with quality & excellence both in business and in giving."

Another Key Constituency -- Teachers.

"Our earliest audience was comprised of a lot of teachers -- they're still our most loyal audience. We keep that in mind." Mobil wonders if the teachers coming on board today are as familiar with its mission as those in the first PBS audience. Mobil plans to reach out to them via:

Targeting: "We'd begun our op-ed program and began to think of certain kinds of audiences we were trying to reach. By funding PBS shows, we found we were reaching an audience of opinion leaders, to whom we could present ourselves. We presented an image of concern to a pre-selected audience."

¶ Teaching guides -- "We created one for our current series, 'A Tale of Two Cities.' It's the first, but more will follow";

¶ Free tapes -- Copyright laws allow schools to tape off-air if they show the videos within 10 days. "This ties in with another of our philanthropic concerns -- education." The shows we support actually encourage people to read." Mobil was one of the first funders of Sesame Street.

Impact On Business There is a halo effect, but it's immeasurable, Spina maintains. "It has become more than reaching opinion leaders. We get letters constantly from people who say they buy Mobil gas because of our broadcast support."

¶ Of Related Interest... The trick is the soft pitch, which is also used in the nonprofit world. Many practitioners are realizing that the public is sick & tired of constant solicitations -- from both fundraisers & advertisers. Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (Bethesda) has issued colorful calendar "New Horizons." It features no appeals. Cover letter is only a thank you for past contributions. "Of course, it really is an appeal," a spokesperson told prr. But only if recipients -- who are already donors -- want to see it that way.

FORBES MAGAZINE CALLS ONE PHILANTHROPIC EFFORT "PR TRICKERY"

When reporter visited Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream headquarters (Waterbury, Vt), community svcs dir Alan Parker had a feeling they might get panned. "But the reporter was very nice & pleasant. So on a personal level, it was a bit stinging."

Forbes Is Unimpressed Resulting article excoriates B&J -- especially for its highly visible commitment to social causes, e.g. Amazon rain forest, trimming defense spending. "These media-savvy aging Aquarians save millions in pr via their stunts," says Forbes. It calls owners Ben Cohen & Jerry Greenfield hippies who "blazed their way to fame & fortune by thumbing their noses at American business." And chides their hypocrisy -- "There are paradoxes in being a socially-minded company whose sugar-laden, cholesterolly toxic products could keep heart surgeons & dentists busy for the next millennium."

Ben & Jerry's Bites Back "They were looking for evidence to say we're basically shallow and have our heads in the clouds. Maybe we are in the clouds, but it's working for us," Parker told prr.

Parker: "If we were anti-business, we wouldn't be in business. We would like to see changes in the way some business is being conducted in this country, but we believe in business. It's a vehicle which has the potential to do a great deal of good. We're not anti-business, we're anti-greed."

1. "We don't sit around conniving pr campaigns. B&J's programs speak for themselves: recycling, community involvement, improving quality of life by sponsoring events, donating 7.5% of pretax profits. We do this rather than spend money in media & advertising." The approach has been successful -- since going public in 84, B&J's has become an ice cream empire.
2. "I spend infinitely more time responding to calls instead of calling someone else, trying to get them to write a story about us."
3. B&J's factory is Vermont's 2nd largest tourist attraction. "During the summer, we're filled to capacity -- a dilemma we're trying to do something about. It's good for Vermont, good for visitors & good for us. People line up to hear our story. What an excellent marketing vehicle!"

If Forbes isn't impressed with Ben & Jerry's commitment to social causes, others are. Columbia U will present Ben Cohen with its distinguished Lawrence A. Wein prize in Corporate Social Responsibility.

WHAT INFLUENCES TEENS? NOT MEDIA; PEER PRESSURE REMAINS PARAMOUNT

Tho some find radio a most influential medium for adolescents (pr 11/27) new research indicates its usage in AIDS education is reaping no results. American Academy of Pediatrics survey of 448 highschoolers shows that while radio ex-