

PHASE III ¶Surveys -- Researchers will assess results via questionnaires to parents, teachers, children. Improved homework habits will be tell-tale.

¶Continued Involvement. "Last year Amoco Foundation spent half of its \$22 million budget on improving education. This program goes above & beyond that, but we're investing in tomorrow's workforce" -- (and customers).

¶Coop Efforts are in their infancy, "but if the program is a success, we'd like to involve other Chicago companies."

THE ROLE OF THE PRACTITIONER: PUBLICITY SEEKER OR BEHIND-THE-SCENES ADVISOR? It's the former, according to some whose goal seems to be putting their names out-front & on-stage. Example: recent spread about C. Paul Luongo in the Boston Herald applauds his ability to use press contacts to promote himself: "He's the only Boston pr man to wangle a front-page story about himself in the Wall Street Journal. He's the only pr man to write a book that has been touted by Time & the New Yorker."

Article cites counselors who explain that publicity is fine, but pr is called on to perform many more functions -- and for clients, not themselves. Luongo: "They don't do anything different than I do. They just pontificate. They want you to think they are not just a publicist, they are a pr person. If there isn't a story, I create one. I'm not doing anything different than anyone else, except I'm better." Well...

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS:

¶Nonprofits, Charity Watchdogs Alarmed by new breed of fundraisers with questionable ethics, says Giving USA Update. Since gov't funding cutbacks, competition for donations has stepped up. Gov't, consumer critics note increased incidence of: 1) questions re percentage of funds raised actually going to the charity; 2) direct mailings hinting every recipient has won a large amount of money; 3) theatre subscription solicitations offering seats to more performances than are actually held; 4) telephone requests in which paid solicitors imply they are volunteers for a worthy cause; 5) collection cannisters bearing names similar to those of nationally recognized groups. Also, IRS claims many printed solicitations don't provide complete info on the tax deductibility of contributions.

¶Study Suggests Drunk Driving PSAs Influence Secondary Behavior. That is, they are more effective at getting moderate drinkers to control their heavy-drinking friends than they are at stopping people from driving drunk. A reader sent prr research from Washington State U. "Most campaigns target heavy drinkers and attempt to frighten them into not driving drunk rather than teaching audiences how to prevent someone from driving drunk." These fear appeals fail because: a) few drunk drivers believe they will be involved in an accident; b) they don't consider themselves problem drinkers since they drink only on weekends. Better to instead teach communication intervention skills to drunk driver's friends, who are often too intimidated or pressured by peers to say anything.

ONE LAST LOOK AT THE REMARKABLE REAGAN PERCEPTION MACHINE:
WHAT CAN PRACTITIONERS LEARN? DID HE HAVE A PLAN OR BLUEPRINT?
OR WAS HIS PR SUCCESS SIMPLY "BECAUSE OF THE MAN HIMSELF"?

There's no doubt Ronald Reagan was master of perception. Even when leaving office with huge budget deficits, a weak dollar allowing foreign buyouts of US assets, defense contract scandals, violations of law & ethics by officials he appointed, Irangate, poor environmental record, homeless in every city -- his popularity was record-breaking. How did he do it?

With some saying the Reagan presidency was a "giant flack firm," (pr 1/9/89) we asked those close to him which strategy or media guidelines, if any, were implemented by the ex-president.

Peter Hannaford, Hannaford Co., (DC) calls himself a "well-informed friend of the Administration." Tho not with Reagan in Washington, was his dpa in Sacramento. "It would be most unlike him to decide ahead of time how high a profile to take...I don't think he followed some pre-determined blueprint."

Herb Berkowitz, Heritage Foundation (DC): "He didn't need us to coach him with the media. We helped to establish & define policies, priorities important to the success & failure of his administration" -- principally thru the book Mandate For Leadership. Indeed, it was widely used thruout the administration, as Hannaford notes. UPI described it as "a blue print for grabbing the gov't by its frayed 'New Deal' lapels and shaking out 48 years of liberal policy."

Other think tanks, like Inst. for Contemporary Studies, also produced material for Reagan. Its "Imperial Media" report seems to have been adopted in part (pr 4/27/81). Whatever the source, here's what the administration did:

1. 'Thermometer' research -- "The Great Communicator" was really "The Great Listener," reports Jack Honcmichl after an exclusive look at 8 years of research data compiled by Richard Wirthlin, Reagan's pollster. Ad Age preview of Honcmichl's book, Measuring America, reveals the "thermometer" formula used to strategize actions on issues or people: Awareness + Popularity = Clout.

Republican Nat'l Cmte paid \$1.1 million a year for Wirthlin's studies, which "probed just about every aspect of public affairs on a scale unmatched in history." Three practical uses of the results: 1) to convince members of Congress to vote in certain ways, by showing how key constituents back home felt; 2) to rise above attacks from inside the Beltway by knowing how "the real America" came down on issues; 3) to have better grassroots data than Congress, the media, even local officials. In this way Reagan was truly in touch with "the people" while others could only reflect their own views or special interests. Result: popularity with the voters even when the usual opinion leaders disagreed.

1. This was measured for public figures, organizations, nations. It was ok to berate nations or oppose organizations not popular with voters. Media figures could be given a story targeted to the publics with which each had the highest rating. As long as Reagan stayed popular, he could pursue his own policies. 55-60 was a favorable rating, over 60 excellent.
2. Briefing Book -- White House Executive Briefing Book spelled out what should be said -- and how -- for people in the administration. One Clear Voice communication resulted, making Reagan's views seem like the only choice. Book used: direct spoken English, vivid comparison, charts & tables, no jargon (pr 6/29/81).
3. 2-Step flow -- direct application of diffusion theory. First, a leak or media placement for awareness. Then, spokesperson or official announcement provides information, completing Step 1, "impersonal media". Finally, in Step 2, Reagan himself meets with key Congressmen or others to apply "personal media" in trial & decision stages.
4. Disdain for media except when they can help -- don't hold press conferences for their purposes but when your purposes call for it. Don't answer questions unless they fit your strategy. Limit questions to specific topics of the day.

Reagan, The Great Press Manipulator? Berkowitz: "He didn't manipulate them. The press laid off. They must have known treating Reagan viciously would have cut off their noses to spite their faces. The public loved him. The press was suffering a credibility problem anyway, & they would've self-destructed in 8 years and ended up with a status below that of used car salesmen had they been mean to him. He was everybody's grandfather. If they had conducted base & personal attacks, the public response would have been, 'Leave our grandfather alone!'"

Berkowitz grades the ex-Administration:

A+ For Selling Reagan -- By turning the office of the President into a bully pulpit, a soap box. Radio addresses, speaking to the nation, traveling around the country, things said by his cabinet. They did a good job of selling him as a leader. According to some polls he left with a 66% approval rating after 8 years!

B+ For Selling Broad Themes --

- a) People should be able to keep most of the money they earn (tax cuts)
- b) America should be able to assert its leadership role (Grenada, missiles in Europe)
- c) Negotiations with Soviets work best from a position of strength

C- For Translating Certain Themes Into Public Policy. Very mixed reviews on this. They did not do a great job at winning on the Hill, winning public support on specific actions. Bungles showed they were not the great salesmen people thought they were.

- a) Contra Aid -- the ex-president could never rally enough support.

- b) Budget Matters -- Reagan was unwilling to go to the mat with Congress & blamed them for the deficit. The public was confused -- is still confused: who is at fault?

But Does Anybody Care? 1989 Congressional Leadership Seminar was cancelled due to lack of interest! Day-long session featured Bob Dole, House Majority Leader Tom Foley, other notable members of Congress. "Registration was low," a spokesperson from sponsor E. Bruce Harrison Co. (D.C.) told prr. "It had been low last year, and we didn't want to take another loss." Why? "It could be a matter of just too much supply, because there are other similar things going on in Washington."

But seminar would've: 1) addressed budget, trade deficits, new taxes (!), environmental issues, banking deregulation; 2) given execs a chance to hob nob with Congressional leaders, take advantage of extensive Q & A period; 3) find out what agenda items would affect their organizations. If apathy is the mood among business leaders, does it suggest even they subscribe to Bush's borrowed words of wisdom, "Don't worry, be happy"?

AMOCO TRIES TO SHAPE LABOR FORCE OF TOMORROW BY IMPROVING EDUCATION OF TODAY

Amoco (Chi) must've anticipated Bill Banach's plea to corporations to aid education in the

planning phase (pr 1/30), for its "Power Hour" program attempts to do just that. "Corporations should get involved in improving education," media rels supvr Owen Wavirnek told prr. "Our chrmn, Richard Morrow, has been active in educ reform -- I think this program grew out of that association."

Wavernik says the idea is to: a) get kids to think of homework time as the hour of power; b) play on their desire to control their destiny; c) involve parents in this aspect of the child's life.

PHASE I ¶Commercials & PSAs -- paid messages feature Amoco tagline. Both in Spanish and English, shown during prime time. "This is unique. Few corporations have ever used PSAs & paid announcements.

¶Brochures containing homework tips were sent with report cards to 550,000 homes. "We decided to target parents because they play a critical role in the child's attitude, especially on an elementary level." Already there have been 6,000 requests for brochures from a Hispanic Boy Scout troop, school districts outside Chicago, Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic.

¶Billboards & posters in subways, trains, buses, schools.

PHASE II ¶Contests -- "Kids (K-8) will design posters developing the theme of homework as their power hour & what it means to them -- knowledge, success, careers? 9 winners will receive \$500 US Savings Bonds, their classes \$750 to spend on math, science, art supplies, plus a field trip to Museum of Science & Industry. A grand prize poster will be reprinted on book covers."