

**EMOTIONAL LITMUS TESTS****CREATE INTRACTABLE MINDSETS**

Flap over Arizona's decision not to make Martin Luther King Day a state holiday illustrates how an emotional issue

(racial equality) can consume issue at hand (state holiday), allowing no room for broader concerns and generating hostility against anyone raising them. Other examples:

1. **Dolphin Safe Tuna.** StarKist's gen mgr quality & communication Eric Bloemendaal told prr that StarKist & other US brands have always tried to free dolphins from nets. And recent measures have greatly reduced dolphin fatalities. But in response to public clamor, StarKist & others pledged to avoid dolphin-populated waters. An unfortunate consequence, he says: foreign fishing boats, under their own laws, can move in & more dolphins could be killed (5/14).
2. **The Americans Disabilities Act.** Greyhound (Dallas) dpr George Gravly told prr that in its original form, Act would have devastated the transportation industry. "The Senate would've required us to put lifts on all busses almost immediately. This would have ruined us, \$40 million a year. A big expense for a company that wasn't making much money -- plus the technology wasn't there." Gravly feels bill put the cart before horse by mandating a solution before completing a study to find out numbers of disabled & where they live, where they go. "We thought they should conduct the study first, then decide on regulations." Act was revised, but meantime some advocates for the disabled vilified industry as cold-hearted & uncaring for raising its concerns.

**TEENS AREN'T SO BAD AFTER ALL;  
MANY ARE VOLUNTEERING, SHARING  
THEIR LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Studies showing that teenagers lack interest & direction in volunteering & donating to causes, and stay uninvolved with civic mat-

ters (pr 3/26) are refuted by a recent Gallup survey for the Independent Sector. In-home interviews with 301 teens, ages 14-17, show that in '89:

1. 58% volunteered an average of 3.9 hours per week;
2. 48% gave money, with an average contribution of \$49;
3. Teens gave 1.6 billion hours, equal to 766,000 employees.

Survey also reveals interesting attitudes: 47% say they volunteer to do something useful, 38% because they enjoy the work. 32% say volunteering teaches them how to get along with others, 20% say they learn to be kind. Churches & schools are strongest influences for inspiring volunteerism.

**ITEM OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS**

Practitioners & PR Educators Are Urged To Submit Proposal Summaries for research funding from Institute for PR Research & Education (NYC). Summaries, due by 12/31, must follow specified guidelines. List of criteria available from prr.

**CAMPAIGNS CAN CHANGE BEHAVIOR IF THEY INVOLVE A 2-STEP PROCESS;  
3 EXAMPLES SHOW HOW NATIONAL EFFORTS USING PARTNERSHIPS  
& GRASSROOTS PROGRAMS ARE MAKING HEADWAY**

It's increasingly obvious that the personal element is critical in big communications campaigns. To wipe out such societal scourges as drunk driving, drug abuse & crime, more is needed than a flood of posters & PSAs. Yet 3 national efforts claim their "media campaigns" have changed behavior: 1) Harvard Alcohol Project's Designated Driver (pr 9/19/88); 2) National Crime Prevention Council's "Take A Bite Out Of Crime"; 3) Media Advertising Partnership for a Drug Free America. A closer look shows relationship-building techniques played a major role from the start.

**McGRUFF DOG CREATERS SAY  
CAMPAIGN AFFECTS BEHAVIOR**

Is McGruff the Crime Dog taking a bite out of crime? A recent survey by the Crime Prevention Coalition (DC) says people have changed their behavior since PSA began in 1980. "A telephone roundup was conducted in '83. Even then, 25% said they had changed their behavior as a result of the campaign. Now that figure is 40%," Jean O'Neil, dir research & policy, told prr.

**MEDIA INFLUENCE  
OR PUBLIC RELATIONS?**

McGruff, the trenchcoat-clad canine, is an effective mascot because people perceive him as trustworthy & friendly. "Children look to him as an uncle figure," says O'Neil. But pr programs were necessary to augment media because:

1. Each community has its own set of attitudes, biases, etc. "Jean & Joe Sixpack from West Elbow, Minnesota have different perspectives & needs than people living in New York City." So local programs are implemented with individual police departments;
2. Crime prevention is not a discrete issue. It ties in with other community concerns. "If you're involved in the school system or a program to revitalize the downtown, you have to have an eye on crime." It's also a key strategy in designing and marketing new homes. Partnerships are therefore established with community leaders, many of whom head up the local watch programs.

"There's no way you can explain to people in 60 seconds how to choose the right lock for their door or what to do when leaving for vacation. Therefore, material (literature, videos, etc.) must be distributed and programs implemented by local police departments."

O'Neil's goals resemble Grunig's model for changing behavior:

1. **Awareness.** Recognition of McGruff, knowledge of NCPC & its programs.
2. **Attitude Shift.** Biggest hurdle was mindset of citizens, police & other crime prevention practitioners. "People thought they couldn't make a difference, that police didn't want them involved." Police thought people were apathetic.
3. **Behavior Change.** "It means timers on lights, learning to secure windows & sliding glass doors, staying off the street at certain hours, contacting police for program package & info." But goals went farther -- reaching out to neighbors, coalescing, establishing systems, e.g., shoveling walkways when they're out of town, picking up newspapers, escort service, etc. "Again, application has to be local. College campuses need a different approach than businesses, neighborhoods with kids, etc."

**HARVARD ALCOHOL PROJECT GOES BEYOND PSAs & TV DIALOGUE TO COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Martha's Vineyard, a resort island off Cape Cod, was chosen to test the marketability of the Designated Driver campaign -- which blitzed tv screens with PSAs and

inserted dialogue in shows like Cheers & LA Law. The project tested the effectiveness of complementing media campaign with basic marketing support thru free sodas, campaign t-shirts, contests & prizes, etc. The marketing mixture also included the usual posters, table-top cards, airplane banners over popular beaches. "The idea is that the concept can be marketed in the same way as Budweiser," says HAP dir Jay Winsten. But more importantly, market test empowered message by personalizing it -- bringing it off the screen and into the community.

Restaurant managers are seeing results -- more sober patrons & higher sales of beer and wine instead of hard liquor. Police, conducting roadblocks, note several cars have sober drivers & inebriated passengers. Arrests are declining.

Project is currently forming a task force of community leaders who will use their experience to: a) draft a guidebook for other communities and b) think about how to sustain behavioral change over the longterm.

**4A's EFFORT AGAINST DRUG ABUSE TO INCLUDE PR FROM H&K, OTHERS**

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America has decided to augment its massive advertising campaign with relationship building efforts directed at policymakers, the press, educators, community groups & others, according to its newsletter.

Partnership's surveys, conducted on a heavy-volume, confidential, ongoing basis shows campaign has impacted attitudes. More telltale than polling, SmithKline Beecham Clinical Labs (Phila) conducted urinalysis on 100,000 workers. Less than 14 in 100 tested positive for illegal or abusable drugs, a 23% drop since '87.

Was success attributable to media blitz, or to programs like one in place at McDonnell Douglas (St Louis), which provides employees with personalized, comprehensive network of drug & mental health counselors, hospitals, treatment facilities? And, as Partnership's dep dir Ginna Sulcer admits, latent behavioral change requires a triggering event. "The death of Len Bias woke the whole country to the dangers of cocaine, not only as addictive but as a cause of death."

"Involving public relations is the logical evolution if we want to achieve big cultural change," Sulcer told prr.

**TELEVISION GETS BUM RAP FOR STREET VIOLENCE, SAYS PROF, AGAIN RAISING BEHAVIORAL ISSUE**

"TV is not the villain that triggers violence on the streets," Bernard Friedlander, U of Hartford, told prr. "Investigators who gaze obsessively at tv violence as if it were the paramount cause of behavioral violence are probably looking in the wrong direction with a single eye."

"A great deal of academic energy has been spent on convicting tv as the most culpable of all suspects of societal violence. But for 30 years, research on the effects of tv on children and on social behavior has had generous funding and has turned up no meaningful impact," says Friedlander. "Kids are safer watching tv where stray bullets are contained within the tube than they are out on the street where the bullets are real."

A veteran researcher on the impact of tv, he says his intent is not to discount power of media. Targeted media, he maintains, can exert great social leverage. He proposes that rather than persist in a "hopeless war against media," advocates for children should use it to promote themes & actions that ultimately protect & enrich kids, e.g. Smokey the Bear & McGruff. "Of course these actions should include the obvious things like strengthening neighborhood clinics, family support systems, community services, & protection programs in schools."

Friedlander provides a list of cumulative precursors which trigger violence, and media is far from the threshold.

