

**CONSUMER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN TARGETS PARENTS  
-- TOPIC IS TEENAGE DRINKING ISSUE**

"The family environment influences the shaping of children's

attitudes toward alcoholic beverages and has been cited in a number of studies," Steve Burrows, vp dep't of consumer Awareness & Education at Anheuser Busch (St. Louis) told prr. "Yet research shows many parents have trouble discussing the topic with their children." AB has thus launched a consumer awareness & education campaign, "Family Talk About Drinking," to provide parents with instruction and support.

**"FAMILY TALK"  
ELEMENTS**

1. Advisory Panel of 6 experts composed guides. Includes psychiatrists, a Boys Scouts of America exec, professors, therapists.
2. Hotline number (1-800-359-TALK) available at no charge, for parents to obtain guides;
3. Free guides, "How to Talk To Your Kids About Drinking" & "How To Talk To Your Kids About Drinking & Driving." Suggest appropriate methods, language, situations.

Program will be promoted thru coop efforts with groups such as the Boy Scouts, and thru print media, e.g. Newsweek, Sports Illustrated, Parent, Good Housekeeping. Program will be translated into Spanish.

"We are a part of society's desire to reduce abuse. It's an area we feel we have a responsibility to be in." Burrows acknowledges that "Family Talk" may cause Busch to lose sales, but "that's the business that we will gladly lose."

**ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS**

"About A Third Of Americans Are Wealth-Poor -- they have zero or negative assets. According to recent study for American Journal of Economics & Sociology, wealth is distributed a lot less equally than income, and the middle class is not as financially stable as it's reputed to be. Wealth-poor Americans have negligible assets with a median of \$2,599 -- enough to survive 3 months if they lose their jobs or become incapacitated. Their only safety nets are family, government, or some sort of private assistance. Many are black, many are single parents, most are under 35. Children factor significantly in wealth/poor status since parents invest much in education, daycare and other related expenses.

**WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**DIED.** John Remington, former PRSA treasurer and one of the longest serving delegates to the Assembly

(from 2 chapters). After selling his Rochester (NY) firm, he continued to consult in the Carolinas.

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**AS CATHOLIC CHURCH BECOMES FURTHER EMBROILED  
IN ABORTION DEBATE, IT TURNS TO EXTERNAL PUBLIC RELATIONS  
TO RESEARCH OPINIONS, COMMUNICATE POSITION**

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (DC), the Church's most visible US arm, has signed a 5-million-dollar contract with DC firms Wirthlin Group and Hill & Knowlton to research public opinion and communicate position statements on the abortion issue. Campaign is in response to NCCB November convention calling for a "resolution on abortion," aim of which is to make illegalization a top-agenda item.

While secular groups like NARAL & NOW align themselves against vocal Catholic leaders, the Church must deal with inner conflict as members themselves polarize over the issue. New campaign will target non-Catholics as well as Church members.

**CAMPAIGN COMPONENTS** A) Public Opinion Research will be handled by Wirthlin, which offers no comment on its involvement. The firm has been identified with right wing causes and conducted public opinion research for the Reagan campaign. Wirthlin refers inquiries to H&K.

B) Communication will be thru H&K, which will send anti-abortion messages to media and may also develop advertising campaigns. Won't be directly involved in abortion fights in state legislatures or Congress. "Our plans include an audit of existing communication material used by the Conference in regards to this issue," deputy gen mgr John Berard told prr.

Cardinal John O'Conner (NY): "Some organizations...have tried to convince America that the main issue in the abortion debate is the right to choose rather than, as it really is, what is being chosen. And to realize their goals, they have purchased the advice and assistance of professional communications counselors and public opinion experts. Given the stakes -- life itself -- we can do no less."

**OPPOSITION FROM WITHIN** "I hate it," Frances Kissling, pres, Catholics for Free Choice (DC) told prr. She doubts that NCCB is trying to gain insight into opinions of its publics: "They constantly say public opinion is irrelevant, that the only opinion that matters is God's. If they were trying to get in touch with their constituencies, it would be

great. But what they're trying to do is gain inroads into this issue, obtain poll data so they can better 'sell their soap.'

Kissling believes the signing up of H&K & Wirthlin will backfire rather than enlist support because public will be turned off by:

1. **Secrecy.** "Original release did not come from bishops, but was leaked to columnists Evans & Novac (Boston Herald)."
2. **Precious money is being improperly spent.** Kissling says bishops are chagrined because it's now public knowledge that they are spending so much on this one issue when they have so many other problems -- closing schools & churches, needy social services, etc. (Bishops maintain money for campaign will be raised from outside sources -- not from the collection plate or existing funds.)
3. **Inappropo Strategy.** Kissling questions whether hiring pr is the proper way to get the message across. "It's one thing for a secular organization with a specific set of objectives in a limited arena, but should bishops use this strategy? They have an attentive audience every Sunday -- must they hire a pr firm?" Obviously, one-way communication from the pulpit haven't been fully persuasive. And also, bishops may be realizing the need to appeal to external audiences.

Does this intensely emotional issue put practitioners in a sticky situation with their clients, their publics, themselves? "It would be interesting to know the feelings of the people at H&K," wonders Kissling. "Many are women, many are probably pro-choice." But Berard counters, "It has long been our policy that any employee who doesn't want to work on a certain account not be required to do so." Did the bishops examine H&K's posture, or that of the assigned counselors, re the abortion issue? "The Conference realizes it's dealing with a highly professional firm," spokesperson Bill Ryan told prr. "I don't think the Conference had that concern."

#### Of Related Interest...

- ¶ **Milwaukee Bishop Uses 2-Way Communication To Handle Abortion Issue.** Archbishop Rembert Weakland became first US prelate to hold a public forum on the subject when he invited about 100 women to voice opinions at 3 hearings, says Nat'l Catholic Reporter. Responding to the November NCCB statement, Weakland called for better understanding of the Catholic female perspective. NCR says his move contrasts other bishops, who, prompted by the same statement, have publicly chastised pro-choice Catholics. Hearings involved small focus groups with facilitators, discussion of set of questions prepared by Weakland. Political leaders, healthcare & social service prof'ls, parish leaders & media were also invited to attend.

#### TOP EXECS' LIST OF HOT POLICY ISSUES OUT OF SYNC WITH POLICY MAKERS' AGENDA

Last week, prr detailed 2 surveys in which legislators, lobbyists, &

policy makers ranked top policy concerns. All were in agreement that environment, education, & abortion were priority issues.

A survey by Ketchum (NYC) asked 350 CEOs, COOs, & CFOs in various industries what they saw as most important public policy issues facing national & local government leaders. Results indicate that business & legislation have different agendas. Execs concerns are: 1) drugs, trafficking & addiction; 2) education; 3) crime; 4) environment.

**SURVEYS IN COMPARISON** Drugs & crime, which hardly ranked in the HRN and H&K surveys, received top billing from the execs. Environment trailed last -- surprising since so many organizations have recently had to answer to SARA III for toxic emissions -- or their constituents for leaks and other accidents. Education is the only issue the execs & policy makers had in common, both groups ranking it 2nd.

Ketchum survey intends to "assess changing agendas & priorities of the nation's corporate leaders," says pres David Drobis. "Major corporations and organizations will inevitably take lead positions to effect changes in these areas." But before they effect any changes, execs must come to a meeting of the minds with the legislators.

#### DESPITE GRIM LABOR STATS, OUTLOOK IS GOOD FOR PR, SAYS PRACTITIONER

As a means of staying afloat during this time of economic turbulence, US businesses are

cutting personnel at a rate 11% higher than that of last year. According to a survey by American Mgmt Ass'n, almost 4 in 10 companies have reduced workforce in the past 12 months.

The news isn't all bad for pr, says Janis Brett-Elpas, pres Rachel PR Svcs (Santa Monica). US Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts growth for service industries -- the need for practitioners is expected to increase by 33% by 1995. "There has never been a time when so many publics demanded more information," Elpas told prr. That, plus advanced tech & refined info dissemination, will propel profession's growth thru 2000, she predicts.

#### FAST GROWING FIELDS

"Several areas continue to grow as public interest in political events, social services, & international relations builds." Elpas says international pr industry is currently worth \$8 billion per year and should double by 1995. Also bound to burgeon: 1) gov't rels; 2) healthcare; 3) high tech; 4) prof'l svcs, e.g. law, accounting. "New jobs will be created by emerging specialties such as desktop publishing and renewed emphasis on employee communications." Also, from environmental concerns.

Practitioners seeking positions should be aware of regional employment trends for industries across the board. West & Northwest offers most hope, East & Midwest are stable & Northeast is in a slump.