

New Book Simplifies Laws Pertaining To PR. Copyright, trademark, fin'l disclosure requirements, noncompete clauses, First Ammdment -- trying to keep up with legislation can spin a practitioner's head! Concise summary offered by Anne Klein Assocs: Public Relations Law: The Basics covers in lay language the major areas of law that affect our profession. Written by atty Gerhart Klein, book is \$20 from AKA, 533 Fellowship Rd, ste 250, Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054.

If Overnight Isn't Speedy Enough... Associated Air Freight (Hyde Park) offers delivery within 2-8 hours between any 2 US zip codes, and speedy delivery to 800+ cities outside the US...no restrictions on size or weight. Whether or not service is expensive depends on level of desperation. A letter from Boston to LA costs about \$175, but so does a 25lb package. Svce rep Arthur Lih says AAF has been offering the service for many years, but people started asking for it only recently. "It's the way our society is. Things are needed right away...yesterday," he told prr. "We help a lot of people out of jams. Plants go down, people need parts or equipment, legal documents can't be faxed." More from: 800-726-3329.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

NOMINATED. PRSA 1990-91 dirs-at-large: Michael Bardin, dir pa, Scripps Memorial Hospitals (La Jolla); John Beardsley, Padilla Speer Beardsley (Minneapolis); Robert Martin, mgr issues commucica-

tion, Coca-Cola USA (Atlanta); Luis Morales, dir mktg, Robert Morris Assocs (Phila.). Assembly delegates at-large: William Duke, pa mgr, Atlantic Richfield Co (LA); William Michelet, mgr corp & cmnty affairs, South Central Bell (Baton Rouge).

FULL TEXT OF CALIFORNIA'S GREEN INITIATIVE

ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH, BONDS, INITIATIVE STATUTE. Regulates pesticides, air, water. Authorizes bonds to acquire ancient redwoods. Establishes elected Environmental Advocate. Fiscal impact: Annual state administrative and program costs of approximately \$90 million, decreasing in future years; partially offset by \$10 million increased annual fee revenue. Local governments would incur \$8 million one-time cost, \$5 million to \$10 million annually, decreasing in future years. State General Fund to incur one-time \$750,000 appropriation 1992-93 for Office of Environmental Advocate; \$40 million for environmental research grants. Future administrative costs of office unknown. If all bonds authorized for ancient redwood acquisition, forestry projects were sold at 7.5% interest and paid over the typical 20-year period, General Fund would incur approximately \$535 million in costs to pay off principal (\$300 million) and interest (\$235 million). Estimated average annual costs of bond principal and interest would be \$22 million. Per-barrel fee on oil would increase revenues by \$500 million by 1996-97, used to pay oil spill prevention/clean up costs. Indefinite deferral of potentially \$2 billion in future state oil and gas revenues resulting from limits on oil and gas leases in marine waters. Indirect fiscal impact could increase or decrease state and local government program costs and revenues from general and special taxes in an unknown amount. (For a full description of the pros and cons, official material from the California Secretary of State, write prr.)

pr reporter

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PR ROLE IN INFILTRATING SCHOOL CLASSROOMS AGAIN IN QUESTION: EDUCATION VS. PROMOTION

At a time when educating youth is vitally important to the future of our society, are corporations, associations & others serious about being impartial contributors to education? Or are they using heightened public concern about education as a way to market products & positions to students -- who can't be reached expeditiously thru other means?

GO FOR IT, SAY MANY Lifetime Learning Systems, specialists in the school market: "Kids spend 40% of each day in the classroom where traditional advertising can't reach them. Now, you can enter the classroom thru custom-made learning materials created with your specific marketing objectives in mind."

As many as 12,000 companies and organizations are involved with in-school promotions, according to US News & World Report. Most provide materials -- magazines, posters, book covers & learning tools -- covering a variety of topics which in some way relate back to the companies or products.

Teachers, experiencing a shortage of funds, welcome the free materials to supplement textbooks & motivate students. But others, particularly consumer watch-groups, are skeptical. A recent Consumer Reports article concludes that "product manufacturers use the authority of the classroom teacher and educational materials to advertise to kids."

A QUESTION OF ETHICS "If there's no insistence that you must look at the materials -- say in the case of a Pepsi scoreboard or a simple bookcover -- no, it isn't unethical," says Phil Toman, vp-pr, Wilmington College, who worked in school pr for 33 years. "When you force the items into the curriculum and put kids in the situation where they must use them, then morality must raise its head," he told prr.

Is there an organization that, at one time or another, has not targeted schools & students for some message or appeal? Traditionally done as a means of building early awareness or loyalty, today it is often a ricochet technique to reach parents -- especially on topics like hi tech which adults avoid.

Always somewhat controversial, with accusations of "commercial invasion of the classroom" or "polluting young minds," today it's even more so. Partly this is attributable to the onslaught of classroom materials offered. Triggering event may have been Whittle Communications' attempt to insert tv ads into current events programming.



Jim Murphy, dpr Polaroid, sees no breach of ethics in his company's program. "We don't push the products; we don't promote to children in any way," he told prr. Its educational materials do tell students to "take a Polaroid picture" as part of their lesson. This has been construed as promoting the products to students, Murphy says, because they "use the unique attributes of instant photography to help kids learn things visually." How do you get around a unique product quality?

HOW TO WORK SAFELY WITH SCHOOLS & STUDENTS

Says Dr. Bennett Leventhal, Director of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at U Chicago: "The biggest responsibility here comes from parents and teachers. They're more credible messengers to the children, and they need to review the materials. When creating tools like these, have advisory groups of parents and teachers determine if the materials are responsible."

"First of all, Polaroid's materials are prepared by teachers," says Murphy. "And we hold teacher in-service workshops across the US year-round to talk about the program and show how it works." Over 200,000 teachers are enrolled & feedback has been extraordinarily positive.

Consumer groups aren't sure where to draw the line. "It's a tough decision, but you have to start somewhere. What it boils down to is what's in the best interest of the child," says Charlotte Baecher, editor of Zillions: Consumer Reports for Kids. (copy of Zillions' report from prr.)

ACTION UNDERWAY Baecher and a group of educators are meeting in November to create a national code of ethics for corporate involvement in schools. "The question that has to be addressed is what role the corporate sector plays to contribute to the education process where the main goal is in the interest of the child more so than what the corporation is going to get out of it in terms of pr, advertising or marketing."

Lifetime pres Roberta Nusim, acknowledging it's likely consumer groups will push for legislation inhibiting the role business plays in the classroom, says a concerted effort among teachers, business professionals, community opinion leaders & parents is the route to take.

"Any regulation would come from within the school systems," Toman says. "And teachers have a lot of say in what goes into their curriculum. Part of education's job is to teach students to differentiate between 'ad-formation' and real information. That's the job of public schools."

Another proactive measure is to adopt guidelines developed by International Organization of Consumer Unions (The Hague; 011-31-70-47-63-31) or Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals (703-998-7371). They call for all business materials intended for school use to 1) be factual, 2) present all relevant views, 3) not mislead by omission, 4) avoid ethnic, age, racial, and sex stereotypes, 5) omit brand & corporate names in illustrations and text, 6) encourage the students' critical evaluation.

BAMBOOZLING POLLS, OR WHAT IS THAT RESEARCH REALLY TELLING YOU?

Presentation of research findings moves ever away from hocus pocus once blighting the field -- when pollsters & other researchers presented data (as did media reporting it) without honestly discussing its reliability. This is a major trend in an era when officeholders & managers seem afraid to show any leadership or advocacy, instead relying on constant pulsetaking via polls -- the No Risk Syndrome.

Trouble is, building relationships that earn trust & motivate behavior often requires taking the lead, being an advocate, attempting to work with or change public opinion. Understanding the true role of research, and what it is telling you, becomes vital.

Never mentioned is that even the most statistically defensible studies usually start off with a 5% error margin. This is because the standard statistical tables for projection of research results are based on the stipulation that if the entire universe of the study were in fact interviewed, 19 out of 20 responses would agree with the findings. To that must be added the specific margin of error for the study at hand. This is why sophisticated pr researchers rely less on the exact stats than on direction, intensity or (preferably) likelihood of behavior.

Take last week's prr lead about enviromania leading to behavior change, as reported in 2 studies. This wasn't a study of observed behavior. Rather, of respondents' reports of their behavior. Never forget the classic seat belt comparison research: In a typical phone poll, 60% claimed they were seat belt users...but when researchers looked into 2,147 cars at 48 randomly selected intersections in the area where the phone poll was conducted, 70% were not buckled up! (prp 8/3/87)

As Scott Cutlip likes to point out, research is not intended to be a predictive tool. It is one aid in decisionmaking -- and for pr a vital one. Most often its value is defining what activities or tactics will or won't be acceptable. But judgment & strategic direction must supersede it, not pander to it (as politicians do).

So it's encouraging to see the following, by the paper's director of polling, in a recent WashPost article on a survey of reaction to Mayor Barry's trial: "Results of the poll cited in this story are based on interviews conducted Aug. 11 with 603 randomly selected DC residents 18 or older. This survey measures initial public reaction to the verdict. Because of the practical difficulties associated with doing a public opinion poll in one day, these results should be interpreted with caution."

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

Many 1990 ARs Will Be Made Of Recycled Paper, says Corporate Annual Reports (NYC). It surveyed east coast corp communication execs, found 43% are considering second-hand stock. Over half (54%) say they would switch from coated to uncoated paper in the interests of the environment.