

"Members would've had trouble getting in." But Grossman says many associations are worried -- money is extremely tight. "A number of organizations have put caps on spending. Some of the major associations are concerned about turnout. For some, a quarter of their total revenue comes from conferences. You put a hole in that and you've got serious problems."

Of Related Interest...

ARC'S TRICKY TASK: MUST KEEP DONORS' ENTHUSIASM UP, BUT BLOOD SUPPLY LEVEL

Balancing supply and demand is the biggest challenge facing the Red

Cross -- and the main reason so many were needed at home instead of at the conference. "All this zeal people have for helping with the war effort creates problems," David Therkelson told prr. "People thought our problems would be in getting blood. In reality, our challenge is just the opposite. We must manage the situation so we smooth the flow." Consider: a) blood has a limited shelf life; b) donors can give only every 50-60 days; c) glut of donations maxes out ARC's capacity to draw, process, & test.

So ARC must convey an almost contradictory message about desired behavior: "Don't rush out and give blood now, but we do need you to give eventually." Therkelson says the organization is dealing with surplus in a variety of ways.

1. **Media messages** tell potential donors that at present, supplies are in good shape. "We tell them, if you don't have an appointment to give blood, hold out for March or April."
2. **Canceling drives.** "There are several blood drives a day at any metropolitan area. We've canceled a few."
3. **Position hosts** at blood drives to meet walk-ins, explain the situation. "This is the most effective method, because it conveys our appreciation and offers an interpretation. The message is delivered in a very thankful, personal way, and that's by far the best way."

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **US Department Of Labor Still Misses The Point Of PR.** Last year's careers handbook detailed the pr profession as one of copywriting and advertising. After scoping practitioners for input, USDL came out with new version which describes us largely as communicators and publicity managers. PR is listed 3rd among subsets of Marketing & Advertising, so occupation seekers have to dig deep into the article to find description of pr. Maybe 92-93 edition will get it right.

¶ **Kathy Lewton's Book On Healthcare PR (prr 10/29/90) Now Available.** Public Relations In Healthcare: A Guide For Professionals can be obtained from American Hospital Association. (\$39 for ASHMPR members, \$49 for non-members. Contact AHA, P.O. Box 92683, Chicago, Ill 60675 - 2683. Request catalog #166122)

Vol. 34 No.7
February 18, 1991

TREND TOWARD BEHAVIORAL PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFERS A CHANCE TO ADOPT A SYSTEM FOR MANAGING THE PR PROCESS

prr has often commented on the need for a standardized process management system for the field -- the type of accepted method of practice used by lawyers, accountants, doctors, engineers & scientists (4/19/90, 2/12/90, 1/22/90, 7/10/89 & more). In those disciplines, all practitioners work by the accepted method so that one professional can evaluate, continue or replicate work by another.

This, in turn, makes quality control possible -- lets a practitioner audit his or her own output, lets a firm evaluate its work or a client critique its counsel. In large measure it is this accepted standard of practice that gains a discipline recognition as a profession.

Because behavioral pr admits the limits to communication & makes behavior its goal, a new, communication-plus system can now be devised. For instance:

Step 1, Environmental Scan: In the current or near-term environments of both the organization & its key publics, what mutually desirable behaviors are both necessary & possible that will enable the organization to achieve its goals. These are ultimate behaviors, such as purchase, vote, join, etc.

Step 2, Planning: What step-by-step cycle of inter-mediate behaviors may be required to bring key publics to the ultimate behavior? Becoming aware...building positive latent readiness to behave...a triggering event? Trying the product...hearing it praised by a friend (Diffusion Process)...attending a meeting? In other words, list the way stations people pass thru en route to the desired behavior, recognizing they rarely jump straight from awareness to action.

Step 3, Targeting: Exactly whose behavior do we need? Supertarget a list of publics, discover their opinion leaders on the topic at hand, then determine which among them are likely to be open to giving the desired behaviors. Like target marketing, this requires effort -- but pays off big in results & cost-effectiveness. It is the antithesis of mass communication.

The process begins with a deceptively simple question: What are the desired behaviors I am trying to motivate? Answering it often takes professionals a long way from news clips & publications, however.



Step 4, Research: Where are the target publics & opinion leaders on the latent readiness scale -- that is, have we got a chance of getting their behavior in the needed timeframe? Solid pr research, most likely studying segments of publics, can supply this data. This is a far cry from market research, and certainly from polling, but the techniques are available (see pr 8/13/90 for a description of this research).

Step 5, Strategy: Which type of campaign is required to motivate the desired behaviors? The deciding factor will usually be the target publics' position on a resistance scale (see chart).

Step 6, Tactics: What activities & techniques will move the campaign forward to success -- i.e. move the target publics thru the steps of intermediate behavior to the ultimate behavior? (Or, rarely, directly to the ultimate behavior.) Devising triggering events is key.

Another approach might be to consider ultimate behavior the goal, intermediate behaviors the objectives. Or, ultimate behavior the strategy, intermediate behaviors the tactics.

WAR AND RECESSION ARE CAUSING EVENTS TO BE CANCELED

For these reasons:

1. **Patriotism.** Epley Assocs (Charlotte) came close to canceling its Ground Hog Day celebration held annually for clients. "We were in the final stages of planning when the war started," vp Tony Hilton told pr. "We weighed pros & cons and decided there should be some normalcy at home." Not wanting to seem insensitive, Epley asked attendees to donate to a fund which helps reservists' families. "We also passed out yellow ribbons."

Note: Hilton is a good advisor on this topic. He joined the firm last year after retiring as a Navy commander. His last assignment was head of public affairs instruction at Defense Information School.

2. **Different Priorities.** "People who were to attend our annual Support Institute meeting suddenly had other priorities," Dave Therkelson, American Red Cross, told pr. "The war wasn't predicted when this conference was being planned." ARC pr & fundraising staff & volunteers had to:

- a) oversee communication with military;
- b) act as an emergency link between families and service personnel;
- c) administer blood drives, which were suddenly full of zealous donors.

American Society of Association Execs predicts the economy will shave down conferences across the board. "We think attendance will be down, bookings of new conferences will be down," pr mgr Lorri McGough told pr. "Usually, during a time of recession, tapes, books & videos do well. That is the way some associations can be of benefit to members" during economic uncertainty.

NSPRA cites similar reasons for canceling its VOICE conference. "It was to be held a week after the war was declared," Bob Grossman told pr. "The people who would've gone were needed at home. Many school districts were being overwhelmed by the impact of the war on students & teachers." In Fort Hood, Texas, for example, 70% of the kids have mom, dad, or both in Saudi Arabia.

3. **Safety.** NSPRA members were troubled that the conference was to be in Alexandria. "There were recommendations being made not to fly into hubs -- DC was seen as a high target area. We decided discretion was the better part of valor," Grossman reports.

4. **Economy.** "A distant 2nd reason had to do with Eastern Airline's demise," says Therkelson. It was a major carrier to Florida.

THE 6 TYPES OF CAMPAIGNS, BASED ON RESISTANCE TO THE DESIRED BEHAVIOR

<u>Resistance Scale</u>	<u>Campaign</u>	<u>Description</u>
Basically, none or minor	Awareness	Publics are ready to act, need to be told how, when, where. 1-way mass communication works well.
Not opposed, but doubt relevance	Information	Basically 1-way but feedback devices useful to answer questions; message strategy is "this affects you for these reasons."
Not opposed, but not convinced to act	Education	Uses opinion leaders & 2-step flow to motivate acceptance & action.
Some are with you but debate rages; social pressure is great	Reinforcement	Targets those known to agree via 2-way communication; role models & opinion leaders stir their resolve not to be held back by opposition.
Opposition because idea seems to counter prevailing sentiments	Attitude Change	Major use of 2-step flow, using communications to raise questions & peer groups to offer social rewards or punishments; primary message strategy is not to stiffen resistance, secondary is offering validation for changing attitudes.
Publics are behaving the opposite way	Behavior Modification	Use all available tools to ask for a willing suspension of disbelief toward suggested new behavior; use behavioral technologies by Lewin, Grunig et al, others; message strategy is repetition of benefits.