

"They once were able to sell their product, promote the advantages of electricity over other fuel, tell people to use it. In recent years, their message has been conservation." While there's nothing wrong with that, the broad scope must be considered. "Utilities should be encouraged to support overall **energy** efficiency goals rather than just **electrical** efficiency goals. They should be part of an overall solution." They should also:

1. **educate leaders, regulators** to the economic/ecological sense of their product;
2. **take an aggressive approach** with customers, environmental groups, others. "Help people understand how electricity is a cleaner & cheaper alternative." (Study \$95 from Science Concepts, 2 Wisconsin Circle, Suite 470, Chevy Chase, Md. 20815; 301/718-9600)

#### SKINNY TIMES FOR BUSINESS MEANS FEWER ADS, MORE PSAs

A slowed economy gives nonprofits an advantage. Survey by West Glen Communications polled 700 public

service dirs at tv stations nationwide. 83% say low spot sales means more time for PSAs, and same number see level of unsold time steadily rising, availing space during prime time. Even in good times, however, dips are cyclical. Jan & Feb are good for PSAs, as is summertime. Other findings:

1. **900 numbers doom a PSA.** "The vehemence with which this question was answered indicates any spot with a 900 number will find limited acceptance," svp Annette Minkalis told *pr*. "If an organization uses this message, telephone costs should be on the screen." Toll-free 800 numbers are acceptable.
2. **Tapes ("hard copy") still preferable**, despite satellite technology.
3. **Local Application** is the supreme factor in acceptability of a PSA.
4. **30-second PSAs** are most popular, tho all lengths are acceptable. (Findings from 1430 Broadway, NYC 10018; 800/325-8677 or 212/921-2800)

#### ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **Nudie Pics Move Into The AR Realm.** Reebok's annual report features a centerfold of a naked man wearing only Reeboks. Creator Addison Corporate ARs admits strategy is part clutter cutter, but says main mission was to underscore the organization's uniqueness. "The point is that Reebok is a different kind of company. It knows how to unleash people -- employees, consultants -- to achieve large objectives.... The medium becomes the message." Who wants to start the office pool on how well this will play?

¶ **Reader Questions Our Usage Of "Actionable."** Robert Moulthrop wonders about this word as used in our 3/18 issue: "The object is not, therefore, to measure public opinion -- but **actionable** public opinion." He finds it basically a litigious term, used in a legal context only. Some dictionaries we checked agree. But our Random House (2nd ed, '87) offers another meaning: "Ready to go or be put into action." Thank goodness. Why should lawyers have the monopoly on such a useful term?

#### NUMBER OF NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED PRACTITIONER ROLE MODELS BURGEONS TO OVER 300: EVIDENCE OF FIELD'S MATURATION

One characteristic of a profession is the open sharing of experience by senior practitioners. A cadre of role models & mentors who shape & share the body of knowledge and guide others into leadership.

Over 300 were named by respondents to the 1990 Survey of the Profession, answering the question, "Who do you most admire a) in the field; b) in your industry; c) in your specialty?" This is 3 to 4 times more than have appeared in previous sociometric studies dating back to 1978.

Seven people appeared at the top of all 3 categories. They told *pr* what the profession must do to maintain its position:

1. **Jim Grunig.** "Research & education will hopefully have more of an impact in the future. PR **will be based more on research**, become more of a managerial discipline than a technical one. Also, **pr will be more involved with conflict resolution** -- solving conflicts between organizations and publics -- and less involved with trying to persuade publics to do what the organization wants them to do."
2. **Ann Barkelew.** "The 90's will be the time when pr practitioners are active partners with the CEO, **implementing communication strategies that are extensions of the overall business strategy.**"
3. **Allen Center.** "The future holds the same stubborn opportunity: **to stand for something on our own rather than for the convictions of our employer.** We have become respected counselors because communication has become important to our employers. We must live up to expectations by striving for discipline & moral standards, advising clients & employers to act in interests of the long term. Morality, harmony, reconciliation are above & beyond the bottom line." Center says practitioners should avoid the temptation to become like lawyers, representing clients despite criminal activity or wrongdoing.
4. **Scott Cutlip.** "I continue to be puzzled & pained by the fact that too few organizations understand the utility & purpose of pr," he told *pr*. He says CEOs' ignorance stems from:
  - a) limited education -- "They come from narrow specialties like accounting, engineering, sales;"
  - b) indifference to (or insulation from) power of public opinion;
  - c) lack of competent counselors.



CEOs started turning to lawyers & HR execs for advice when pr missed the boat on big issues like ecology, feminism, Civil Rights. Watch for now: 1) eroding infrastructure of education; 2) renewed spirit of environmentalism. But already some are taking that too far and making specious claims & grandstanding. He is also alarmed by **excessive emphasis placed on pr's role as marketing support.**

- 5. **Pat Jackson.** "Public relations will become a **behavioral activity**, evaluated by the behaviors it motivates, reinforces or modifies."
- 6. **Harold Burson** feels pr will **become much more strategic**, that the decisionmaking process will include, "What impact will this have on our publics?" Burson is concerned that since pr has earned respect, there are not enough fit practitioners. "A lot of people will continue to come from the outside to fill pr positions, people with broadbased business judgment & experience." He urges educators to broaden pr curricula to include social sciences, finance & management and include, but stress less the technical aspects of communication.
- 7. **Chet Burger** considers 2 things critical to the future of pr:
  - a) Maintaining credibility in an era of understandable skepticism. "An organization's reputation is far more difficult to maintain." The public has seen scam after scam, the resignation of a President. They have become cynical of the establishment and of corporate culture. Media, meanwhile, has become more inquisitive and expository.
  - b) Strategizing. "Being a good technician is important, but marginal. The critical thing for practitioners is **sensitivity to the broader current of public opinion**. Strategies more than tactics." PR people are going to be more valuable in the future because they can offer something more valuable than tactics -- strategies. Plus they're in tune with the broader issues.

Some people didn't name individuals, but companies like Johnson & Johnson, Toyota, Hill & Knowlton, suggesting an admiration for certain policies, principles or strategies with which those organizations have become associated. Others named areas of practice or types of practitioners, such as "consultants," "experienced APRs," or "investor rels," showing the elements of pr they look to for development.

**RESPECTED LEADERS IN FIELD AS A WHOLE**

"The 3 Bs" of Bernays, Burson & Burger top the list, followed by Phil Lesly & Bob Dilenschneider. Then Larry Newman is clustered with Jim Grunig, John Paluszek & Jerry Dalton. John Budd, Larry Foster, Ann Barkeley, Scott Cutlip, Allen Center & Betsy Ann Plank rank high. Other leading role models are Ron Rhody, John Graham, Llyle Barker, Joe Epley & Paul Alvarez. (pr editors Otto Lerbinger & Pat Jackson were also named, but disqualified for what researchers call "suggestion" -- association with the publication may have prompted respondents to think of them.)

They come from 3 sources: **counseling, teaching & corporations**. Logically, well known counselors are seen as mentors -- 11 on this list (Bernays, Burson, Burger, Lesly, Dilenschneider, Newman, Paluszek, Budd, Graham, Epley & Alvarez). Grunig is the first teacher-scholar to make the

list -- assuming Cutlip is named more for his pioneering textbook, written with Center (a corporate practitioner turned teacher).

Rhody is from banking, and 4 are hi-profile corporate practitioners (Foster, Tolley, Plank & Barkeley, tho all but the latter have retired & are counseling). Dalton & Barker were pa heads for military services, both generals, but one now with a corporation, the other teaching.

**MOST NAMED IN INDUSTRY & SPECIALTY CATEGORIES**

Educational practice produces many role models. **Schools:** John Wherry, Larry Ascough, Dave Smoker, Bob Grossman, Ned Hubbell (also named as a pioneer researcher), Bill Banach, Gary Marx, Bonnie Ellison, Dawn McDowell (now with Canadian schools), Sissy Henry. **Higher Education:** Fred Volkmann, Art Ciervo. **Teachers:** Glen Broom, Dennis Wilcox & Doug Newsom (all text authors), Laurie Grunig (well known for applied research), Don Bagin (also a newsletter editor), Norm Nager & Bill Brody (both authors).

**Healthcare:** Ken Trester, Kathy Lewton, Frank Weaver & Steve Seekins. Sunshine Overkamp & Dick Berg are with **NPOs**.

**Counselors:** Davis Young, Barbara Hunter, Bob Dorf, Dwayne Summar, Gershon Kekst, John Beardsley, Bob Gray, Isobel Parke, Jim Dowling, Beverly Beltaire. Brian Kilgore, & John Francis, both counselors, were most-named Canadians.

**Business:** Fraser Seitel is from **banking** -- but author of a text. Win Neilson practices **investor relations**, Brad Whitworth **internal communications**. Jack Felton is with a food manufacturer, Mechlin Moore & Larry Williford are from **insurance**, Ken Clark with a **utility**.

**REPORT SAYS UTILITIES SHOULD REVERSE THEIR MESSAGE STRATEGY; BUT CAN FACT FIGHT PERCEPTION?**

A new study suggests that by touting conservation, utilities send the wrong message to their customers. Tho the appeal enables utilities to conform to regulatory guidelines and b) join the environmental momentum, research of tech literature & discussions with experts in the field show electrical usage (microwaving a meat-loaf rather than cooking it in an oven, making steel with an electric arc rather than using a blast furnace, using fax instead of overnight courier) **saves energy & eliminates carbon dioxide**.

"Utilities are being told to find ways to save electricity," Mark Mills, pres, DC-based Science Concepts & author of "Ecowatts: The Clean Switch" told prr. "They, in turn, have been telling their publics how to do this, e.g., with energy-saving bulbs."

Mills notes the conflict between a) what is politically correct -- saying "use less" -- and b) scientific finding that switching to electricity -- e.g., microwave ovens -- saves overall energy & makes more economic sense since electricity is cheaper.