

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

Partnership For A Drug-Free America Uses the Language of its Target Audience, 8-11 year-olds. Thru focus groups with children in this age range, language & characters in the message were refined. These come on the heels of messages targeted toward 6-8 year-olds. Concept is to establish a "New Chic" among kids and help them see, hear & believe that "it's hip & cool **not** to use drugs. We tried to develop a message via a fun & easily acceptable voice, showing kids' sense of fun, their idiosyncracies & irreverence," explains J. Richard Hsu whose firm is creating the spots. One character's response to the proposition of using drugs: "I'd rather stick anchovies in my ears." Partnership, with ex-J&J CEO James Burke as chairman, receives \$1 million/day in media time & space to communicate anti-drug messages.

P&G Writes Employees to Apologize for News Leak Search (pr 8/19). Letter from CEO calls incident 1) "an error in judgment", 2) "an embarrassing experience for our company", 3) "a difficult time for our employees". Company asked police to investigate leaks to media, primarily Wall Street Journal, by checking personal long distance records for calls to the reporter. Phone company appears to be equally culpable for not resisting subpoena of personal records. Big Brother is alive & well in Cincinnati.

Internationally Known Company Founder, Marketing Genius, Gives First Interview in 58-Year Career. In an era of spotlighting CEOs, winemaker Ernest Gallo doesn't feel it's necessary. Man who built world's largest selling brand, inventing shelf positioning & personal research techniques along the way, finally allowed in-depth interview, at age 82, with a trade mag. Asked why he'd never done it before, Gallo said, "Well, I guess you've got two kinds of people: those who like to hear themselves talk and others who like to listen." Listening paid off: 1 in every 3 bottles of wine sold in US is Gallo, company is world's largest winery.

"Americans Are Still Reading!" writes Alan Caruba, ed. of Bookviews -- "the re-structured syndicated column that's now a monthly newsletter. As newspapers & magazines have increasingly eliminated book reviews from their pages, our syndicated column has become a seasonal feature. Now we're offering our recommendations via this newsletter." Publicists: It's sent to print & broadcast contacts to use at no cost. "New titles will find a welcome" here. Booklovers: subscribe to this **free** newsletter. (PO Box 40, Maplewood, NJ 07040)

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. PRSA's 1991 individual award winners: John Sattler (Sattler International, Hampton Bays, NY) receives Gold Anvil -- PRSA's highest individual honor; Glen Broom (chrm, journalism dep't, San Diego State Univ) named Out-

standing Educator for his contribution in advancing pr education; Jerry Bryan (dir, corp comms, Sverdrup Corp, St.Louis, MO) awarded the Paul M. Lund Public Service Award -- he volunteers 600+ hrs/yr to 14 nat'l & regional org'ns.

AUDIO TAPES KEEP COMING ON AS POTENT COMMUNICATIONS MEDIUM; INTERNAL EFFECT IS CLEAR, SOME EXPERIMENT WITH EXTERNAL PUBLICS

"Informal research showed our sales force wanted to know more about the company. But they didn't want to read 'one more thing,'" explains Don O'Toole of Waste Management (Oak Brook, Ill). "They all have audio cassette players in their cars & plenty of travel time." So introducing his **audio cassette newsletter** was a natural.

Format is loosely based on NPR's "All Things Considered." Runs on both sides of tape, 20 minutes total time. O'Toole does everything at a cost of only \$2/cassette (includes studio time & postage, but not his time).

Postcard survey to WM's 1200 sales people across US & Canada found 97% say the cassette newsletter is "very" or "somewhat" useful to them in their dealings with customers (from a 25% response). It's "tremendous," opines O'Toole, who plans to continue the monthly cassette newsletter indefinitely.

Several practitioners say they are experimenting with audio cassettes. Rhone Poulenc Ag Co. (Raleigh, NC) uses AgNews tapes with its field force. They seem **ideal for commuters, maybe lunchtime joggers** with their Walkmans. Who else? If you are using them, or considering it, please share your experience or thought process with pr's readers.

BIGGER BUDGET EXAMPLE WINS AWARD 2 YEARS RUNNING

Tape format is also used by Yellow Freight System (Overland Park, Kans.) -- garnering IABC Gold Quills in both '90 & '91.

Called Yellow Line Radio, program targets 7,500 linehaul drivers. "A great deal of the organization's success in terms of equipment & equipment maintenance, public sentiment, customer satisfaction & timely delivery of freight fall on the shoulders of **this important, and relatively isolated, group of employees,**" explains James Felkner.

The other communication pieces are in place, a gap was felt to exist with this target audience. Goal is to demonstrate responsiveness to drivers' concerns & needs. Objectives: 1) "promote attitudinal changes & raise safety consciousness, which ultimately will 2) affect the company's investment in manpower, equipment & customer satisfaction."

CO-DESIGNED BY TARGET PUBLIC

Program was shaped by the drivers themselves via on-site focus groups & phone interviews. Research also helped identify audience profile which, along with company's



corporate culture, determined **the blueprint**: a) male host, b) no fast-patter hype, c) music to break up the talk, d) an original anthem to open & close each show.

PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES

Program is **interactive**: drivers can talk to management after listening to the tapes via 800 number, printed on the face of each cassette & promoted on the program. Drivers can express their concerns, offer suggestions, request music. As a result of driver feedback, 25 equipment changes have been made. "Corporate goals are already being met through attitude improvement and cost saving suggestions."

Task force of vp's of labor relations, linehaul operations, hr, equipment maintenance & safety provide input into each program, produced bi-monthly. In addition to speaking on the program, these execs also receive a transcript of each driver call-in pertinent to their areas. Each driver calling in receives a written response. Cost is \$35,000 per show. Last year, first full year of the project, show was produced within budget. **"By both management & driver standards, this program is working."**

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WHY AUDIOTAPES WORK: THE 5 LANGUAGES OF PR

Practitioners can choose from 5 language systems, each with its own characteristics:

1. **Spoken Language**: 50,000 years old; easily understood; no grammar or punctuation or spelling; sticks to a short list of simpler words & phrases -- and a point can be repeated ad inf to be sure it gets heard. Audiotapes inherit all these advantages.
2. **Written Language**: 5,000 years old; requires literacy & knowledge of grammar, punctuation & spelling; tends to utilize a vast vocabulary; repetition to make a point usually looks like talking down. In an era of overcommunication, it requires an effort that is less & less available.
3. **Graphic Language**: visuals, symbols, colors & similar non-verbal communication forms are taking over, some say. Research suggests as much as 60% or more of actual daily communications are in this mode. If you're dubious, look at your clock (unless it's digital, in which case see next entry).
4. **Arithmetic Language**: disliked & misunderstood by many (66% in one study said they **loathed** statistics) but in an era of tricky economics, number-crunching & keeping score, an essential mode. Resolution: charts & graphs, "one apple vs. two plums" analogies & other ways of translating, for some audiences, this language to one of the others -- which shows the usefulness of the 5-language paradigm.
5. **"Chinese"**: Confucius said, "When in China speak Chinese; it's the only language they understand." Moral: adapting language to the cliches, special sayings, color, tone & style of the locale or public is essential if you are to be taken seriously.

VARIATIONS ON THE THEME

Esso Petroleum (London, UK) won an '88 Gold Quill for use of audio tapes to communicate with its drivers. "Magazine style chat show" uses a roving reporter. Much of the program's content comes from the target audience, which is encouraged to call in on a special hotline. Company reports: "Although elements of the program are pro-active, much store is set on being **able to react to events between programs**. There are no management soliloquies. Neither is there management censorship of material. In this way Tiger Talk's credibility is maintained." Cost: about \$9,000 per month.

ANOTHER USE, WITH A TWIST

This time as a self-promotion piece. VTI Communications for Business (Chi) wanted to communicate internal changes to attract new clients. Rather than the typical open house, VTI wanted each account exec to conduct personal tours for their clients. Problem was how to get them there. "We felt an audiotape would stand out among the clutter of print promotional pieces and set the tone of surprise & humor that would be found in the tape itself." Dick Orkin, whose audio style emotes a warm, humorous image, was chosen to be the voice. Script idea: taking an old client on a tour. Last half of '89 (when this was done) showed an increase in sales of 21%. Project ended up costing \$7,000. VTI received a Gold Quill in '90 for this project.

MAYBE SCIENTISTS DO UNDERSTAND ABOUT COMMUNICATIONS AFTER ALL

A standard jibe at technical people & organizations is their failure to communicate.

Numerous studies & cases prove the problem. But a passage in a book by one of the century's finest scientists shows how a little application of their own scientific process quickly demonstrates that communication is critical to their work.

Richard Feynman, Nobel laureate, tells the story in Surely Your're Joking, Mr. Feynman! While working on the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb, he was put in charge of a group that had devised an ingenious way of using adding machines & calculators to solve huge mathematical problems (in pre-computer days). But they had solved only 3 problems in 9 months, so:

"The real trouble was that no one had ever told these fellows anything." The army had selected them specially from all over the country but fearing security leaks "would tell them **nothing**... I said the first thing is that these technical guys need to know what we're doing. (Lab director) Oppenheimer went & talked to security and got special permission so I could give a nice lecture about what we were doing, and they were all excited.

"**Complete** transformation. **They** began to invent ways of doing it better. They improved the scheme. They worked at night. They didn't need supervising in the night; they didn't need anything. They invented several of the programs that we used.

"So my boys really came through, and all that had to be done was to tell them (how their work contributed). As a result, we did 9 problems in 3 months, which is nearly 10 times as fast."