

strategy is ideal for exactly this reason. Even then, *only* until you put the item on the agenda. If research at that point shows prevailing selective perception is against you, go underground.

CAVEAT ILLUSTRATED BY THE ANIMAL RIGHTS ISSUE

1. As strategized above, it made sense for the animal rightsers to go public a few years back because nobody was

paying attention to them. This put their issue on a lot of agendas. By the same token, the animal welfare folks had selective perception on their side -- so both sides could make a case for public campaigns.

2. **What happens in such circumstances:** Do they merely cancel each other out? Does this put the media in their beloved "mediator" position, and therefore turn real control over the debate to journalists? Can one side prevail under these circumstances?

THE ROLE OF FUTURES RESEARCH

Another helpful tool is projecting the support an issue will be able to garner in a certain time frame. Could the animal welfare people, for instance, have calculated or estimated how many people had a value system, attitude base or life-style that would make them susceptible to support of animal rights? The evidence seems to be that very little of this kind of research is done -- or done with any seriousness or accuracy (granting there's an unavoidable guess factor built in).

3. **As for prevailing,** the animal welfare people were already hugely prevalent. So they had nothing to gain by letting the issue emerge. The animal rightsers could only become stronger through a public campaign. That movement's decision to go public alters the basic principles: it forced the animal welfare side into *direct* contact with their strongest opinion leader supporters, and ruled out any response to or acknowledgment of the animal rights viewpoint -- since that could only strengthen the animal rightsers.

4. **For a long time, this is the strategy Animal Welfare followed -- and it worked.** Animal Rights remained a small, zealotist, fringe movement. Then someone ignored sophisticated strategy, or misunderstood the true effects of mass media, & decided (in this case, on the fur issue) that a noisy *public* defense & attack on animal rights was necessary. Almost from that date you can plot the swelling success of animal rights.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. PRSA '93 dist chairs: East Central, Donald Durocher (Durocher & Co, Detroit); Mid-Atlantic, George Palmer (George Palmer Assocs, Wilmington, Del); Midwest, Shirley Quastler (Quastler, Pearlstein, Quastler, Westwood, Kans); NE, Diane Davis (Diane Davis Assocs, Wellesley, Mass); No Pacific, Barbara

Britch (Be Britch & Co, Anchorage); SE, Aileen Katcher, Baptist Hospital, Nashville); So Pacific, Craig Miyamoto (Univ of Hawaii, Honolulu); SW, Judith Knapp (Judi Knapp PR, Norman, Okla); Sunshine, Robert Ross (Bob Ross & Assocs, Miami); Tri-State, P. Michael McDermott (Banco Economico SA, NYC).

MARKETEERS ADOPTING PR VALUES -- BUT MORE SCIENTIFICALLY

Successful marketing depends on **knowing your customers** -- a foundational pr principle used more & more by marketers. (See also this week's t&t.) "Talk to your customers. Find out who they are, what their values are. Ask them, 'what's most important to you in...'. Find out what they like or don't like about your messages, your organization, and why. Do focus groups. It's all **qualitative information** you're seeking," Joyce Fuchs-Gioia, president of J.K. Fuchs & Associates (New Rochelle, NY) told pr.

Once this information is available, you can apply it to add value to your product or service & increase sales. Consumers on all levels have become accustomed to having value added to the sale in one way or another. It's called **Value-Added Marketing** -- the process of providing something extra that's beyond the customer's expectation. Oftentimes the most meaningful ways of adding value do not cost a lot of money. It's what your customers *perceive* to be valuable that counts.

TOOLS FOR UNDERSTANDING YOUR CUSTOMERS

1. **Where are they on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs?** This classification of publics based on

their psychological development is a pyramid, whose base is *physiological* needs (basic body requirements including water, food, oxygen); moves up to *safety* (security, protection & stability in one's life); *esteem* (achievement, prestige, status & self-confidence); *belonging & love* (affection & affiliation with others); and tops off at *self-actualizing* (self-fulfillment & maximizing one's potential).

2. For those who reach the top of the pyramid, Maslow created "**B-Values**" -- Values of Being. He realized that the self-actualized person's greatest values are "truth, justice, beauty, love, virtue, perfection, goodness, integration, oneness, wholeness, comprehensiveness, God-like humor." He explains that "B-Values are needs, like Vitamin B. Their absence will produce disease. They give meaning to people's lives."

3. **VALS** & other psychographic systems segment the public according to values, lifestyles & demographics (see pr 7/31/89). Updated in '89 to include these renamed categories: a) Strugglers; b) Action Oriented -- Makers, Experiencers; c) Status Oriented -- Strivers, Achievers; d) Principle Oriented -- Believers, Fulfilleds; e) Actualizers.

4. **Cue framing** looks at customers' unstated needs. Uses paired phrases that reveal motivations. For example: a) "**toward**" vs. "**away from**."



"If you want me to work for you, give me a reward. The more the reward speaks to my values, the more response I'm going to give you," explains Fuchs-Gioia. To motivate others, you may have to talk about the pain they'll experience if they don't do what you want. Some people are motivated by working toward a goal, others by avoiding pain. b) **Procedural person** (wants to be told what to do) vs. an **options person** (wants lots of choices). c) **The 5 senses**. Use visual words for artistic types -- "you'll see the difference" or "it'll be clear to you." For an auditory person, "I hear what you're saying" or "it's clear as a bell." Research firm that developed cue framing -- Ress Huckabee (Delaware, Ohio) -- has a questionnaire that uncovers this information, gives a clear picture of your customers, not only their cues but their values.

5. **Connotation theory:** people will or won't relate to things based on how they see themselves. You need to choose carefully the words & visuals you use because they have connotations. For example, when a professional woman sees an ad on tv of a woman in a traditional role scrubbing the floor, she doesn't relate. This image connotes a role the professional woman doesn't apply to herself.

NOW THAT YOU KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER...

6. **Determine what you already have that has high perceived value to your customers & relatively low cost to you.**

It might be information, discontinued product, special services. (Avoid discounts, price-cutting, rebates. There's usually something else you have with a higher perceived value than money.)

7. **Once you've decided what the added value will be, perform a reality check.** Call one of your best customers (or one who belongs to the target group). Ask for his or her thoughts. "I guarantee your customer will be flattered. Ask questions beyond what he/she thinks of your proposed program. Ask for suggestions for the future, for permission to call from time to time." Classic qualitative research -- once eschewed by marketing but now seen as vital.

8. **Then design a feedback loop into the program.** You want to continually receive information from both your staff & your customers on how your program is working and what could be improved. This is classic pr, a constituency relations program.

AN EXAMPLE

Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health wanted to increase the average order size from its catalog. It looked at other mail order catalogs & saw they were offering discounts. So the Center offered discounts too, "but it had no effect because the people who buy from that catalog don't place a high value on money. What is more valuable is the writing & teaching of the Center's spiritual leader." Based on this value, it offered an audio tape exclusively available to those who spend \$50 in the catalog (perceived value \$10, cost \$1.75) and a video exclusively available to those spending \$100 (perceived value \$40, cost \$2.50). "You have to look at your market. See what's important to them. See what you have that has a high perceived value to them & low cost to you. Then offer it to them as an incentive. It works."

DO EXTERNAL PUBLICS CARE ABOUT INTERNAL PROGRAMS?

A large paper supplier has this banner on the front of its building:

National Paper Company
1993 goals
"Total Quality Commitment"
Making Customer Satisfaction the #1 Priority

While this makes the message a reminder to employees as they come to work, or go in & out during work hours, has this any meaning for external publics -- customers, prospects who have not been dealing with the company, vendors, neighbors, public officials?

Individual situations will vary, but here's a quick forcefield analysis:

FACILITATING FACTORS

OPPOSING FACTORS

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Since quality & customer satisfaction programs are in vogue, it shows the company is "with it"; 2. Anyone not familiar with these programs would still be likely to react positively to an organization that goes public with this message; 3. Boldly announcing the message in this location means the company has to be committed -- remember customers go through those doors, too. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unless every employee is well indoctrinated & has bought into these programs, there's a risk of raising expectations which cannot be met; 2. Therefore, the banners are not prudent to kick off a customer satisfaction or quality campaign, but as a culmination; 3. Those whose own workplaces have made a mess of such programs will probably be turned off (but then, every message turns some on & others off). |
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Unless some major factors have been overlooked, on balance it appears there is value in going public with internal campaigns.

SELECTIVE PERCEPTION AS A STRATEGY SCREENING DEVICE

The major strategy question (& thus research requirement) for public communication campaigns, far more important than any other, is this:

Based on their current perceptions & existing attitudinal base, how many people's selective perception will allow them to be turned on by the messages, versus how many will be turned off.

Unless the positive number is many times higher than the negative, a public campaign is counterproductive. A quiet, direct campaign is required.

This is why most mass media campaigns have the real effect of creating a debate, even making an issue where there was none. Now, if you are in the minority position, or unable to garner attention for your issue, the public