

Potential for backlash was there. "As a major retailer of tires & other automotive parts, Canadian Tire did run the risk of negative media coverage or negative feedback from environmental groups. In '91, McDonald's Restaurants received a great deal of negative media coverage for their sponsorship of an Earth Day Canada event. Fortunately, all media coverage focused on the positive aspects of the promotion," explains Jennifer Garland of CTC.

USEFUL FINDINGS GLEANED FROM 2 MEDIA SURVEYS

STUDY OF EUROPEAN PRESS COVERAGE of US companies, conducted by the Delahaye Group (Newington, NH), found:

- Coverage in Europe is more likely to be positive & communicate key messages. On average, US press is 37% positive compared to 51% in Europe.
- 1 in 3 US articles contains an organization's key message; in Europe its 1 in 2.
- 50% of consumer companies communicated key messages & generated positive press, compared to 35% of companies focusing on biz-to-biz markets.

SURVEY OF FLORIDA REPORTERS, Bennett & Co's (Maitland, Fla) 4th annual:

- 92% prefer 1-pg alerts to longer narratives, up from 49% last year.
- Labeled envelopes, addressed to a specific person, are more likely to be opened than envelopes that are typed, handwritten or have "general editor" labels.
- 42% do not think a night or weekend phone number necessary, while 32% feel it is of some importance. Only 10% say it's extremely important, a significant decline from last year when 46% said extremely important.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

DIED. H. Brian Wilson (vp corp rels, Pechiney Corp, Greenwich, Ct) on Aug 1 of complications resulting from leukemia. PRSA Fellow; former pres of Westchester/Fairfield chapter; ex-chair of International Committee.

RESIGNS. Richard Cheney as chair emeritus of Hill & Knowlton after 33 yrs with the firm. Will pursue his interest as director or consultant to start-up ventures.

NOMINATED. PRSA officers: pres, Joseph Vecchione (Prudential, Newark); pres-elect, John Beardsley (Padilla Speer Beardsley, Mpls); sec'y, Debra Miller (Fla International Univ, North Miami); treas, Luis Morales (Robert Morris Assocs, Phila).

New directors-at-large: Joseph Curley (Curley & Pynn, Orlando); Monty Euston (Press & Radio-TV Assocs, Syracuse); Kathy Kelly (U of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette); Joe Trahan (U of Chattanooga).

C INTERACTIVE MEDIA REVOLUTION UPDATE: FAX ON THE FRONTLINE

Medical University of SC is installing a 24-hr, **document-on-demand system** it calls Medufax that's aimed at journalists covering health & medicine. "I haven't found any other organization using fax to serve journalists in this way," Scott Regan, dpr, told prr. Documents (4-6 pgs, bullet format) covering 15 subjects are available, including AIDS, animals in research, cancer, agro-medicine, heart disease.

OBJECTIVE "We're positioning our institution as the leading source of health & medical information in the state & the Southeast. This is one more step to reinforce that. Eventually journalists will get into the habit that anytime they need information, a quote or a source, they'll call us. That's a good mark of a strong media relations program -- when **the media is calling you rather than you calling the media.**"

"We've been telling our media contacts around the state about what we're doing. Everybody is excited that they'll have access to that information. We demonstrated it at a conference and public relations people's eyes went buggy."

HOW IT WORKS

1. Each document has a 4-digit access number.
2. Journalists are given a PIN (personal ID number).
3. They dial an 800 number, enter their PIN number & the access numbers of the documents needed.
4. Within minutes documents are automatically faxed to the journalist, "providing instant access to information 24 hours a day."
5. To facilitate use, a rolodex card is given to each journalist listing his or her PIN & all available documents with their access numbers.

Initial setup has been "very time consuming," assimilating all the data & putting it into readable format -- "comprehensive yet short enough so they don't have to read thru reams of fax paper to find what they're looking for. Once we see how successful it is in the state, we'll begin expanding it & inviting reporters from around the Southeast & even from some of the national publications to have access to it."

BACKGROUND "The technology to do this has only been around about 18 months. I stumbled upon it when I was having computer



problems & called Aldus. Using my key pad, they walked me thru to the problem, then asked me to enter my fax number so they could send me a document on how to fix the problem. I thought about **what applications there might be for public relations.**"

Closest application Regan found is the National Cancer Institute's system where the public can access info via phone & fax on various types of cancer. PR Newswire has a system, notes Regan, but it's used more for news releases & speeches, for the financial press & for stock analysts to access quarterly reports.

System Regan is putting in place (to begin operating Sept 1) is owned by Sprint. Others are available but more expensive, according to Regan.

Of Related Interest:

DO CONSUMERS WANT THE "WORLD OF INFORMATION" IN THEIR LIVINGROOMS?

Here's one view on the interactive media revolution (see last week's pr lead). Sarah Stambler, editor of Marketing With Technology News, writes:

"Somewhere, people have been left out of the equation." According to the cult of 'interactive' futurists, people are going to spend even more time with the news, interacting with all these devices, relishing their personalized editions....

If audiences have drifted away from newspapers to television, it's not because they're in pursuit of more; just the opposite, they want less to do....

Interactivity? For the masses? Interactivity with news & information appeals more to a niche population of aggressive people who have always sought more information in libraries, specialized publications, and more recently on computer databases.... If only some of those R&D millions would go into the interactive fax arena!" (See preceding article)

NEWSLETTER TRACKS WOMEN'S ATTITUDES, VALUES & LIFESTYLES

Published by public opinion researcher Ethel Klein, "EDK Forecast" gives "atmospheric data" on women's needs, fears, attitudes & hopes..."the emotional & interpersonal contexts in which American women make decisions." Gleaned from the preview issue:

- Almost 3 women in 10 say they **shop because they feel good** -- or want to.
- 80% of daughters report they **turn to mom** for advice sometimes or often.
- 48% consider **phone conversations** an integral part of their social lives.
- Women who call themselves **feminists** are more likely to wear make-up & manicure their nails. 72% of them like to shop -- & they spend more on dresses & own more shoes than non-feminists.

)) Among forecasts in the preview issue:

- When looking to capture that discretionary dollar, **position products to gratify emotional highs** & lows of mood-motivated shopping.
- Many women feel personally **threatened by tv violence**. Programmers & advertisers will feel pressured to respond.
- Best way to reach the growing number of dynamic, midlife women is **thru their daughters**.

(\$249/yr for 6 issues; from EDK Associates, 235 West 48th St, NYC 10036)

GREEN PROMOTION WORKS WELL FOR CANADIAN TIRE

Wanting to be linked positively with the environment via a **soft-sell approach**, Canadian Tire Corporation (Toronto) became the exclusive sponsor of Earth Flag -- Earth Day Canada's largest, highest profile national event.

THE PROJECT Between 4/20 - 5/1/92, public was invited to sign a nylon panel located in each of CTC's 420 stores. In 2 weeks, 400,000 Canadians signed the Earth Flag panels. Following the promotion, panels were collected, stitched together -- into a 300 lb, 7-story flag -- then presented to the Canadian people, represented by PM Brian Mulroney, prior to its being flown to Rio for the Earth Summit where it was presented to UN delegates.

GOALS Project used increasing public awareness & understanding of Earth Day & the Earth Summit to help CTC: a) increase public awareness of its commitment to the environment; b) position its involvement with the environment in a credible, non-controversial manner in order to avoid public backlash & potential negative response from the media; c) promote its environmentally friendly products.

AUDIENCES Customers, dealers & their staffs, employees, Earth Day volunteer coordinators, regional & national politicians, media & the Canadian public in general. Because of the size, scope & differences of each of the target audiences, communication vehicles & message content were tailored to each audience (and available in both English & French -- Canada's 2 official languages).

There's an "environmental bill of rights" brewing in Ontario which may stir more org'n's to proactively assess & nurture mutually beneficial relationships with environmental groups. Bill will "empower any resident of the province to sue anybody he considers a polluter...by alleging the infraction of a regulation, however insignificant, plus damage or threat of damage to air, water, public land, plants, animals or an 'ecological system,'" explains a 7/19 Forbes article. It abolishes "standing" -- the doctrine that says you cannot sue unless you have a direct, personal interest at stake.