

than change agencies had anticipated. [How long will it be before there's an understanding that communication & information, by itself, does not change behavior in 99% of cases?]

"The Rand research illustrates that **self-delusion influences individuals to ignore public information material addressing their special needs.**"  
(Copy of report from prr)

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## ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **Branding May Be Failing With Consumers But Research Says It Still Influences Financial Analysts.** Another example of how out of touch this group can be? A Gregory & Clyburne survey of 85 analysts covering 2400 companies finds they're most influenced by "corporate branding messages." The type of advertising (& presumably other communications) "most effective in creating a positive image" is product ads. James Gregory admits "The most surprising finding to me is that half the analysts admit that ads or articles had influenced them..." Study confirms the opportunity for pr: only 30% feel sr. management "does a consistently good job of articulating the vision of their corporations." (Study \$4.95 from G&C, 45 Church St, Stamford, Ct 06906; 203/327-6333)

¶ **Mini-Survey Shows Quantitatively That Saturn's Recall Built Relationships** (prp & purview 8/23). 27% of 121 potential new car buyers nationwide contacted by Market Opinion Research (Farmington Hills, Mich) say their view of Saturn is *more favorable since the recall*. 21% have a less favorable perception. 50% were unchanged. A net difference of 6% have a more favorable impression.

¶ **Now Available: Personal Computer Software For PR Research** that runs on the Apple Macintosh. Developed by Glen Cameron, U Ga pr prof, "Publics" a) provides advanced audience segmentation functions that help identify audiences who support or oppose a given position/subject -- before a pr program is launched. b) Performs general audience surveys & c) brainstorms with focus groups. d) Automatically creates a questionnaire that probes the knowledge & attitudes of the sampled audience, or helps you create your own. e) Generates demographic profiles in easy-to-understand language. f) For phone research, it'll generate random phone numbers in specified area codes & prefixes. g) Aids the accurate keying-in of data with program prompts. h) Built-in "expert-on-disk" computes sophisticated, demographically-keyed statistics & helps interpret results. Academic version with curriculum guide is available for college classroom use; IBM/PC-compatible version out late this year. (\$295 from The Right Brain, 4263 Brigadoon Dr, Shoreview, Minn 55126; 612/229-6299)

## WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**HONORS.** Joe Curley (Curley & Pynn Public Relations Management, Orlando) receives FPRA's John W. Dilin Award, orgn's highest honor, for high ethical standards & outstanding professional leadership.

Marilyn Kern-Foxworth (assoc prof, Texas A&M, College Station) receives 1993 Kreighbaum Under-40 Award from AEJMC -- given to mbrs under 40 for outstanding performance & effort in teaching, research & public service.

## UTILITY SHOWS 2-WAY SYMMETRICAL PR MODEL AIDS BOTTOM LINE

But how pr is positioned in the organization's structure & operating procedures is a critical factor. IABC Foundation's 6-yr Excellence Study (prp 6/17/91 & 7/13/92) posits that Jim Grunig's symmetrical model of public relations (prp 1/1/88) is most effective for helping an organization adapt to its environment & build healthy, working relationships.

Paper by Brad Rawlins (James Madison U, Harrisonburg, Va) provides a case study -- "**qualitative data to support the hypothesis that organizational factors do contribute to how public relations is practiced.**" He considered the factors of 1) organizational structure, 2) power, 3) culture, 4) politics & 5) leadership to analyze how a pr dep't dealt with a potentially disruptive & costly problem.

**SITUATION** Energen is a large Alabama gas utility. Jim Alderman, vp conn, received an early warning from a legal advisor that a main subsidiary's \$50 million project would require dredging the Cahaba River to provide a gas line to the other side.

**LIKELY OPPOSITION** While Energen had the legal right to dredge the river, Alderman knew a group of concerned citizens -- the Cahaba River Society (CRS) -- would be a mighty foe. They had already stopped one company that had a \$100,000,000 investment in coalbed methane wells. Alderman learned from the project engineer that another way across the river was technically feasible, but more difficult & would cost half a million dollars.

Cases like this are particularly useful in this era of restructuring & reengineering (prp 8/23) -- which is a **window of opportunity for pr** to 1) find the right place in the structure & 2) focus its work on outcomes and away from the "we've always done it this way" stuff that may not be working.

## TEAMING & LATERAL COOPERATION LEAD TO PLAN FOR A SOLUTION

**Step 1:** Alderman then went back to legal counsel, explained the options & the impact CRS could have, & got the **lawyer's** support.

**Step 2:** To get more support, they went to the **Chief Financial Officer**. The CFO pointed out that the \$500,000 cost was only 1% of the total cost. He supported Alderman's decision to use the more expensive procedure because it was good public relations & they wouldn't have any delays & costs with legal problems.



Step 3: Alderman went to the CEO to present his case, & got his approval.

Step 4: Alderman then went back to construction with the new orders & asked when they planned to meet with the citizens of the Cahaba area. "We hadn't planned to meet with anyone," was the engineer's reply.

Step 5: They then planned a meeting with CRS & any other concerned citizens where they showed what the company was planning to do & asked for suggestions. Members of CRS were satisfied with the plans, had no suggestions. Alderman promised they would be kept informed of progress.

Step 6: After drilling started, Alderman invited CRS members to the site. They were so impressed with the way the company approached the problem of getting the pipeline across the river without altering its appearance that they took pictures to the company with the coalbed methane wells, whose project they had stopped, to show how it should be done. Project was finished without any hassles.

Case study shows that an organization with

- a decentralized structure,
- a pr dep't that is provided with legitimate power because it is valued for its ability to reduce uncertainty,
- a cohesive culture with strong social values and...
- visible leadership with a vision of social responsibility

can practice the symmetrical model of pr and thereby have strong ability to reduce or eliminate political opposition from powerful coalitions. If pr is a subordinate, order-taking entity in a hierarchical structure, the several lateral communication steps required here would in most cases be impossible.

#### 4 FRAMEWORKS OF PRACTICE

**Press Agency:** Propagandistic, seeking media attention; a 1-way asymmetric model. Dominates current practice according to Grunig's research.

**Public Information:** Disseminates accurate info but does not volunteer negative info or seek input; a 1-way asymmetric model. Most popular in gov't & scientific agencies.

**2-Way Asymmetrical:** Identifies messages most likely to gain support of publics without having to change the behavior of the organization, thus manipulative. Change benefits the organization but not necessarily the publics. Organization knows best, needs no free marketplace of ideas. Most popular in corporations & advocacy groups.

**2-Way Symmetrical:** Uses bargaining, negotiation, conflict resolution to effect change in the ideas, attitudes & behaviors of both organization & publics, for mutual benefit. Used at times by many organizations but seldom their dominant model.

#### THE RESEARCHER EXPLAINS

Environments affect organization structure because they introduce uncertainty.

The more complex & dynamic the environment, the greater the uncertainty.

Therefore, an org'n must be structured in a way that can deal with its particular level of uncertainty.

The key to dealing with uncertainty is the level of centralization in an organization. The greater the uncertainty, the more decentralized the organization should be. Where complexity, interdependence & environmental uncertainty are high, it is imperative that an organization not be too centralized.... If public relations exists outside of the centralized power, then the symmetrical model cannot be practiced."

#### RESEARCHERS OFFER NEW METHOD TO PREDICT BEHAVIOR

Will there always be a gap between reported intended behavior & actual behavior? Is it due to individual personality traits? If so, which traits predict consistency of actual behavioral follow-through? These are central research problems Jo Nell Miettinen (Stanford) & David Dozier (San Diego State U) are looking at.

#### MEASURING SELF-ACTUALIZATION MAY CLOSE THE GAP

Research may inadvertently measure attitudes toward behavior [what prr's Behavioral Model calls "latent

readiness"] rather than the behavior itself. If self-reports collected by research are unreliable & direct observation of behavior is not possible, what then? Here's the researchers proposal:

Attitudes as reported by survey respondents often don't translate into action. Among thousands of examples: Gallup found 76% of Americans label themselves as "environmentalists." But a study by Saatchi & Saatchi found "behavior has not caught up with attitude ...16% or less of consumers act on their concerns in terms of real behavior."

1. Maslow's self-actualized grouping (highest level of his 5-tiered Needs Hierarchy) may solve the problem. This group has a firm sense of self & of reality, which deters the formation of self-deceptions.
2. Low self-actualizers are more influenceable (due to their lack of self-awareness), & therefore more prone to answer survey questions in ways they feel are socially correct, rather than with a firm sense of reality.
3. Measuring the level of self-actualization as part of a survey would provide a way to identify False Positives -- those individuals who either cannot or will not accurately report intended behavior.
4. But this is a small, select group -- and explains why polling's "pure statistical sample" misleads, because the 80-90% who are not self-actualized answer the questions but then don't follow-thru. So research methodology may need another look as well.

#### CASE STUDY IN THE DANGER OF SELF-DECEPTION

It can prove deadly, as shown by a recent Rand Corporation study on sexual behavior & AIDS: "Of the men who did have bisexual experiences during adulthood, only 29% considered themselves bisexual, while 68% thought of themselves as heterosexual." This is one reason why AIDS education messages directed to gay & bisexual men are less effective