

goals for the period of product introduction.

- **Target the appropriate universe** that will support those sales goals, i.e. who can give needed purchase behaviors now. Once you know its size & prospect characteristics, you can begin to target & structure your message.
- **Identify interdependencies**, to target influencers (e.g., if "power users" influence purchasing decisions, find ways to reach them). Most technology products (Geibel's specialty), especially software, affect many users at the customer site. By identifying these players & their interdependencies, your communications objectives are established -- the Concentric Circles of Influence method.
- Identify communications channels to **reach your targeted publics without alerting the rest of the world** -- e.g., SIGs (Special Interest Groups) & user groups.
- **Develop prototype marketing programs that you can test.** Focused pr allows you to develop different messages for different publics.
- **When giving media interviews**, emphasize the specialized niche market nature of what you do. Dwell on the specialized knowledge & resources needed, & the barriers to entry. Emphasize how you meet these requirements & have brought a viable product to the market. Your objective is to convey your value added & discourage others from entering the market.
- **Don't** tout market potential or sales projections unless for another reason than marketing -- e.g. investor relations. The customer is only concerned about what the technology can do for them. Your early-stage innovators don't need a lot of market reassurance -- they are experimenters & risk takers by nature. The job of your public relations is to reach them so they can identify themselves to you.
- **Avoid** mass-market business publications -- the ones that make your ego feel good. Yes, they have credibility -- with your competitors.

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

WELLNESS IS ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING FRINGE BENEFITS. More organizations are expected to offer wellness programs as a fringe benefit than any other secondary benefit, according to a survey by Human Resource Executive mag. Currently offered by 46% of respondents, wellness programs are expected to be offered by an additional 10% within a year. (More info on wellness from Wellness Councils of America, Community Health Plaza, Ste.311, 7101 Newport Ave, Omaha 68152-2175; 402/572-3590)

NO-SHOW, NO-GO BANQUET for CARE's Southeast Regional Office was most successful banquet in event's 9-yr history. Raised \$81,252 -- \$23,000 more than the previous year. Rather than attend a formal dinner, recipients of the invitations are asked to donate. Poster-size, b&w design combined a stark tin cup of gruel with copy that read, "To 24 million people -- this is a banquet." CHD Public Relations (Atlanta) contributed its services pro bono.

WHEN YOU NEED IT, PR PROVES ITS CONTINUING ESSENTIALITY -- AS WHEN WINTER THREATENED TO BRING DOWN THE POWER POOL

Last month's severe winter weather caused PSE&G (Newark) to institute deliberate outages -- which it previously had never done during winter. "We have a plan for electric capacity emergencies...but it's geared to a summer event because that's when we typically experience highest demand," Neil Brown, pub info mgr, told prr. More demand than can be supplied brings down the entire regional system -- as happened in the famous North-east brownout of 1967.

Utility's 48 hrs of intense activity are a learning tool for other organizations with a time crisis:

- Communications involvement began 8pm, Tuesday, Jan 18. Operations notified the adv'g mgr to begin preparing radio messages asking customers to conserve energy. He immediately notified his team to start redoing the radio ad because the text was geared for a summer event, asking people to turn down their air conditioners, etc.
- Ad mgr notified Brown, according to procedure, who then got in touch with operations "to get a handle on the situation & begin planning for the news end of the operation."
- Discussed the situation with Bob Kinhead, gen'l mgr of adv'g & comms, & agreed to arrive early the next morning -- 6am.
- Situation had not improved by Wednesday, 6am. Ad team faxed newly created ads to 36 radio stations; ads were on the air by 6:30am.
- Capacity had deteriorated to the point where the regional power pool had instituted a 5% voltage reduction, then shortly after 7am started the rolling blackouts.
- First news release was on the wires by 7:15am explaining the situation, asking customers to conserve & that on the direction of the power pool, service interruptions would begin. "From then on we were in constant contact with the media."

"I've been in the business more than 20 years, and I've never seen that intensity of activity in such a compressed time period. And it's one of the few times I've ever heard the press pay a compliment to a public relations effort," said Bob Kinhead.

- First tv crew arrived at 11am. Last one left at midnight. Systems operation center was used as backdrop for tv interviews. Company president & systems operations mgr did a number of interviews; Brown & another operations mgr did some tv interviews. "We also did constant updates, live feeds with area radio stations, & just kept at it." Stopped doing rolling blackouts by Wed afternoon, but continued the conservation appeal. Ad team updated its paid message 5 times.
- "I stayed till around midnight, when the last tv crew left. Then went over to a hotel in Newark, but by 3am my pager started going crazy -- radio was looking for updates for morning drive time." Media continued heavily thru Thursday with the message to conserve.
- Customer service & marketing were in constant contact with customers "altho some calls did manage to find their way here."
- Post-event surveys indicate that 90% of PSE&G's customers heard the conservation message. And of those who heard it, 80% took some conservation measures. "That was a major factor in easing the emergency."
- "If the event had continued longer than 2 days, the fatigue factor would have been a problem. We're going to train agency people to take over in the event that it should last longer. We're all -- comms, adv'g, customer service, marketing, operations, power pool -- looking at what happened to see how we can improve things." [The Lessons Learned approach]
- "During an average year we get around 1100 media inquiries. This year, in the month of January alone we had 600 -- an indication of how busy we were."

WAYS TO CHAMPION CREATIVITY ACROSS YOUR ORGANIZATION

Too many organizations are operating on automatic pilot, not taking advantage of available brain power. "Those who can harness the intellectual capacity within their organizations are the ones who will finish first," explains Grace McGartland, who recently wrote *Thunderbolt Thinking: Transform Your Insights & Options Into Powerful Results* (Bernard-Davis). Her book offers a 5-step, how-to model to help people expand their thought processes:

1. **Looking at situations in different ways than you normally would** expands your perspective.
2. **Sharing ideas & forcing each other to think in different ways** ratchets up your brainpower & taps into your hidden resource. We only use about 5% of our brain's capability.
3. **Turbo-charge the environment** -- create a stimulating thinking atmos-

Vision is still essential.
 "Many slip into a myopic state & are unprepared to deal with change to the point of being visionless." She points to the Fortune 500 list as evidence: "Nearly 50% of the companies included on this list in the 80s no longer exist as independent entities in the 90s."

phere. Get workers out of their normal routine & help them become more creative.

4. **Improve conversations between co-workers.** Instead of shooting down ideas people have that won't work, use those ideas to think of other ones that will accomplish the same outcome.
5. **Be a catalyst.** Act on ideas, make things happen as soon as you can.

SOME THUNDERBOLT THINKERS

Johnson & Johnson's meetings are held in rooms without chairs in order to

keep people's thoughts crisp, clean & to the point. This also saves valuable time & money by encouraging participants to finish meetings on time.

Headlines USA surveyed its employees to see when their imaginations were most alive. It found that sitting on the toilet was number one. It now places printed advertising in public restrooms.

At **Paramount Flag** there are no formal meetings. Instead, execs open their mail together every day, which typically takes 30-45 minutes.

At **Apple**, naming meeting rooms "Dorothy" & "Toto" to stress that there's a wizard in everyone turns ordinary meeting rooms into think tanks. (\$24.95 hardcover, \$14.95 soft cover; available in bookstores or by calling 1-800-945-3132)

SOME IDEAS FOR CREATING THUNDERBOLTS:

1. Don't wear a watch all week.
2. To stress the seriousness & importance of a meeting, issue a black tie invitation requiring formal attire at the meeting.
3. Physically change your frame of reference by standing all day long.
4. Use crystal balls, matchbox cars, magic wands, balloons or any toy or gadget to introduce play into your upcoming board meeting, release inhibitions & get the creative juices going.
5. At the start of your next meeting, ask participants to draw their brains...or draw their ideas.
6. Stack plastic chairs outside a meeting room & ask participants to carry in their own chairs so they can determine the space themselves.

MASS MEDIA BACKFIRES BECAUSE IT ALERTS COMPETITORS, TOO

Public relations should "focus on the publics that are critical to market success...with laser-beam precision. The shotgun approach to media relations is to be avoided at all costs, **since it serves as a heads up call for the competition,**" writes Jeffrey Geibel of Geibel Marketing Consulting (Belmont, Mass). His approach is meant for emerging technologies but is widely applicable:

- **Understand who your best customers are,** why they buy your technology & how long it will take to close the sale. Then identify realistic sales