

Guidelines. To avoid repetition, messages run no more than 2 days. Allen spends 30-45 minutes the previous day & 20 minutes that morning preparing the day's messages. OA Today is available each morning by 9am.

Evaluation. Recent readership survey showed a 13% response to OA Today "which I think is good...compared to other publications we've had where the response has been 10% or below. Basically employees are happy with it, they offered some new ideas. One we've already implemented -- running the cafeteria menu."

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

THE LANGUAGE OF MULTICULTURALISM is demonstrated in a flyer from U South Florida promoting the 4th Annual Conference on Social Marketing in Public Health. 1) "Please notify us if a reasonable accommodation of a disability is needed." Some folks do make unreasonable requests -- so get it on the table up front. 2) The required diversity disclaimer is more inclusive than most: "Events, activities, programs & facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, marital status, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, Vietnam or disabled veteran status as provided by law & in accordance with the University's respect for personal dignity."

BUSINESS LEADERS NEED A LESSON IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS IF recently reported research is accurate. Jericho Promotions asked Fortune 1,000 execs whether they watched a) Michael Jordan's retirement press conference and b) Pres. Clinton's State of the Union address. 49% turned on their tvs for Clinton -- but 78% watched Jordan. Priorities, anyone?

CONTINUING PRR'S INTEREST IN RESEARCH: Lou Williams' 1-day seminars on "Measuring & Evaluating Your Communications & Public Relations Efforts." May 4 in Toronto; May 18 in Chicago. Seminars cover: nature & role of research; which programs can be measured; how to build a survey instrument; how to conduct & interpret readership surveys; how to conduct focus groups, their strengths & weaknesses; comm audits; & more. (2 Prudential Plaza, 180 N. Stetson, #1500, Chi 60601; 800/537-7123 or 312/565-3900)

NEW YORK TIMES JOINS INFO ORGANIZING TREND, in a small way, at least. Editorials now have an intro, almost an exec summary of 2 or 3 paragraphs, then space & a dividing bullet, before the long grey body of the piece.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. W. Ward White (vp comms, Northwestern Mutual Life Ins, Milwaukee) to the Conference Board's Council of Corporate Comms Execs.

RETIREES. Henry Von Spreckelsen (corp comms mgr, Bethlehem Steel, Pa) on 3/31 after 35 yrs with BS. He plans to continue being "active in comms & the science of pr."

NEW APPROACH OF BOTTOM-UP MARKETING IS PR DRIVEN

Using grassroots marketing -- "creating a groundswell locally to bring an issue or product into the national consciousness" -- is how The Wallis Group (Tulsa) will help American Booksellers Ass'n raise awareness about the importance of independent booksellers.

2 EXAMPLES OF GRASSROOTS MKTG

1) **Start Regionally.** "Much of our grassroots marketing approach is based on what we've learned promoting books, working with authors & publishers," Suzanne Wallis told pr. Local independent booksellers who really like a book will then promote that book & author, creating awareness within a region until there's a groundswell & it reaches the national consciousness -- "best example is *Bridges of Madison County*."

2) **Promote Local Values Nationally.** Each year, Toyota gives its President's Award to 230 dealers based on their customer relationships. Along with a trophy, each winner receives a page in People Magazine -- a paid advertisement. Writeup & photos are done in People Mag style, focus on dealer's community involvement & run within dealer's market area.

Local is still a key word.
"What we see most are the big national sellers distilling all authors down to a couple dozen. There are thousands of fine writers thruout the country whose books -- and thus their ideas -- don't get to the national consciousness, but are very important regionally. Independents are always anxious to work with regional authors." ABA hopes to strengthen the clout of this 2nd tier of booksellers.

- "It shines some light on the dealer as a person, a corporate community citizen, not just a Toyota dealer. Toyota wants to give dealers a chance to talk about this side of what they do. All of these 230 stories together build momentum to demonstrate the important roles these people play within their communities."
- Toyota links with these grassroots, community endeavors. "So often people think of Toyota as Japanese all the way thru. When in fact these dealers are people living in the US & very active in their communities. It begins to demonstrate how Toyota as a company has had tremendous affect thruout this country on many good community efforts."



**ABA PROJECT IS ALSO
FIRST AMENDMENT ISSUE**

Focus will be to 1) increase public awareness of growing diversity of bookstores and the difference between chain stores independent booksellers, 2) point out how the independents contribute to their communities.

- "We want to help the public understand **the importance of independent bookstore owners within their communities**. They are like the *mom-&-pop* businesses that have gone by the wayside to the huge superstores. These are people doing a lot for their communities, but don't always have the clout with publishers that big chains have."
- But independents offer their communities a **"greater depth of inventory"**: If you have 5 independent bookstores in your community run by 5 different people, you'll have 5 different arrays of books. Each buyer selects books based on his/her preferences. With chain stores, one corporate buyer, with perhaps some influence from regional mgrs, selects books for all its stores.
- "This builds a strong case for supporting the independent bookseller because it encourages the publisher to continue publishing 45,000 books each year. If the independents disappear & just chains are ordering, publishers aren't going to be publishing as many books. But the general **public needs to have all these books available to them**, giving that many authors the opportunity to write."

Wallis Group will increase awareness thru **"editorial marketing"** -- encouraging feature stories about individual bookstores. "We've found there are some wonderful relationships between individual booksellers & their communities. They're not just entities without identities. They are people working on behalf of their community, not just as businesspeople. Our challenge is to find those independents with stories to tell." Other plans are still being made.

HELPFUL TREND Indication of how bookstores fit into their towns is their emergence as coffee houses. The concept of zonking out in a bookstore with a good read & a cuppa java may be the essence of "local." After pioneer attempts in California & DC, the trend is catching on everywhere.

STUDY: PARTNERSHIPS KEY TO DAYCARE, ELDERCARE PROGRAMS

Partnerships -- where businesses join with other businesses, agencies or NPOs -- is an effective way for organizations to meet employees' dependent care needs, a **major employee loyalty & productivity issue**. The most prevalent arrangement is a formal one, where companies collaborate & are managed by a nonprofit or community org'n, according to a Conference Board study of organizations with experience implementing work/family programs. Involved organizations say:

- **Advantages include:** shared resources (64%); lower costs (45%); ability to meet more needs (45%); better quality programs (36%); improved corporate image (21%). "It makes good business sense to team up with

others in developing initiatives that are community-based & too costly for one company."

- **Barriers:** conflicting goals (40%); complicated negotiations (36%); costs (25%); equity among participants (19%). "The real barrier is not so much conflicting goals as lack of clarity about goals."
- **Keys to success:** clarity of goals, defining participant roles, planning, funding, communication, commitment. "Utilization rates are closely tied to the success of communication & marketing."

ONE RESPONDENT'S EXPERIENCE

"Partnering with a local school district on a near-site kindergarten program has been a tremendous success in terms of shared costs, flexibility, community relations, corporate image & productivity," explains Sue Osten of 3M. "Employees who utilize the school report **enhanced morale, increased productivity & decreased absenteeism**. School hours match business needs so parents arrive to work on time & know their children are well cared for, even when public schools are closed. The convenient location increases parent involvement. We have seen 100% attendance at parent-teacher conferences. The program also helps ease the transition for employees relocating to corporate headquarters." (Copy of study from Conference Board, 845 Third av, NYC 10022; 212/339-0345; \$15 mbrs, \$60 non-mbrs)

ANOTHER USE OF E-MAIL: AS A BONDING DEVICE, TIMELY SOURCE

OA Today is "our hospital's office automation system on which any employee can read or send messages. It comes out of our office every day," Scott Allen, comty rels coord, Arkansas Children's Hospital (Little Rock), told prr. Hospital's 2600 employees can access it via E-Mail; 2300 are currently doing so.

Content. Includes info from various dep'ts or administration -- "things that have to get out daily or they'd become old news." Specifically, 1) Today at ACH -- what's happening that day. 2) Noteworthy News -- general items. 3) Names of all hospital employees having a birthday that day. 4) The day's cafeteria menu. 5) Rumor Buster -- "every once in a while we'll get a question from an employee asking about something they heard. I'll find out if there's any truth to the rumor & run what I find." 6) In December, *holiday recipes* -- "a feature for just that month." 7) Daily updates on special projects -- ie, last June "had an employee campaign to raise money for the research center we're building."

"Our campus is spread out. Employees are in several buildings. Those in the outside buildings especially like OA Today because they don't always get over to the Hospital to hear the news. From when we started almost 2 yrs ago, our readership has gone from 1600 to 2300."

Editing. Info comes into the pr dep't. "99% of the time messages run 'as is' with just some grammar changes. We ask each person who submits to have message approved by their office manager or supervisor."