

"This decision could significantly change the pr industry (sic), beginning a new period of accountability for the field," says Akiyama.

## ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

**SENDING THE WRONG MESSAGE AT THE WRONG TIME?** When the Big 7 nations held its conference on jobs & employment in Detroit last month, funding was raised from area businesses. Each of the big 3 auto companies kicked in \$100,000, for example. Donating \$50,000 apiece were 2 area **healthcare plans**. Was this a wise move because it supported a project of obvious concern to that region? Or did it provide evidence that one reason for healthcare reform is because there is slush money to throw around in the present system?

**RESEARCH FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS** is the focus of a May 6th PRSA conference in Boston. Six case studies will describe a) the research challenge & approach, b) how it defined the pr program, c) demonstrated results. Cases will assay how research applies to pr across a wide range of issues & industries. For example, 1) how GTE uses targeted quantitative & qualitative employee, customer & key leader research to drive planning & management compensation; 2) how integrated research helped build relationships & facilitate least cost planning for Portland General Electric; 3) how customer/prospect research for a law firm helped shape positioning & growth into new markets. (Info from Carol Schreck, 617/292-0470)

**FOCUS ON WHAT WE ACHIEVE, NOT WHAT WE DO** is one of 20 challenges Mitch Kozikowski proposes for pr professionals. He offers this definition of the field: "We are the discipline that manages (read that as evaluate, maintain & enhance) the *reputation* of the organization & the *relationships* with its publics." Then "routinely measure the impact & value of the pr service. Get to know & understand how & why even small behavior changes occur. Become the source of expert information on the organization's relationships with its constituents. What did you cause to happen? Focus on the results you *achieved*, rather than on the *things* you did." (Copy from pr)

**RECORD NUMBER OF MAGS LAUNCHED IN '93** -- 789 titles, 110 more than in '92. These numbers refute "the impending death of the magazine, that will soon be bulldozed & paved over by the much-heralded information superhighway," reports Samir Husni's *Guide to New Consumer Magazines*. Categories that increased: sports (more than doubled), home services, computers, women's fashion & beauty, business & finance, travel. Sports titles were 11 mags short of unseating the sex category as the leader of new consumer mag launches. Sex held the lead for the 5th consecutive year, tho it decreased from 97 in '92 to 95 in '93. Frequency is a tie between quarterly & bimonthly. "A mere 54 magazines dared to declare a monthly frequency. It is fun to note that **24 new magazines did not declare a frequency at all** in their first issue." (\$63.95 from Folio, Box 4949, Stamford, Ct 06907-0949)

## PERSONALIZED & LOCALIZED PR CAN EVEN PASS TAX INITIATIVES

Grassroots organizing & coalition building got California's Proposition 172 passed last November. Initiative proposed to permanently extend an about-to-expire 1/2 cent sales tax to assist law enforcement & public safety services statewide.

- **Short Timeframe.** "This was an unexpected statewide special election. People don't go to the polls in Nov of an odd year, just the even years (for Congressional & state races) -- so we needed to educate people," Bobbie Metzger of Stoorza, Ziegus, Metzger & Hunt (Sacramento) told pr. SZM&H was hired in August & worked 3000 hours in those 3 months "because we were personally committed to seeing that measure pass."
- **Goal = Understanding.** Proponents felt that if people understood the issue, they would vote for the initiative. "Unlike some tax initiatives where you want to hide, we felt & polling showed that if people understood this they tended to favor it. So our job was to make this issue known to voters."
- **Low Budget.** \$2 million was raised (compare with \$17 million spent by the anti side of the school voucher initiative on the same ballot). "For most campaigns -- unless they're for governor or for a controversial or high-stakes issue -- there isn't a great amount of dollars. So for this effort we had to use every weapon in our arsenal." These included:

### GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING/ COALITION BUILDING

"We have in our **database** many, many groups & organizations with which we have worked over the years." California compares in

size to 9 states on the eastern seaboard, has 31 million people, probably 13-14 million registered voters. "There are thousands of organizations to work with here."

1. **Started Calling The Groups In Our Database.** Hired 6 months out, we might call everybody because even the smallest group is of value." But because timeframe in this case was so short, not *all* could be contacted.
2. **First, Sought Endorsement** from each group.
3. **Then, Wrote Items For Their Publications.** For example, the California Teachers Assn's internal newsletter goes to 300,000 people. "If you get a communication from a group you belong to, you probably give that more credibility than something else. That's why we think it's so important to work with all these groups & org's because *people read the communications from the groups to which they choose to belong.*"

- 4. **Slate Mailers.** Many organizations publish an election issue where they show their endorsements. "So we got repeat messages to these members. We figure we reached somewhere between 5-6 million people this way."
- 5. **Speakers.** "We also sent speakers to these groups to explain why this initiative was so important to them."
- 6. **Telephone Trees.** If groups are really motivated, "we ask them to do internal phone banks. If you start a phone tree, you can reach a lot of people. We help organize it & craft the message."

**PERSONALIZED MEDIA APPROACH**

"People don't tend to read newspapers a lot, but newspapers do drive the electronic media, & undecided people do look at their editorial page," Metzger believes.

- 7. **Face-to-Face.** "We focused on the editorial board effort." Ended up getting 90 editorials with only about 5 against the initiative. Sent out info packets to all the papers. Called each one to see which way it was leaning, what its concerns are, what group or org'n has believability with that paper. Then coordinated with that org'n to communicate with that paper. For example, conservative papers normally oppose tax increases. Calif Taxpayers Ass'n, which normally opposes tax increases, endorsed the initiative. "If we knew the paper was on the fence, we would ask Cal Tax to communicate with the paper why it felt this initiative should be supported. In many cases it worked; we also held some papers neutral that I have never seen be neutral on a tax."
- 8. **Live Press Conferences.** Did a "slew of them" around the state & generated a lot of earned media. "Democrats & republicans were with us from the Governor to the Speaker of the legislature...people who have never agreed on anything agreed on this."
- 9. **Tailored, Targeted Messages.** Wrote & placed opinion pieces in statewide dailies. Did radio & tv talk & news shows. "We worked with all the sheriffs & police to find out what their cutback situation would be without the tax. Then, putting spokespeople on radio & tv thruout the state, we were able to communicate what it would mean to each market's local police dep't. When you localize something, it has impact."

"There's an interesting debate over use of the word free media. If you call it free, many don't recognize its value. So some are now calling it earned media."

**STUDY: PERCEPTIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS DIFFER**

Environmental vp's & managers from transnational corporations believe the quality of the environment is improving, but overwhelmingly think most environmental activists & journalists feel it's declining, according to a survey by E. Bruce Harrison Company (DC). Some findings:

- 100% of these execs say the quality of the environment is improving. But they feel only 73% of gov't regulators would say it's improving,

- as would only 20% of environmental activists & 33% of journalists.
- 60% say the environmental movement is stronger than in 1990. 63% expect challenges from environmental activists to increase in the next 5 yrs.
- 86% say a healthy economy is essential for the environmental movement to continue to grow.

"What's most striking about this survey is that corporate environmental managers clearly understand the disconnect that exists between environmental realities & external perceptions," explains Bruce Harrison. "As the data show, they can even quantify the magnitude of the disconnect. The task at hand, of course, is to bring the two perceptions into alignment."

**DUAL ROLE**

Environmental mgrs agree their jobs encompass not only the external challenges of understanding & complying with ever-changing regs, but internal challenges such as integrating environmental issues into the company's overall business strategy & environmental protection into every employees' job -- progress that often goes unnoticed by external evaluators.

"When we sit down with clients, they say health & safety are two primary criteria, cost is secondary. Those are the bywords many companies are using today," Bill Green, environmental comms consultant, told prr. But that message isn't reaching the public..."whether people like me don't communicate it strongly enough, or it's the NIMBYism out there, or eco-terrorists who don't believe corporations anymore, I'm not sure. But there are always question marks surrounding companies' intent."

**COURT CASE MAY SET PRECEDENT FOR WHAT IS EXPECTED IN PR FIRM - CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS**

Church of Scientology is suing Hill & Knowlton for activities that were "improper & damaging to the Church," to the tune of \$40 million. Conflict arose following Church's public exposure of deaths & acts of violence linked to Eli Lilly's anti-depressant drug Prozac, Beth Akiyama, dpa, Church of Scientology, told prr. H&K's alleged breach of contract with the Church followed. Eli Lilly was a client of J. Walter Thompson -- which, along with H&K, is a subsidiary of WPP Group PLC.

Judge Stanley Sporkin denied defense motions to dismiss the suit. "It may well be that no Court has ever found there to be a fiduciary relationship between a public relations firm & one of its clients. But whether there exists a fiduciary relationship is a fact-intensive question, involving a searching inquiry into the nature of the relationship, the promises made, the type of services or advice given & the legitimate expectations of the parties," according to the judge. Case is scheduled for trial June 13 in Wash DC district court.

"Compelling ethical & legal issues for pr practitioners -- including whether they owe a fiduciary duty to their clients -- are at issue."