

"cultural & other differences must be accommodated," says James Fouss, pres, of Response Analysis (Princeton) -- recently selected as the US member of the International Research Institutes.

Most obvious barrier is language. In Western Europe alone there are 5 major & 12 minor languages. In many nations, more than one language is spoken & interviewers may not know which language is being used until the call is made.

Research can also be frustrated by multiple time-zones, local business practices, & lack of phones in many southern European households.

"Cultural differences pose challenges. Koreans consider it disloyal to divulge information on their company to an outsider. Japanese may consider it unacceptable to answer questions posed by any stranger." Does this apply to interviewing immigrants here?

### AMERICAN CONSUMERS HAVE 7 DEFINITIONS OF QUALITY

According to the EquiTrend survey (by Total Research Corp) which measures consumers' perceptions of quality of 400 brands:

Quality Definition	Media Examples	Brand Examples
Sophistication	Business Week Arts & Entertainment	Lexus Automobiles LEGO Toys
Acceptance	Time Magazine NBC Network	Kodak Film Campbell's Soup
Trendiness	Entertainment Weekly MTV Network	Nike Athletic Shoes Sega Video Games
Practicality	Popular Mechanics Nashville Network	Fisher-Price Toys Levi's Jeans
Service	USA Today Headline News	American Airlines AT&T Long Distance
Glamour	Rolling Stone Mag Sci-Fi Network	Prodigy On-Line Visa Credit Cards
Simplicity	Reader's Digest Home Shopping Network	Hershey Bars RCA Televisions

1,200 consumers rated brands on quality & answered questions on their media viewing/reading habits. Ranked highest in quality among media are: 1) Nat'l Geographic Mag, 2) Discovery Channel, 3) CNN, 4) Disney Channel, 5) PBS-TV, 6) Consumer Reports, 7) The Learning Channel, 8) Reader's Digest, 9) Nat'l Geographic Traveler, 10) Wall Street Journal, 11) ESPN, 12) Smithsonian Mag, 13) Family Channel, 14) Time, 15) CNN Headline News, 16) Life Mag, 17) NBC-TV, 18) CBS-TV, 19) Arts & Entertainment Network, 20) The Weather Channel. (More info: 5 Independence Way, CN-5305, Princeton, NJ 08543-5305; 609/921-9100)

### SUPERVISORS AS THE COMMUNICATORS; GETTING 'EM STARTED

Every study known finds workers -- all of us -- prefer to get our on-the-job info from our immediate supervisors. These positions now emphasize 3 responsibilities:

1. Being a 3-way communication channel -- up, down & laterally
2. Coaching, training, championing, cheerleading
3. Managing (not resolving) conflict, so the clash of ideas is encouraged but personal clashes are discouraged

Organizational rhetoric urges adoption of this system, with many organizations dropping or reducing traditional internal communication modes -- e.g. employee newsletters -- to make it happen. But supervisors often resist or don't really know how. Here are 2 methods for instituting the behavior thruout an organization:

#### 1. HAVE THEM FACILITATE RESEARCH

Research is essential in reengineering internal communications to identify the different ways different units or folks want to receive info. Such a survey ought to use a 100% sample of employees -- partly as a means of *informing them* of the vital role of internal communications & their responsibility for it (pr 8/10/92). Therefore:

- A. Have **supervisors conduct group sessions** with their units to fill out the questionnaires. This means they have to explain the purpose & importance of the research, and how the findings will help make communications easier.
- B. To prepare supervisors for the sessions, **hold training courses** where they are presented with -- and can discuss, debate, question -- these topics.
- C. To the training agenda **add basic skill info** on conducting meetings, being a 3-way communication channel, etc.
- D. Set deadlines for completing the sessions; involve selected supervisors in analyzing the findings & determining the redesigned communication system; have definite plans for a 2nd series of meetings to present a draft of the new system to all employees. This should start to **obtain supervisor buy-in** -- especially since their role as the key communicators will undoubtedly be part of the new system.



Without being aware of it or making it a big hassle, supervisors are doing the communications job.

2. HOLD AN ORGANIZATION-WIDE SERIES OF CASCADING MEETINGS

Find some critical topic, use it as a pilot for supervisors to practice being 3-way com-

munications channels in their units. Follow steps similar to B, C & D above.

To further make either method self-reinforcing, or a substitute for willpower, add 2 evaluation documents to the process;

- 1. Filled out by supervisors, telling how they feel the sessions went, what questions were asked most, whether they'd like help getting better at being a key communicator, etc.
2. Filled out by attendees, not to rate how well their supervisors performed (too early, could chill the process) but to determine what info they took away.

Table with 2 columns: 'SUPERVISOR' is an outmoded term in new wave organizations... 'FOOT IN THE DOOR' describes these strategies -- the 2nd of 5 steps in motivating behavior change...

DOES THEIR TRAINING MAKE LAWYERS EXPERT COMMUNICATORS?

pr asked (5/16) whether attorneys now also claim public relations skills? "Attorneys may actually be the most highly trained communicators in the world when it comes to delivering factual but emotionally persuasive messages to influence well-defined audiences. Not a bad definition of pr," Chuck Champlin, dir comms, Disney Consumer Products (Burbank), faxed us.

The law school curriculum is being reevaluated, "I'm not aware public relations training is being considered," Nancy Slonim of the American Bar Ass'n (Chi) told pr. But, she notes, "over the past 10+ years there has been increasing awareness in the profession of public relations & related disciplines -- customer/client relations." She cites a growing use of outside & inhouse pr consultants. "I remember a time when that was quite extraordinary; but it's rather commonplace now. And I assume those pr professionals are informally training lawyers...."

ABA offers training in client relations thru video One Client At A Time. "It's the first step into the field -- reminding lawyers to be service oriented." There is also growth in TQM within law firms. But "beyond

unique circumstances, lawyers are not being trained to do public relations."

Unique circumstances include ABA's a) media training to its officers & prominent members (those designated by the president who have authority to speak in his behalf on certain issues); b) yearly Bar Leadership Institute for presidents elect of state & local Bar Ass'ns where "media training is a fairly strong component" as well as lobbying, employee relations, etc. c) Others also market this training & "lawyers do seek it out." ABA has discussed making a pr training program broadly available. "I suspect there's a market for it."

AS GHOSTS, SPEECHWRITERS HOLD INFLUENTIAL POSITIONS

By the nature of their task, they must have access to the speaker (usually someone highly placed) where they discuss ideas, problems & solutions, becoming the speaker's "alter ego," explains Douglas Starr in How To Handle Speechwriting Assignments. The words they choose can give shape to ideas. Franklin Roosevelt called his ghostwriting team his "Brain Trust." Basic steps for effectiveness:

- 1. Get name & number of inviting-group's program director & suggested topic.
2. Contact that person concerning the topic, speaking situation, audience makeup, & speaker's credibility with that audience.
3. Interview the speaker. Take notes, tape record so you can use his/her own words.
4. Do additional research on the topic as appropriate.
5. Write first draft -- 10 pgs, double spaced.
6. Read draft aloud, listening for alliteration, sibilants, tongue-twisters & awkward phras-
7. Rewrite -- until you have a smooth copy for the speaker.
8. When you & speaker are satisfied, prepare a final reading copy. And copies for your files, the media, others.
10. Attend the speech, evaluate it.
11. Get the speaker's reading copy for your files. It will have his/her final notes between the lines & in the margins, all highly useful for future speeches.
12. Keep files. Very important!

Guide covers speaker & audience analysis, research, & the mechanics. (Pilot Books, 103 Cooper St, Babylon, NY 11702; \$5.95 + \$1 handling)

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING RESEARCH REQUIRES EXTRA SENSITIVITY

Consider: Some Japanese find it impolite to answer any question "no." Filipinos & Italians appear to routinely check the "top box" when asked to choose answers on questionnaires. US companies seeking trade opportunities often attempt to interview consumers & business leaders in other nations using the same research techniques & questionnaires used in the US. But