

toiletries, tobacco & beverages.

- **Radio has a national penetration of 88%** -- 98% in urban areas.
- **Over 242 mags circulate** in the country. 70% of national circulation is found in Mexico City. Circulation audits are just beginning.
- With **over 336 newspapers**, circulation levels are low. They are best used for local influence as no one national paper covers the country.
- **Key barriers:** a) It's not what you know, it's who you know. b) It's not what you have to say, but how much you can pay for coverage. c) Tracking or clipping services are unreliable.
- **Opportunities:** a) An emerging communication industry is eager for news. b) Strategic partnerships with columnists & media can break barriers. c) Mexico's communications industry understands that change is inevitable & necessary.

Keys For Doing Business In Mexico ● Mexico's consumer community is vastly different from other markets, requiring **very targeted strategies & tactics to effectively communicate.**

- **Form strategic alliances** to eliminate the mystery & unfamiliarity of reaching Mexico. Once you identify which markets you want to penetrate & you agree on a communication strategy, basic marketing principles will take you the rest of the way.
- **Don't expect, as in North America, to make a contact, share a meal & have a deal.** Mexican business professionals are well aware of cultural barriers & attempt to address them whenever possible. But this one significant difference should be noted. Mexicans require a relationship be established & sufficient trust be developed prior to finalizing any deal. Be prepared to spend time developing your partnerships.

ITEM OF IMPORTANCE TO PROFESSIONALS

CBS CHAIRMAN: "THIS IS A BUSINESS MEETING, NOT A MEDIA CIRCUS" -- & he was referring to a proposal to open the company's annual meeting to tv cameras! Accuracy in Media suggested it, saying it was ironic CBS fights to get its cameras into other events -- but won't allow them at home. CEO Laurence Tisch argued it could be disruptive. CBS does tape the sessions & distributes copies, and allows reporters to cover -- still, it appears inconsistent.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. Dennis Wilcox (San Jose State U) receives Fulbright Award, will set up a pr curriculum at U of Botswana & give workshops for practitioners in Botswana & Zimbabwe.

Lew Armistead (dpr, Nat'l Ass'n of Secondary School Principals) receives NSPRA's President's Award -- it's highest honor.

USDA FOLLOWS THRU ON PROMISE TO RIGHTSIZE, REENGINEER PR

The gov't won't use that term, of course -- and this agency now prefers "communication" to the standard "public affairs." This semantic change signals both the pros & cons of the reorganization.

BACKGROUND

When Cong. Mike Espy became sec'y of US Dep't of Agriculture last year he vowed to reform the dep't, replacing "the old, bureaucratic, duplicative Office of Public Affairs with one, new, streamlined & efficient Office of Communications" (pr 2/15/93). Following prr's coverage, leaders from PRSA met with USDA. Name did change to communications (from public affairs) & 2 divisions were created -- legislative affairs & communications.

THE APPROACH

"We've reorganized not only the centralized office of communications, but have made some recommendations for streamlining the public affairs function along mission lines -- transferring functions between agencies, abolishing some agencies, transferring their functions to other units.

"It basically takes USDA from 42 separate offices & agencies to 29; & includes a reduction of 8500 employees over 5 years," Ali Webb, dir of comms, told prr. **PA staffing will be cut proportionately** with all staffing across USDA. Reorganization bill is in the House now; passed the Senate 98 to 1. "We hope to have it on the president's desk for signature early this summer."

WHAT'S BEEN DONE

Webb's 150-person communications unit has:

1. **Reduced the number of midlevel managers**, now a common practice;
2. **Created a public outreach unit** -- "a version of the old public liaison team that works to enhance our communications with all organizations, not just agriculture groups";
3. **Added 7 senior level staff called communications coordinators** who have come from the agencies. "They function as a pivot point for the 6 mission areas & those who don't have pa staff. They fill a void identified early -- lack of coordination among USDA agencies. It has been an insular place from not just a public affairs standpoint but also a program standpoint. Here in communications, we're getting people around the table to talk, develop plans & strategies & then get the work done. That's probably the single largest change we've done."



4. **"Increased our technological edge"** using computer bulletin boards, fax for info access, etc.
5. **Surveyed media & farmers** to see how well info is being delivered by USDA programs as well as its public affairs units. Process will be ongoing for next 4 yrs "as we try to identify who our customers are & how we're meeting their information needs."

IMPACT ON ONE AGENCY

Forest Service has half of USDA employees -- and has been a leader in gov't pa. Espy's move was seen by many as typical Washington knee-jerk: pa = publicity agents, thus expendable. But once in office, he found much critical information is disseminated by many USDA agencies -- e.g. the new nutritional labeling requirements -- & Forest Service in particular needs pa arm to operate the national forests for timber production, recreation, wildlife & other uses.

Inventory of pa jobs found environmental educators, graphic artists, illustrators, writers, a-v personnel, interpretive services etc among them. So Espy's initial statement of a 50% cut proved unworkable. In addition, law requires public involvement on forest plans, wilderness set-asides etc.

GOOD OR BAD MOVE??

As one gov't insider told prr: "There are still so many folks in gov't who don't understand what public affairs people in gov't do, that we are in an era of 2-way communication with the public. We need to educate. But we professionals have to be competent, earn our place at the table. It comes back to training & professionalism."

STRATEGY IS TO BE INTERACTIVE

"As our mission has broadened to include feeding programs, rural development & forest services, it has become a huge challenge to find out (a) what our customers want & (b) provide info that's useful to them (c) in a form they can use. I don't see any kind of communication we're trying to develop that's not interactive -- up to & including **trying to figure out how to do interactive employee newsletters**. We've got a model program running using our E-mail system -- trying to add feedback to the static information that goes out."

WATERGATE'S BERNSTEIN ADDS HIS VIEWS OF TODAY'S MEDIA

As if joining the debate with those who are again trying to link pr mainly with media, claiming media have been ordained to review an organization's every action, he speaks of the "bastardization" of mainstream media:

"Journalism has gotten away from finding the truth & gotten more into gossip, sensationalism & a denial of society's real situation. It's an escapist sinkhole."

"We have allowed our priorities to be bastardized. The sleazy standards of the low-end of our business are a thwart to the high-end of our business."

Cited case: The day Germany was reunified, which he feels may have been one of the most important days of the century, many major newspapers gave top position to the breakup of Donald & Ivana Trump's marriage.

"This is the triumph of the idiot culture. In this journalistic titillation, we teach our readers that the absurd is the most important."

"It has a lot to do with our society, but we simply must say that we won't pander to that anymore. We have to take a stand."

PR pros take a stand by going direct to stakeholders & stiff-arming attempts to have their clients victimized by media bastardization.

MEXICO IS A WIDE-OPEN OPPORTUNITY FOR PR & MARKETING

With vacation season here, take a mental trip South of the Border: (If you're not interested in selling there, this may help you understand Latino/Hispanic/Chicano publics right where you are.)

In the past, its consumer market was concentrated among the affluent. Since NAFTA, Mexico's middle class is forming joint ventures with foreign companies, franchising businesses, exporting products & services. Now they are viable consumers.

"Mexico is filled with potential for information, new products & new services. Its needs are tremendous in that it is a market just developing. When was the last time someone handed you 90 million new consumers... & growing? In the last 10 years, Mexico has grown at a rate of 21%," explains Patricia Cohen-Albrecht of Cohen Latino Communications (San Diego). A native of Mexico & pioneer in Hispanic marketing in the US, Cohen offers details on reaching & communicating with consumers in Mexico:

Demographics ● **50% of Mexicans are between 1 & 19 yrs old** -- an important factor as you look at the products & services that would best serve this market.

● **Over 25% of the workforce is women.** They are becoming influential not only in decisions affecting family & household, but also in business.

● **32% of Mexico's consumer population resides in 3 major metro areas:** Mexico City (20 million), Guadalajara (5 million) & Monterrey (4 million). Of these consumers, 9% represent the upper & upper middle class population (the A & B socio-economic segments).

● **The C & D (middle & upper-lower) classes are awakening.** With the acceleration of privatization there has been a restoration & improvement in purchasing power for the average consumer, after more than a decade of devaluation & inflation.

Media Environment ● TV is largely controlled by Televisa. National tv penetration is 85% with **average number of sets per household at 1.9.** Gov't clearance must be obtained for ads & promotions on foods, drugs,