

A look at the hourly cost of meetings shows why it is so important they be needed and effective:

Annual Salary	Hourly cost of meeting					
\$62,500	125	250	375	500	625	1,250
\$50,000	100	200	300	400	500	1,000
\$37,000	75	150	225	300	375	750
\$25,000	50	100	150	200	250	500
\$12,500	25	50	75	100	125	250
	2	4	6	8	10	20
Number of attendees in meeting						

Resource on meetings: 3M Meeting Management Institute, 3M Austin Ctr, 6801 River Place Blvd, Bldg A145-5N-01, Austin 78726-9000; 512/984-7135

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PROFESSIONALS

"**NATIONAL DIRECTORY OF NEWSPAPER OP-ED PAGES** identifies receptive newspapers in every state & province. Provides full editorial contact info, specific comments & guidelines from Op-Ed editors, insider feedback from freelance contributors & pr pros. Over 200 listings give payment rates, desired length, copyrighting policies, frequency, whether contributors must live within a paper's circulation areas. Also contains instructions on how best to market a message to this medium. (From Communication Creativity, Box 909-NRPR, Buena Vista, Colo. 81211; \$19.95 + \$3 shipping)

"**PUBLIC OPINION IS GREATEST FORCE FOR ENACTING CHANGE** say 186 enviro journalists. Phone survey found 46% believe public opinion is the main motivating force for environmental regs. 44% feel public opinion & scientific or technical judgment have equal weight. Only 9% believe scientific or technical judgment by itself is the motivating force. (More from Duffey Communications, 11 Piedmont Ctr, Suite 600, Atlanta 30305; 404/266-2600)

"**PR PRO RELEASES JOB STRESS BY WRITING NOVEL WITH PR HERO.** Tom Brennan of Brennan Communications (Anchorage) has written Cassie (Northwest Publishing). "The 'hero' is a public relations executive under seige by his wife, an environmental activist," he told **prrr**. It stems from Brennan's frustration during the Exxon Valdez disaster "because I was media contact & chief spear-catcher for Alyeska Pipeline Service Company." Brennan's wife Marnie is having a pin made that reads: "I'm Not Her."

"**THE VISUAL TRAP**" catches another victim. Council for a Livable World (DC) mails an 11x13 package to oppose Oliver North's Senate candidacy. "Stop Oliver North" warn big red letters on the envelope. But envelope reverse is a b&w close up of North, bled 4 sides, looking into the distance, in his Marine uniform with medals front & center. Which is the stronger message?

HOW CRAYOLA USES MARKETING THAT'S ALMOST TOTALLY PR

Crayola Crayons' 800# consumer communications center "gives us a direct pipeline into consumer reaction & thinking. From that we're able to glean the interesting relationship Crayola has with kids & adults. It's almost universally positive. That information is a helpful tool for us in developing our programs," Brad Drexler, mgr corp comms at Binney & Smith (Easton, Pa), maker of the crayons, told **prrr**.

Because of significant consumer awareness, advertising levels at B&S are low -- in the range of \$3 million annually for the Crayola brand. "What we're best able to do is leverage the brand strength within very defined budget parameters. **We introduce products with national impact & results on budgets of \$20 thousand or less.** And because we don't have significant advertising levels, we've been able to demonstrate clearly the impact our pr programs have." For example:

SILLY PUTTY'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY REBIRTH

Celebrated in '90. At the time, sales were flat but stable. Product had peaked years ago. Campaign was built around the anniversary & introduction of 4 new colors -- "all orchestrated without advertising support." By the 4th quarter of that year, sales were up 60%.

PR's POSITION IN THE COMPANY

"We've been able to orchestrate several campaigns to introduce products or programs without support of advertising & demonstrate that we can impact sales in a large way. That has helped strengthen the credibility of what pr can accomplish. We (pr) now have greater attention from our sales people since they recognize we can help them do their job in a big way."

PERPETUATING THE BRAND'S REPUTATION

1. In '90, Crayola introduced 8 colors, the first new ones in 18 yrs, & retired 8 old ones. **Focus groups** with children ages 4-10 around the country sought consumer opinions -- how they would improve or change Crayola products. This was "consistent with a new company philosophy to become more attuned to the needs of the end users."

2. **Retired colors were enshrined in the Crayola Hall of Fame**, built at HQ. "It became a real attraction. People want to come & visit & see & touch. It drives a lot of traffic thru our tour program."

3. **At the time, a groundswell protested the colors' retirement.** After being screened by phone, protesters' names & phone numbers were given to the media. "We felt the intent of individuals protesting our crayon



color change was so tongue in cheek & benign, and the benefit derived in the form of increased awareness for the new colors so great, that the opportunity far outweighed the slight risk sales could be negatively impacted." Picketers were even invited to protest the Hall of Fame ceremony.

Bottomline results: \$6 million incremental increase in sales, with no advertising support. Won a Silver Anvil in '91.

4. **In '93, company celebrated its 90th birthday.** Consumer contest named 16 new colors being introduced. Winners a) got trip to Hollywood for birthday party, b) had their names printed (for a limited time) on the crayon each named, c) were inducted into Crayola Hall of Fame as the first non-employees ever to name crayon colors. Over 2 million name suggestions were sent in -- more from adults than children. Contest was introduced in January, winners announced in Nov. Year long events brought much media attention.

Bottomline results: "Our biggest challenge was living up to management's expectations, which were based on success of past programs. They anticipated significant results on limited budgets & resources." \$70,000 budget (for all anniversary programs) included 2 satellite b-roll feeds, an 11-market satellite media tour, numerous press mailings & employee special events. No outside agency support could be afforded. Crayon sales rose 12%. \$23 million of Crayola 96 boxes (with the 16 new colors) were sold. More than 10,000 consumers called the 800 phone center about the contest, making it the #1 reason for calling the company in '93.

Want a chance to work for an organization where public relations drives marketing? Binney & Smith has an opening for a communications specialist with consumer product experience. "In some cases we may be the only visible marketing support" -- so, "being in touch with our consumers works hand in hand with our programs. Knowing consumer perceptions & reactions is essential." (Contact Drexler at 1100 Church Lane, Easton, Pa 18042)

RE-ENGINEERING MEETINGS MEANS BEING WARY OF SOME STUDIES

Many studies on effective meeting tactics push toward emphasis on visuals:

- Presentations using visual aids were found to be 43% more persuasive than unaided presentations, according to a U Minn & 3M study.
- In a study (Wharton Applied Research Ctr) to assess the effects of the use of overhead transparencies (OHTs), it was found they have an impact on meeting outcome, perceptions of the presenter & meeting process. Specifically:

Crayola stays relevant. It offers a line of multicultural products that began with crayons representing 8 skin tones "to greater sensitize kids to cultural diversity." Products have since expanded to markers, paints, color pencils & clay.

a) More individuals decided to act on the recommendation of the presenter using OHTs than on the presenter who did not. Individuals also reported making their decisions earlier when OHTs were used.

b) Presenters were perceived as better prepared, more professional, more persuasive, more highly credible, & more interesting when they used OHTs than when they did not.

c) Groups, where OHTs were used, were more likely to reach consensus on their decision, took less time in long restatements of position & spent more time interacting than where OHTs were not used.

- 5-yr study by MediaNet (NYC) of over 1,700 presentations covering more than 380 corporate groups, using surveys, evaluations & exit interviews found:

- a) Use of color vs. b&w significantly affects audience reactions to visual content (information).
- b) Initial attention span per visual averages 8 seconds & increases to 11 seconds as color is added.
- c) Photographic (natural) filled backgrounds increase attention span initially to 16 seconds per visual.
- d) Repetitive logos **reduce** initial attention span by as much as 2 seconds per visual while adding no value to content message.
- e) Exposure index (maximum time a visual should remain displayed) & attention span each increase as the age of the audience increases from 30 toward 60 yrs of age.

Visuals obviously are important. Studies imply they alone make the presentation effective -- and that's the part practitioners need be wary of. For real info transfer & attention-getting, **nothing beats a skilled presenter (eye contact, constant audience read, etc) using a flip chart.** This isn't always possible, but switching to OHTs isn't the quick solution.

Unless OHT's or slides can "build" info -- add each bit as it's discussed by the speaker -- audiences simply read ahead. This makes the presentation about the equivalent of passing out copies of the OHTs.

In the MediaNet research, "attention" was measured. Color & photographic backgrounds may keep eyes on the screen -- but do they improve transfer of ideas & concepts? Do they actually compete with info transfer? More & more research on audience response is needed to re-engineer our meetings. So far, nothing much beats a compelling, charismatic speaker.

PEOPLE REMEMBER:

- 10% of what they read
 - 20% of what they hear
 - 30% of what they see
 - 50% of what they see & hear
 - 70% of what they say
 - 90% of what they do
- But, involvement is key ...