

sis of local impact of national stories/events (44%); shorter stories (34%); higher story count (34%).

- **Use of computers.** 57% of editors are using computers in the news gathering process. 74% say they will be within the next 12 months. "So if pr people are to be up to speed on this, they're going to have to be way ahead of the curve than they are now," Jack Cox, FAC pres, told pr.

As a result of these changes, "content is going to be even more important in the on-line newspaper with bottomless news holes. Newspapers will need the best educated & trained journalists in their history." And the info providers (pr pros) will have to be equally proficient technologically & understand these new journalists' info needs.

Questionnaires were sent to 1,200 editors, publishers & advertisers selected at random from newspapers across the US. 854 questionnaires were returned, a 71% response rate which makes the results projectable to the entire population of these publishers, editors & adv'g dirs. (More from FAC, 3800 Barham Blvd, Suite 409, LA 90068; 213/851-7372; fax 213/851-9186)

"We're seeing a dramatic entry of the newspaper industry into the computer age," notes Cox. 5 wks ago the New Century Network was announced -- a consortium of NYTimes, LATimes, Knight Ridder, Chi Tribune, Cox Enterprises, Newhouse, Hearst, Washington Post. "They're trying to be one block of newspapers creating a seamless system. So if you're reading the Dallas Morning News about the Oklahoma bombing, you'd be able to seamlessly go into the Daily Oklahoman in your computer. From a marketing standpoint, the industry is taking advantage of its power as a resource & its position in the marketplace -- rather than the deals online services have been trying to cut with papers individually, which wasn't good for the industry."

INTERACTIVE PR CONTEST ON INTERNET LURES PRACTITIONERS

Called *Quandary*, it's held monthly, poses humorous pr problems & asks fellow "netters" for creative solutions. "Although the pr situations are fictional, winning entries will require both pr know-how & creative effort. We think it will provide some levity to a quite serious business & offer players a chance to hone their analytical skills," explains Sandra Bain, whose firm Bain & Assocs is contest creator. *Quandary's* address on the World Wide Web is Bain & Assocs' home page: <http://www.bainpr.com/bain>.

This month's problem: *Your client is the Moo Moo Milkery. They have a new ingredient that allows milk to stay cold without refrigeration. There is only one potentially controversial side effect -- milk that contains this additive becomes a truth serum when mixed with chocolate syrup. How do you promote this new product?*

Monthly prizes will be awarded & winning entries will be posted on B&A's home page. "It is imperative that all public relations professionals become familiar with the latest communications vehicle on the block -- the Internet. We see the *Quandary* contest as a way to encourage others to take a spin on the Information Superhighway."

STUDY SHOWS NEED TO RE-EVALUATE LARGEST PUBLIC -- WOMEN

The myth that women must choose between being family nurturer or valued employee can be put to rest. This either/or model is out of touch with women's own experiences, finds the study *Women: The New Providers* by Whirlpool Fdn, Families & Work Inst. and Louis Harris & Assocs.

Women today see themselves as playing important roles both within & outside the home, in paid & unpaid jobs. These roles are all part of a holistic concept of what it means to provide for one's family. Findings have implications for employee relations, public issues, marketing communications, volunteering -- almost every aspect of pr:

- **Regardless of employment status**, 88% of women agree they are responsible for taking care of their families; 94% feel very or somewhat valued by family & friends for fulfilling these responsibilities.
- **Women who work full time are more likely to feel more valued at home** than those who work part time -- or even those who are at home full time caring for their families (63% vs 56% & 57% respectively).
- **55% of employed women provide half or more of the household income**, split as follows: 18% provide all; 11% more than half; 26% about half.
- **Even if money were not a consideration**, 48% would choose to work part time or full time. 31% would work at home caring for the family. 20% would select volunteer work -- up from 13% in '81.
- **9 of 10 women report experiencing time pressures.** A plurality mentioned not having enough time together as their greatest family concern.

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

- **What makes them feel successful at work?** 51% say the quality of their work; paychecks, 7%; being promoted, 4%. "A strong work ethic seems to prevail for a majority of women who want to do a good job, even tho they may not have a good job."
- **If money were not a concern**, twice as many women would choose part time (33%) over full time (15%). This transcends gender & national boundaries. Approximately 1/3rd of women & men in the US, Canada & Mexico would work part time if they could afford to do so.
- **About 1/3rd of women working part time consider their jobs a career.** They feel valued on the job to the same degree as full time workers.



"Women's greatest worries about the workplace concern 1) employers providing fewer benefits, 2) the difficulty of balancing work & family responsibilities. Ironically, the choice of part-time work may give more time with the family, but usually precludes access to benefits -- which are also critical to family support. 30% of women working reduced hours have access to benefits compared with 78% who work full time."

FAMILY VALUES: WOMEN NOT IN TUNE WITH FAR RIGHT VIEWPOINT

- 70% worry a great deal about people not caring about others & give it a higher rating than every other societal concern.
- Defining family values in their own words, 52% say it's "loving, taking care of & supporting each other"; 38%, "knowing right from wrong, having good values." Men agree with these definitions.
- 93% think society should value all types of families rather than only certain types of families, like those with two parents (5%).

"These views should be instructive to opinion leaders who can build upon the positive approach echoed by both women & men." (Copy from Whirlpool Fdn, 400 Riverview dr, Benton Harbor, Mich. 49022)

REPORT: E-MAIL IS FOUNDATION FOR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Current & future use & impact of technology for employee communications finds "It breaks down the barriers of time & place, & has particular benefits for employees who are frequently away from the office -- on the road, working at home or in satellite facilities. The typical corporate information hierarchy is broken down, & communications flow freely from senior management to factory floor workers & everywhere in between."

Report is the result of a survey of 224 corporate communicators primarily from Fortune 100 corporations. 42% response rate indicates high level of interest. Cognitive Communications & Xerox co-sponsored.

- **Current uses of technology:** to shorten the communications cycle time (96%); reduce cost of employee comms (64%); to increase distribution (50%); flatten corporate hierarchy (43%); speed up decisionmaking (38%). Data show larger companies are seeing the impact of technology more than smaller companies.
- **Use of e-mail:** 87% for message transmission between individuals; 67% to disseminate pub'ns; 75% for moving employee info thruout their org'ns.
- **90% believe technology is essential for the effectiveness of employee comms.** 75% feel upgrading technology for communications is a necessary function in which employee communications pros must play a major role. Yet 81% say their department has no formal ties to the Info Tech (IT) or Mgmt Info Systems (MIS) dep'ts. And a number of respondents wrote in to say they feel uncomfortable using or managing new technologies.

- **Respondents predict organizations will use electronic & print media equally in just 3 yrs.** Only 3 yrs ago, less than 10% of employee communications traveled electronically.

"Technology transforms the role of the communicator & the manager. The communicator will need to advocate for networks that reach as many employees as is economically & practically possible. And they will need to take the lead role in developing information resources that can be placed on the network -- resources in the form of newsletters or daily updates on service, performance, sales, or information sources that help employees perform their jobs or simplify their lives." (Copy of report from CCI, 700 Canal st, Stamford, Ct. 06902; 203/328-3080; Internet: 73523.2131@Compuserve.com)

BENEFITS OF E-MAIL

- "In organizations with corporate cultures that encourage & support cross-functional & cross-level communications, 2-way dialogue between employees & the CEO happens whether the CEO 'asks' for it or not!"
- "In turn, an employee with an idea or a concern can share it directly with an individual -- from a senior manager to an immediate supervisor -- without having the message reviewed & filtered by others."
- "The message gets transmitted instantly & often triggers a rapid response.... There is a cultural 'obligation' to communicate quickly, clearly & in a straightforward way, replacing corporate jargon with personally accountable 'straight talk.'
- "This creates new opportunities for dialogue, & a new sense of empowerment. A hierarchy-free virtual communications infrastructure -- the democratization of employee communications -- quickly leads to more informed employees & can, in turn, result in positive employee attitudes."

DECLINING HEALTH OF NEWSPAPERS HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR PR

This is not a new issue. But a new study by Foundation for American Communications & American Opinion Research takes an in-depth look at the industry & sees implications for pr professionals.

- "'Usefulness' -- whether the newspaper is perceived as being useful in readers' daily lives -- is the single best predictor of readership," notes Anthony Casale, AOR pres. Readers want "content that's good enough to play a role in their lives."
- **Declining readership** is the top industry issue. 58% cite it as very important. Also cited: declining readership of young people (55%); quality of content (50%); increasing competition for readers' time (49%); low public credibility (31%).
- Newspaper execs are pessimistic about the future. Only 71% say it's healthy now; only 52% believe it will be healthy 10 yrs from now.
- **Editors are making changes.** Rated as "very important" are: more analy-