

**Countries are taking various routes to solve a telephone numbers shortage.** This week's t&t looks at Australia's changeover to an 8-digit number & 2-digit area code. During planning, Austel analyzed other countries' experiences. In Paris, the change to 8 digits was implemented in one day resulting in a dramatic drop in phone traffic. It took a year for calls to reach pre-change levels. In the US, need for new numbers is met by splitting area codes as often as required causing "frequent disruption" to callers. Finland, Sweden, Japan & Hong Kong have all moved to 8-digit numbers. Singapore & Korea will also be changing to 8 digits in the near future. (More info from Mandy Balla, pr mgr, numbering campaign, Austel, P.O. Box 7443 St. Kilda Rd, Melbourne, Victoria 3004; phone +61 3 9828-7488; e-mail mjb@austel.gov.au)

**Ethnic Media Guide for Chicago** (\$35), by the Illinois Ethnic Coalition (IEC), lists 100 media outlets (print, radio & tv) serving city's diverse ethnic communities. Contains names, addresses, phone & fax numbers, editors, publishers, program dirs, pub'n dates, circulation, languages, editorial focus, cost & distribution locales. IEC is a 25-yr old org'n committed to improving intergroup understanding & cooperation. Last January it released its *Directory of Chicago Ethnic Organizations* -- who they are & what they do. This October it will release its *Ethnic Handbook: A Guide to the Cultures & Traditions of Chicago's Diverse Communities* -- profiling 33 of the city's most prominent ethnic groups, providing info on demographics, history, religion, culture, politics, holidays & special events, issues for the communities & more. (More info from Jeryl Levin at 312/368-1155)

**Does USA Today really have a Sunday edition?** Last week's pr listed it as #1 of the top 12 Sunday papers by circulation. In fact, it's a **Friday paper**, identified as its "weekend edition" -- so is considered a Sunday paper. "They play it as a paper that has features that go over the weekend. Just as there was a time when some Saturday papers (those that had no Sunday edition) were called Saturday-Sunday papers. Some tabloids used to do that," counselor Dick Weiner told pr. (Source of the story is his client.) Looks a bit like cooking the numbers to us. They have 3 days to sell what others sell in 1 day -- tho some Sunday editions are on newsstands on Saturday, often incomplete.

## WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**HONORS.** PRSA bestows its highest honors to: Hal Warner (sr principal, Capitoline/MS&L, DC) Gold Anvil Award winner; Larissa Grunig (assoc prof, U of Md-College Park) named Outstanding Educator; Jeffrey Lawlor (gen mgr, Haljohn Public Relations & Marketing, Austin, Texas) Paul M. Lund Public Service Award winner.

Glen Cameron (assoc prof, U of Georgia-Athens) wins Pathfinder Award from Institute for PR Research & Education for his original research which has made a significant contribution to the Body of Knowledge & practice of pr. ♦

## E-MAIL UPDATE

pr's e-mail address has changed. It's now prr@nh.ultranet.com.

## SURVEY SEEMS TO VERIFY TREND TO BIFURCATION OF FIELD

Strategic counsel (67%) & media rels (67%) are the two types of **work most frequently assigned to pr firms** by corporate clients, finds the 4th annual Thomas Harris/Impulse Research PR Survey.

- **This polarity** is increasingly splitting the practice, between:

- 1) involvement in decisionmaking & problem solving that includes strategy, counseling, training; and
- 2) producing communications products.

- **Survey suggests firms primarily produce communications products** -- implying a more strategic role for *in-house staff*, or at least heads of staff.

If respondents didn't differentiate between *strategic* & *tactical* counsel -- which is doubtful -- scales weigh even more heavily on the side of communications products as the major role of firms.

## MORE EVIDENCE OF FIRMS' TACTICAL ROLE

Reported at over 50% are special events (62%); *primary research* (60%); graphic design (58%); *secondary research* (58%); crisis mgmt (55%); *measurement of results* (54%); corporate reputation mgmt (52% -- but a definition of what's actually done in this category is necessary to give it any meaning; Harris told pr no definitions were provided in the questionnaire). The 2 italicized tasks are usually strategic. Crisis mgmt depends on the assignment. The others are tactical.

## HOW FIRMS GET HIRED REMAINS WORD-OF-MOUTH

"Colleagues" is the leading response (72%) to how clients learn about pr firms. Other responses are entirely tactical: capabilities presentations (38%); professional org's (34%); trade pub'ns (18%); participation in committees/panels (12%); employees (9%); conferences/conventions (9%); newspapers & mags (9%); adv'g (9%); winning awards (7%). 2,298 clients participated in the survey (33.8% response rate).

## REASONS FOR FIRING A PR FIRM

Poor quality of work (29%); poor client service (24%); did not deliver on promises (19%); assignment completed (14%); cutback in budget (9%); overcharging (9%); personnel changes in the firm (8%); shifted the work in-house (8%); dishonesty (2%).



- **Disparity exists** between the criteria clients use in picking a pr firm & the way they evaluate existing firms.

	"Extremely Important" Selection Criteria		"Extremely Important" Evaluation Criteria	
	#	% of respondents	#	% of respondents
Creativity	1	45%	7	48
Meets deadlines, keeps promises	2	44	1	68
Client service	2	44	3	61
Chemistry	3	43	11	37
Quality of my account team	4	40	2	63
Knowledge of my industry	5	38	8	44
Media placement	6	34	9	41
Strategic counsel	7	26	12	34
Quality of writing	8	24	4	56
Honest, accurate billing	9	22	6	52
Attention to detail	10	21	5	53
Access to influen- tial people	11	19	16	23
Measures results	12	17	13	26
Involve senior mgmt in my account	13	14	16	23
Full service capabilities	14	11	18	16
Specialized services we need	14	11	15	24
Quality of mgmt	15	10	10	38
Fair & equitable compensation	15	10	19	15
Respected	16	7	14	25
International capabilities	17	6	21	9
Stability of staff	18	4	17	20
Graphic/design capabilities	19	3	22	7
Research capability	20	2	20	11
Ethnic com'n capabilities	20	2	23	4
Access to Internet/ on-line services	21	1	23	4
Multi-media capabilities	21	1	20	11

**Top ranking for "creativity"** would seem to nail down the assertion that those hiring firms are looking for tacticians. Unless respondents meant they're seeking "creative" strategies -- which would be better termed "innovative" or "cutting edge." Strategy is a research-based activity, not a "creative" one in the usual meaning of that term.

(More from Thomas L. Harris & Co, 600 Central Ave, Suite 280, Highland Park, IL 60035; 847/266-1020, fax 847/266-1026)

## COM'NS HAS ITS OWN LANGUAGE -- & ITS OWN LEXICOGRAPHER

*Webster's New World Dictionary of Media & Communications* is revised & updated. Of its 35,000 "base entries," 3000 words have been added or updated since the 1990 edition, notes author Dick Weiner. He has provided pr with several useful compilations, and now becomes its lexicographer as well.

Contents explain how communications has/is developing its lexicon:

- Most of the new entries pertain to the **computerization & digitizing** in graphics, publishing & other fields, with jargon & names of equipment, software & other products & techniques.
- Dictionary includes **technical & slang terms** in 28 fields, including broadcasting, computer, direct marketing, exhibitions, film, graphic arts, journalism, print media, public relations, publishing, sales promotion, telecommunications, theater.
- Also has a **global orientation** with hundreds of British, Canadian, French, German & Japanese words.
- Listings include **abbreviations, acronyms, ass'ns, biographical dates & several hundred major companies** in the media & communications fields.
- Current **jargon, nicknames & slang** are supplemented with historical info, particularly 19th century printing & publishing terms that are still used.
- Attention is called to **words that are commonly used incorrectly**, misspelled or mispronounced. (678 pgs, \$27.95; Macmillan USA, 1633 Broadway, NYC 10019; 1-800-428-5331)

**praiser:** a public relations practitioner, a term used by Variety [that doesn't surprise us!]  
**bimonthly:** a pub'n issued every 2 months, not twice a month, which is *semimonthly*.  
 -- from Weiner's Dictionary

## ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

**Face-to-face, personal contact sells.** Michael Searls, pres of Summit Financial Products, finds personal visits to his sales reps -- who may handle as many as 60 different lines including Summit's -- always lead to a boost in sales. "If we're one of 60 products, we have to be very good to be what we call 'at the top of their briefcase,'" he told the Denver Post. The company would try to get its message across with videotapes & other marketing tools, but sales often drifted after an introduction to a specific market. But "the personal visits I've been making seem to blow the lid off of that." He & his family have begun a 16-month national media tour (traveling in an RV, homeschooling the children on the road) to facilitate this "grassroots, guerrilla marketing campaign."