

- Conducting the calls in a manner likely to be construed by respondents as a survey or poll to gather data for organizations independent of any party, candidate or interest group -- when in fact they aren't

New Hampshire law requires people engaged in push-polling to inform those contacted that the phone call is being made on behalf of, in support of or in opposition to a particular candidate. That candidate must be identified by name & a phone number must be given for where the polling is being done.

OTHER STATES TOO?

At least 4 other states recently considered bills, but none passed, Nat'l Conference of State Legislatures told pr. The states are: Florida in '96; Nevada, '95; NJ, '96; California, '95-96. But some states have acted:

- **West Virginia** has a law that directly addresses push-polling, enacted long before the explosion of push polls in '94. Law limits the use of public opinion polls to the "gathering, collection, collation & evaluation of information reflecting public opinion, needs & preferences as to any candidate, group of candidates, party issue or issues." It prohibits the use of push-polls. Problem, however, is enforcement. The statute lacks any objective standards (sample size, targeting, etc) for determining the intent of the poll sponsor. Charges of push polling surfaced in '96 gubernatorial race. But there have been no judicial or administrative decisions interpreting the statute.
- **Wisconsin** law requires paid pollsters to identify who paid, upon request of the person being interviewed. Applies to all paid polls -- legitimate or push.
- **New York** law requires any candidate, political party or committee disclosing poll results in any candidate election to file the following info with election officials within 48 hrs of the disclosure: name of poll's sponsor/payor; name of polling org'n; sample size, geographic area & special characteristics of the population; wording & order of questions; polling method; time period of poll; number contacted that did & did not respond to specific questions; poll results. But, since many push polls are never reported, it doesn't address the problem. For the "mini" push polls -- those administered within the context of an otherwise legitimate scientific poll -- these disclosure requirements would provide info.

Will NH's law, & others like it, help eliminate the public's negative feelings toward polls? There is currently a 50-70% refusal rate, making it harder & harder to find people willing to respond to surveys. On the other hand, could this legislation mushroom undesirably toward limiting free speech by regulating all survey research?

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. Ron Martin (dir internal com'ns, Seagrams) & Norm Leaper (The Leaper Co) receive IABC's most prestigious honor -- Fellow designation. IABC Fdn's Jake

Wittmer Award to Larry Bishop (vp com'ns, Boeing) for outstanding use of research in the Boeing-McDonnell Douglas merger (see pr 4/27)

RELEVANCE: FOOD PRODUCT PUSHING FOOD CHARITY SCORES BIG

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Reynolds Wrap aluminum foil, Reynolds Metals partnered with Meals On Wheels to reach 2 goals:

- 1) Recruit 50,000 new volunteers nationwide for Meals On Wheels (MOW);
- 2) Promote MOW & Reynolds Wrap nationally, regionally & locally

Program won PRSA's Best of Silver Anvil Award (from 758 entries). Reynolds worked with Amann & Assocs PR (Richmond) & Creamer Dickson Basford (NYC).

RESEARCH FINDS PUBLICITY STUNTS NOW TURN OFF CONSUMERS

- In focus groups held to develop strategy, participants were "turned off" by initial plans to feature Reynolds Wrap in a huge publicity stunt -- unfurling a giant roll of it over the Golden Gate Bridge. They saw this as an enormous waste of the product. But said they'd respect & buy from a company that supported a cause in a meaningful way.
- '97 Equitrends study of top 500 consumer brands ranked Reynolds Wrap #5 (right behind Disney) in terms of highest perceived quality by consumers. Felt this trust in a food-related product could be leveraged to help MOW.
- 40% of all MOW programs have waiting lists of elderly homebound in need of meals delivered to their homes. Volunteers to deliver these meals are needed in almost every community with an MOW program.

STRATEGY

Transform the 50th anniversary into a dynamic, emotionally-charged, yearlong public service event that would recruit new volunteers -- & at the same time thank customers for their continued support of Reynolds Wrap. **Because there was one main goal with a very measurable outcome, the primary message never wavered:** to recruit 50,000 new volunteers for MOW programs nationwide.

TACTICS

Major elements included:

- **Toll-free number** (1-888-MEAL HELP): people could call to volunteer. A real person (not voice mail) answered & linked caller with his/her nearest MOW agency
- **50 new Ford Aerostar vans** donated to 50 MOW agencies according to need & geographic diversity. Special ceremonies were scheduled at each agency



- **Nat'l media kickoff** held in Los Angeles, with celebrity athletes & tv stars. 50 vans, joined with Reynolds Wrap garlands, were lined up in the parking lot of one of the largest MOW programs in the US
- **Message on 100+ million cartons** of Reynolds Wrap about the search for volunteers -- with the hotline number
- **PSAs** (:15, :30 & :60 spots) featuring a tv personality
- **Full page print ad** in *USA Today* announced the search & hotline
- **Free-Standing Insert** (FSI) in Sunday newspapers included the hotline
- **Reynolds' Web site** informed visitors about the volunteer search & hotline
- **Jewel-Osco chain distributed grocery bags** featuring hotline (no cost)
- **MOW booth at Reynolds Kitchens On Tour.** 57-foot tractor-trailer promoting Reynolds brands criss-crossed the country. At each stop, local MOW agencies hosted a booth to sign-up volunteers

EVALUATION Budget was \$1.36 million. Covered costs of research, pr firms, special events & other tactics. FSI & ad in *USA Today* totalled \$366,157, less than 1/3 of the budget.

Goal 1: 70,000 volunteers were recruited (exceeding the 50,000 goal)

Goal 2: • 12,500,000 potential print & 13,459,150 potential broadcast impressions resulted. NewsHour with Jim Lehrer ran a segment about it.

- Further awareness was created when PSA ran 17,202 times on 218 network affiliates for a total of 400,767,000 potential broadcast impressions
- Hotline received 6,000+ calls; Web site recorded 4,201,000 visits (119% increase over the previous year)
- 50 van donation ceremonies/special events resulted in communitywide media coverage from Jan-Oct. Highlights: a van emerged from a giant foil Easter egg in San Antonio; one was used to deliver the agency's five millionth meal by Spin City actor Barry Bostwick in Nanuet, NY; a van was blessed by a bishop in Waukegan, Ill; Dorothy Rodham, First Lady's mother, used a van to deliver meals in N. Little Rock, Ark.

"It seemed only fitting during our 50th anniversary year to give back to communities all across America because consumers have supported our brand for so many years. And we know it makes good business sense because our research tells us consumers appreciate a brand which helps worthwhile causes," says John Lowrie, vp, Reynolds consumer products div.

DROBIS PROVIDES NEW TERMINOLOGY FOR ROLES OF PRACTITIONER

Public relations should be influencing decisionmakers at the top, becoming strategic partners in the creation & conduct of policy, David Drobis told IABC Conference. "We are more than just cheerleaders & messengers -- we are also watchdogs, pollsters, pundits &, in some cases, institutional psychiatrists." As key CEO aides, pr pros must perform **7 key roles**:

1. **Chief Scout:** The eyes & ears of the organization, "uniquely positioned to see critical trends unfold & provide invaluable intelligence on a wide range of issues & interests"
2. **Navigator:** The pilot helping the CEO steer thru troubled waters of issues management & prevent conflicts with groups such as shareholders, employees & regulators
3. **Firefighter:** Organization's front line of defense in times of crisis & the CEO's strong right arm when the reputation of the organization & its brands is challenged
4. **Interpreter:** Translator of the CEO's vision to all stakeholders & provider of feedback on how well stakeholders understand & accept the CEO's messages
5. **Advocate:** Sponsor & spokesperson who persuasively conveys the CEO's vision thruout the organization, while retaining objectivity & a readiness to challenge the CEO's assumptions if they are inaccurate or unrealistic
6. **Evaluator:** Measurer of results whose research delineates people's beliefs, establishes each audience's threshold of credibility, & evaluates the influence of the CEO's communications on people's behavior
7. **Educator:** Mentor who cultivates management's appreciation of the communications process & helps the CEO develop an instinct for communications in formulating organizational strategies & policy

(More from Ketchum Public Relations, where Drobis is CEO, 412/456-3586)

FIRST STATE LAW BANNING PUSH-POLLING PASSED IN N.H.

Anonymous push-polling is a "deceitful practice" & has an "adverse impact on the political process," states a bill that passed the New Hampshire legislature & was signed into law April 1. It requires candidates to be accountable for the statements & messages generated by their campaigns -- and that the public be informed when candidates use push-polling.

Push-polling is defined as:

- Calling voters on behalf of, in support of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office; and then...
- Asking questions about opposing candidates which state, imply or convey info about the candidate's character, status, political stance or record