

THE QUESTIONNAIRE Responses are shown on a 100-pt scale, 0 being the lowest, 100 being the highest:

1. In the past 5 yrs, how strong has **social, political & media pressure** been on multi-purpose companies to improve their business practices (e.g., environment, labor) in developing countries?

- Execs: 60, Media: 55

2. How much do you believe multi-national corporations have changed their business practices in developing countries for the better?

- Execs: 50, Media: 42

3. To what extent do you believe that multi-nationals misrepresent the way they actually conduct business in developing countries?

- Execs: 40, Media: 50

4. To what degree do you believe that ethical issues always are part of the final decisionmaking process in multi-national corporations?

- Execs: 80, Media: 30

5. Given more stringent securities laws, are business people more candid & forthright than they used to be?

- Execs: 60, Media: 42

(More from Klein at 609/988-6560)

AIRLINE TRIES "MAKE GOOD" FOR FREQUENT TRAVELERS: ENOUGH?

After the pilot sick-out (pr last week), American Airlines is compensating for the inconvenience by issuing double mileage & upgrades to frequent flyers. But only those in American's "premium" programs benefit: gold, platinum & exec platinum members.

Visibility technique: Offer arrived on a yellow sheet featuring the Western Union logo (but American's hq address) across the top -- to show urgency. Offer was extended to American's "very best customers," those who were most likely to be flying during this time period. Letter was sent, says a spokesman, to "show appreciation for their continued support."

For passengers who aren't frequent flyers, American waived service charges on re-booking flights & offered full refunds without penalties to people who decided not to travel during the sick-out or couldn't go at all.

- **A point on which insufficient research has been done is how long inconvenienced customers hold their negative feelings** -- especially the angry ones. Sociological "Rule of Abuse" says they will be slow to get beyond it until the perceived abuser accepts responsibility -- which American is doing here. But who can say it is enough?

SECONDARY RESEARCH CAN REDUCE COST, FIND RICH DATABASE

One of the least known -- or anyway least used -- items of research knowledge concerns 2 longstanding organizations of immense value to practitioners. They are the Nat'l Opinion Research Center at U.Chicago (NORC) & the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at U.Conn. Both investigate the "whys" of public behavior.

When research is needed, it isn't always necessary to launch a new study. Chances are someone has already done a similar one or gathered data on similar topics. In his 1999 *Guide to PR Research*, Walt Lindenmann recommends doing a review of surveys that have already been completed -- called a literature search & secondary analysis. NORC & Roper are starting places.

TAPPING INTO PUBLIC ATTITUDES AT NORC

NORC conducts social policy & social science research for gov't agencies, educational institutions, foundations, non-profits & businesses. Biennially it conducts the General Social Survey, personal interviews of US households covering everything from racial attitudes to musical preferences, measuring trends in attitudes, experiences, practices & concerns. GSS began in '72. NORC's areas of research:

1. **Economics** -- economic forces that shape society
2. **Education** -- different areas of educational system, including teachers, students & schools. How children learn & how teachers teach
3. **Epidemiology & public health** -- cause & effect of a disease, tracking its spread
4. **Health services** -- attitudes about medical treatment, family access to care, doctor & patient attitudes toward death & dying
5. **Statistics & methodology** -- development & research of new sampling & data collection methodologies
6. **Substance abuse, mental health & disability studies** -- why some people become easily addicted to alcohol & drugs when others don't, what is role of mental health in individual life choices?

Listing of studies in each area is available at www.norc.uchicago.edu.

"NORC has a significant library & our librarians are a good source," says Julie Antelman, pio. "The librarians understand organizational history & understand census abstracts, the sources of data pr people might use. They



can also refer them to other sources." Plus, NORC's website has a page of links to other sites offering statistics & additional types of research.

The cost of obtaining info from NORC is considerably lower than conducting primary research because their data is already in the public domain. Costs depend on the size sample needed, the time it takes to collect the info, etc. NORC will also conduct primary research studies, at rates comparable to most market research firms.

DATA AVAILABLE FROM ROPER CENTER'S ARCHIVES

Center doesn't
conduct surveys but

is an archive of contemporary research. Its US database goes back to '35 & is updated daily, containing data from more than 125 polling org's, including Gallup & major news org's. There is also a Latin American Survey data bank & Japanese Data archive.

- "We have a fair amount of data for people interested in general consumer topics," researcher Lisa Parmelee told prr. "It's worth a look if you don't want to purchase proprietary data. This is a lower cost alternative."
- **Users can call & have researchers search databases;** or access the Center using subscription services such as Lexis-Nexus, Academic Universe or Dialog. Roper's database, POLL, can only be accessed online by the 3 subscription services just mentioned -- or by subscription.
- **Center sells data sets** practitioners can purchase & analyze. Researchers can e-mail the Center directly with questions, or call. Online catalog of available topics is at www.ropercenter.uconn.edu.
- **2 publications, *The Public Perspective* & *America at the Polls*,** may be useful for public opinion movement & insight into political issues & referenda. A bi-monthly, *Public Perspective* reviews public opinion & polling, examining trends (a recent issue covered the tobacco debate with public opinion data). Polling experts contribute articles.
- ***America at the Polls*,** published every 2 yrs, presents comprehensive overview of election results. Latest edition, for Nov. '98 elections, includes key gubernatorial, Senate & House races, as well as demographic breakdowns, initiatives & referenda, campaign spending figures. Also articles by election experts. '94 & '96 issues are also available.

AMONG THE MANY SECONDARY SOURCES AVAILABLE IS ONE FOR FINDING THEM

ProfNet takes an e-mail request for a particular type of expert source & distributes it to com's pros in 2,000 institutions worldwide, including univs, corps, pr firms, non-profits, gov't agencies & think tanks, scientific ass'ns & labs. It's administered by PR Newswire. To use ProfNet, send a query to profnet@profnet.com or phone 800/PROFNET.

(More from NORC at 773/753-7500; Roper Center at 860/486-4882)

THE DILEMMA OF "FACE" PROMOTION: NECESSARY YET DANGEROUS

Article about Silicon Valley company Marimba (Fortune, March 1) highlights the problem of using a personality as the "face" or personification of a company (also known as the "Iacocca phenomenon").

The software manufacturer is headed by CEO & co-founder Kim Polese, toasted as "the Madonna of Silicon Valley." Initial hype about the company, founded in '96, created tremendous awareness about Polese but virtually none about Marimba & its primary product.

- **Strategy:** company & its pr firm purposely shifted attention away from software & focused on the personalities of Marimba's founders.
- **Result:** everyone in Silicon Valley knew who Polese was, few knew much about her company & its products.

TO USE PERSONALITIES OR NOT TO USE PERSONALITIES

Research shows consumers are more likely to purchase a product or support a cause if they can identify with a personality. As

org's get larger & more impersonal, often the only way to get attention & interest is with a "face." But generating awareness for a personality alone won't change consumer behavior. Consumer loyalty is created by:

- **Building relationships with the com'ty** thru projects that interest target stakeholders (& not typically in arts or economic development)
- **Generating qualitative, relationship research** to get to know consumers
- **Offering something of value** to loyal customers (info, special services, memorabilia -- sometimes called "value-added marketing")
- **Recognizing that loyal employees lead to loyal customers**

If promotion centers on a personality, you're in trouble if the person quits, dies or just goes away. This is also true of celebrities used in promotion -- & they can also get caught up in embarrassing scandals.

CORP EXECS, MEDIA DIFFER ON ETHICAL BEHAVIOR IN THIRD WORLD

Survey by Pinnacle Worldwide charts the difference of opinion between corporate execs & the media regarding business behavior in developing countries. On a scale of 100, execs rate their ethical behavior 80; media give them a rating of 30.

Execs also rate their performance higher concerning honesty about operations. Surveyed were 117 corp execs and 93 journalists from around the world. Other studies suggest data reflect media's skepticism about most types of org's today.

"This survey shows the need for companies to expend more effort on explaining to the general public why they do things & how they fit into an ethical framework," notes Jerry Klein, pres of Pinnacle & exec vp of Anne Klein & Assoc.