

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

- ¶ **First NIMBY, then NOPE, now BANANA.** Not In My Back Yard was the activist cry a few years ago, but as issues became global -- like rain forest degradation or labor practices in developing nations -- it became Not On Planet Earth. Now, reports Alex Huppe, Harvard's dpr, any organization trying to build new facilities must contend with Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anything. PR gets tougher all the time!
- ¶ **Maps & games are a form of information mapping** (prr 3/8 & 2/15) -- & further evidence of how visual language is increasingly the effective one. It's not just because they're visual, but because they organize info for visual consumption -- actually seeing it vs. the intellectual acuity necessary to "see it" in our heads. (For a series of prr articles on games over the years, call Laurie Eldridge)
- ¶ **IABC increases dues \$25 for regular & assoc members**, to \$175. First increase in 10 years kicks in June 1. Student & retiree dues aren't affected. Reason for increase: expanded member services & higher costs of doing biz. PRSA dues are also \$175 -- for the moment, but there's talk of an increase after several years without one -- like IABC. (More from Gloria Gordon at 415/544-4719)
- ¶ **Relationships of pr practitioners & lawyers**, particularly how each reacts in crisis situations, will be studied by Bryan Reber, doctoral candidate at U Missouri-Columbia, under the '99 "SMART" award. Sponsored by Ketchum in cooperation with Institute for PR. Consists of a \$5,000 study grant, \$2,500 grant to the faculty advisor, Glen Cameron, & a paid internship at Ketchum's NY office. (More from IPR, 352/392-0280)
- ¶ **Single clearing house or center to "help establish and promote standards for pr measurement** and to provide credible counsel to those within the industry on appropriate tools & techniques to use when assessing pr activities," has been formed by The Institute for PR. Commission on PR Measurement and Evaluation is chaired by Walt Lindenmann of Ketchum. Members include representatives from corps, pr firms, research houses & academics. All members have participated in prior measurement initiatives. (More from Lindenmann, 212/448-4213)
- ¶ **Bob Dole's dictum, revisited** by Tom Brokaw in a recent speech, could be applied to pr if practitioners aren't careful: "Beware of the hired guns. The vast amounts of money the campaigns raise go into the pockets of people who don't really care." What's the line between professional disinterest & rooting for your client?

Note to readers: Some of our recent supplements, like today's, have been a bit longer than usual. We've promised not to overburden you with reading, but we feel these particular supplements are primers -- they can be kept readily available for use in your work on a regular basis.

Vol.42 No.11
March 15, 1999

HI-TECH ZAPS ADVERTISING BY LETTING AUDIENCES SCREEN IT OUT, CREATING MAJOR OPPORTUNITY FOR PR TO DIFFERENTIATE ITSELF

Consider the following list of barriers technology is devising for ad media -- and one quickly sees why pr is surpassing ads in effectiveness. This is true for basic awareness & publicity. Even more true when taking into account what pr can do that ads cannot *under any circumstances*, like relationship marketing, customer loyalty & delight programs, or user groups.

- **Television** -- digital tv recording systems now make it much easier to zap advertising out of favorite shows than with current VCRs
- **Radio** -- equivalent technology may be available on car radios
- **Telemarketing** -- caller ID can eliminate telephone solicitations
- **Web ads** -- billboards on the Internet won't reach consumers because they can purchase software that filters out unnecessary Web advertising. There's a motivator for using it: connections to the Web are faster
- **Newspapers** -- printing advances mean ad supplements are often equal in size to news sections, leaving only hard core ad readers -- a dwindling species as old-time shoppers get overbusy combining work & home
- **Sponsorships** -- is there any evidence anyone buys products or otherwise supports a company because it puts its name on something? If so, every opera lover must be a Texaco customer, because it has put on the Met Opera broadcasts for generations
- **Direct mail** -- responses are reported to be at an all-time low (prr 4/15/96); check your own junk mail to imagine how others handle it
- **Point of purchase** -- had a comeback a few years back, may be the best bet -- except that folks are tired of *everything* blaring a commercial message

Magazines were written off not long ago -- like radio when tv arrived. They may be the best ad medium of all, because studies show readers consider ads part of the editorial matter in this leisure reading medium.

ANGST OF ADWORLD EPITOMIZED

New trick of making computer cursors into logos or other small ad devices illustrates the frenzied search for ways to regain mass, can't-miss-it advertising. Cola exclusives in schools (prr 4/6/98) are another example. *Boston Globe* tech columnist John Ellis feels advertisers will have a difficult time justifying hefty production & placement costs because technology is shifting buying power from the producer to the consumer.



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As he notes, this "leaves advertising agencies with some explaining to do." He cites the example of Coca-Cola:

- A 30-second tv commercial for Coke could cost as much as \$2 million to produce & another \$30 million to place on different tv shows over the course of its run
- Agency makes \$350,000 on production, another \$3 million on placement
- What happens when Americans with disposable incomes have a digital tv recording system instead of a VCR? (Sports & breaking news can still be effective because they're "real time" programs -- which explains astronomical ad rates for 20/20's Monica interview or the Super Bowl)

How long will a company like Coke pay its agency for ads no one watches? Advertisers will have to find a different way to reach consumers. "Real time" programming may be effective, but can be very unpredictable.

BUT AD FIRMS WILL TRY TO PUSH FURTHER INTO PR TURF

Ellis makes the following predictions about what ad agencies will do now:

- Ad agencies will become **consulting companies**
- Ad agencies will become **Internet companies**
- Ad agencies will **form joint ventures with telecom's companies** to help them manage, market & communicate thru their databases -- but thereby running headlong into the escalating privacy issue
- Ad agencies must **reinvent themselves as hothouses of creativity**, constantly devising creative solutions to marketing problems. This is where they were in their heyday -- & it could impinge on pr's strategic counseling role.

STUDY SHOWS WHY CAUSE-RELATED ACTIVITIES ARE INCREASING

And how it's paying off. Cone/Roper Cause Related Trends Report presents first 5-yr study of companies, customers & causes. Key findings include:

- 74% of consumers believe companies should engage in cause-related mktg
- 61% believe cause-related mktg should be a standard business practice
- 83% say they have a more positive image of a company that supports a cause they care about
- 2/3 of consumers polled say they're likely to switch to a brand or retailer associated with a good cause, if price & quality are equal
- 87% of employees of org'ns involved in a cause feel stronger loyalty
- 56% of workers wish their employers would do more to support a cause

Almost 2,000 consumers were questioned in person by Roper Starch Worldwide for Cone, Inc., Boston. (More from Cone, Inc., 617/227-2111)

RUSH TO MEASURE PR GOOD -- BUT ONE CONSIDERATION VITAL

Many organizations are demanding their pr be evaluated. Several professional societies have projects underway. Practitioners are increasingly interested. Lost in the effort is one uncontroversial factor:

In order to measure something, you must first define it

Could an ancillary, unexpected benefit of the measurement effort be progress toward an agreed definition of precisely what pr is?

If one measures mainly outputs, publications & clippings, this clearly implies pr is 1-way com'n. Evaluating relationships or behaviors says something quite different about the field's strategies, goals & capabilities. And there are several mid-points as well.

DEFINING PR SEALS ITS FUTURE

With pressure from accounting & law firms, ad agencies (see previous page) & others to barge in on pr's work, promulgating measurement gauges that imply anything less than pr's full & total capabilities could force the field into a secondary role. Here's a broad approach to consider:

1. What differentiates pr (& offers an outstanding future) is that this profession has a different worldview than those now crowding in on it -- an approach that is badly needed in our rapidly changing, issue-prone human climate. It goes beyond finances, structure & policies
 - **We postulate the true bottom line to be relationships;** financial statements keep score of whether relationships are positive or not
 - **PR's strategic view** is that relationships earn trust & motivate supportive behavior, and behavioral science backs this up

THIS PHILOSOPHY IS PR'S USP

1. **It isn't that we can hype goods,** services & issues better than advertising -- we can, but that's just one *more* advantage of pr
2. **It's not that we're the communicators.** Everyone must be today, certainly the managers we counsel -- if they wish to be successful. PR does so much counseling & training in this arena only because mgmt schools fail to teach it. We should be the experts, the counselors, however
3. So we're really doing remedial education, teachers of the disabled! This **training role** may always be necessary, since communicating effectively & 2-way is one of humankind's major challenges. But it's only another tool in our kit
4. **PR is basically an enabler of organizational success** -- the triumph of causes & people. Behaviorists. We make things happen -- or not happen

Unless practitioners speak with One Clear Voice about this, individually & thru their societies, we leave the high ground open to others.