

MARKETING & PR TO ETHNIC PUBLICS ALSO RISING; STUDY FINDS GROWING INTEREST & COMMITMENT, BIGGER BUDGETS

Survey of multicultural marketers finds ethnic marketing, or marketing to ethnic publics, continues to grow as demographics shift & groups achieve more purchase power. "Ethnic marketing is here to stay," Lisa Skriloff, pres, Multicultural Marketing Resources (NYC) told pr. "The combined buying power of all groups is now a trillion dollars – an impressive number for any segment." Findings:

1. Nearly all respondents report **increased interest** in marketing to ethnics in the *past 5 years*
2. More than 3/4s predict **consumer marketing firms will increase efforts** over the *next 5 years*
3. Over 3/4 predict ethnic budgets will increase by 10% or more. Nearly half **believe budgets will increase by 25% or more within the next 5 years**
4. The biggest concern for ethnic marketers is **obtaining top management commitment**

PRIORITY ISSUES center on figuring out how to best target these publics:

- a) Determining how to reach ethnic publics "**in their own language**"
 - b) Discerning the **motivation** of various segments
 - c) **Reaching key segments** within the ethnic groups
 - d) Finding and retaining **minority employees**
 - e) Also important are obtaining **budgets** from decisionmakers & **evaluating** ethnic programs
- **Asians gaining ground.** More marketing dollars have been targeted at Hispanics & African Americans, but that is changing. "There has definitely been an increased interest in marketing to Asian Americans"
 - **Gay marketing on the rise, also marketing to people with disabilities.** While these aren't considered ethnic groups, they are minority markets with bigger buying power

"Something I was glad to know about, but wasn't surprised to see, is the importance of reaching the multicultural community. It was good to hear it from others – that multi-cultural marketing & pr are here to stay." Census data indicating country's changing demographic landscape is a key factor in convincing the experts, she believes.

Erlach Transcultural Consultants, which conducted the study with Skriloff's group, surveyed 43 top experts & opinion leaders across the US. "We publish a source book of multicultural experts," Skriloff says. Researchers drew from that as well as from individuals who had been featured in & who subscribe to MMR's newsletter, *Multicultural Marketing News*. "We mailed the survey and tabulated the ones that came back to us."

"PLAIN ENGLISH" CAMPAIGN OFFERS QUALITY MARK FOR CLEAR COMMUNICATORS TO DISPLAY; AIM IS ERADICATING CONFUSION

What's wrong with this sentence: "High-quality learning environments are a necessary precondition for facilitation & enhancement of the ongoing learning process"? Plenty, believes Chrissie Maher, founder of UK-based Plain English Campaign (PEC). The sentence represents the type of run-on jargon that gums up communication between government & commercial institutions & the public. Better to say, "Children need good schools if they are to learn properly," advises Maher.

Maher's group strives to clarify binding documents presented to the public by companies, gov't, legal & financial institutions. Campaign, started in '79, has gathered a huge following of org's to which it offers the "Crystal Mark" for clear communication. Trend is gaining ground in the US. "In the States, some lawyers are doing wonderful kinds of things, persuading other lawyers."

CRYSTAL MARK FOR CLARION COMMUNICATION "In 1990, we introduced our seal of approval – the Crystal Mark – to encourage org's to communicate clearly with the public." For £500 pound fee (\$800 US), org'n receives:

1. Individually numbered Crystal Mark logo as camera-ready artwork or on disk
2. Listing on the Crystal Mark holders Webpage & a link to the company's site
3. Full assistance if a customer questions the clarity of the document
4. PEC's expert witness if a document's clarity is questioned in court

An organization can apply by sending documents to PEC for a free evaluation. If need be, documents are edited – either by the submitter or by PEC – to the Crystal Mark standard. Crystal Mark holders include British Airways, American Express & scores of other financial institutions, businesses & public utilities in UK, US, Australia & South Africa.

THE MARK CAN BE USED ON DOCUMENTS THAT MEET THESE CRITERIA:

1. Average sentence length of 15 - 20 words
2. Active verbs – instead of passive ones
3. Everyday English
4. Words like 'we' & 'you' – instead of 'the insured,' 'the applicant,' 'the Society' and so on
5. Conciseness
6. Clear, helpful headings
7. Good type size & clear typeface
8. Average line length of between 7 and 12 words
9. On forms, plenty of answer space & a logical flow



- **Documents are tested** on the public to make sure they can be read, understood & acted upon from a single reading
- **The Honesty Mark** can accompany the Crystal Mark, free of charge. This indicates the org'n is willing to sign a legal declaration that there are no hidden extras or misleading terms

COMMUNICATION: A LIFE AND DEATH MATTER

Years ago, Maher was witness to the demise of two

elderly women who froze to death when they couldn't understand an application form for housing benefits. "I went there the next morning to see them being taken out in ambulances." When she found out they didn't survive, she pledged to make it her mission to clarify communication from banks, mortgage companies, utilities, etc. "I thought I'd be at it three years, and here I am." Maher began PEC in '79 by shredding documents in Parliament Square. That infamous incident kicked-off her ongoing campaign, which aims to eliminate jargon, legalese & medical mucky muck from documents delivered to consumers.

"Anything that we have to sign that says, 'I understand and abide by...' it's my right, not my privilege, to be able to understand it," she told prr. In essence, org'ns & gov'ts steal from people when they bog down their communications with jargon. "They take up the most precious thing you have, and that is your time, because your time is your life." PEC finances itself by charging for the Mark, as well as for editing services & publications. Maher's thinking is that by not taking grants or funds from other interests, PEC maintains its independence. (More from www.plainenglish.co.uk)

CRAFTING PLANS & QUANTIFYING RESULTS ACCORDING TO BUSINESS PRIORITIES ARE CHIEF CONCERNS FOR CORP PR DEP'TS

Research conducted by Corporate Communications Studies (Rockville, Md) concludes there are 2 overriding priorities for managers of pr departments at major corporations:

1. **Centering pr plans around business priorities, with results quantified in business terms.** While the costs, output & size of audiences of pr initiatives can be measured, demonstrating effects remains difficult (despite a rash of new evaluation tools)
2. **"Ideal" organization of dep'ts is hard to discern.** Study notes, "Emergence of truly global org'ns, power of the Internet to link people within far-flung organizations, the imperative need & opportunity to outsource many of the tactical aspects of communication – these & other factors make the development of an 'ideal' dep't structure & linkage to the corporation exceedingly complex."

GOOD NEWS FOR PR

The topic "Proving the Value of the Communications Function" ranked 7th." Researcher Tom Moore notes that historically pr has struggled for acceptance & legitimacy. "In the past decade, corporate com'n has grown in sophistication as a business function & tool and become more tightly integrated with other business functions. This evolution means that the leadership of these dep'ts must address a number of mgmt issues." The study aims to shed light on which priorities are most critical.

Study surveyed com'n dep'ts at 408 major US companies and domestic operations of companies with hqs outside the US (such as Siemens). 81 responses were received. (Copy from Moore at 301/279-9455 or www.corpcomstudies.com.)

TARGETING SENIORS: GUIDE GIVES DIRECTION TO PRACTITIONERS

Doing business with older Americans requires special strategies, according to Sandra Timmermann, dir Mature Market Institute (Westport, Ct). Many cases over the years show practitioners often tend to lump this megamarket in with others. MMI has published a guide addressing tactics such as a) the use of appropriate images of those over 50, b) suggested conversation styles, c) typefaces & graphics. "As America ages, so do the needs and interests of its consumers. Our booklet presents a perspective on how they view themselves and how we can communicate with them." Some tips:

1. **Use positive images** of older adults, those showing people who appear active, athletic, stylish & interested in learning [Classic study shows seniors think of themselves as at least 20 yrs younger]
2. **Avoid using negative words** like "lonely" & "sick," or phrases like "he looks great for his age"
3. **Design printed materials with great visual contrast**, sharp images, serif types, uncoated paper stock & ample white space
4. **Speak clearly and slowly**, maintain lower tones, eliminate background music or noise
5. **Design physical settings** so they are free of glare from nearby windows, use comfortable, easy-to-use chairs, remove potential hazards such as extension cords
6. **Keep presentations organized, not too fast paced.** Read words on visuals for those who have difficulty seeing a screen

- Points 3 thru 6 (& even 1 & 2 with some interpretation) are good counsel for use with any audience at this time when it's so hard to break thru the clutter

"It's not a good idea to push products on mature customers. While they don't buy into trends, they do appreciate factual presentations & respond well to value & an emotional connection with the seller." [Like everyone today, seniors want to be served, not sold, involved, not told]

¶ OF RELATED INTEREST:

Dychtwald continues quest for paradigm shift. Ken Dychtwald, head of Age Wave (see prr 8/15/88) continues to try to change the American mindset, which he feels is still against seniors – despite the evidence against it. "If you can see past wrinkles and gray hair, these are living, breathing, complex, colorful, experienced &, in many cases, wise men & women," he told *The Washington Post*.

- **"In decades to come, every aspect of American society is going to be reoriented away from youth and toward maturity – advertising, marketing, urban design, politics & the entire economic structure of the US is going to have to retool to become a gerontocracy governed by the old"**

His advice for the mature sector: a) don't blame your genes, your doctor or your environment. Instead, take care of your "equipment" & stay abreast of news & advances in medicine; b) be involved in something meaningful, larger than yourself; c) focus on relationships with people you love; d) give up the notion of "entitlements"; e) get comfortable with the idea of dying.

Again, this is sound counsel for everyone, not just oldsters. Which helps prove Dychtwald's point, by showing that what makes sense for seniors today applies to us all – the antithesis of Youth Culture.