

DON'T FORGET RADIO: PSYCHOLOGICAL ASS'N CASE SHOWS "OLD MEDIA" HAS BENEFITS HARD TO DUPLICATE

American Psychological Ass'n has a big challenge: Get people to be interested in & pay attention to its research findings on major social issues. Topics are relevant, e.g. college binge drinking, conflict resolution programs in schools, how to maintain old & build new relationships – all demonstrating “the rich diversity & important role psychology plays in everyday life,” as the APA puts it. But even this offers no special hope of breaking thru the clutter over overcommunication.

WHY RADIO WORKS

In psychological terms, radio is the ultimate captive audience.

Listeners tune in one-by-one, most listen alone – focusing on what's being said. TV is often watched in groups, with people making comments, distracting attention with snacks, flipping channels. Because radio is imbibed aurally, with no type to read or pictures that allow message senders to shape response, this is a deeply & personally accepted medium.

APA'S TEST CAMPAIGN

At its annual convention last month, radio pr service News

Generation recorded each researcher's session. Then distributed 28 local audio news releases (ANRs) to 157 stations & radio networks. ANRs focused on local markets of the researchers. Results: 1400 airings on 722 stations nationwide – including #1 stations in NYC, Dallas, Detroit, Miami, Sacramento & Oklahoma City & national radio networks. (*More from www.newsgeneration.com or www.apa.org*)

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **Is Privacy Becoming a Commodity that Can Be Bought & Sold?** One futurist group believes personal info, such as a drunk driving citation from the early 80s or a bout with cancer, will be made available to inquirers at the click of a mouse. Furthermore, gov't, employers and/or insurers could become Big Brother – e.g. a utility could notice you have too many lights on & send a chastisement about responsible energy usage. The ultimate invasion: Matsushita is developing a smart toilet that will analyze waste & send findings to the user's healthcare provider.

¶ **NYTimes Reporter's Response to George W. Bush's Expletive on Open Mike** is worth reading. News vet Adam Clymer has a sense of humor & humility about his job. Of course, the *Times* wouldn't print the remark – not because it was made when the mike wasn't supposed to be on, but because of the language. It noted Bush had called Clymer a “major-league [expletive].” Clymer's “My Media Moment” column (*NYT* 9/10) offers insight for media relationships. (If you missed it, copy from pr)

¶ **Fact TV News Shows Commented on Ford & United Airlines Apologies to Customers** for recent disruptions is telling evidence of 1) orgn's knowledge on how to respond to issues & 2) journalists' lack of attention to how often the rule is carefully followed. First rule has always been to say you're sorry or, if not guilty, that you are concerned. Ford did so on “Monday Night Football”, UAL in 30-sec tv spots. These cases + Firestone, Mitsubishi et al illustrate why anticipating & “managing” issues is pr's overriding responsibility – yet how little is done to really anticipate them (pr 12/13/99)

TO IMPROVE SCHOOLS, BUSINESS LEADERS & EDUCATORS NEED TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS – & LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER

When it comes to meting out blame for community problems & societal ills, it's still open season on the public school system. Educators complain that when new employees fall short of the learning curve, business says the schools have done a poor job. Yet when the economy is booming, as it is today, no one thinks to credit public education. The queries posed at NSPRA's annual conference were:

- How can educators stop the pot shots & instead form lasting & productive relationships with private sector opinion leaders?
- How can business really help make schools better, instead of arrogantly acting like “we know best”?

Bonnie Ellison (Northside ISD, San Antonio) offers suggestions from her years as a school pr veteran:

ORGANIZATIONAL DIFFERENCES

A variety of factors contribute to anti-school sentiment. Basically, educators have to sort thru a

bag of organizational differences – *& concerned businesspeople need to understand them also:*

1. **Time Frames.** Business wants quick fixes, public education is for gradual, proven reforms. “We're slow to change because quick solutions mean *kids are guinea pigs*,” she says. “CEOs tell school districts they need to implement a 5-yr plan. Schools are used to thinking in terms of quarters or semesters, not years-long plans”
2. **Training.** “At McDonald's, kids don't serve burgers until they have 7 days of training.... Schools don't have anything comparable. In fact, in our district, teachers have to do 3 days of in-service, unpaid, voluntary training”
3. **Structure & Overhead.** Tho a lot of biz leaders complain of too much administration in schools, *the ratio of administrators to employees is low compared to the private sector.* E.g. one typical district has 22 administrators to 700 employees. But a bank in the same town has 37 vps to 200 employees. A local resort, seasonal help aside, has 158 administrators for 200 full timers

AND PERCEPTION ISSUES

4. **Incompetence.** “CEOs have the perception that private sector does a better job, works longer hours.... They

believe that if schools were run more like a business, they'd do better.” But that depends on which business you're talking about, since business has as many managerial failures as do schools

5. **Different backgrounds** hamper the CEO's ability to relate. Many are from privileged backgrounds & think schools should measure up to *their* experiences. Others feel public education is worthless. “Many of them think they can't count on schools because, in their lives, they've counted on private education, tutors, abundant supplies & materials, symphony tickets, museum memberships, etc.”



6. **Anti-union sentiment.** Helps drive business enthusiasm for privatizing public schools. “Many think they can privatize services to non-union entities just as they do in business.”

ENGINEER CONSENT

Ellison says that if Ed Bernays was right – it’s all about relationships – then optimizing relationships is priority. Model works well for any group trying to work with another.

- **Research** can lead to a change in perception for both sides. Technique: Gather together biz leaders, say 400 for a school district with 50,000+ kids, and ask them how they feel about themselves, their jobs, if they’re underpaid, overpaid, etc. Also conduct same survey with educators. Ask each side to come up with their own questions, an exercise which itself is revealing

In Ellison’s experience, this research has been laden with surprises for both sides. “Educators may be surprised to know people in the private sector don’t make as much money as they had thought they did.” A principal, for example, often makes more than a mid-level manager

- **Form mutually beneficial partnerships.** These include a *partnership staff*, employing both school & business people; & a *partnership council* comprised of volunteer CEOs & school personnel. “Business people like to know they have their own people. Schools benefit by having twice as many pr folks.” And while business people feel they have a sense of control, schools can weigh in on the type of help they need. For example, decline a fast food chain’s offer to supply free cheeseburgers for A’s if what you’re trying to do is emphasize better attendance
- **Find the perfect fit** for their involvement. Often, when this is done, the support & even contributions money will flow without schools having to ask for it. Ellison recalls how a major food service chain was asked to lend expertise to a school’s food service department. The company had the food service staff visit their headquarters, fed them a gourmet meal, showed them around. When it was the company’s turn to visit the school and be fed a meal in the school’s cafeteria, they saw what was lacking. “The money started to flow”
- **Declare the event.** This means, take the lead in reaching out to the public with whom you want to form a relationship. “Tell them, we’d like to get together & survey both the business community & the educators, get you involved & work together,” etc.

CASE: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS BUILDS UNDERSTANDING

Ellison recounts how the owner of a major league sports team had long denounced public education. “For years we tried getting him involved,” she says. He never wanted to participate in partnerships or engage in dialogue; still, the district wanted the support of this extremely wealthy, vocal & influential individual. Finally, educators appealed to his ego & asked him to talk to the 5th grade of a poor elementary school. “He ended up falling in love with the kids & the school. Now, 4 years after adopting the school, he goes around & says to CEOs, ‘In your business, did you make any mistakes today? How would you like to see it on the front page tomorrow? How would you like it if the day after that, a whole bunch of people were telling you how to fix it?’” By building a relationship with him, they built a bridge to the business community. (More from NSPRA at 301/519-0496 or www.nspr.org; or Ellison at (210) 706-8599 or Bonnie_Ellison@nisd.net)

DOING A RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN? SURVEY FINDS NEW GRADS WANT BALANCED MIX OF PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL LIFE

As pr gets heavily involved in recruitment & retention campaigns, in the face of today’s tight labor market, a new study provides a major guidepost. Like everyone else, new graduates are seeking a balance between work & pleasure. PricewaterhouseCoopers survey finds:

- Students rate career development (56%) & personal growth (55%) as their 1st & 2nd life priorities – no surprise
- But 57% say attaining a balance between work & personal life is their *most important* career goal. Up significantly from 45% two years ago, when the first survey was conducted

William O’Brien, PWC’s global leader of human capital, says the finding reflects the realization on the part of employers & employees alike that work & home life cannot be treated as separate entities. Thus, “Providing choices that allow employees to have fulfilling professional *and* personal life is a *business imperative*.” Other findings:

1. **Willing to Work.** Tho respondents want flexibility & balance, on average they expect to work at least 47 hours a week at their first jobs
2. **Good Reputation Key.** 42% rate an orgn’s reputation for offering a good future career reference as “crucial” when choosing a first employer
3. **No Lifers.** They expect to commit 4.5 years to that employer, & would extend that for (a) higher salary, (b) ability to balance work & life, (c) rapid promotion. Since (a) & (c) often have constraints, helping new employees balance work & life is thus a vital retention factor
4. **Global Savvy.** A quarter have studied abroad & about 20% have worked in a foreign country. Over 70% are interested in an international career, 81% in living abroad for at least a year

On behalf of PWC, Universum Int’l conducted this 2nd International Student Survey, polling 2500 students from 36 leading universities in 11 countries. (More from *Rimjhim Dey*, 212/259-4079 or www.pwcglobal.com.)

¶ Of Related Interest:

FRANCE LEADING THE CHARGE AGAINST GLOBALIZATION / AMERICANIZATION

Despite PWC’s finding that many employees are eager to work abroad & break out beyond their borders, it also reports a rising sentiment of anti-globalization (perceived often as Americanization) in Europe, France especially. Case in point: The biggest celebrity in France last year was sheep farmer José Bové, whose claim to fame was destruction of a U.S.-based fast-food restaurant. “France is now taking the international lead in the outcry against globalization,” PWC reports. “The trade debate has been recast as ‘Anglo-Saxon globalization’ vs. preservation of France’s national & cultural values.” Note same issue in French Canada. Ironically, the movement is steering countries toward a stronger EC union. Beyond Quebec, could this arise in The Americas – only with a Hispanic twist?