

- The first reads “accent the future” (all small case)
- Then “Introducing a new way of looking at things.”
- Next “accelerate the future” (all small case)
- Leading to the next page reading “Making a commitment to look further.”
- Next fold: “Creating relationships that reach beyond.”
- Final fold: “accenture, formerly Anderson Consulting, Pointing the way forward.”

3. **Underneath is a loose posterboard sheet** describing the company & its 5 emphasis areas. It also tells how to pronounce the name (ak-SEN-chure) & urges a visit to a special introductory website, [accenture.com/hello](http://accenture.com/hello)

4. **Inside what remains of the box** are a letter from the CEO, a description of services offered by the \$10-billion global mgmt & tech consulting giant & the new copy of *Outlook*, the firm’s journal

**Of interest to pr pros is a second letter** apparently offering each exec a chance to reach his or her colleagues & clients. The one from cpro Jim Murphy suggests recipients might “enjoy perusing the name launch package” & describes spending 147 days selecting the name, rebranding & repositioning – & planning a \$175-million ad effort in 50 nations to solidify it.

- Remember when a simple news release & letter was enough? Accenture’s launch is an object lesson for any who still believe just putting the word out will get attention

## REPORTERS GET 6x AS MUCH AIR TIME AS THOSE THEY COVER

If the presidential election is a guide, practitioners should reevaluate how they get their spokespersons onto broadcast media. Candidates’ sound bites made up a mere 11% of election news air time – while reporters got 6+x more time to speak than candidates. Study by Center for Media & PA terms it “the incredible shrinking sound bite.” Sound bites averaged only 7.3 seconds!

As for media playing the Jeffersonian role of informing the public, network news *post-election* coverage – the Florida riddle – was 3x as long as during the period when voters were making up their minds & assessing candidates. Even where the nation’s CEO is concerned, sensational coverage rules.

## WHO’S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**DIED.** J. Handley Wright, 94, a leader in the profession during its formative period, as attested by his position as cpro, Ass’n of Amer Railroads – in the days when that industry was a powerhouse. A legend to his peers & followers, he was PRSA’s 3rd pres (in ’50) & Gold Anvil recipient in ’79.

**RETIRING.** Chuck Werle, Chicago & PRSA leader, after 34 yrs divided between corporate & counseling exec positions. Says to prove he is “over the hill” will move to mountains of Asheville, NC.

**HONORS.** Portland PRSA’s William Marsh Award for lifelong achievements in pr to Chuck Williams (reg’l dir, K.I.D.S.). Nelson Fellman (svp, Anne Klein & Assoc) receives Frank X. Long Award from Philadelphia/PRSA for creativity & excellence in writing.

**ELECTED.** SanFran PR Roundtable officers: counselor Mitchell Friedman, chair; Beverly Butler (Amer Cancer Society) v chair; Olivia Kress (KPMG) treas; Dawn Lyon (Chevron) sec’y. Celebrating its 61<sup>st</sup> anniv, Roundtable is oldest org’n for sr pr pros in US.

## STUDY’S FAILURE DISPROVES YEARS OF ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT HEALTH BEHAVIORS; MAJOR IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

Much of our understanding of the causes of behavior comes from health campaigns, especially those supported by the US gov’t thru the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Nat’l Cancer Institute et al. Even if we’re not aware of it, many assumptions held in pr have their basis in this research. Now comes a 14-yr, \$15-million study that seriously questions the classic “social-influences” method.

- **The social-influences approach** – for 20+ yrs a major behavioral strategy – focuses on helping people identify & resist social influences to do or not do something. In this case, “a curriculum-based intervention” included “bolstering skills to recognize the social influences of smoking including advertising & peer pressure; fostering skills for resisting those influences to smoke; & increasing awareness of & promoting tobacco-free social norms”
- The Hutchinson Smoking Prevention Project involved 650 teachers & 8388 students in 40 Washington state school districts. The program started in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade & continued thru 12<sup>th</sup> grade, described as “**the most rigorous randomized trial possible** to determine the long-term impact ... on smoking prevalence among youth”
- The study is hailed, in an editorial in the *Journal of the Nat’l Cancer Inst*, as “the gold standard in prevention science, **the definitive study on the social-influences approach**” and “elegantly designed & impeccably implemented” – i.e. if it didn’t work, probably nothing like it will
- **Results:** “No significant difference was found” between the control group & those receiving the training. 24.4% of girls & 26.3% of boys smoked daily by grade 12 – almost the same percentages as the control group. 2 yrs after graduation the number of daily smokers had actually risen by 3+%

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PR

1. **Training people to develop resistance skills to harmful behaviors** – long accepted as the way to do it – may be as ineffective as mass communication campaigns that preach against the behavior, i.e. the social-influences method must be reexamined

- The reason is that this approach “typically locates the cause of (behavior) almost exclusively **within the individual**,” notes the NCI Journal editorial (as does the mass communication approach). The method is mis-named since “social-influences” implies dealing with the external influences of society – when it really means working with individuals to resist those influences.
- The editorial suggests: “We must move beyond simple models (what works?) to more complex ones (what works, for whom, under what conditions, how, & why?)” It calls for a transdisciplinary effort – such personal factors as biology & psychology measured in the context of social & cultural influences



- **This is consistent with the behavioral pr strategy** of going far beyond Awareness ... to determining individuals' Latent Readiness ... by causing or usurping Triggering Events ... thus motivating movement toward desired behavior by those who are ready to move

## 2. Predictive risk factors for the behavior need to be identified – i.e. *Triggering Events*

### WHAT CAN PR DO NOW?

If training/education approaches & communication campaigns don't work (pr 12/2/96), what might? More thought & much more research are needed, but here are some possibilities to guide practitioners who – for better or worse – have the assignment of motivating, modifying or reinforcing stakeholder & often individual behavior:

- PR research & experience suggest the key is **sociological factors** – opinion leaders & role models, social rewards & punishments, peer pressure. Diffusion Process doesn't seem to be a sufficiently serious consideration in “social-influences” studies
- Case in point: PRSA's K.I.D.S. project works to empower *parents* – which research shows to be the major influence on youth at least 'til age 12 or 13 (K.I.D.S. targets all substance abuse: alcohol, drugs etc as well as tobacco). The Hutchinson project used *teachers* – which raises the issue of finding the most influential opinion leaders
- How about concentrating on what influenced the 3/4 in both the control & experimental groups *not* to smoke? Identify what triggering events motivated 1/4 to *start* smoking in the first place, or those in the experimental group to *stick with it in spite of the training*. Then work to modify or eliminate those external influences. Maybe old Joe Camel was powerful & eliminating him was important. (Irony: ads don't work to help *resist* harmful behavior but are influential in helping to *rationalize* it)

Study reinforces 2 key questions: 1) Is preventing behavior more difficult than initiating or stimulating it? 2) Are findings about youth applicable to other groups? While its outcome is obviously important to practitioners in education, healthcare, social agencies – the widening work/life balance issue makes it vital also for employers. (Copies of study, editorial & additional material from pr)

### VOLUNTEERISM UP AMONG YOUTH WHEN SCHOOLS REQUIRE IT; WILL THIS ENGENDER AN ETHIC OF CARING – OR RESISTENCE?

Youth volunteerism is up 10% from '96, according to a study from National Institutes of Health titled, “America's Children.” Study contains much valuable data for practitioners.

- **It finds 9<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> graders more likely to participate if their schools require** they do so & make appropriate arrangements. In these schools, 59% of 6<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> graders volunteer
- **When schools don't enforce & enable it**, only 29% of students in this age group volunteer
- **24% of high school students participated in volunteer activities** once or twice during the '98-99 school year – & 16% performed 35 or more hours of volunteer service
- **Students are more likely to volunteer if their parents attained higher educational levels.** In '99, 65% of 6<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> graders whose parents attended graduate school volunteered, compared to 37% of students whose parents did not have a high school diploma

- **Girls are more likely to volunteer than boys.** In '99, 57% of 6<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> grade girls volunteered, compared to 47% of boys

NIH speculates that volunteerism contributes to enhanced self respect, respect for others, leadership skills & active citizenry. In a few cases parents have sued schools for requiring it, suggesting enforced volunteerism stiffens or creates resistance in some types of people. These are among many reasons supporting youth volunteerism as a positive experience is a top notch social responsibility or community relations activity in pr programs.

### HEADS UP FOR RETAIL-LEVEL ORG'NS OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Strategies for 2001 & beyond for any org'n operating at the retail level – i.e. direct to customer – have to be tech-friendly, employee-sensitive & customer responsive. Trends forecast by the Herman Group:

1. **More part- & flex-time workers.** Employees will be even more difficult to find & retain, as info tech & other higher-paying jobs lure applicants. Allowing flex hours is the only defense
2. **Technology should fill gaps**, offering customers, patients or clients friendly terminals that help them locate what they're looking for without seeking out sales help – just like e-shopping
3. **On-line options.** Retailers will get customers' e-mail addresses & buying/lifestyle preferences. Frequent updates of websites will of course be necessary
4. Salespeople (the few that will remain) should be trained **to get personal with shoppers**, finding out about families, backgrounds, interests of customers. “This investment will result in more sales, greater loyalty”
5. **Sell the shopping experience.** It should be a chance for the shopper to socialize or be entertained. Retailers should offer more than a simple purchase

“Retailers who want to survive will begin now to plan for the evolution & shifts that are to come.” The best evidence is those org'ns already doing these things.

### FORMER ANDERSON CONSULTING DEMONSTRATES WHAT IT TAKES TODAY TO BREAK THRU THE CLUTTER & ANNOUNCE A NEW NAME

Accenture is the name now – & a heavy cardboard box, 13 inches square, an inch & 1/8<sup>th</sup> thick is how the change was presented. Because the name doesn't appear on the outside (except in a small copyright notice not likely to be seen at first), curiosity prompts opening this unusual package. Details:

1. **Cover copy is simply “01.01.01”** – the serendipitous date the name change takes effect. Anderson Consulting began as a division of the Arthur Anderson auditing & accounting firm. When the consulting section grew very large, it suggested separating – resulting in a nasty court battle as the parent company sought recompense for birthing the new entity
2. **A tear-off strip on the side opens the box** – which turns out to be a series of foldout pages, each folding in a different direction & each in a set of differing bright colors