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- **Believers (32%).** They tend to be **male, aged 30-49, married, employed and somewhat affluent (\$50K+).** They **trust the good intentions and honesty of companies** and are less likely to need cues from media, family, friends, or even personal experience with a product, or knowledge about the company as an organization. They are less likely to stop using a product because it's getting negative press, and less likely than Cue takers to base trust on ads and packaging. Trust has increased lately for Microsoft, Kmart, Amazon, and decreased for Firestone, Philip Morris, AOL and Exxon/Mobil.
- **Probers (24%).** They are more likely to be **boomers (40-49) who have fallen out of the corporate culture and are less affluent (\$35K-)** than other segments. They believe most companies are motivated by self interest and nearly all Probers (92%) have stopped using products because companies broke their trust in some way, compared to Cue takers (83%) and Believers (74%). They rely on their own experience/knowledge of a company or brand and are less likely than Cue takers to trust ads, packaging, friends' recommendations and media. They are more likely to write (83%) when dissatisfied compared to Cue takers (75%) and Believers (77%) as well as when satisfied (74%), compared to 60% and 54% respectively. In the past year, trust has increased most for Sony, Kmart and Amazon, and decreased for Firestone, Philip Morris, Exxon/Mobil and AT&T.

Of all factors affecting trust, poor service irritates everybody the most – 84% say they get the most fed up when they experience it and show their unhappiness by refusing to purchase the product or boycotting the company. More than 9 out of 10 say they are more likely to trust a company that has a responsive Website or customer service department.

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WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

HONORS. NSPRA Announces Pat Jackson Scholarship Fund. The National School Public Relations Association (Rockville, MD) is honoring prr's long-time editor, the late Pat Jackson, for his contributions to NSPRA and education pr. "Pat Jackson's contributions to the public relations profession is monumental," says exec dir Rich Bagin. "**His belief in the practice of behavioral public relations and the use of 'actionable' research continues to guide today's practice of public relations.** As many pros have noted, Pat not only showed us what true public relations is, but he also taught us what public relations could be." NSPRA is encouraging members and others interested in contributing to the fund to do so by either making direct donations or purchasing the

Pat Jackson Collection on Public Relations, available in CD, VHS, or audio format. "Through this collection, NSPRA hopes to keep the work of Pat Jackson alive for many years to come," says Bagin. (More info from NSPRA at 301/519-0496)

ELECTED. NSPRA'S newly elected exec board for 2001-2002 include: pres, Barry Gaskins (Pitt County Schools, Greenville, NC); pres-elect, Chevon Baccus, (Jacksonville, FL); vp at large for urban education, Frank Kwan (Los Angeles County Office of Education, Downey, CA); minority vp, Elizabeth Ackerman (Fulton Co. School System, Atlanta); vp at large-superintendent of schools, Jane Hammond (Jefferson County Public Schools, Golden, CO).

DID BURGER KING SUCCUMB TO ACTIVIST DEMANDS OR NOT? BK GOAL: FOCUS ON TARGET PUBLICS, BOYCOTTS NOT EFFECTIVE

Though People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Norfolk, VA) claims responsibility for change in policy, Burger King says work was underway long before PETA came on the scene. "Our goal was to remain fact & science based. We had a team of experts studying what should be done while working closely with industry groups who do the slaughtering," Rob Doughty, vp corporate communication, told prr. "**BK was not concerned about the mass market. Nor were we concerned about PETA. We were concerned about the specific groups who would be affected by the changes that would be made.** PETA would not accept our desire to do this thing right. That's when we chose to stop talking with them entirely."

PETA still believes its five-month campaign that featured gory slaughterhouse details, gruesome photos, organized protests and celebrity pressure "paid off." "We have placed an indefinite moratorium on our Burger King campaign because they have done what we have asked them to do," Jay Kelly, spokesperson for PETA, told prr.

CONFLICTING PERCEPTIONS ARE TO BE EXPECTED

Effectiveness or not of such tactics are continually debated among professionals. A seminal study done in the 1980s on boycotts shows that their effects are

minimal – usually only inside the organization being boycotted. BK reports no consumer impact from PETA's actions. In fact, one location actually was said to have gained customers because of dissatisfaction with activists' actions.

PETA'S STRATEGY:

After a lengthy campaign against McDonald's, PETA turned its attention to the Home of the Whopper. Graphic images such as

BK suppliers slitting throats of conscious chickens and animals, sometimes skinning and dismembering them while the animals were conscious, were used to help PETA get its message across. [For info on how the effectiveness of this tactic is affected by **cognitive dissonance**, see prr 6/29/92.] "We sent the CEO a letter saying, 'Look what your chief competitor has just done,'" says Kelly. "At first we got a smokescreen but after organizing over 300 demonstrations, we had a nice quick victory. It was good for us and good for the animals." Because of their frequent customer contact, fast food stores are vulnerable to such confrontations.

BK USES COALITION BUILDING TO BRING INDUSTRY TOGETHER

"Since BK is 4 & 5 steps removed from the actual slaughter of the animals, there were many people who had to have time to work out the best possible

alternatives," Doughty explains. BK was looking for industry-wide standards that everyone could agree to before announcing its intent. "All the animals come from the same slaughterhouses. It is not like



there are McDonald's cows and BK cows. The slaughter industry needed to set clear standards that everyone could agree to. We were determined to focus our efforts on this audience."

Burger King's new CEO John Dasburg has stated: "Our new guidelines and audits are the right thing to do." The company formed the Animal Well-Being Advisory Council comprised of university-affiliated animal experts.

"We enforce new guidelines via a series of announced and unannounced audits at suppliers' facilities. Suppliers who do not meet Burger King Corporation's animal handling standards will face disciplinary action." Like McDonald's, BK's enormous purchasing power enables it to pressure suppliers.

As a result of its expert evaluation of slaughterhouse conditions, BK determined that more often than not the **USDA Humane Slaughter Act that has been on the books for decades was not being enforced.** "We've always believed in humane treatment of animals," Doughty explains. Therefore, "BK is petitioning the USDA to enforce the act currently in place."

WHY CHANGE? WHY NOW? Coincidentally, the change coincided with the installment of the new CEO who was subjected to PETA tactics. A full-page ad, written by James Cromwell, the actor who played the farmer in the movie Babe, was published in Dasburg's hometown in Minnesota. It entreated the new CEO to "ponder that life for millions of chickens, pigs and cows raised and killed for Burger King continues to be hideously cruel." Moreover, on the CEO's first day of work, protesters crowded the headquarters and another ad appeared, this time in the *Miami Herald*. "The new CEO asked to expedite the plans that were already in place," said Doughty, "but the work had been ongoing all along. We were more concerned with the industries that had to agree to all the changes than we were with PETA."

For PETA's part, Kelly says the group is satisfied with BK's new practices and **has started a campaign against Wendy's.** "We've shifted targets." Bruce Friedrich, PETA's vegan campaign coordinator, says **supermarket chains Kroger and Safeway also could be targeted.** It could be argued that a supermarket, despite its frequent customer contact, is not as vulnerable as a fast food restaurant with a narrow, animal food menu. But memories of Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers grape boycott in 1968, which used highly aggressive tactics, suggest that PETA could score again, albeit with greater difficulty.

CRONKITE ERA IS LONG GONE – "NO SINGLE REPORTER EARNS AMERICA'S COMPLETE TRUST"

It used to be that everyone tuned in to "and believed" the man who would wrap up his evening reports with, "And that's the way it was." That man was Walter Cronkite. Today, the number of people turning on the evening news is dropping every day (71% tuned in to one of the three networks for news in 1987, now only 50% do). "During the Cronkite era, there were only three national broadcast networks, no cable news networks and the Internet didn't exist," says Jack Bergen, pres., Council of Public Relations (NYC). "The proliferation of news outlets has changed the information landscape, with the expanding menu of viewing choices reducing the traditional broadcasts' audience share and influence."

WHICH CHARACTERISTICS INSPIRE CONFIDENCE?

The Council along with Bruskin Research (Edison, NJ) surveyed 1,020 Americans. Respondents were asked, "Which one of today's tv news personalities do you trust most?" Participants were then asked why that person merited their confidence. "We found that perceptions of positive personal values and attributes, primarily **sincerity, honesty and candor, along with a likeable, down to earth personality, are the most important in establishing trust and credibility.**" Bergen adds that 33% of the respondents base their news viewing decisions on an anchor's personal qualities, followed by 17% who base them on presentation and delivery and 16% on the newscaster's experience and knowledge.

The **newscaster Americans trust most is Tom Brokaw** (NBC) followed by Peter Jennings (ABC) and Dan Rather (CBS). Others mentioned include Ted Koppel, Katie Couric, Larry King, Diane Sawyer and Mike Wallace. Comment sample:

"He doesn't speak down to his audience." "He exudes sincerity." "She doesn't seem sleazy." "He's from North Dakota." "He's from South Dakota." "He's from Texas." "She seems like the girl next door." "He's a straight shooter." "She has the most honest face." "She seems like your next door neighbor." "Not pompous."

STUDY FOCUSES ON CONSUMER TRUST & WHAT MAKES IT TICK

Brand loyalty is only as steadfast as the product maker's or service provider's trustworthiness, finds an on-line study of 1,252 consumers. When that trust is broken, e.g., the company does something seen as shady and gains negative media attention, many consumers will switch without looking back. Yet, **some forgive, as long as the organization corrects its wrongs, admits its mistakes and behaves honorably henceforth.**

According to the study, most consumers (96%) say they've taken one or more steps when they lose trust in a company. Some write letters (78%), others just stop using a product. A high percentage (62%) e-mail the company when they are pleased with a product or service.

The Trust Monitor, a study conducted by M Booth & Associates (NYC) and Harris Interactive, outlines various types of consumers and reveals the degree to which trust drives their behavior. "Companies need to understand distinct patterns involved in building trust, not only to win trust but to shore up the bond when something goes wrong," says counselor Margaret Booth.

TRUST GAUGE

The respondents say food companies (60%), banks (59%) and retailers (59%) are industries that they "trust to do the right thing," if faced with a serious problem concerning their product/service. A minority (37%) says they don't trust any industry to do the right thing in a crisis. The researchers broke the respondents into the following segments:

- **Cue takers (44%).** These are **mostly women, and they rely on external information** – appearance, ads, friends. They tend to be 18-29 or in the 65+ age group. They like wide brand recognition and recommendations from friends. They trust the established businesses and have confidence in slick advertising and ad claims. More than other segments, they go for attractive packaging (26%). They express brand loyalty but are the most likely of the three to be affected by media attention, both positive and negative. They are, however, the most forgiving and will resume