

Reviews and Reports

USING PRINT, RADIO, AND TV EFFECTIVELY

A Special Conference of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education

Why long-term credibility is critical to successful media relations . . . Why strategy planning is important . . . Why thought starters are one of the best tools in marketing news . . .

These topics are among many important issues highlighted at the CASE special conference on "Using Print, Radio, and TV Effectively." John Seigenthaler, Earle Holland, Kathryn Costello, and other speakers discussed:

- Marketing Your News Effectively
- The Automated PR Office: What It Can Do For You
- How to Get Regional and National Coverage
- Covering Health and Science Stories
- Building Good Relations with the Media

Long-term credibility with the media means learning how your university excels, keeping your news sense, tying to current events, and never, never, ever featuring a "nonexpert." So said Costello, director of public relations for Southern Methodist University.

"Why is it important to cultivate long-term credibility? Because it may determine whether your letters and releases are read at all by busy editors," she explained. Costello is a former associate vice president for university relations at Vanderbilt University and assistant professor of medical administration at the Vanderbilt School of Medicine.

News and information functions should be hinged on the mission, purposes, and goals of the university, she said. Public relations strategy should be integral with the university's development strategy. "And strategy is important for evaluating effectiveness. We should set our goals—what we'd like to achieve in public relations for the university in the next year. These goals should be specific in each area—publications, production, news bureau, special events, and legislative relations."

A comprehensive list of thought starters can be very useful for media contacts, according to Peter Bryant, vice president for col-

lege advancement and dean of admissions, Cornell College at Mount Vernon, Iowa. Bryant uses introductory letters for contacting reporters and editors. In them he establishes news value for suggested topics. He uses a thought starter to indicate the importance of an issue, then he establishes the qualifications of a spokesperson. The reporter is offered a frank discussion by a qualified spokesperson on an important and timely topic.

Lane B. Stephenson explained why his office purchased a Vector Graphics System B microcomputer, a D.C. Hayes Associates modem, and a Qume Sprint 5 letter quality printer. Stephenson is director of the Office of Public Relations at Texas A&M University. Using the microcomputer, his office electronically transmits releases to newspapers and the wire services.

Plans to implement a Furtune Systems microprocessor were discussed by John Clark, news services managing director at the University of Tennessee.

Earle Holland urged university communicators to get away from bland grant announcements for research news. "The stories we should write," he said, "should capture the adventure of the scientific process, the human interest of the researcher's quest." Holland is assistant director for newsfeatures and communications services, and university research editor, Ohio State University.

University communicators should establish themselves as resources to media people, as liaisons with the university, suggested Bob Gilbert, director of special news services, University of Tennessee.

Speakers stressed the importance of developing expert lists for reporters' and editors' reference. Make regular contact with editors, and always have a story idea ready, they suggested.

"Orient the media as to how you can serve as a resource to them. In fact," Bryant said, "make sure they have your home phone number and know you're available to them."

The high readership of USA Today was discussed by John Seigenthaler, editorial director for the national newspaper and publisher of The Nashville Tennessean. The paper's editorial section devoted to theme topics "provides a unique measure of depth for editorial writing, and people are reading what their peers think," he said.

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