

THE COMMUNICATOR
The USAID PHN Newsletter for CAs
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The Communicator's Goals:

- * To increase the flow of information between USAID's Bureau for Global Health and CAs engaged in communications and public relations work
- * To enhance awareness of the need to disseminate news about our work and to show why it is important

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If you would like back issues of The Communicator, e-mail lhomiak@phn.pal-tech.com.

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KEEP YOUR WEB SITE UPDATED

In the past few issues we have encouraged you to communicate your work by drafting success stories and writing letters to the editor. Another good and simple way to spread the word is letting others know about changes and updates on your organization's Web

site. Just prepare a short e-mail to inform your audiences of new findings, tools that have been developed, or new items posted on your Web site, and provide a link to it.

PRB Example

Below is an example of how PRB markets its Web site while also informing others about new work and projects.

“Just a quick e-mail to let you know that the Population Reference Bureau has posted new content on its website: www.prb.org.

1. Diverse Factors Linked to Maternal Deaths in Zambia
2. Number of Foreign-Born Reaches All-Time High in U.S.
3. Maternal Mortality in Guatemala: A Preventable Tragedy
4. Using Evidence to Save Newborn Lives
5. Rapid Population Growth, Crowded Cities Present Challenges in the Philippines

PRB WebUpdate alerts you to new content posted on the PRB websites. We post new content every three to four weeks.”

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PITCHING EXPERTISE RATHER THAN STORIES TO THE MEDIA

Ideally, your media relations or PR campaign contributes stories to media outlets that reach your target audience. In reality, where competition for coverage space is high, you have to think beyond the headline and opt for other ways to receive media coverage, such as piggybacking stories that normally do not feature your area of interest. One popular way to get media attention is to sell yourself, or your organization, as an expert on a particular topic. Once journalists consider you a source of expertise, they will be more likely to contact you rather than rely on new pitches. Several on-line services are available to help you jump-start this approach, such as ProNet, SourceNet, and ExpertClick. These “Internet dating services for PR” connect journalists with experts they need on a short deadline. The expert has to create a profile, keeping in mind keywords that journalists would ask or search for.

Technique Tips:

- Do provide precise details in your expert’s profile
- Do relate your expert to a trend or current event
- Do respond to all queries appropriately and in a timely fashion

- Don’t use Internet services as your main media relations strategy
- Don’t respond to a pitch in any manner except the one requested

- Don't post an expert without his/her consent

[SOURCE: PR Network, "Pitching your client's expertise to the media"]

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STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Participants at the InterAction Forum 2003 for media professionals, held in Washington, D.C., from May 19 to 21, outlined various strategies to get the message out. Michael McCurry, a former spokesman for the Clinton administration, urged communicators to develop strategic media approaches and target smaller and medium-sized markets. He also offered five points for effective communication:

1. Credibility – maintaining a record of accuracy
2. Candor – acknowledging mistakes, such as communicating a false fact, when they occur
3. Clarity – being clear about what the message is
4. Compassion – recognizing that people have differing points of view
5. Commitment – being serious about the communications effort and recognizing its importance

Carol Giacomo, Reuters diplomatic correspondent, suggested that media professionals develop relationships with reporters covering their issues and tie these issues to current news events. Laird Anderson, professor emeritus at American University, stressed the importance of keeping a list of 8 to 10 key reporters. Other panelists explained the importance of Internet services when building strong relationships with the media. Recommendations included customizing Web sites and putting a password-protected area only for press.

[SOURCE: www.interaction.org/content/forum2003/panels.html and "Monday Developments" InterAction's bi-weekly newsletter]

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RESOURCES FOR YOU

Sharing Your Information: PRB's E-Library

The Population Research Bureau's E-Library is a service that allows users to obtain publications and Web site materials by e-mail. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the E-Library is part of an initiative to raise awareness and use of population and health information, specifically in low-resource settings. PRB has also launched a collaborative resource tool called "Population and Health Infoshare." This electronic library is created by partner organizations working in reproductive and child health, HIV/AIDS, and population, and includes features such as interactive browsing by topic,

region, country, language, and partner organization; e-mail document delivery; and customized e-mail newsletter. By joining Population and Health Infoshare, organizations and projects can share information with audiences worldwide.

To get more detailed information on the E-Library, e-mail elibrary@prb.org. To join Population and Health Infoshare, go to www.phishare.org.

[SOURCE: www.prb.org]

Nancy Schwartz & Company

Nancy Schwartz is one of the top not-for-profit communicators in the field today. She has both a Web site and the newsletter “Getting Attention,” in which she circulates useful tips and other resources for communicators. Check out her good, commonsense PR at www.nancyschwartz.com. Here are some results from a survey she conducted about e-newsletters:

- E-newsletters are an up-and-coming communications vehicle. 75% of nonprofits and foundations publish e-newsletters or are planning to.
- Text rules! Most nonprofits offer their e-news in text format only. (The private sector is moving fast and furious toward HTML format for e-news. Should we follow?)
- E-newsletters are not published often enough. Most nonprofit e-newsletters are published quarterly (30%) followed by monthly (18%).

Nancy recommends strong, focused content for newsletters so that readers can easily understand a message. She also advises to:

- Keep the newsletters focused and easy to scan for easy digest
- Send newsletters only to subscribers who have signed up for them to avoid alienating potential audiences
- Use a simple format
- Never send attachments – viruses typically arrive as attachments and are often routed out by security systems

[SOURCE: www.nancyschwartz.com]

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WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING

Listen to Radio Programs Broadcast in Afghanistan

The IMPACS Web site has several radio programs produced by the Afghan Women Radio Production Unit in Kabul. A 20-minute radio magazine called “Women in Today’s Society” covers a wide range of issues including health, education, childcare, music, poetry, and literacy. Different NGOs working with women’s issues in Afghanistan produce this program every two weeks.

Visit www.impacs.org to listen to the remarkable work of Afghan women.

[SOURCE: www.impacs.org]

Africa Women’s Media Centre

The African Women’s Media Centre (AWMC), a women’s media NGO, has launched a five-nation research initiative to examine media coverage of public health issues in Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, and Senegal. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the project will attempt to identify perceptions of public health issues (and gaps in the coverage of these issues) in the predominantly negative reporting of war, hunger, disease, and death in Africa. The media campaign also aims to address how public health issues affect women and how the media can provide adequate coverage.

To read more about this campaign, go to <http://ipsnews.net/interna.asp?idnews=18113>.

The Media Evaluation Project

The Communications Consortium Media Center (CCMC) has begun a multiyear research and information initiative to provide various organizations with a set of templates to judge the effectiveness of their investments in strategic media and outreach efforts.

To read about this project and subscribe to receive periodic updates, go to www.mediaevaluationproject.org.

Jackie Judd to Be Kaiser Family Foundation Senior Visiting Fellow

Jackie Judd will join the Kaiser Family Foundation as a Senior Visiting Fellow in September 2003. The Emmy Award-winning correspondent for ABC News will examine better ways to communicate health policy information, help the Foundation and other NGOs use the Foundation’s new broadcast and Web cast studio in Washington, D.C., and participate in the design of a new project to educate and inform journalists worldwide about public health issues, including HIV/AIDS.

For more information, visit the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation at www.kff.org

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YOUR FEEDBACK

With your participation this newsletter can increase our interaction and participation in getting the word out about what we do. Let us know what you would like to see in this newsletter, what topics you want covered, or what additional items should be included. We also encourage you to become a contributor -- pass along stories about your program, including poignant accounts, major accomplishments, new publications, awards received, or upcoming conferences, to lchomiak@phn.pal-tech.com.

Also, if you know people who should get this newsletter, let us know so we can add them to our subscribers list.

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