

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

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As Ethnic Media Becomes A Force, PR Opportunities Abound

With the explosion in ethnic media in the last 20 years — ranging from radio stations specifically geared to blacks to Spanish-language TV channels **Univision** and **Telemundo** — PR and marketing execs have had a tough time figuring how to reach their audiences.

Sergio Bendixen, a Coral Gables, Fla.-based pollster, says companies may be forgiven for thinking that targeting ethnic

((PR PULSE))

The jones for e-mail is getting acute. According to new surveys by AOL and Opinion Research Corp., as reported by Emarketer, AOL users are starting to rely on e-mail just as much as they do on the telephone to communicate. AOL subscribers spend about an hour a day on e-mail, and say they can't go more than two or three days without checking their e-mail. And they check it everywhere: during a business meeting, on the beach or in the bathroom. A few other nuggets from the survey:

- ▶ 41% of Americans check e-mail first thing in the morning
- ▶ 18% check e-mail right after dinner
- ▶ 14% check e-mail right when they get home from work
- ▶ 14% check e-mail right before they go to bed
- ▶ 40% of e-mail users have checked their e-mail in the middle of the night

Source: MediaPost Communications/Emarketer

media “may seem like ‘Mission: Impossible.’” However, if demographic trends continue — with the U.S. expected to have more nonwhites than whites by the year 2050 — marketers may ultimately be sorry if they fail to recognize how minority groups are starting to morph into the mainstream.

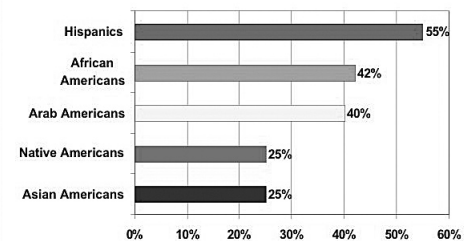
“The old model of the American melting pot was one in which immigrants were absorbed into the culture,” Bendixen says. “But with globalization and a revolution in communications, America is starting to look more like a salad. There are lots of different ingredients, but they each retain their own texture, their own fla-

vor and their own identity. Ethnic markets are not monolithic and [marketers] need to be knowledgeable and sensitive to numerous groups.”

Bendixen just completed a comprehensive study on multicultural media on behalf of **New California Media** (San Francisco), a nonprofit organization that tracks ethnic media, as well as **The Center**

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Primary Consumers of Ethnic Media



Source: Bendixen & Associates

for **American Progress** and the **Leadership Conference on Civil Rights**, both of which are based in Washington, D.C.

The multilingual poll, which

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PR Starts To Charge Onto The 'Eastern Front'

When managers of **Edelman Europe** met for an affiliate meeting in **Barcelona, Spain**, late last year, one question kept on creeping into the conversation: when are we going to open up shop in Poland?

“Enough clients were saying it to us so it got to a point where we felt we had to make a move,” says Barbara Kwicien, who ran one of Poland's top 10 PR agencies for the past three years and is now in charge of **Edelman Poland** (Warsaw), which opened for business earlier this month.

Nearly 15 years after the collapse of communism, PR is starting to flourish in the former Eastern bloc countries, with, as

Edelman's new footprint indicates, Poland leading the way. The reasons should be plain to any PR manager with an eye on emerging markets: considered an economic success story among the Central and Eastern European economies, Poland's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2004 grew 5.6%, one of the highest growth rates of any European Union member.

What's more, Poland is the largest consumer market of the ten nations that joined the European Union May 1, with a population of around 38 million people.

Edelman Poland, which is currently working on the **Chiquita** and **Amgen** accounts, among others, has 12 full-time

employees specializing in corporate reputation and consumer marketing; it's the agency's first office within one of the 10 new member states in the European Union.

There are many factors for PR execs to consider when their companies enter East European markets, not least among them that “pay for play” is still practiced in many areas, although it's not nearly as pronounced as it was several years ago. And while media relations in the West centers on developing “professional” relationships with members of the press, in former Eastern bloc countries there's more emphasis placed on cultivating the “personal” before

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PR On The Eastern Front

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PR reps go into pitch mode. Another crucial element: you need to work with homegrown talent on the ground from the get-go to help you get acclimated to the market. (For other tips, see sidebar.)

Two new chapters of www.worldwlt.org — an online business community of more than 30,000 people and 80 chapters throughout the world — recently launched in Poland (PolskaWIT) and Russia (RusWIT). RusWIT is run by PR execs from **DataArt Inc.**, a software outsourcing company headquartered in New York with a development center in St. Petersburg, Russia.

“There is a tremendous amount of word-of-mouth [in these countries] so you need to create events that will facilitate that,” says Vica Vinogradova, VP of corporate communications at DataArt. “PR really needs to take a look at the whole region because you have all industries there,” including automotive, manufacturing, retail, and they need help communicating their messages.

Asked how susceptible former Eastern bloc countries are for PR services, Kim Nyberg, Chairman-CEO of **Hill & Knowlton Central-Eastern and Northern Europe** (Helsinki, Finland), said in an e-mail exchange: “They believe more strongly in the power of PR than we in Western countries do. However, their perception of PR is much narrower. It is either media relations or public affairs. Public affairs meaning in this context, more lobbying than issues management.” He added: “It is quite common to try direct influencing of political decision-makers. Other aspects of PR are in reasonably low demand. Growth potential is big if you compare to present levels.”

Like Poland, Russia is also ripe for PR services. “As Russia

RAISING A DIFFERENT KIND OF RED FLAG

By Michael Smith/Director, Graduate Program in Professional Communication-La Salle Univ.

Since the collapse of communism in 1989, Eastern European public relations has developed in 16 years the same public relations practices, professional associations, and business structure that it took the U.S. 100 years to develop.

However, like a typical 16-year-old, the adolescent Eastern European PR market has experienced rapid growth, but not always maturity.

Anyone who’s lived with a temperamental teenager knows the tension between growth and maturity. Here are three tensions that those entering the Eastern European PR market face, along with some advice on how to deal with them:

► **Growing numbers of full-service agencies, but immature skills:** Throughout the region, agencies offer clients everything from publicity to strategic consulting. According to the **International Communication Consultancies Organization (ICCO)**, the number of full-service agencies in Eastern Europe is increasing steadily. But the number of highly skilled practitioners is still low, reflecting a lack of formal training in public relations. Thus, you can expect to find a wide range of PR services, but should be prepared to create professional development opportunities. More universities now offer courses, and several large firms, such as Porter-Novelli, hold periodic training meetings for their worldwide management staff.

► **Growing range of practice areas, but an immature understanding of public relations’ strategic role:** The growth in full-service agencies has also outstripped potential clients’ understanding of public relations. Many still consider PR a form of advertising, or think PR people are only good for event planning. The advice is the same in Eastern Europe as it is here: take time to educate your clients about the role PR can play in growing their businesses.

► **Growing numbers of media outlets, but immature journalistic standards:** The fall of communism meant the rise of independent, privately owned media outlets, both broadcast and print. Media penetration is wide and deep, so there are a number of ways to reach various publics. However, the **International Public Relations Association (IPRA)** reports that a number of media outlets still engage in “pay for publicity,” and so-called “black PR” campaigns, which attempt to destroy an opponent’s reputation through misinformation, are common. You should be aware of these practices and ensure that your company’s standards for working with journalists are clear. Some professional organizations, such as the **Czech Association for Public Relations Agencies (APRA)**, have sponsored roundtable discussions on journalist practices.

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Michael Smith

opens up to the world marketplace, the biggest demand is for open and transparent operations. That’s the phrase you hear again and again and again,” says Jim Heatherington, director of membership affairs for the **U.S.-Russia Business Council** (Washington, D.C.), a nonprofit trade association that promotes commercial ties between U.S. and Russian companies and currently has 300 members, ranging from **Cisco Systems Inc.** to **Ernst & Young** to **MetLife**. “Communicating strategically is just as important as the business operation.”

Paul Nathanson, senior

VP of **The PBN Company** (Washington, D.C.), which was one of the first U.S. PR agencies to open an office in Moscow (in 1990), says: “PR managers need to understand that they can do business in Russia, and they can do the right way.”

A PBN survey conducted last year of 175 of Russia’s most important companies found that 7 out of 10 CEOs acknowledge that reputation management is essential to achieving their company’s strategic business objectives while 9 out of 10 believe that reputation management should be one of the main functions of the CEO. “The

infrastructure is developing, and this is a big area for PR,” Nathanson says, adding that there are about 200 PR agencies currently in Russia. “Companies in Russia don’t want to be known as ‘Russian’ companies but international firms.” **PRN**

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