

PUBLIC RELATIONS INFORMATION AND PRACTICES

AS VIEWED BY

WOMEN'S NEWSPAPER EDITORS

BY

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

The Editor-Practitioner Relationship

A flood of public relations materials comes across every women's editor's desk weekly. Manufacturers are keenly aware of the importance of being mentioned in the nation's newspapers. They recognize that the readers of the women's section are the nation's chief consumers. Women do most of the purchasing of food, clothing, household appliances and furnishings and they exert a strong influence over their families' buying decisions.

Ideally, every story on the women's pages should originate with a reporter who interviews as many different sources as necessary for a complete and accurate account of the subject. But because of the number of columns to fill, limited staff and funds and rising costs, women's editors must often rely on outside sources of information. Increasingly, their work is made more difficult by the broadening range and complexity of news content. Not all women's news staffs have the expertise and specialized knowledge necessary to cover the "new" areas of news--science, health, education, social welfare and consumerism. As a consequence, the role of the public relations officer is expanding.

In practice, then, the public relations practitioner has become a tool of the news gathering operation of the media, along with the paper's own reporters, correspondents and wire services. In a sense, the public relations person is covering a news beat for the editor.

The press is reluctant to admit its growing dependence upon the

public relations practitioner. Recent criticism of the women's pages for what has been called "a flagrant abandonment of the newspaper's editorial space to the paid publicist" has made some women's editors particularly sensitive to this issue.<sup>1</sup> Yet, there is no need to argue the necessity of the public relations role. Given the present information system with the inability of the media to cover every aspect of today's large scale and widely dispersed industries, there is a definite need for such activities.

Yet, the role of the public relations person is often misunderstood and mistrusted. Much of the criticism comes from the news media through which practitioners must carry their messages.

The news media have condemned public relations people for operating under unethical standards, for news management and secrecy, for inundating the news media with biased reports and for seeking free publicity which some say should be paid for as advertising.

On the other side are the critics of the press who express concern about what to them is an increasing reliance by the news media upon public relations sources for information. These critics do not question the importance of public relations activities but do question the media's acceptance at face value of public relations materials.

In a speech before the 1971 Weekly Newspaper Conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Professor Scott Cutlip charged that:

Too little attention is given to the fact that an ever increasing share of the news content of our newspapers is coming, often unprocessed, from the public relations type-

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<sup>1</sup>Scott M. Cutlip, in a talk entitled, "The Public Relations Practitioner and the Nation's Public Information System," for the Weekly Newspaper Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison, November 6, 1971.

writer. More and more of the news gathering and reporting job is abandoned to the practitioner who supplies the information in neat, easy-to-use packages.<sup>2</sup>

Much of this criticism has been directed at the women's pages. Ferdinand Kuhn, long a top foreign correspondent, commented sharply on these practices in a lecture at the Columbia School of Journalism a few years ago:

In all but a few big-city papers, one has only to look to know the press adulterates news with unlabeled advertising. The line between news and salesmanship is hard to find on the pages and sections that deal with food, fashions and travel.<sup>3</sup>

These and the real estate pages were labeled by Kuhn as the "blighted areas of our press."<sup>4</sup>

In defining the amount of "real" news versus canned material added to our newspapers in the past 20 years, Ben H. Bagdikian, a noted critic, also attacked the women's section:

Some women's page material reflects the real world...But there's a distressing residue of journalistic sludge... business plugs...press releases printed as news, acres of food photos and releases separating ads, gushing fashion stories.<sup>5</sup>

He claims that a significant percentage of the added "news" or nonadvertising pages in dailies are special sections that are filled mostly with uncritical promotional information.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ferdinand Kuhn, "Blighted areas of our press," Columbia Journalism Review, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer 1966), pp. 5-10.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ben H. Bagdikian, "Fat Newspapers and Slim Coverage," Columbia Journalism Review, Vol. 12, No. 3 (September/October 1973), p. 16.

Others voice concern over what appears to be a lack of journalistic responsibility and a disregard for personal ethics on the part of both the press and the public relations practitioner. Senator Frank E. Moss (D-Utah) questioned the competence and professional integrity of food editors and admonished them for bypassing the question of advertising and nutritional claims in their food pages:

It surely seems that the advertiser reigns supreme on the food pages. Instead of being first rate journalism, too often our food pages are first rate press agency. Look at the reports which come out of your food tours, conferences and contests, which suspiciously appear to be junkets filled with wining, dining and gifts.<sup>6</sup>

After conducting a nationwide study among food editors, one reporter termed the food section the "cash register of the newspaper."<sup>7</sup> Richard Karp, Washington based freelance writer, believes the food section exists to provide a "happy hunting ground for advertisers." He claims that the chief--and in many cases only--source of food news used by the newspapers' food editors is the food industry itself:

On the average, more than 90 percent of the recipes and stories that appear in newspapers are releases supplied to food editors by vast corporate manufacturers, public relations agencies and trade associations...the reader is rarely, if ever, told the source of a story is a company hand-out.<sup>8</sup>

This criticism is not falling on deaf ears. Women's editors are quick to point out that their readers' needs and interests are paramount. They may depend upon public relations sources for some of their information

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<sup>6</sup>Senator Frank E. Moss (D-Utah), in a speech before the American Association of Newspaper Representatives (AANR) Food Editors Conference, Chicago, 1971.

<sup>7</sup>Richard Karp, "Newspaper food pages: credibility for sale," Columbia Journalism Review, Vol. 9, No. 4 (November/December 1971), p. 3.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

but they are not spoon-fed by business.

In a retort to the criticism of Moss and Karp one food editor agreed that the chief source of food news is the industry. She cited lack of equipment, time and budget as the reasons why she can't test more recipes herself and pointed out that her paper's photographic department simply is not equipped to take photographs as good as those provided by public relations sources. But she emphasized that her requirements start with a clear picture of something she thinks her readers would like. And she insisted that the food editors she knows would never promote a worthless product simply because the manufacturer is an advertiser.

Newspaper policy often forbids the use of brand names. As a result, companies send food editors lists of "generic terms" that may be substituted. But some of these terms, such as "tomato-based hot sauce," are so specific that, unless they are reworked, they are as much a product plug as the brand name itself.

One food editor explained the recipe hand-out problem this way:

We can avoid using the generic terms supplied by food companies. But there is no question that recipes lead the reader to a specific product. We often rewrite the hand-outs, but unless you really modify them drastically, they will still contain plugs, and we don't modify our hand-outs to that degree. The only way to avoid concealed advertising is to work up your own recipes, which few papers do.<sup>10</sup>

Some women's editors are deleting recipes and devoting more space to broad consumer issues. But food editors still report a high demand

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<sup>9</sup>Ann Hamman, "Food pages: next course," (letter), Columbia Journalism Review, Vol. 11, No. 1 (May/June 1972), p. 61.

<sup>10</sup>Richard Karp, op. cit., p. 40

for recipes. Opinion research conducted by a major cookware company indicated that a high percentage of readers clip and save recipes.<sup>11</sup>

However, women's editors can use many recipes and photographs from public relations sources without becoming their mouth pieces. They have complete freedom to accept or reject public relations materials as they choose; and they can treat them in any way they see fit. Public relations copy is fair game, as any public relations practitioner must realize.

Problems arise when editors fail to base their criteria for selection on the needs and interests of their readers. As information gatekeepers, it's their responsibility to present all sides of an issue. In order to exercise this objectivity, they need to view the public relations practitioner and his work with a degree of skepticism.

Editors are supposed to be guardians of public interest--seekers of the truth. Practitioners are seeking to advance their causes or clients by spotlighting the institutions' favorable news and softening or suppressing their darker sides. Both public relations persons and editors have been guilty at times of forgetting that, although public relations is an extension of the news gathering operation of the media, it is not unbiased. Failure to recognize this and to apply the same critical standards to public relations materials that are applied to all outside news sources has been the cause of much misunderstanding between practitioners and the press.

#### Professional Standards of Ethics

At a time when the press is concerned about its credibility,

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<sup>11</sup>Harland Warner, "Are Product Publicists Spinning Their Wheels With Recipe Releases?" unpublished article, Corning Glass Works, Corning, New York.

professional standards of ethics are a popular topic of debate. Editors are taking stock of their papers' policies and practices. Public relations practitioners, attempting to sort out their own code of ethics, are also questioning the implications of free offers and special writing awards to the press. Much of the discussion revolves around the women's pages.

Claims are made that the high standards of journalism upheld in other parts of the paper are absent from the women's section. Colleen Dishon, former women's editor and now editor of Features and News, Inc., says she learned about news management when she covered the New York fashion shows:

The fashion editor who does a good job of covering the public relations sponsored fashion showings receives industry awards and then her editor is likely to brag about it... In another area of the women's section--food--the influence of advertisers can be even less subtle.<sup>12</sup>

She pointed out that some food editors even get their pay checks from the advertising department.

Karp, in his investigation of the nation's food editors, reported that they receive a steady unsolicited flow of gifts from industry.<sup>13</sup> And it's not limited to the traditional fruit baskets, liquor and cosmetic samples. A common ploy is for manufacturers to let editors "try out" a new appliance. Another practice is for large appliance companies to supply food editors with expensive kitchen equipment at a special "home economics discount" to help them establish a test kitchen. Karp pointed out that food editors who get a product free on a regular basis are likely to

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<sup>12</sup>Colleen Dishon, "That wonderful world of upside down," Columbia Journalism Review, Vol. 10, No. 2 (July 1971), p. 8.

<sup>13</sup>Karp, op. cit., p. 41.

forget the cost to the consumer and advocate it.

But, according to some critics, the big pay-offs to editors who "sell out" are the junkets that masquerade as food tours, conferences or contests. Various trade commissions take groups of food editors on food tours of their countries. Companies fly the women to exotic retreats for a "conference." Others bring the editors to the company's main plant for a tour, lots of free product samples and plenty of wining and dining.

How wide-spread this practice is one can only speculate. Certainly, there are many women's editors with high ethical standards who would not dream of prostituting. The "freebies game" is an insult to these editors. And it's an annoyance to the honest public relations practitioners.

Growing concern over the dependency of the press upon public relations favors has prompted recent examinations of this problem. None have investigated the matter in depth. However, each survey has forced the participants to come to grips with the issues and take stock of their own practices.

In 1972, the Associated Press Managing Editors (APME) established a professional standards committee assigned "to take a searching look at the ethical standards and practices within the ranks and to point the way towards further examination."<sup>14</sup> One important problem the committee tackled was the public relations practice of giving "freebies" to the press.

The committee decided to look at the reporter's point of view through the New York "fashion weeks." A women's editor was asked to cover three fashion presentations (two in New York City, one in Montreal)

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<sup>14</sup>Professional Standards, a report by the APME Professional Standards Committee, November 1972, p. 1.

not for the fashion news involved but for the "freebies" offered.<sup>15</sup> She was encouraged to accept whatever free meals, drinks and gifts that were around.

The editor had to buy a suitcase to cart home the estimated \$250 in "freebies" she received--perfume, jewelry, accessories and the like. Not as easy to account for were the dozens of cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, dinners and breakfasts consumed on the spot.

She reported that not every newspaper reporter attending these events accepted the outpouring of gifts and social events. But many did. And many also won expense-paid trips to Amsterdam and Rome. Although the recipient of these freebies is under no obligation to push the manufacturer's product, Karp pointed out that an editor accepting this outpouring of gifts would not be inclined to take an unfavorable view of her benefactor.<sup>16</sup>

But, if women's editors do accept freebies and payola, it may be because they're encouraged to do so. Von Hoffman pointed out that women's staffers must often take the hand-out or they don't get to cover the story since the managing editors either won't or can't pick up the tab.<sup>17</sup>

To find out how managing editors handle the freebie problem, the APME sent them a questionnaire. Nothing close to a consensus of opinion was reached.<sup>18</sup> About one-half the respondents indicated that their policy

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<sup>15</sup>Carol Sutton, "Freebies, The Reporter's View," Professional Standards, report by the APME Professional Standards Committee, November 1972, p.46-48.

<sup>16</sup>Karp, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>17</sup>Nicholas Von Hoffman, "Women's pages: an irreverent view," Columbia Journalism Review, Vol. 10, No. 2 (July/August 1971), p. 52.

<sup>18</sup>Larry Newman, "Freebies: The Editor's View," Professional Standards, report by the APME Professional Standards Committee, November 1972, p.21-39.

had become more explicit in the past ten years. However, only 20 percent of the editors said they ruled out all gifts.

When the editors of "The Quill" queried a sampling of newspaper managing editors and other media representatives regarding their acceptance of complimentary tickets, dinners, junkets and gifts from business sources, they too received a variety of responses.<sup>19</sup> The majority of respondents bar or discourage freebies and junkets for their staff but some are more flexible than others. A few editors explained that strict rules can be unreasonable and unworkable.

Karp discovered that newspaper policies contain many loopholes, however.<sup>20</sup> For instance, newspapers that forbid their editors to go on company-paid trips often allow them to accept excursions paid for by trade associations since these represent an entire industry rather than a private interest. Another exception to the rule is that editors may attend any freebie selected as a "newsworthy" event, a somewhat elastic label.

Although more than one respondent to "The Quill" questionnaire noted that freebie offers are diminishing by the week, the practice is apparently still extensive. At a recent APME convention, Paul Poorman, editor of the "Detroit News" and chairman of the professional standards committee, said that "news" staff members had been offered more than \$70,000 in free gifts and services over the last year.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Charles Long, "Games Newspeople Play," The Quill, Vol. 61, No. 8 (August 1973), p. 15-18.

<sup>20</sup>Karp, op. cit., p. 42

<sup>21</sup>"Newsman Still Getting Gifts, AP Report Tells Editors," The Milwaukee Journal, Tuesday, November 20, 1973, part 1, p. 5.

Even more disturbing is the practice of offering combination deals-- editorial space in exchange for paid advertising. Poorman reported that a survey of public relations men revealed that 38 percent had been offered such a package. Twenty-six percent had been told that an advertising schedule was a prerequisite to getting their releases in the paper.

Many journalists regard contest, other than those administered by journalism groups, as another threat to their integrity. The danger, they say, is that the interest groups, rather than singling out journalistic excellence are more likely to reward stories favorable to their cause.

In an article in the Columbia Journalism Review, David Zinman pointed out that what makes some groups' motives particularly suspect is that they have never given awards to critical stories.<sup>22</sup> Other companies put their own executives on judging panels. Zinman explained that, although not every contest was conceived for ulterior reasons, the number sponsored by interest groups is now so great (more than 40 percent of those listed in Editor and Publisher) that they tend to reduce the meaning and importance of all news awards. And, the longer they are around, the more easily they are accepted by newsmen as a fringe benefit of newspaper work.

To get a reading on attitudes, Zinman sent a questionnaire to 300 editors and reporters representing at least one reporter in every state. Of the 128 who responded, 68 percent felt that, in general, prizes contributed to better reporting. However, 60 percent said reporters should not take cash prizes from commercial groups.

In their assessment of the current freebies practice, the APME

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<sup>22</sup>David Zinman, "Should Newsmen Accept PR Prizes?" Columbia Journalism Review, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring 1970), p. 37-43.

committee also sought the public relations practitioner's point of view. Although responses to the questionnaire indicated a wide range of opinions, a pattern of sorts emerged.<sup>23</sup> Of those public relations practitioners who regularly provide things of value to the press, more than a third do so in the belief that it will provide more favorable coverage. An additional third do so in the understanding that the press expects it; one in six had been solicited by the press to do so.

A similar trend was revealed by those who regularly supply free transportation or accommodations for events considered newsworthy. More than a third do so in the belief that the event would not otherwise be covered. Some 16 percent said they thought the press expected it; 14 percent anticipated more favorable coverage as a result.

Over one-half the respondents said they don't clearly understand the freebies policies of at least some of the papers they deal with. And virtually all of those who provide freebies would stop the practice if the newspapers involved opposed it.

Obviously, neither journalists nor public relations persons are without blame. The freebie practice continues because it is encouraged by members of both professions. Yet, neither group want to acknowledge its share of the guilt. Perhaps when journalists and public relations people come to appreciate the requirements of each other's jobs, there will be less need for pretense.

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<sup>23</sup>Kurt Luedtke, "Freebies, The p.r. man's view," Professional Standards, a report by the APME Professional Standards Committee, November 1972, p. 40,41; also Public Relations Journal, April 1973, p. 32-34.

The Importance of the Women's Section

The women's section of the American newspaper is in a state of flux. A "large and growing division exists between two kinds of women's pages. The traditional variety perceives its readers as housewives and club members with limited concerns...The newer type assumes reader interests far beyond brides, diapers and charity luncheons and strives for male readers as well."<sup>24</sup>

Big papers on both coasts and in the Midwest have begun moving at various speeds towards innovation. The feeling at some papers is that the women's pages are frivolous, non-substantial and ought to be a thing of the past.<sup>25</sup> Several major dailies have done away with women's pages as such and incorporated their better ingredients into general feature sections.

However, some journalists envision the women's section (or its counterpart) as developing into the most exciting, most useful, and even the most important part of the paper. They point out that the consumerism movement and women's liberation have thrust new vigor into these pages.<sup>26-29</sup> Women's editors, knowledgeable in food, shopping, housing and consumer fields are well qualified to handle stories on nutrition, health, and merchandise quality control. In an article in the "Montana Journalism

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<sup>24</sup>"Flight from Fluff," il. Time, 99:48, March 20, 1972.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>26</sup>Nicholas Von Hoffman, op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>27</sup>Jean S. Taylor, "'Hell hath...' just ain't good enough," ANSE Bulletin, October 1970, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup>"Flight from Fluff," op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>29</sup>"Pages for Women," il. Time, 89:55, May 19, 1967.

Review," Zena Beth Guenin said that "as audiences receive more of their hard news coverage from television, there should be more newspaper emphasis on 'life-style' stories and involvement with the actualities and frustrations of modern living."<sup>30</sup> The women's pages, if given half a chance, can respond to this need.

"Ms." editor, Gloria Steinem said:

I've come back full circle in that I now feel the value of the women's pages. They should cover all subjects, including men, from a point of view that is not being represented.<sup>31</sup>

In fact, the women's section can already claim strong readership. Papers that have tried to restructure or do away with the women's section have encountered reader resistance. Von Hoffman pointed out that "people read the women's pages far more than the editorial page...Both the quality and quantity of reader mail is impressive."<sup>32</sup>

Women's pages are not bound by the same restrictions that dictate news format in the rest of the paper. There are almost no "must cover" events and fewer firm deadlines. This means that women's editors can take time to develop a story idea and interpret the significance of the hard news. The only restraint put on women's pages is that the material be connected to the lives of the readers, that it be shown why it might matter to them.

This type of descriptive or "soft" news is precisely what public relations departments are best capable of providing. Who else is in a

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<sup>30</sup>Zena Beth Guenin, "Women's Pages in the 1970's," Montana Journalism Review, Summer 1973, p. 31.

<sup>31</sup>Charles Long, "The A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention Colossus," The Quill, Vol. 60, No. 4 (June 1972), p. 37.

<sup>32</sup>Nicholas Von Hoffman, op. cit., p. 52.

better position to talk about research developments, nutritious low-cost meal plans, the care of new synthetics and product evaluations? Corporate public relations persons have experts at their fingertips who can provide specialized information not readily available to women's editors. And industry has the funds to conduct research on public attitudes and social trends. The public relations person who is aware of the type of information the women's editor wants is in a position to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between himself or herself and the press.

#### The Problem

It's obvious from the high percentage of rejected public relations material that many practitioners are expending time, money and effort in a futile pursuit of news space. The editor, besieged with far more material than she could begin to use, can afford to be choosy. Public relations persons who gear their material to the needs and style of the newspaper hold the best chance of capturing the editor's attention.

As long as the editor and the practitioner are doing their jobs, there will always be a certain amount of conflict between the two fields. But this should not prevent them from understanding the requirements of each other's job. They should be able to cooperate with each other based on an appreciation of what each is trying to do.

It is the responsibility of the practitioner to analyze media requirements and further good press relations and with this in mind, this study examines problems that confront business public relations persons who provide material to women's departments of newspapers. It attempts to answer such questions as:

How do women's editors use public relations materials?

What type of information do women's editors want?

How do they regard free gifts and expense-paid trips offered by business?

What changes would women's editors like to see in public relations information services and practices?

This investigation into changing editorial needs and policies at the women's desk is intended to point out the strengths and weaknesses in various public relations practices and provide guidelines for improving the working relationship between women's editors and public relations people.

The questions asked in this study cover a broad range of issues. It is necessary to emphasize that this is a descriptive study and is merely intended to present a cross-section of current trends in attitudes and practices. It does not purport to provide all the answers. Nor can the results be generalized to women's sections outside the sampling area, without qualifications.

Adding to the complexity of this topic is the fact that women's pages are in a transitory state. The findings and conclusions drawn as a result of this research should not be regarded as conclusive. Instead they should serve as a foundation for further research in the area.

#### Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the study was to examine women's editors views of public relations materials and practices.

Specific objectives were:

- 1) To determine the way in which women's editors at representative newspapers that circulate in Wisconsin use materials from public relations

sources,

2) To assess the attitudes of women's editors towards the information service provided by public relations practitioners,

3) To analyze reasons for rejection by women's editors of public relations materials,

4) To find out how women's editors regard the free gifts and expense-paid trips offered them by business,

5) To determine the attitudes of women's editors towards public relations in general,

6) To find out what changes women's editors would like to see in public relations information services and practices.

#### Definition of Terms

Freebies are token or expensive gifts, tickets to events, accommodations, meals, travel to simple or exotic places given to the news media by public relations practitioners. Some journalists regard industry-sponsored writing contests as another type of freebie.

Women's news is copy devoted to advice, how-to stories, features and research articles on subject matter relating to family and consumer. General subject areas are foods and nutrition, fashion and clothing, health and beauty, home furnishings, house and garden, family finance and management, and family life. The articles may appear as short fillers or feature articles--with or without illustrations. Under this definition, society news, syndicated letter columns, club news, non-information items like patterns, horoscopes and puzzles, fashion and food advertisements are not considered women's news.

## CHAPTER II

## SCOPE AND CONDUCT OF THE STUDY

Scope of the Study

The nature of the study necessitated limiting the sampling area to a region easily accessible by car, given available time and funds. The large number of daily newspapers that circulate in Wisconsin provided a sufficient population from which to draw a sample.

Combining the larger metropolitan papers in Chicago, Minneapolis and St. Paul--which claim a competitive share of the Wisconsin market--with the 35 Wisconsin dailies, allowed for greater comparison between high and low circulation size papers.

One stipulation for being included in the study was that the women's section of the newspaper must carry some public relations material. Each of the papers was reviewed during a one week period for public relations content. Nine papers were eliminated before the sample was drawn because the women's section contained no material from business sources.

The universe used in this study was a 16-paper sample representing the total of daily newspapers that circulate in Wisconsin in 1973. The sampling procedure involved cataloging the newspapers into five circulation size groups. Current circulation figures for the newspapers came from the 1973 Editor and Publisher International Year Book.<sup>33</sup>

A study conducted at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1967

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<sup>33</sup>Editor and Publisher International Year Book, Editor and Publisher Co., Inc., 1973.

provided a basis for the circulation groups used in the study. "A Content Analysis of Women's Pages of U.S. Daily Newspapers" drew a proportional representation of papers of each region in the U.S. from the circulation groups.<sup>34</sup>

The division differs from the national study in that several circulation groups are combined to prevent only one or two papers being a group. One circulation group (75,500 - 100,449) is omitted because no Wisconsin papers are in that group. In addition, the lowest circulation size group is enlarged by 1,000 for more even distribution of the papers.

The newspapers were listed in alphabetical order under each circulation category. Three papers were selected by random sampling from each of the circulation groups for a total of 15 papers. A fourth paper, known to have a test kitchen for recipes was added to the highest circulation size group. Because recipes are one of the most frequently used items from public relations sources in the women's section, it was felt that information concerning recipe testing at newspapers would be valuable to the study. Since the study was of a descriptive, rather than an analytical nature, the expansion of the highest circulation size group did not affect the validity of the results. Findings were based on simple frequency counts and the editors' comments. (See Table I for papers and their circulation groups.)

#### The Concept

In order to meet the objectives of the study, the following

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<sup>34</sup>Sherry D'Esta Davison, "A Content Analysis of the Women's Pages of United States Daily Newspapers," M.S. Research Project, 1967, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

TABLE I  
CIRCULATION SIZE

Group I - 8,449 and under circulation	
Beaver Dam Citizen	5,800
Portage Register	8,165
West Bend News	7,540
Group II - 8,500 to 20,449	
Manitowac Herald Times with Two Rivers Reporter	20,432
Stevens Point Journal	11,616
Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune	11,160
Group III - 20,500 to 30,449	
Fond du Lac Reporter	23,017
Janesville Gazette	27,038
Oshkosh Daily Northwestern	29,426
Group IV - 30,500 to 75,449	
Appleton Post Crescent	46,346
Green Bay Press Gazette	49,476
Racine Journal Times	40,733
Group V - 100,500+	
Chicago Tribune	728,760
Milwaukee Journal	350,364
Milwaukee Sentinel	178,227
St. Paul Pioneer Press with St. Paul Dispatch	233,484

emerged as the concept:

1) A structured interview would be administered to the women's editors by the researcher. Many of the questions would offer several alternative answers. Others would be open-ended. Responses would be recorded by the researcher on individual answer cards.

2) One section of the interview dealing with editors' attitudes towards public relations freebies would be handled separately. Editors would be requested to draw uncoded cards from a file box, fill out their responses and return the cards to the box. The researcher would promise not to examine the cards until all 16 editors had been interviewed as a way of assuring anonymity.

3) At the close of the interview a two-page questionnaire would be administered to each women's editor. This would provide a measure of their attitudes towards public relations, practitioners and public relations information services.

#### The Methodology

A personal interview was preferred to a mail survey for several reasons. First, impersonal mail questionnaires sometimes have a low rate of return. Second, the researcher was interested in asking more questions than could have been easily handled in a written questionnaire. Also, it was anticipated that editors would take a greater interest in an interview and therefore elicit more complete responses. A directed conversation permitted less specific categories for the answers and allowed for the inclusion of additional comments. Finally, a personal interview made possible the subjective evaluation of attitudes which adds to the value of a descriptive study.

Interview questions were divided into the following five sections:

Section A dealt with general information about the women's editor and her staff. The purpose of this section was to identify any major differences in the size and structure of the women's staff, job titles and coverage of women's news among the five circulation groups. It was also intended to give a general picture of the women's departments included in the study.

Section B examined women's editors' use of public relations information services. It was designed to find out about editors' use of written material, their opinions concerning the quality of written materials, the value of public relations news tips and their reasons for rejecting some materials.

Section C concerned editors' use of recipe releases from business sources and their opinions concerning these recipes. It also included a question on unsolicited food samples from companies. Because a 1967 content analysis of the women's pages of U.S. daily newspapers revealed that a higher percentage of news space is devoted to food and nutrition news than to any other topic and because it is recognized that editors receive many recipes from the food and appliance industries, this section is warranted.<sup>35</sup>

Section D dealt with the freebie issue. Questions concerned newspaper policy with regard to the free gifts and trips offered editors by industry, the frequency of freebie offers, special discounts on consumer items and editorial ties with advertising.

This section also included the uncoded question-answer cards

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

which the editors were asked to fill out themselves. Questions concerned women's editors attitudes towards free gift and trip offers from business; what influences them to accept or reject such offers and their participation in commercially sponsored writing contests.

Section E was designed to find out what type of material women's editors want from their public relations information sources. It related to subject matter and format of releases, advance timing of materials, public relations illustrations and press kits.

A second purpose of this section was to identify any changes women's editors would like to see in public relations information services and practices. Questions were formed so as to evaluate present opinions about practitioners and to elicit recommendations from the editors.

To standardize the administration of the interviews and thus assure validity, all-lead-in statements and instructions were typed on file cards for the interviewer's reference. For the same reason, each interview question was typed on a separate file card. Answer forms for each question were printed on separate cards, color-coded by section. Before each interview, the answer cards were matched with the question cards in the file. Then, each section of question and answer cards was placed on a separate ring. This method greatly facilitated the administration of the interview. And, because each question card obstructed the editor's view of the answer forms, the forms did not bias the responses.

The editors were guaranteed anonymity for themselves and their papers on all responses. Each editor was encouraged to give her candid opinions on business information services and public relations practices.

At small papers, women's editors handle most, if not all, of the

copy that goes into their sections. However, as the size of the women's staff increases the various areas such as food and fashion become more independent. The women's editor may not be fully aware of the amount of public relations material received and used in the food section. In turn, the food editor often does not know how the home furnishings editor makes use of public relations material.

Moreover, the women's section is sometimes completely divorced from the food section at large papers. This is the case at one of the papers in this study. At another paper in the highest circulation size group, the food, fashion and home furnishing departments are completely autonomous; there is no women's section as such.

Because of the time pressures at newspapers, the researcher decided to interview no more than one editor at each paper. Food and nutrition is the only subject area handled separately in the interview, so only the food editors were contacted at the papers in the highest circulation size group. This means that there are a few blanks in the answer forms for specific subject areas like fashion and home furnishings for the highest circulation size papers. But because this constitutes a marginal part of the study and because all questions were answered at least in part, this seemed the best solution.

At two of the papers in the highest circulation size group, the food section is part of the women's department. Although the food editor was contacted, the women's editors at both papers volunteered to answer most of the general questions. However, the women's editor and food editor were interviewed separately and no question was asked more than once at either paper. Only the women's editor filled out the written questionnaire at each newspaper. Therefore, there were no more than

sixteen responses for each question in the study.

A pre-test was administered to two editors at papers not included in the sample: the Wisconsin State Journal and the Capital Times. They were chosen because of their proximity to the university.

As a result of these pre-tests, minor changes were made in the interview technique. For instance, the researcher had planned to tape each interview as a check on the interview responses. But because the editors objected to the use of the tape recorder and because it proved easy to record all the responses on the answer forms, the tape recorder was not used in the actual study. Also, several questions were combined and some changes were made in the wording of both questions and response categories.

#### Schedule

Prior to the interview period, a letter was sent to each women's editor in the sample requesting her cooperation in the study. (Appendix A). A few days later, the editors were telephoned to set up interview appointments. An interview schedule was arranged for a three week period during the autumn of 1973.

The researcher received excellent cooperation from all the editors in the study. All but one expressed great interest in the interview questions and the research results. Certainly, none were apathetic towards the role and function of public relations practitioners. Every editor elaborated to some degree on many of the questions and this enhanced the value of the research.

The time required to conduct each interview ranged from 70 minutes to three hours at one of the larger papers. The average interview lasted one and three-quarter hours.

CHAPTER III  
DESCRIPTION OF WOMEN'S DEPARTMENTS

Interview Section A

The purpose of this section was to give a general picture of the women's departments included in the study and to identify major differences among the five circulation groups. It defined the size and structure of the women's staff, job titles and the approximate news space of the women's sections.

Interviewer: Before we tackle the real subject of this interview, I'd like a little information about you and your staff.

Women's News Staff

Question: Does your newspaper have a special staff to handle the women's news section? If so, how many people does it include?

Only one of the 16 papers in the study lacks a special staff to handle women's news. On this paper, which is in the lowest circulation category, two general reporters write women's news as well as general assignment features. The two other papers in this category have one full-time editor to cover women's news. These editors occasionally report on events of general interest, such as the local school board meeting.

Staff size cannot be directly associated with circulation size in the four lowest circulation groups. However, as the following table illustrates, the women's department enlarges with increasing circulation size. (Group V, the highest circulation size category, has been omitted

from this table.)

TABLE II  
STAFF SIZE

No. of full-time persons	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV
One	2N			
One + one part-time	1N	2N	1N	
Two		1N	1N	1N
Three			1N	
Three + one part-time				2N

In addition to three full-time editors and one part-time food editor, one of the papers in Group IV has three part-time editors in different locations who write for their area editions. The women's editor also assigns stories to 13 special correspondents in other locations and she can purchase free-lance articles. A student intern writes for the paper during the summer months.

There is a marked difference in staff size between papers in the four lowest circulation size groups and those in the highest circulation group. This is not unexpected since there is a wide gap between the circulation size of group IV (30,500 to 75,449) and group V (100,500 +).

At one of the papers in the highest circulation size category there are eleven full-time and two part-time persons in the women's department. Another paper employs nine full-time persons and one part-time person on the women's staff.

Where the food section is independent of the women's section, staff sizes are smaller for individual departments. One autonomous food editor

shares full-time secretarial help with the five persons on the women's section. The food department of one major daily includes six full-time professional home economists and one part-time; four of these are writers.

### Job Titles

Question: What's your job title?

Although women's sections claim to include both sexes among their readership, "women's editor" is still the most commonly used job title for this department head. It was used at 10 of the 16 newspapers in the study. This title was used exclusively by the middle range circulation groups III and IV. But one women's editor in group IV, who stressed that her section is not exclusively for women said, "Everyone reads it." Another women's editor in this circulation category pointed out that management recently tried to disband the women's section. Reader reaction was so vehement that the women's department was reinstated, but on a smaller scale. (Management attributes the cutback to the newsprint shortage.)

Only two editors, one in group I and one in group II, are designated as "women's editors." Other job titles are: Family Page Editor and General Reporter in group I and Community Life Editor and Society Editor in the second circulation size group. Partly this reflects the fact that editors at the smaller papers are responsible for more than the women's news. It is also indicative of a trend towards more general titles for women's editors and their sections. But tradition dies hard at some papers. One editor said that her readers generally refer to her as the society editor but that she is trying to promote the title of women's editor because it is not as limiting in its connotation.

Two of the papers in group V have a "women's editor." One other paper dropped this title in 1968 and substituted the term "family life editor" to reflect broader subject coverage. At another newspaper the various sections such as fashion and home furnishings are independent of each other; there is no women's department as such. The head of the food department is now referred to as the "food and wine editor" because of the growing emphasis on beverage information.

Question: What are the job titles of the other persons writing women's news for your paper?

Traditional job titles like food editor and home furnishings editor are still standard. But, at some papers the titles have become more specialized. For instance, the job title of "men's fashion editor" underscores one women's section's interest in attracting male readers. "Food and wine editor" is self-explanatory. In some cases specialized job titles help define the job responsibility. "Food guide writer" is one example.

Other papers have dropped the old titles altogether and replaced them with names that emphasize changes in news coverage. Designations such as "community life editor" and "family page editor" reflect a transition from the stereotyped women's pages to a general feature section for the whole family.

Not everyone considers job titles significant, however. At a paper which still uses the traditional names, the women's editor said that staff titles are somewhat meaningless since she trains each member of her staff to cover all the feature areas. A women's editor at a large daily said she feels job titles are unimportant and for that reason

never runs them with bylines.

The following table groups similar job titles used in the women's departments included in the study:

TABLE III

## JOB TITLES

Total	Job title	Total	Job title
10	women's editor	5	food editor
5	assistant women's editor (or assistant to the women's editor)	1	food and wine editor
2	society editor	1	food guide writer
1	community life editor	- - - - -	- - - - -
1	family page editor	2	fashion editor
1	family life editor	1	men's fashion editor
1	women's staff editor	1	fashion reporter
1	women's writer	- - - - -	- - - - -
- - - - -	- - - - -	1	home furnishings editor
11	general reporter	- - - - -	- - - - -
3	staff writer	1	news assistant
1	feature writer	1	news clerk

#### Frequency and Regularity of Women's News

Question: About how often do you use news of special interest to women in your newspapers--daily, twice a week, or at least one a month?

The higher circulation size papers carry women's news more frequently and on a more regular basis than do the smaller papers. All

papers except those in the lowest circulation group carry women's news every day their paper is published.

One of the papers in group I includes some women's news each day. Another has women's news two or three times a week and a third has a full page on Saturday with scattered articles throughout the week. The middle-sized papers, groups II and III, carry a women's section six days a week, Monday through Saturday.

Two of the papers in group IV print news of interest to women six days a week. The other paper in this circulation group also has a Sunday women's section.

The papers in group V show the widest variation. One women's department is responsible for the women's section of one morning and one evening paper owned by the same publisher. So there are two news spaces to fill, seven days a week. Another women's section at a major daily runs seven days a week. A third paper has women's news Monday through Saturday and a special food section on Thursday. The food and wine editor at a metropolitan daily has news space every day except Friday, with the heaviest coverage on Thursday. Her news space in the Sunday magazine is quite irregular.

#### Amount of Space Devoted to Women's News

Question: Under normal conditions, what is the average number of pages in your women's section per week?

It is desirable to have an idea of the approximate amount of space devoted to women's news in each paper as a basis for distinguishing between the circulation groups. Papers with a larger news space might be expected to use more public relations materials.

Editors were able to give only a rough estimate of the number of pages in their women's section during an average week. All but the food editors included society news in their estimates. And in several cases, estimates included both editorial copy and advertising. Only a few were aware of the average number of column inches of copy in their sections per week. It was particularly difficult for them to estimate copy at the time of the interviews since most women's sections had been cut back, due to the newsprint shortage.

Therefore, following the interview period a rough measurement was taken of the news space of each women's section and food section in the study. These figures include total editorial space, both copy and pictures; they do not include society news. Moreover, it is important to note that these are only approximations and should not be taken as conclusive. What these figures do illustrate is that the number of pages devoted to women's news increases for the higher circulation size papers.

TABLE IV

## AVERAGE NUMBER OF FULL NEWSPAPER PAGES OF COPY FOR ONE WEEK

Paper	Food news*	Women's news
Group I - under 8,449 circulation - - - - -		2.2 (Mean)
Beaver Dam Citizen		1.5
Portage Register		2.4
West Bend News		2.6
Group II - 8,500 to 20,449 circulation - - - - -		2.9 (Mean)
Manitowoc Herald Times with Two Rivers Reporter		1.8
Stevens Point Journal		2.2
Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune		4.8
Group III - 20,500 to 30,449 circulation - - - - -		3.2 (Mean)
Fond du Lac Reporter		3.8
Janesville Gazette		2.5
Oshkosh Daily Northwestern		3.4
Group IV - 30,500 to 75,449 circulation - - - - -		6.5 (Mean)
Appleton Post Crescent		7.1
Green Bay Press Gazette		7.2
Racine Journal Times		5.3
Group V - 100,000 + circulation - - - - -		15.0 (Mean)
Chicago Tribune	6.7 + Sun.	21.1
Milwaukee Journal	6.9	18.1
Milwaukee Sentinel	3.2	8.5
St. Paul Pioneer Press	3.8	15.0
with St. Paul Dispatch	3.1	12.5

\*Figures for "Women's news" in Group V include "Food news", as do figures for the other circulation groups.

## CHAPTER IV

## USE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS MATERIALS IN WOMEN'S SECTIONS OF NEWSPAPERS

Interview Section B

This section examined women editor's use of public relations information services. It was designed to find out about editors use of written releases, their opinions concerning the quality of the materials, the value of public relations news tips and their reasons for rejecting some materials.

Interviewer: I'm most interested in your reactions to the material you receive from public relations sources and your opinions concerning the public relations practitioners you know. I have several specific questions dealing with the relationship between women's editors and public relations persons who disseminate information to them.

Rest assured that you or your paper won't be identified in connection with the answers you give and I'd really appreciate your honest reactions. Please feel free during the conversation to add any comments you'd like to. My immediate purpose is to gather information for my master's thesis. But I hope the results will prove useful to both women's editors and their public relations information sources.

First, I'm going to ask you for some educated guesses.

Quantity of Mail From Public Relations Sources

Question: What is the approximate number of releases your news department receives in an average week from all public relations sources? Here are

some possible ranges: 0-50; 51-150; 151-300; 301-600; 1200 and more.

As might be expected, there is an obvious increase in the number of public relations releases received with an increase in the circulation size. Two of the editors handling women's news in the lowest circulation group said they get fewer than 50 releases per week. The other editor in group I reported receiving between 50 and 100 releases each week.

One of the editors in group II also estimated receiving somewhere between 50 and 100 public relations releases weekly. A good share of these releases come from the nearby university. The other two women's departments in this circulation group get about 50 releases.

Women's sections in group III receive about the same amount of mail as those in group II. One office gets about 50 releases each week. A normal range for the other two papers is between 50 and 100 releases weekly. All editors in the fourth highest circulation group reported getting between 50 and 150.

It was surprising to find that the women's department which is responsible for women's pages in two newspapers receives an amount of mail comparable to that on much smaller papers. However, the women's editor said that she has frequent phone contact with local public relations persons. Food editors at two other papers in the highest circulation group size get between 50 and 150 releases a week.

The volume of mail arriving at one food department weekly is about five times the amount received by the other editors in group V. The food editor and her staff must cope with somewhere between 600 and 700 public relations releases every week.

Number of Public Relations Releases Used Weekly

Question: How many public relations releases would you guess you use in your news section during an average week: Here are some possible ranges: 0-5; 6-10; 11-15; 16-20; 21-25; 26-30; 30 and over.

In asking this question it was made clear that this included use of the material in any way--to print in total or in part, or to use as a story idea.

There is no marked variation in the number of releases used in the four lowest circulation groups. Four women's editors in the three lowest circulation groups use no more than five releases each week. One editor in the lowest circulation group and all three editors in group IV use from six to ten public relations releases in an average week.

The number of public relations releases used weekly cannot be tied to circulation size. An editor in the lowest circulation size group uses between 21 and 25 releases. The heaviest use of public relations materials--about 50 per week--is at a paper in the second lowest circulation size group. The greatest number used by any editor in group III is between 11 and 15 releases.

One women's editor in the highest circulation size group uses between six and 10 releases in an average week. The three food editors differ greatly in their use of public relations materials. One uses no more than five releases a week. Another uses between 16 and 20. And, in the other food department, the editor uses 30 or more releases in some manner each week.

Releases Accompanied by Illustrations

Question: About how many of these releases would be accompanied by

illustrations? Like--none, less than one-fourth, about half, practically all.

Two of the editors in each of the five circulation groups, or a total of 10 editors, said that less than one-quarter of the releases used would be accompanied by illustrations. One editor in the lowest circulation size group would not use any illustrations with public relations releases. The other editors said they would use photographs with about half of the releases.

Two women's editors said that only food and recipe releases from public relations sources are printed with illustrations. Only the fashion releases are accompanied by photographs on the women's pages of one of the largest papers; food photographs are taken at the paper.

#### Illustration Used Without Copy

Question: About how many illustrations from public relations sources are used without copy other than cutlines in an average week?

All but one of the editors said they use no more than five public relations illustrations weekly without copy other than cutlines. Two editors said that only fashion illustrations would be printed without copy. One editor in group IV uses between 11 and 15 fashion illustrations in an average week in this manner.

One of the food editors in group V pointed out that she only uses public relations photographs that illustrate a general theme such as breads and cheeses. Those that pertain only to a particular recipe are thrown out. Public relations photographs are filed according to the subject area and used to supplement illustrations taken at the paper. The number of public relations photographs used depends somewhat upon the

amount of news space and the way space is divided for the food section that week.

### Public Relations Information Sources

Question: Here's a list of possible public relations information sources that I'd like to ask you several questions about:

- Public relations wire service
- Public relations counseling firms or public relations departments of ad agencies
- Corporate public relations people
- Trade associations
- Local and state government agencies
- Federal government agencies
- Education institutions
- Professional organizations
- Fund drive organizations

(This list was handed to the editors. Also, brief typewritten explanations of the type of material sent out by each of these sources were available for their reference. See Appendix B.)

First of all, about what proportion of the material relevant to women's news that you receive from each source do you use, either for story ideas or to publish in total or in part? Like--none; less than one-fourth; about half; practically all; don't get any.

(Responses to these questions have been combined. During actual interviews, the editors were allowed time to answer each question separately.)

Considering each one again, how good a source of news tips and feature story ideas are each of these information sources? Please give me a summary rating for each one--either excellent, good, fair or poor.

Now, I'd like your opinion on the quality of what they provide, considering such factors as timeliness, news value, accuracy, lack of bias. Again, give me a summary rating for each one. Ready?

Last thing I want to do with this list is to get your opinion of which gives you the best all-around information service, which is second best and which is third best.

Public relations wire service: Only one of the papers included in this study--a major daily--receives this wire service. Even at this paper, the editor was unaware that it existed until she checked with several other departments. Apparently, the bulk of the material coming over this wire goes to the business editor. The food editor could not recall having received any information through the public relations wire service.

For this reason, the public relations wire service was not evaluated by any of the editors in the study.

Public relations counseling firms or public relations departments of advertising agencies: All the editors in this study use less than one-quarter of the material they receive from public relations counseling firms or public relations departments of advertising agencies. One editor never uses this material because, "It's just another form of advertising."

Other editors complained that the material has "little news value," "takes too much time to develop," and is "biased and one-sided."

One small-town editor said that if a release has a local angle, such as the promotion of local company officials, she'll use it. But generally she feels that, "They are trying to push a product and our paper's policy is to avoid advertising. Anyway, both state and national news is covered through the wire service. It's a function of our reporters to get the local news. So I don't have much need for canned information."

One food editor explained that she considers three things before deciding whether or not to use material from counseling agencies, corporate

people and trade associations. The recipe is the most important thing; if it's bad, the release is thrown out immediately. The quality of the photograph is the editor's second most important consideration. Sometimes she may save the recipe but throw out the photograph. Least important is the lead or the "fluff," which, as she explained, is always rewritten anyway.

Several editors mentioned that they use food items only from firms and agencies. As one editor put it, "Food items are good but the rest of the material is too biased." Another editor uses the whole food release and the illustrations, deleting company and brand names.

Half the editors rated public relations counseling firms and ad agencies only "fair" as a source of news tips and story ideas. One editor said that she never uses material from local public relations departments because their work is amateurish. News tips from agencies outside the city are accepted if they are good and are offered on an exclusive basis. Another food editor pointed out that the news tips she receives from the really sharp firms are generally good to excellent.

One woman's editor at a major daily said that agencies can put her in touch with "stars on the media circuit--the big names that lend prestige and a certain cosmopolitan flavor to your features."

Most of the editors rated the quality of the material from public relations firms or ad agencies as "good" or "fair." One editor finds that material from local PR firms is tailored to her needs much better than that from national sources. All the editors in the highest circulation category explained that the quality of the material varies greatly, depending on who sends it. As one editor said, "You soon get to know the quality of their work."

One food editor explained her method of weeding out material:

"All material goes through an initial screening. The better releases, perhaps about 20 per day, are worth a second look. A small number of these get used. I'm often in my office 'till midnight going over the immense volume of mail. I hate to throw something in the wastebasket without at least skimming over it since it might prove useful."

She noted that the quality of the work from the brightest public relations persons is often excellent. But the majority of releases are far too long and wordy. She pointed out that PR persons could save editors a lot of work by expressing themselves in a few words.

Another editor complained about the flowery language in many of the releases from agencies. She said, "They're not written for people. Either they're cutesy or they're trying to string a play on every other line. They should write the way people normally talk."

Two editors in the highest circulation groups said that public relations firms and public relations departments of ad agencies offer the best all-around information service of any of the sources. Another editor at a major daily rated them third and one editor in the third highest circulation size group considers them her second best source of information from among those on the list.

One editor gave them a number one rating because they provide good recipes. Another editor said, "These releases help me keep on top of the latest developments. They give me an idea of the types of things I should be promoting." One editor rates them third because of the importance of the big book publishers and the toy manufacturers who are the clients of these agencies.

Corporate public relations people: A majority of the editors use less than one-fourth of the material they receive from corporate public

relations people. Two editors use about half the material. One editor who uses much of the material she receives from major food companies pointed out that she uses only half of the releases she gets from national companies but she incorporates everything from the local companies, one way or another.

The same things that turn editors off to material from public relations firms bias them against releases from companies. One editor pointed out that the material is a good source of ideas but that it could never be used in its original form because of the strong commercial emphasis.

One editor at a major paper said she uses all news generated for local charities. Or if a company initiates a beneficial community program, it will be covered. She uses less than half the material with no local tie-in.

One editor pointed out that she does little product news and, for that reason, cannot use much of the material from corporate people. She said, "I may use the general ideas or do a story on convenience foods, mentioning various products--but I'll make my own observations."

A different editor pointed out that although the proportion of material from corporate people that gets used is small, it should be measured against the total volume of mail from this source.

An editor in the second highest circulation group considers corporate people her second best public relations information source because of the food and nutrition releases they provide. She said that she frequently uses the whole release and the photographs, simply editing out company and brand names. One editor in group V said she would put the releases on par with the material from trade associations and federal

government agencies, and not quite as high as the material from PR agencies because of the strong product emphasis.

According to one food editor, releases tend to describe the obvious, such as directions for cooking simple convenience foods or how to sprinkle nuts on a cake. She feels that releases should weigh the preparation time against the added cost of the product.

One editor said that she's generally interested if a release explains a new way of using a product, such as an original recipe for pumpkin pie filling. She has two other conditions: that it does not plug the product and that it includes good photographs.

The quality of the written material from public relations sources got a "fair" rating from half of the editors; the remainder of the responses were split between "good" and "poor."

A food editor has found that most of the releases from food companies concern convenience products. She said, "Some of these products are dreamed up in a test tube. They have no nutritional value; they're only money-making deals." She has noticed, however, that more companies are hiring professional home economists who are aware of the importance of good nutrition. She explained, "It shows in their releases. But their solution is to pump vitamin's and minerals into a chemist's dream."

She pointed out that it's easy to recognize the fake foods: "It's any product where you have to add the most nutritious part of the dish yourself, such as the meat."

About half the editors rated corporate public relations people "fair" as a source of news tips and story ideas. One editor said that she recently covered an exhibit of historic quilts organized by a local company but she stressed that it was unusual for her to get a story lead

from a company.

Trade associations: About one-third of the editors said they use half the material they receive from trade associations; the rest of the editors use less than one-fourth. Many prefer this source to agencies and private industry because, as one editor explained, "Associations are simply representing a raw product; they're not pushing specific brands." Someone else said that the trade associations don't try to shove material down your throat the way private industry does.

Opinions differ, however, regarding the quality of the written material and the value of the associations as a source of news tips and story ideas.

One editor praised the material from fruit growers: "It's well done; they provide useful recipes and good photographs. But they don't come up with as many original ideas as the corporations." In contrast, another editor credits them for having good ideas and rates them lower than agencies on the quality of written material. Perhaps the explanation, as one editor pointed out, is that the quality of the material fluctuates.

An editor at a major daily said that she uses about one-half the material from local trade associations and less than one-fourth of that from national associations. She finds it useful as a source of crop information. Another editor uses the filler material from trade associations.

A food editor pointed out that her use of material from trade associations tends to be seasonal. During the summer months, she uses a lot of material from fruit and vegetable growers.

Local and state government agencies: Editors use a higher percentage of the material that they receive from local and state

government agencies than from industry; one-half of the editors use 50 percent or more of local government materials. It's also true, however, that the amount of mail coming in from these sources is considerably less than that from business.

More than half the editors rated local and state government agencies as "good" or "excellent" as sources of news tips and story ideas, about on par with federal government agencies.

One editor pointed out that if the material has local implications, it's newsworthy. She finds, however, that material from government agencies has too much jargon. It requires a lot of editing to make it more readable and more clearly understood. Another editor said that the information is timely but poorly written. One food editor described the writing as dry and boring. She said that it shows no imagination.

In spite of these opinions, about half the editors said that the quality of the material from local and state government agencies was generally good. One editor at a small paper thinks that this public relations information source provides the best all-around information service, chiefly because the news has a local angle. Others mentioned that they use research data and product warnings issued by government offices.

Four editors concluded that local and state government agencies provide the second best all-around information service and three editors consider them the third best source.

Federal government agencies: Nine of the editors use at least 50 percent of the material from federal government agencies. They find it useful because it emphasizes the consumer viewpoint. It is an important source of information about legislation that affects the readers of the

women's section. One editor pointed out that she used materials dealing with the implications of Phase IV.

One-half the editors rated the federal government agencies as "good" for a source of story ideas. One editor explained that the material provides a basis for a lot of stories.

But many of the editors had complaints about the style of the writing. One editor pointed out that government material is "too convoluted; too complicated." Someone else finds it pedantic. And one food editor said that it reads like a dictionary.

Five of the editors ranked federal government agencies as the second best information source; one editor rated them third.

Educational institutions: Educational institutions received the highest overall rating from the editors. Ten editors, most of whom work on papers in the three smallest circulation size groups, said that universities provide the best information service. They indicated that they use at least half of the material from educational institutions.

One editor liked the material from educational institutions because it has a local angle. Another editor thinks that the information is credible: "Universities are not trying to plug a product; I'm more inclined to believe their research results."

Over one-half the editors rated educational institutions as "good" or "excellent" as a source of story ideas and news tips. But, one editor suggested that they need to dig harder for ideas. Too often, she finds, educational institutions will only quote one authority. She recommended that educational institutions send editors a rough story idea with a list of experts to contact so that the editor could follow it up herself if she's interested.

Ratings for the quality of the material from educational institutions were almost equally divided among "excellent," "good" and "fair." One editor has noticed that the quality of the material fluctuates both in newsworthiness and timeliness. She said, "I realize that educational news services get story ideas from government releases which account for a certain delay. But to write about something like food budgeting, the material should at least be novel." She would like to see the copy brightened so that it's more enjoyable to read.

Professional organizations: No one considered professional organizations to be outstanding information sources. However, three editors gave them the second best rating and one editor said they provide the third best information service.

One editor from the second lowest circulation group said she uses about three-fourths of the material from organizations and finds them good sources of story ideas. She gives the most news space to nutritional information and state-wide programs. Another editor pointed out that she uses all of the news tips from local organizations. Generally they just provide the story idea; she develops it herself.

A couple of editors pointed out that professional organizations are special interest groups, and therefore tend to be one-sided in their presentations. An editor at a major daily said that she uses next to nothing from these groups: "It's only useful for notices of meetings that we might like to attend."

Use of material from professional organizations varies from none to practically all among the different papers. Seven of the editors rated professional organizations as "good" for providing story ideas; however, the rest of the answers varied from "excellent" to "poor." The majority

of the editors rated the quality of the material as either "good" or "fair." One editor finds that releases from professional organizations are "well-written but too technical." Most editors felt that they could not give a blanket statement; the material has to be judged case by case.

Fund drive organizations: A common statement was, "I use all of the material from local fund drive organizations; nothing from national organizations." One women's editor at a large city daily pointed out that "these organizations are committed to raising the quality of life. Their value as a source of news tips varies considerably since some have had more training in this area than others. Most of their publicity chairmen are not professional communicators."

Two of the editors in the lowest circulation size group said that the fund drive organizations provide the third best information service. One explained that she uses all of their material because of the community appeal.

Six of the editors could not rate the quality of the material from fund drive organizations. Several explained that they do not use material from this source; it is covered in another section of the paper. One editor at a large paper pointed out that organizations have to be judged on an individual basis. She added, "Most of them know nothing about how to prepare a release. Generally I get the information I need over the phone." However, the quality of the material was rated "fair" by 7 of the 10 editors who evaluated it.

One women's editor said that the information from fund drive organizations is generally accurate but, since they are trying to sell something, it's only representative of one point of view. Someone else said that generally organizations do not give full information; it's

necessary to check out the details further.

Consumer groups: One food editor pointed out that one important information source was not included in the list. Consumer groups are her number one source of information now. She explained that they present a new side of a multi-faceted story: "They are private, non-profit organizations and they have the readers' needs as their prime concern."

Whereas most of the information from the other public relations information sources is unsolicited, information from consumer groups is often by request. The editor explained that she gets many of her story ideas from these groups. And she rates them "good to excellent" as background material for articles.

#### Business Public Relations Sources

Interviewer: So that's it for this list, but now I have another that specifically concerns business public relations sources. On this, I'd like your estimates of what proportion you use of the material that comes in from each type of industry. Like--none; less than one-fourth; around half; practically all; don't get any--plus any general comments you want to make about each one. O.K? (Editors were handed a copy of the list.)

Cosmetic or beauty aid companies  
 Dairy and beverage companies and associations  
 Finance firms, banks, etc.  
 Flour and cereal companies or associations  
 Fruit and vegetable companies or associations  
 Home furnishings industries  
 Houseware manufacturers  
 Major appliance industries  
 Meat associations (producers, packers, promoters)  
 Textile and/or clothing industries  
 Toy manufacturers  
 Other (please specify)

Cosmetic and beauty aid companies: Several editors said that the worst public relations job is done by the beauty aid and cosmetic industry. They explained that much of the material is "just pure product publicity." One editor was particularly critical of the illustrations. She pointed out that the photographs often feature nothing more than a lipstick or a bottle of perfume, similar to the stark magazine ads.

Four of the editors pointed out that they do not handle this subject area in their columns. Six others make no use whatsoever of the material they receive from the cosmetic industry. One editor stated flatly, "It's bad material; it has no news value." Another pointed out that she prefers the cosmetic information she receives over the wire service (NEA) because it's in more of a story context.

One editor explained that the only time she needs information about the cosmetic industry is for special sections or if a federal warning is issued about certain products. Another editor uses filler material from some of the cosmetic and drug companies because she finds them less product oriented than the features; they do not contain company or brand names.

Because the material is "so obviously product-oriented," one editor noted, "it's too hard to generalize. So I don't use any of it." Another editor said, "Releases from beauty aid companies end up in the wastebasket. However, about half the time I'll interview the travelling company representative and do a story on her."

Dairy and beverage companies and associations: Editors had only favorable comments concerning the dairy industry. One editor said she uses all of the material she receives from this source because "they limit it to personal items. They know what we want." Three editors reported

that they use a fourth of the material about dairy products and they consider that a substantial amount. Most of the editors use less than one-fourth of the material.

One editor praised the dairy industry for putting out "good usable material," and someone else said that dairy releases are "excellent." An editor at a small paper pointed out that she receives far more black and white proofs from the dairy industry than she can use.

One editor pointed out that she is starting to receive a lot of material from wineries and beverage companies. She emphasized that she only uses the newsworthy items--not the product publicity. Another editor said that the only photographs in which she has noticed a blatant display of products are those put out by the liquor companies.

Finance firms, banks, insurance companies, credit unions: Little material from financial institutions is used in the women's pages. Half the editors use less than one-fourth of the material they receive from this source; the others use none. One editor said that her use of this material is limited to credit union reports. An editor who works at a major daily said that she's likely to use this material only if there's a local seminar involved.

Flour and cereal companies or associations: Many editors seem to hold a high opinion of the material they receive from flour and cereal companies and associations. One editor rated the material "excellent." An editor who uses about one-third of the material from these sources said that they send out great photographs.

Two editors mentioned that they use only the recipes from flour and cereal producers, not the releases. However, another editor criticized the recipes from cereal companies because she finds they are often obviously

built around a product. She uses only about 15 percent of the material from cereal companies in contrast to about 28 percent of the material from flour companies. Another editor referred to one flour company in particular, saying that she uses about one-fourth of the releases they send out.

Five of the editors use one-fourth of the photos and releases sent to them from flour and cereal interests and one editor uses about half.

Fruit and vegetable companies and associations: Three-fourths of the editors use less than one-fourth of the material that comes across their desks from fruit and vegetable companies and associations. One food editor pointed out that she receives "less material and less usable material" from this industry than from other food industries.

In contrast, another food editor said that she uses more material from this industry and the meat industry than from any of the sources of food news; she finds the quality of the material good. One food editor uses as much as 50 to 60 percent of the material from fruit and vegetable companies. She pointed out that there is little hold-over of this material, especially those concerning seasonal foods.

One editor said that the association representing this industry provides useful information. She finds that organizations that cover raw products have a broader viewpoint than companies who can see only the value of their specific products.

Home furnishings industry: Use of the material from the home furnishings industry seems to be based more on the emphasis this area receives in the paper rather than on the quality of the material. A couple of editors said that the only time they use this material is in special sections. Normally, they do not have enough space to do large

lay-outs on interior design. Another editor explained that at the present time she uses less than one-fourth of the material she receives from this industry. However, she added, "We plan to expand our section once the newspaper shortage is over and then I want to do more in this area."

Editors in the second highest circulation size group have the highest usage of material from the home furnishings industry. One editor uses one-fourth of this material; the other two use about half. One of the editors remarked that this industry puts out the best releases of any of the industries related to the women's pages. Another editor praised the industry for being quick to explain any problems which arise within the industry. She said that they make a concerted effort to keep in close contact with the editors.

Home gardening aids industry: Half the editors use less than one-fourth of the material they receive from this source. The rest use none. Several editors pointed out that much of the information concerning home gardening is carried in another section of the paper. A few of the papers in the study have special home gardening sections. One editor said that she throws out releases from this industry if specific brand names are mentioned.

Houseware manufacturers: Three-fourths of the editors use less than 25 percent of the materials they receive from the houseware industry. Food editors said that this material is usually routed to other departments. One food editor pointed out that she only uses material from this source when the recipe calls for a special appliance such as a wok or a fondue pot.

One editor said that she uses about half the material she gets from a local housewares manufacturer. Generally, this information concerns a

new product, such as a self-cleaning oven. But someone else said she uses little material from this industry because it plays up brand names.

Major appliance industry: Two editors use about 25 percent of the material they receive from this industry. One of these editors pointed out that she gets a lot of information from local companies. The other editors use little or no information relating to major appliances. According to one editor, it is because they plug brand names, "just like the houseware manufacturers." Another editor said, "I don't like pushing appliances. However, I occasionally run descriptive articles on certain types of household equipment."

Meat associations (packers, producers and promoters): The meat industry received a high rating from the editors. Two of the editors said they incorporate all of the material they receive from this source "one way or another." One of them explained that, because of the meat shortage, information concerning this problem is timely.

Three of the editors use one-half of the material they get from the meat industry; one editor uses a fourth of it; the others use less. An editor said the information is good because it often deals with consumer problems. A food editor said that the meat institute is trustworthy, that it provides good illustrations and does an excellent job. Only one editor said she would rate the quality of this material as simply "average."

One editor admitted that she uses more material from this industry than from any other, largely because they do not specify brand names. She pointed out, "This fall they sent out excellent material on beef that included line drawings and descriptions of various cuts. The releases explained how to choose beef cuts and recommended cooking methods." She said a chart with the standard names for cuts was provided. She used the

material as the basis of a four-page spread and has since requested further information. "This type of information is useful for my readers and it doesn't plug any products or companies. Also, it was well put together so that editing was unnecessary."

Textile and/or clothing industry: In general, editors seem to have a good opinion of the material from the textiles and clothing industries. Several editors praised the quality of the releases and illustrations from this source. However, some of the editors pointed out that the quality of the illustrations has been poor lately. One of them speculated that the fashion industry's budget has been cut.

According to one editor, the material in this area is generally better than that from other industries. She also pointed out that there is high reader interest in this area. An editor at a major daily explained that she saves all local material but uses less than one-fourth of the national releases. Two editors said that they use releases describing national sewing contests because many of their readers are interested in participating, but little else. Another editor explained that she does not need information from textile and clothing manufacturers because she receives a substantial amount of wire copy on fashion.

Toy manufacturers: Half of the editors use less than 25 percent of the material from toy manufacturers. The others do not use any. One editor said that the product plug in these releases is obvious; "They're simply trying to sell toys." Use of this material is highest prior to Christmas. Two editors said that articles on toy safety or federal warnings concerning banned or unsafe toys are important.

National Versus Local Source of Materials

Question: About what proportion of the business public relations materials that you receive comes from national companies or associations? Like--none; less than one-fourth; about half; practically all.

How much comes from state and local companies or associations?

In the two lowest circulation groups, two of the editors receive practically all their public relations materials from local sources. About half the incoming public relations material at another women's department is local. The remaining three papers receive most of their mail from national companies or associations.

In contrast, nine of the ten women's departments in groups III, IV and V find that practically all their mail comes from national sources. Six editors receive less than one-fourth from local or state companies or associations and three others do not get any local public relations materials from business sources.

One women's editor in group V gets most public relations materials from local sources. She mentioned that almost all the releases from national sources arrive unsolicited, whereas much of the local material is stimulated. She suggested that companies issue request cards to editors. This would allow editors to limit material to those they are definitely interested in, would cut down on waste and would reduce the volume of rejected mail.

It is obvious from these results that the higher the circulation of the paper, the greater is the proportion of material received from nationally operated sources. The one exception in group V is due to the fact that the editor stimulates a great deal of material from local

businesses.

### Background Information

Question: In evaluating public relations materials for use in your feature section, you probably reject a lot of them for one reason or another. Of those you don't use, do you retain any for background information? Often, sometimes, never?

Ten of the 16 editors in the study said they "sometimes" retain public relations materials for background information in articles. Several editors pointed out that mail is sorted on a daily basis and reviewed at the week's end. The best material is filed for later use. Some editors only retain background information for certain subjects. For instance, one editor said that she saves recipes and any information on economic and social issues.

A few editors stressed that they seldom keep materials for background information. As one editor explained: "I receive so much material that there's no way to keep it all. At the moment I can't use much anyway because of the newsprint shortage." Another said that she does not keep material unless it is current or unique. The library and information files at the paper are her best sources of background information. A food editor pointed out that the release must have valuable information on nutrition or perhaps the history of foods before she will file it. She added: "A release that is simply a product push and that doesn't really have a story to tell isn't worth it."

A fourth of the editors make a regular habit of filing materials for later use. One food editor who often keeps public relations materials said: "As you can see, I have drawers full of written releases and

illustrations. About 90 percent of the material I intend to use is filed. Some will be used for background material; recipes and photos may be incorporated into features at a later date."

Two editors never save materials from business sources. One editor said: "I want impersonal and objective points of view. Public relations materials are biased so I don't keep any. I have lots of local sources to consult, like the county extension agent, experts at the university or the libraries." But, since three-fourths of the editors retain public relations materials at least part of the time for background information, they must value public relations releases as a helpful resource material.

#### Feature versus Filler Material

Question: Now, regarding the releases you do use, do you accept more feature or filler items (five column inches or less)? Do you receive enough filler items?

Ten of the 16 editors said they make greater use of feature length material than short filler items from public relations sources. In spite of this, half of the editors stated that they don't get enough filler material. An editor at a small paper explained: "I prefer features but I've got more room for filler items." Another said that fillers are needed for good layout.

The editors at the smaller papers expressed more interest in fillers than the editors at higher circulation papers. In fact, one editor said she is desperately in need of good filler material. In contrast, all the editors in the highest circulation group said they receive enough filler items; two said they get more than they want. A

women's editor at a major daily explained that usage of filler items tends to be cyclical. During the summer months she uses general filler items from detergent and food associations. But for the most part she is trying to phase out fillers.

#### Treatment of Public Relations Materials

Question: I'd like to talk about written materials other than fillers provided by business sources. How often do you use them in each of the following ways? (This list was shown to editors.)

- In their original form
- Reworked
- Incorporated with other material
- As story ideas
- Other (please specify)

Original form: Public relations copy is fair game. In fact, many editors consider it a journalistic sin to use public relations copy in its original form. Six editors, four of whom work at papers in the highest circulation group, claimed they never use public relations releases in their original form, recipes excluded. One reason for this is that they are concerned about exclusivity. Also, they want their articles to be a product of their own work.

Another five editors seldom use public relations materials without changing them in some way; three do so occasionally. Only two editors said they frequently use these materials in their original form. One of these editors explained: "I often use food, fashion and home furnishings releases in their original form, simply editing them for style rules. After all, editors are delighted to use material as it comes in if it's

well written. It saves them a lot of time."

Reworked: About half the editors in the study often rework public relations material before using them. An editor at a small paper pointed out that it usually involves changing the lead or reworking the style. "It's only simple editing. I generally keep the essence of the story." A fourth of the editors occasionally rework things; the others said they seldom bother to rework articles. At a paper where the news hole has been cut back, the editor said she would probably rework more articles after the newsprint shortage, especially for the food section. But another said that if materials require much reworking she simply throws them out.

Incorporated with other materials: All the editors in the highest circulation category said that they often incorporate public relations releases with other materials. One editor said she does this mainly for special editions. One food editor said that 95 percent of the time, releases are incorporated with other material.

Only two editors, both in the second lowest circulation group, said they never incorporate public relations materials with other things. All three editors on the lowest circulation papers said they seldom combine business releases with other material.

Story ideas: More than half the editors pointed out that they occasionally get ideas from public relations materials for developing their own articles. But only one indicated that these are a frequent source of ideas. A women's editor at a major daily said that she often takes several different sources and gets ideas from them, especially for science articles. Public relations releases provided ideas for features on obesity and immunization, she recalled. "Also, we keep a file on

abortion material and often add statistics or other information to this. And material from the textile industry is saved to use with fashion features."

#### Reason for Rewriting Releases

Question: What are your principle reasons for rewriting releases?

Seven of the editors rewrite releases to eliminate the less important details. Sometimes space limitations make this necessary. But one editor complained: "They just don't get to the basic facts. Sometimes pertinent details are buried or missing altogether. Often I must eliminate unnecessary adjectives. I edit the copy and if this fails I attempt to rewrite it. If it's still no good, I throw it out." Another said she pulls out any information that sounds false or is unsupported.

About half the editors rewrite the articles in order to put them in the style or format of their newspapers. Three editors felt that it is important to express the information in their own words. As an editor from one of the larger papers explained: "You'd be prostituting yourself to run the material as is. If that was the case, the public relations companies could just as well send their material directly to the composing room. I never use the material in its original form, even if it's good, and that's rare."

Three editors said a chief reason for rewriting is to tone down the bias or favoritism reflected in the story. One editor said: "The leads are too commercial. The firm's name shouldn't be mentioned more than once in the story." "Too product oriented," was another typical comment.

The need to give the material a local angle was cited by three

editors as a major reason for rewriting. As might be expected, this is especially important to the editors at the smaller papers, one of whom said: "We have limited space; local copy gets priority. Many of our readers get another paper that has wider circulation. I need to be able to offer them information they won't get elsewhere."

Two of the editors often rewrite in order to include additional information. Sometimes this is because the release is one-sided and they want to incorporate other points of view.

One food editor stressed that much of the public relations copy requires heavy editing. She frequently finds grammar and spelling errors and incorrect word usage. "It reflects sloppy thinking on the part of the PR persons. Also, many recipes aren't well enough tested, so these must be revised or thrown out."

Other reasons given for rewriting releases were:

- To clean up the style; often too flowery
- To reorganize the material so that it follows a logical sequence
- To get rid of the chatty, nonprofessional tone
- To give it more of a news or feature slant
- To change the emphasis

#### Release Verification

Question: Do you take steps to verify the public relations releases from business that you use--by calling back to the original source or to other experts, for example? Always, usually, occasionally, never? If so, what's your purpose in doing this? And, if you don't follow up on a release, why not?

One-half of the editors in the four lowest circulation groups

reported that they never verify public relations releases. Largely, they said, it is because they trust the source. This is especially true if the source is local or if it is a large well-known corporation. As one editor put it: "You get a feeling about sources after a while and learn which ones to trust. Some never make mistakes." Another said: "Basically, we assume they're right. However, in a recent case, a local company brought out a hamburger substitute without stating on the package that it was synthetic. We phoned the company and, as a result, they've changed their label."

Others mentioned that the time and expense of checking out releases is prohibitive. If they question the accuracy of something, it simply gets thrown out." Another said if she spots two releases with conflicting information, she'll assemble more materials on the subject as a means of verifying the facts. And a small town editor explained that she does not have the time or staff to handle investigative reporting.

Another third of the editors "occasionally" check out releases. Usually it is to clarify information or to check the accuracy of certain facts. Sometimes it is to see if it pertains to the local situation. One food editor said that the need to verify depends upon the subject matter. If it is a controversial area, such as a special diet, she will check it out with the local experts, but recipes are only verified with the source if the ingredients or directions seem questionable.

Three out of four editors in the highest circulation category almost always verify information from public relations sources before using it. One said she recently contacted three different companies concerning one article. Another warned: "If I receive two or three correction sheets in a row from the same company, I watch their releases

carefully. If it happens too much, I simply cross them off the list."

### One-Sided Releases

Question: If a release seems one-sided, what do you generally do with it? That is, do you make an effort to get the opposing point of view, throw it out, otherwise (please specify)?

The treatment of a one-sided release obviously depends upon how interesting and worthwhile the editors consider the subject matter. Three-fourths of the editors said a biased product promotion would automatically be thrown out. As one editor explained: "If it's simply an article on why you should use more tomato paste in a recipe, it goes into the waste basket. But if it deals with a dietary issue, I consult another source." Another confirmed: "Most product publicity is not worth investigating. Beauty areas are particularly sticky because it's hard to get a medical doctor's reaction. On the other hand, we're criticized if we don't present both sides."

Three editors said a straight news story would likely be run as such. One said: "We never get public relations releases that aren't one-sided. So I may simply use it as is, attributing it to the organization. The next day I'll probably print a release that presents the other side of the story. You can be sure I'll fight back by bringing out the opposing point of view."

A few editors would take the time to rewrite it, adding their own ideas to balance it out or tone down the bias. Or they may hold it to combine later with materials from other sources. "Material that is obviously one-sided raises a lot of unanswered questions for the opposing stand," one editor said. But the overriding consensus was that a release

that represents only the company's viewpoint gets tossed out. "It's not my job to promote their products," one said. "I think of my readers first. To print only one side of an issue is not of much help to them."

#### Local Company Criticized

Question: If a local company or its product is criticized publicly, do you normally send a reporter to get the company's side of the story? Could you give me a recent example?

Ten of the editors claimed that if a local company was criticized, they would seek the reactions of the company officials or local representative before printing an article on the controversy. One editor referred to an instance where a local company began marketing a cereal with sugar coating and a soft, sticky center. A local consumer group criticized the product, claiming it was bad for children's teeth. The editor contacted a company spokesman who told her that the amount of sugar in a serving is no more than the amount in a bowl of peaches or a teaspoon of grape jelly. Her article presented both sides.

Papers that have a good-sized women's staff are most inclined to do investigative reporting. When the city health department rated the quality of hamburger in one city, the women's editor sent the survey results to local stores prior to printing them in the paper, and included storeowners' reactions in her article. In another town, the women's editor phoned the public relations person at a local company after reading a criticism of their product in a new book.

Occasionally the women's department will do an in-depth article on a "hot" issue. When the microwave oven controversy was raging one paper checked out numerous sources, including local dealers, to get the back-

ground information for a story. Another did a feature on the health foods controversy, interviewing the owner of a health foods store as well as nutrition experts to give a balanced presentation. As might be expected, the depth of coverage depends on the importance of the issue to the readers. One editor said that when the oil supply was cut off from a man who supplied many local families, the paper sought the reactions of 24 different people, including company officials.

Five editors said they do not normally look into problems at local companies; this is handled by the business desk. But others pointed out that if a front page story has a consumer angle, such as safety, they may follow it up in the women's section. For instance, a recent botulism scare prompted two women's editors to phone the company in question and use their stand in developing the article. One emphasized: "We try to present both sides of consumer issues."

An editor at a major daily explained that in most cases the company will contact her anyway, shortly after the issue breaks as a straight news story. She said she appreciates this because of her tight workload.

#### Follow-up on Press Advisories

Question: One aspect of public relations is giving newspaper editors tips on upcoming events. How often do you send reporters and/or photographers to cover events that come to your attention through news releases or press advisories? Often, occasionally, seldom, never?

Only one editor said she never follows up on press advisories. Her reason is that it would be a form of advertising for the sponsor.

One editor said that she would pursue a legitimate press advisory but that many are simply soliciting free advertising. "They're always

giving tips on unnewsworthy items," she complained. Another felt the same way. "Many are not worth it. Often you can get the same information without attending the event." And a third editor said: "I definitely think most press conferences are a waste of time."

One of the food editors said: "We get these notices two or three times a week and so we can't possibly follow up on many of them. Besides, we have our own ideas for feature stories."

An afternoon daily editor said she is not interested unless it is an exclusive tip. "There's no point in spending all that time on it if the morning paper is going to print it first."

Editors at papers in the three lowest circulation groups stressed the importance of a local angle. A typical remark was: "We often cover industry sponsored events; seldom or never look into those of a state or national scale." To illustrate, one editor said: "When a well-known company held a seminar on sewing for home economics instructors, in a city only a few miles away, management wouldn't let me attend because it wasn't strictly a local event."

The decision to follow-up is based on expected reader interest and on the novelty of the event. One editor said that if it concerns a person of national interest, she's tempted. Another said that a conference dealing with some consumer issue would be covered, as would most local store promotions. "And we attend industry sponsored art functions because these events interest our readers."

Some editors have developed good rapport with local public relations persons. An editor of ten years said: "Many of them know what we want and so we trust their leads." And an editor at a smaller paper said: "We often follow-up both press advisories and phone calls from the local

companies in our area. Most persons in public relations are responsible; they know better than to phone if something's not newsworthy. For instance, at one practitioner's suggestion we interviewed the first woman elected to the company's board of directors. We also did a story on the woman who instituted the company's safety program 50 years ago."

#### Rerunning the Same Release

Question: Do you ever rerun the same or similar releases several weeks or months apart?

Most editors regard the idea of rerunning the same material as a disservice to their readers. Three-fourths of the editors said they never, or hardly ever, repeat things. As one explained, "Space is too valuable to repeat anything. If I did, it would be by accident."

Another said: "Occasionally a shortened version of an article that's already appeared may be used, as when a local event needs additional promotion. But it's never quite the same." Other exceptions would be a series of articles in which pertinent facts are repeated or the same story written from a different angle, she said.

Again, local interest is a consideration. As one editor explained: "If it's a subject of general appeal to the community, I may first present it in brief, then as a story with more details, and later follow-up with a photo."

One food editor said both the type of subject matter and the newsworthiness of the information are taken into account. She explained that certain topics, such as canning, are apt to be repeated on a yearly basis, because they tie in with the season. Low-cost recipes may be rerun since there's good reader interest in them.

There are evidently no rules as far as recipes are concerned. One food editor said that she never repeats them. But another editor said recipes are sometimes rerun several years apart because of reader request. And a third pointed out: "Once in a while I may repeat a similar idea with different recipes. But some companies are overzealous; they inundate you with recipes. There's a limit to what you can do with cranberries."

### Tear Sheets

Question: How often do you send tear sheets of your news section to the organizations whose release you use? Like--always, occasionally, seldom or never? What's your policy on this?

Only two of the 16 editors automatically send tear sheets to public relations sources. One, an editor at a small paper, emphasized that she uses little public relations material so it is easy to send an occasional tear sheet. The other, an editor at a large daily, has secretarial help for tear sheets. About 25 percent of the color illustrations used in her section each week are from agencies and tear sheets of color photos are always sent to the source.

Four of the editors never send out tear sheets. They made it clear that they simply don't have time to keep up with such requests. "A better idea," one editor said, "is for them to subscribe to a clipping service." One irate editor said: "Although I've been here for three years now, one company continually requests tear sheets in the previous editor's name. If they can't keep their mailing lists up to date, I'm certainly not going to spend my time sending them tear sheets."

Half of the editors will honor requests for tear sheets, but one

editor stipulated that a stamped self-addressed envelope must be provided. Another said: "Personally I feel this cheapens the company's image. They should buy the newspapers themselves rather than expecting free service. However, if they send me a lot of material and want some way of keeping tabs on the amount used, then I'll comply with a special request."

One editor at a major paper said that she sends out tear sheets as infrequently as possible. Written requests are not honored; public relations persons must phone after the article has appeared. She also said it depends upon her opinion of the public relations practitioners. "If they're honest, play fair, lay things on the line, then we'll do this for them." Another said she will send tear sheets to a "good" source to encourage more information from them.

Several editors send out tear sheets of illustrations, especially color photographs. The subject area makes a difference too. One editor primarily sends tear sheets for food releases; another for book reviews; a third for large furnishing or fashion layouts.

One sends out tear sheets when a major portion of the release is used. At another paper the layout must involve material from more than one source, such as a counseling firm representing several clients.

An editor at a major paper pointed out that extra copies of the newspaper are scarce. She will sometimes make a photocopy of an article to honor a special request. But generally she limits this to educational use, such as special sections on nutrition for public schools.

#### Identification of Source

Question: About how often do you identify public relations sources:

always, occasionally seldom, never?

In which of the following ways do you identify public relations information sources: at the end of the release; product mention; photo attribution; in the body of the release?

Do you use the business or generic identification?

Do you do this for all types of releases? If not, how does it differ?

There was a wide range of responses to this section. Two editors said they never identify business sources. The only instances where they might use a company's name were if the company was bringing out a revolutionary new product or if mention of the name was essential to the explanation in a consumer story.

Several said the decision to use the company's name depended on whether or not it would have a definite bearing on the story. One editor names the business "whenever they seem to deserve it." She normally names associations, but not companies.

Two editors will identify the source in a feature article but not in a filler. Another said that if she uses three fillers from the same source, she'll mention the source in one of the fillers only. One editor gives the source of material about 25 percent of the time in the lead. In a column she uses the business name; in a filler, the generic name. Most editors, if they cite the source at all, will use the business name, rather than substituting a generic term.

Four editors always identify the source. As one put it: "Readers have a right to know the source of the information. It aids them in making value judgments. But I would cut it out if it was connected with in-group rivalry among businesses."

Those who always identify sources do so only once in the article; other references are taken out. The majority cite the source somewhere in the body of the release, such as attribution after the fact. One editor said she occasionally gives photograph attribution, especially with fashion pictures. And another said that if a brand name product is included in a recipe, the company is not mentioned elsewhere in the article.

### Commercial Addresses

Question: Do you use commercial addresses in your articles so readers can get further information, products or samples? Would you give this information on request?

More than half of the editors do use commercial addresses upon occasion. But there has to be a good reason for it, such as a free recipe booklet or a pamphlet on appliances. And they expect to see such material beforehand to evaluate it.

One editor, who occasionally gives addresses, emphasized that she never includes phone numbers. "We can't proof-read numbers and it's too easy to make mistakes."

All but one editor provide commercial addresses on request by readers, although it is sometimes a nuisance.

Two editors said they occasionally withhold addresses as a means of estimating readership or reaction to the article. For instance, one editor did an article on swimsuits for women who have undergone mastectomies and received 65 calls in four days requesting the address of the swimsuit company. Another article on the removal of facial hair resulted in 114 phone calls.

One food editor said that she will sometimes recommend good recipe

booklets to readers who phone the paper. As she explained: "A lot of people here like to make their own sausage. In addition to giving them my recipes, I usually refer them to a booklet put out by the Meat Institute."

#### Brand Names

Question: Do you regularly run a new products column in your feature section? If so, do you mention brand names in this column? Does your paper's policy permit you to use brand names in other articles?

Of the twelve editors in the four lowest circulation groups, only two carry a new products column. In the highest circulation group, one editor has a regular products column, another runs one irregularly, and a third includes product news in a column on cooking tips. All but one of these editors use brand names in the product descriptions.

Two-thirds of the editors mention brand names in articles. One said she always makes some reference to the source, either through the brand name or company name. Another commonly uses brand names in recipes or in fashion stories, but not elsewhere. One editor did a special layout on new carpeting, including brand names in the descriptions. However, she said this was unusual and was stimulated by a housewares show she had attended.

One young editor said: "I'm against using brand names in the women's section, but they get used in other parts of the paper. When we're putting together a special edition on summer sports or back-to-school clothes, we simply cut and paste the public relations releases per se, to save time. It's my boss' policy and I don't really agree with it."

### Generic Terms

Question: Do you make use of the list of generic terms, such as "tomato-based hot sauce," sent to you by companies?

Most of the editors prefer to use generic terms in place of brand names. As one editor at a small paper explained: "I wouldn't want readers to think they had to use a certain company's product to get good results."

One food editor said she keeps company lists of generic terms on file but rarely uses them. She thinks companies that insert generic terms in their recipes are smarter than those who send lists. "If the recipe uses brand names and I can't think of a good generic substitute, I junk the recipe," she said.

Several editors prefer to use their own definitions or modify the generic terms provided. They complained that many generic terms are too elaborate and confusing; others are obscure. One pointed out: "People don't know what you're talking about when you refer to a buttermilk baking mix or a flavor enhancer. The definitions for chemical products are the worst. It's a dead giveaway that they're not a real food."

One editor's solution is to use general ingredients in recipes and avoid the use of special foods that could refer only to a particular product. But another food editor would rather use brand names. As she explained: "A reader spends perhaps 10 to 15 minutes on the whole paper, so has no time to figure out complicated generic terms. Brand names save time."

### Duplication of Material

Question: Some companies send the same materials to syndicated columnists and to women's editors. Does this mean that you are likely

to duplicate each other to some extent? If so, is this good or bad? Why?

None of the editors at the smaller papers have noticed a duplication of public relations materials in syndicated columns. And the idea does not seem to worry them. One conceded the possibility of duplication but said: "On a paper this size it's no problem. It's easy for me to keep track of everything that gets printed."

Typical comments were: "It's unlikely to happen because we only carry a couple of syndicated columnists and I don't use much material from public relations persons." "If I received both, I'd simply throw out one or the other."

One editor liked the idea. "A syndicated columnist may be in a position to get more information on the subject than me. In that case I would run hers instead of mine." She did point out the waste in sending the same material to different members of the staff on the same paper.

Editors in the two largest circulation size groups are more skeptical of the practice. One said that if she noticed duplication of information, she would be leery of using that public relations source again. Another said the practice is annoying and unnecessary, especially with illustrations.

One editor was not disturbed by the idea. Her paper operates as a syndicated source. And she pointed out that use of public relations material in these syndicated food columns is extremely rare.

A food editor emphasized that public relations sources should not send the same materials to national magazines and to newspapers and gave this example: "About two weeks ago I received a color transparency from an agency and a few days later saw the same photo in a national magazine. I had planned to use it in a Thanksgiving layout but instead sent it back to the agency. What good is it to me if it's not exclusive? I won't run

it if it would make me look like I'm copying the magazine."

### News Management

Question: About how often do you or your news staff receive requests, pleas or pressures of any sort from public relations people to "kill" or "water down" a story which you think is newsworthy and which you plan to use? More than once a month? Once a month? Less than once a month? Never?

How often do you get phone calls from public relations practitioners criticizing articles that you have printed? More than one a month? Once a month? Less than once a month? Never?

Most editors said they are rarely or never pressured by public relations persons to run a particular article or to kill or water down something else. One editor said: "They wouldn't dare!" An editor from a large daily pointed out that it almost never happens. "If they try to dissuade us, it's a sure way to get us to print it. We won't be influenced."

One has found that a few public relations persons will apply pressure to run a long list of names irrelevant to the story or something that's a form of advertising. Another said that a company will occasionally send out their position on an issue and request that she inform her readers, but direct pressure of any kind is rare.

According to one editor, this type of pressure is more common at the business desk. As she put it, "PR men don't pay attention to the women's editor." But another editor at a small paper said: "Locally we've had requests to water down or hold back information about industrial pollution, but national firms practically never apply any pressure. Also, any

adverse reaction to articles is mostly from local people. Even so, I like this type of feedback because it gives me a chance to explain my position."

Angry letters or phone calls are also uncommon. One editor said she had had little experience with critical letters, but that one firm would let you know when you misused their trade name. Another editor occasionally gets calls from companies complaining that she did not give the "whole story" and wanting her to add another point.

Referring to public relations practitioners, one editor said: "They know us and trust us and the kind of paper we turn out. It's more likely to be the small retailer who makes a fuss. For instance, we did a story on used cars in which we said 'avoid lemons.' This annoyed the used car dealers and they started a campaign to get criticism of used cars out of the paper."

When claims were made that commercial baby food was not nutritious, one food editor ran an article explaining how to make your own. In retaliation, a baby food manufacturer sent her a letter saying she knew nothing about their products and that she ought to tour their plant. At the time of the butter/margarine controversy a public relations counselor for a margarine producer asked her to use margarine in her recipes because he was getting complaints from his vice presidents. She replied that she would not run his recipes as he dictated and that if he tried to tell her what to do, she could get along without his material. That brought a conciliatory phone call.

But this editor pointed out that few of the companies apply heavy pressure. "After all, I'm not out to get industry. I simply feel that any private concern has to be watched." She finds that whenever a big

crisis comes up in a particular industry, the companies are anxious to defend themselves. During the meat boycott many meat producers reacted by claiming that they do not make a profit, a fact she found to be ridiculous. And when a soup company had to suspend operation because of a case of botulism, all the soup companies wrote her about sanitary conditions at their plants. The mushroom people, she says, are always on the defensive.

#### Rejection of Public Relations Material

Question: What are your most common reasons for rejecting public relations materials? (The researcher had a check list of possible reasons as well as space for unanticipated responses. Prior to the study period, the researcher decided to probe the following five reasons, if they were not mentioned.)

- Not news
- Advertising
- Poorly written
- Untrustworthy or unknown source
- Lack of space

The most frequent reason given for rejecting public relations releases is that they are too commercially oriented. One food editor said that she automatically rejects material if it contains brand names. One cautioned that overzealous public relations people who push their product or company too hard are defeating their purpose.

Three-fourths of the editors cited insufficient news value as a common reason for rejecting material. One food editor said: "When they send out a release on how to put pecans on a pudding, it's obvious they

simply want to talk about their product. Also, they try to incorporate too many products into a single recipe or release. Some recipes are too involved or else they call for expensive ingredients that most readers can't afford."

Several editors pointed out that the newsprint shortage has made them extra choosy. "Releases are usually well-written and I can cut out the puffery, but lack of space is a big factor now. My women's section has been cut back to one page, so naturally, local features get priority," one said. But another editor said: "Although lack of space is a problem, if you come across a good release, you'll try to put it in the paper."

For many of the editors a release does not have news value unless it has a local angle. An editor at a major daily said: "If it has no local interest, it gets rejected. Also, I often get releases on something I've received before or that we've already covered. Others would be outdated by the time I could use them."

About a third of the editors find that many releases are poorly written. One editor frequently finds errors in spelling and grammar; also the copy trails on and on too long. Others said the wording was too convoluted. Phrases such as "in the container of your blender" and "on the medium speed of your electric blender" are common in recipe releases.

Several editors complained that material is not precise enough. They want only the necessary facts. One editor stressed that no more than one main idea should be presented in a release.

Editors will reject material if they have reason to distrust the source or the accuracy of the material. One editor automatically throws out a recipe if it does not state "kitchen tested." She pointed out that a food editor soon learns a great deal about nutrition and can easily

recognize false information. "If not, you won't be around long," she said. She also pointed out that her readers are not easily fooled: "They know when they're getting an agency release. That's why I edit and cut out a lot of material."

One editor said: "It's very simple. If I like the way the material is presented I'll use it. If not, I reject it. It has to appeal to me. Of course, illustrations must be attractive." A fourth of the editors mentioned the importance of good illustrations. One food editor said that if the recipe meets her specifications, the illustration is the next thing to be considered. She pointed out: "Leads are always rewritten anyway."

Two editors said they reject releases that are too long. If it is more than one or two pages long it gets set aside," one editor said. "And chances are good that I'll never get back to it."

An editor at a small paper said, "Public relations releases generally don't fit our news format and I don't have time to rewrite them."

"Duplication of materials" and "not women's news" were two other reasons cited for rejecting releases.

## CHAPTER V

## USE OF BUSINESS RECIPE RELEASES AND FREE PRODUCT SAMPLES

Interview Section C

Food and appliance companies use the recipe release as a means of promoting their products. This section concerned editor's use of recipes from business sources and their opinions concerning these recipes. It also included a question on unsolicited food samples from industry.

Interviewer: Food and appliance companies are noted for their recipe releases.

Sources of Recipes

Question: Are food and appliance company and association releases your chief source of recipes? If not, what is?

Companies and associations are the chief source of recipes for about one-half the editors in the study. As one editor at a small daily explained, "Public relations recipes are a time-saving device."

Another one-third of the editors consider business an important source, although not the main one. Many editors also rely on local persons and ethnic groups for their recipes. One editor said that she gets about half her recipes from business sources, the rest from local women. And a food editor at a major daily pointed out, "Public relations releases are an important source for our Thursday edition. But we do a lot of features on good cooks. And so, readers can send in their favorite

recipe, and, if we use it, they receive five dollars. Of course, new recipe cookbooks come in daily."

The women's editor at a metropolitan paper explained that she does not depend upon any one source for recipes. Public relations agencies, local chefs, companies and associations are all occasional sources. On smaller papers especially, the local home economist often contributes recipes. One editor who gets material from two local columnists occasionally uses company recipes to tie in with local events. For instance, she used public relations watermelon recipes in connection with a feature on a local watermelon contest. Also, she prints short recipe fillers at Christmas time.

One editor has little need for public relations recipes because her paper carries a syndicated recipe column. She explained, "We pay for this so naturally we're not going to reject it in favor of public relations sources. If a public relations release is very imaginatively done, I may use it, but that's rare." Another editor gets most of her recipe material through the wire services but sometimes uses company recipes because of the good food photos.

### Testing Recipes

Question: Do you test recipes you receive from business sources before printing them in your news section? If not, why not?

Do you ever have recipes tested for you professionally or by volunteers? If so, whom?

Half of the editors never test recipes they receive from business sources before printing them. Only one editor tests recipes regularly;

others do so occasionally.

Many editors expressed confidence in their recipe sources. One editor said, "On the whole, I trust the companies. I'm sure they pre-test the recipes they send us."

Some editors complained about the time and cost involved with testing recipes, and one candid editor said that she disliked cooking anyway and would not want to be bothered making all those dishes. Others explained that they can judge the recipes fairly well at a glance because they have seen so many.

An editor at a major daily pointed out, "We often end up choosing the recipes an hour before they go to press. In order to test them, we'd need to do this far in advance. However, our food editor tests two recipes at home each week for a Sunday recipe column. We run these regardless of how they turn out, explaining why we think they were a success or a failure."

A few editors will occasionally test recipes that involve a new cooking procedure or ones that seem questionable. One food editor tests all recipes used in color layouts. And she only uses recipes that state "kitchen tested." Another editor pointed out that 90 percent of the recipes in her columns are from local people and so have been tested at home.

Only one of the editors interviewed has test kitchen facilities at her paper. The test kitchen director works full time testing and revising recipes. She receives several new cookbooks each day. She reviews them, chooses the best and sends one recipe from each book to the kitchen to be tested. If the recipe is a success it will be used in the food section and the book will be recommended.

Special Sources (or preferred sources)

Question: Are there certain companies you depend on for good recipes?

If so, what are the reasons?

No one admitted to having an affinity for certain sources, but half the editors said they found some sources more reliable than others.

Most of the editors in the two highest circulation size groups tend to rely on some sources more than others. As one editor explained: "You soon get to know which ones are best; the ones that can be trusted and do an adequate job." Another editor confirmed this by saying, "You learn which ones are best through experience. If there's no kickback from readers I assume that the recipes are good and I'll use that source again."

An editor at a small paper said, "I find that certain companies send more attractive illustrations than others. Also, I judge recipes by the choice of ingredients." Two editors consider some companies more reliable than others because they send recipes often and because they pursue special interests such as organic foods.

One editor said she uses association material more often than company recipes because the association represents a basic food rather than a particular product. She also looks to sources that are constantly revising their recipes and updating their information. As an example, she referred to the meat industry which recently issued information on the common names for each cut of meat in various parts of the country and recommended a standardized name for each.

But, as one food editor put it, "There are so many recipes to choose from--I have no need for special sources." Another editor said

that the source varies with the season. A great deal of material from the fruit and vegetable companies get used at canning time. And a different food editor remarked, "It depends upon my present need. For example, I recently adapted public relations zucchini recipes for a feature. But I simply turned to my file; the source was the last consideration."

### Changing Recipes

Question: Do you ever rewrite the recipes to make them clearer or simpler? Do you sometimes change the ingredients or direction in recipes received from business sources?

None of the editors at papers in the two lowest circulation groups rewrite public relations recipes or change ingredients. Food editors at the larger papers are more likely to alter recipes. Perhaps because they use more recipes they learn to recognize unnecessarily complicated directions or possible errors.

One editor's remark is typical of the comments of others at small papers: "I rewrite the lead-ins and eliminate the brand names, but I don't change the ingredients. Rather than take a chance on a recipe I question, I wouldn't print it."

Two food editors at large dailies said they often rewrite for clarity or simplification. They eliminate unnecessary ingredients and directions, particularly those promoting a product. As one editor explained, "If it calls for three cups of black olives and I know that one cup will do, then of course I cut it down. Food companies shouldn't recommend the largest size can when a smaller one is enough. One company calls for one-fourth cup mustard in every recipe they send. And I always

mark out M.S.G. whenever I come across it because a half teaspoon of sugar does the same thing."

Two editors complained about the wordiness of many recipe releases. One also pointed out that some companies are old-fashioned. "At a time when practically everyone has an electric beater, it's redundant to add '...or 300 hand strokes.'"

One food editor said she never changes ingredients but sometimes rewrites directions. She pointed out that companies hire professional home economists who do careful testing. "But we may rewrite--depending on where it's from. For the most part, we're skeptical of a recipe that needs rewriting, so we're likely to reject it." More commonly, she comes across a good but poorly written recipe in a cookbook she's reviewing. If she discovers a short-cut, she'll print the original and append her suggestions to it.

At another paper the women's editor will phone the source if she questions the recipe. She claims she has often discovered errors this way. But if it looks like more trouble than it's worth, she'll simply toss out the recipe.

#### Recipes Without Illustrations

Question: How often do you use a recipe release unaccompanied by a photograph or other illustration? Like--often, occasionally, seldom or never?

Two-thirds of the editors will only occasionally or seldom print an unillustrated recipe. A food editor explained that she may add extra unillustrated recipes to a feature but they are the first things to cut

out. And recipes are not used as fillers because, as she explained, she has more news items for the food section than she can use.

An editor who works at a large paper stated that 99 percent of her recipe stories are illustrated and added, "Maybe 12 times a year we use a recipe without an illustration."

Two editors on small papers said that the rare occasions when they use recipes without illustrations are in articles about bake-off winners. Another editor said that she does not include a photo for every recipe on a special recipe page.

Only one editor in the highest circulation category uses recipes often without illustrations. She finds the quality of recipe photos from public relations persons is not consistently good. Most food photographs are taken at the paper and public relations recipes are simply incorporated into features. A few other editors at small papers frequently use recipes as fillers.

#### Importance of Public Relations Recipes

Question: Do you want food and appliance companies to continue sending you recipes?

All but one of the editors interviewed wants to continue receiving recipes from public relations persons. The single veto came from an editor whose paper carries a syndicated recipe column. She would prefer written releases on new products.

The general feeling expressed by the editors was that even though they may not use many of the recipes, they would prefer to sort through the mail rather than miss it. Several said they are especially interested

in recipes with a seasonal tie-in, such as canning recipes in August, apple dishes in October and pumpkin pie at Thanksgiving. Two editors mentioned that Christmas filler recipes are helpful.

Several editors pointed out that they're interested in any "new" ideas. One editor said that she appreciated recipes from microwave oven companies and others with a selected type of appliance since these special recipes are hard to find.

Several editors complained that both recipes and food photos are too product oriented. A food editor said that many recipe releases have no story to them. The ones that delve into the history and traditions of foods impress her more.

Editors pointed out that recipes should be more news oriented. They want recipes that tie in with social and economic conditions. At the moment, low-budget recipes are a high priority. One editor pointed out that she used only meatless recipes during the meat boycott.

A food editor said that public relations sources were about six months behind in supplying recipes for low-cost meals, whole wheat flour and natural foods. Another editor pointed out that it is still hard to find recipes that include metric measurements.

Practically everyone mentioned that they want recipe releases to include nutritional information. One food editor said that the general public is more conscious today of the link between good nutrition and good health than they were a few years ago. She likes to explain the nutritional value of the recipes she prints. "Something like a graph illustrating that bananas are high in phosphorus would be used," she said. She's interested in recipes tied to such things as calorie counts, salt-free diets and polyunsaturated fat counts.

The editor pointed out that she never uses a recipe that is not nutritionally sound. "It can't be a bunch of mixes, but it's possible to combine both natural and convenience foods in order to capitalize on quick preparation time while keeping the cost down. A recipe should not be too involved. Taste is important too and I believe that people are coming more taste conscious. The availability of the ingredients locally is an important factor, also; I normally keep exotic things out of the recipe. I look for a recipe having the greatest appeal for the greatest number of people. Occasionally, I do a feature on ethnic foods but not unless I tell my readers where they can purchase the ingredients."

Two editors admonished business for still thinking in terms of the full-time housewife. One editor said, "They should offer recipes for women who work outside the home, men who like to cook and the young people who are into the natural foods kick."

#### Food Samples and Product Evaluation

Question: Do you welcome unsolicited food samples as a way of keeping up with new food products on the market?

Would you like to receive new products, such a kitchen appliances, on a trial basis in order to evaluate them?

Editors in the lowest circulation size groups were fairly disinterested in receiving free food samples. Most said they couldn't care one way or another. As one editor put it, "They're not useful to me but I don't mind receiving them. The companies aren't getting any actual return or publicity value. A news release would be just as good."

One editor said she recently gave a box of peaches to charity.

Another editor said she distributes free food samples at the office but is not likely to mention them in an article.

An editor who liked the idea said, "Yes, I enjoy these samples; it's a kindly gesture on the part of the company. And other people in the news department see the products." A couple of editors said that their food editors mention these new products in their columns.

Only one firm editor was firm in her objection to free food samples. She explained, "We don't get any because the companies know my policy. I consider these things a form of payola." At a different paper, the policy is to accept only one of a kind (not a carton) and it must be offered before the product is available in the stores.

One food editor said she preferred to go out and buy the food herself. "This tells you something about the distribution and availability of the product. You face the same problems your readers do. Besides, many of these free product samples are phony foods--the kind that require you to add the most important part of the dish."

But another food editor at a major daily appreciates the convenience of receiving these samples through the mail. She recently evaluated freeze-dried foods for a feature she is planning on foods for safaris. She admitted, "Of course, it would be more objective to purchase the foods ourselves. But we lack the time and the staff to do this thoroughly. It's easier if the product is sent to us."

Another food editor emphasized that she is just as interested in the retail cost of the food as in the taste and would like to see this information included in the sample.

Only one editor said she would be interested in evaluating new appliances on a trial basis. Editors at the smaller papers claimed that

they're too busy to bother with this; some never write about new appliances anyway. And editors at the larger papers said the product would have to be out of the ordinary. As one editor pointed out, "One can opener is like the rest. I'm not interested unless it's a totally new concept. For instance, I recently evaluated an ultrasonic cleaner that is used for polishing silverware, jewelry and tools. That's the sort of thing I mention in my column."

A women's editor at a major daily said, "If it's already on the shelves and advertised, then it has no news value. If at all, only by special request. Even so, we don't have testing facilities here and would have to take it to a research lab. By that time it would probably already be on the market. I turned down two offers in the past two weeks because I could get the information elsewhere. One was already in the stores and I had read about the other."

## CHAPTER VI

## NEWSPAPER POLICIES AND ATTITUDES CONCERNING PUBLIC RELATIONS FREEBIES

Interview Section D

Questions here concerned newspaper policy regarding the free gift and trips offered editors by industry, the frequency of freebie offers, special discounts on consumer items and editorial ties with advertising.

This section also included the uncoded question-answer cards which the editors were asked to fill out themselves and replace in the file. Questions concerned women's editors' attitudes towards free gifts and trip offers from business sources, what influences them to accept or reject such offers and their participation in commercially sponsored journalism contests.

Interviewer: Now I'd like your frank answers on what some people regard as a sensitive issue--the free gifts and trips offered women's editors by business.

Frequency of Free Gift and Trip Offers

Question: How often do you or your women's staff receive offers of free gifts from public relations practitioners? Like--more than once a week; once a week; once a month; less than once a month; never?

How often do you or other persons on your staff get offers of expense-paid trips?

More than one editor responding to "The Quill" survey noted that

public relations freebie offers are diminishing by the week.

All but one editor in the three lowest circulation size groups said they are never offered free trips. The one exception said, "I've probably been offered two free trips in the ten years I've been here."

The women's editor of a middle-sized paper said that her food editor attends a dairy food convention each year. This year an offer also came from the makers of an oriental sauce but it was not accepted. The editor explained that she and her staff are selective about the seminars they attend, but she hinted that she knows of other editors who are always flying off to some exotic place for a food convention.

Free trip offers are frequent at some of the major dailies. One food editor said she routinely turns down free trip offers every day. Another editor who works at a large metropolitan paper was recently offered a four week trip to Africa, all expenses paid. She didn't accept. "We do not go on junkets," she told the researcher emphatically.

According to one food editor at a high circulation size paper, "Junkets are not offered as much now." On the average, she still gets about five free trip offers a year. But sometimes offers are more frequent. "It depends upon the scare. All the meat companies wanted you to visit their plants at the time of the meat boycott. And the baby food companies were after me during the baby food controversy. But you know that everything would be shipshape the day you visited them anyway, so it wouldn't do you much good. You'd have to go unexpectedly," one editor explained.

When asked how often they receive offers of free gifts from public relations sources, one-half the editors replied, "Never." And most of the others indicated that offers are rare.

Many editors said the only free items they receive are product samples or insignificant things like a recipe box or a coupon for frozen vegetables. One editor was careful to point out that even these are unsolicited.

Free cookbooks come in routinely for review, but editors said they consider these more of a chore than a bonus. Several editors at small papers mentioned that they receive little gifts from local people or groups as a way of thanking them for covering some event, "...the sort of thing you can't refuse without offending someone." A few editors also said that they get free tickets to local affairs.

More than one editor remarked that free gift offers have "gone by the board." An editor who has been around newspaper offices a while observed that it's no longer common to see the free bottles of liquor at Christmas time. Several editors said, "They know better than to offer them to me; they're quick to learn our policy." One food editor pointed out that, at the editors' request, extravagant gifts are no longer handed out at the food editors' conference in Chicago.

But at one major daily, in spite of a stringent "no freebie" policy, the women's department gets free gift offers about twice a week. The same paper reported getting offers of expense-paid trips about twice a month--mostly related to fashion or food.

### Freebie Policy

Question: What is the policy of your women's staff with regard to gifts and trips?

Does the policy differ for other departments of your newspaper?

If so, how does it differ?

The results of this study show that newspaper editors have not adopted a standard freebie policy. None of the editors said they accepted all free gift and trip offers. But at six of the papers there is no set policy; offers are weighed on an individual basis.

One-half the editors interviewed said they never accept free gifts from companies or associations. If they attend conferences or seminars sponsored by business, their paper pays the transportation costs. However, at some papers, the decision is arbitrary. A food editor at a major daily said that sometimes her paper pays the expenses; at other times the company pays the fare. Her boss decides what the arrangement will be, and she doesn't know how he decides.

An editor at a middle-sized paper said, "Policy regarding trips varies from one to another. We accept the conditions of the sponsor. There aren't many free trip offers anyway."

Editors at small papers pointed out that few such offers come their way, so the question rarely comes up.

However, at three of the four major papers, free trips are strictly taboo. One food editor said that her paper pays all the expenses for any seminar she attends: "We send the plane tickets back to the company. The only time I accept free transportation is when I'm acting as a judge in a cooking contest. The paper also covers accomodation expenses but we let them entertain us while we're there...It would be too much bookwork for them to separate everything."

An editor who would never think of accepting a freebie said, "Of course we do accept tickets to charity balls or art openings that we cover. But, we consider these minor goodies. It's sort of a grey area. Also, each year the whole staff gets free circus tickets for their families.

There are no strong feelings about this."

The policy regarding free gifts is rather vague at some papers. A third of the editors never accept free gifts. A fourth of them will accept things of "insignificant value." Others have no set policy. A typical remark was, "We accept gifts if they're not too expensive."

At one paper the editor will accept gifts worth no more than one dollar. She explained that it's easier to keep things of minor value than to mail them back. Another editor pointed out that she never solicits free gifts but that she is allowed to accept cookbooks.

Where there is no set policy most editors said that they supposed management frowned on freebies but that the matter seldom came up. An editor at a large paper said, "Management felt compelled to issue some kind of statement on the matter because there's been so much talk about this lately. But the note that was passed down to us simply suggested that we use our own judgment."

At one major daily, the policy regarding free gifts and trips is very clearly defined. "We've always had a high standard of ethics at this paper," the editor explained. "It was simply understood. But recently we decided to put it in writing so there'd be no question about it. In fact, we intend to publish our policy in the paper within a few days so that advertisers and public relations people won't have any doubt about our stand."

The editorial staff at this paper can accept gifts of insignificant value, such as a calendar, pen or key chain. Anything worth more than that is returned. Perishable things are given to charity. All theater and sport reviewers must purchase tickets and submit expense vouchers.

The only case in which the paper might accept free transportation

is when there is no other way of covering the story. An example would be a military flight to some remote place. The women's editor added, "If it's necessary for the paper to be represented at a press party, someone will go, but generally we don't attend these things. They're a waste of time."

All the editors felt that, where a policy did exist, it applied equally to all editorial departments.

Excursions: Companies versus Trade Associations

Question: Does your paper's policy regarding excursions sponsored by trade associations differ from the restraints placed on trips paid for by companies? If so, how?

In his survey of food editors, Karp found that those who could not accept free trips from companies could often accept them from trade associations. However, all but one editor in this study said that their papers' policies (where one exists) apply equally to excursions sponsored by companies or trade associations.

"It's possible that if it were sponsored by a state department we'd attend," one editor explained. "But we do not accept any commercial ventures." Another editor said, "Each trip is evaluated on its own merits. I recently attended a seminar in Chicago sponsored by a national council, and management insisted on paying my way."

The editor of a major daily emphasized that there are no exceptions to the paper's policy. "We don't go on junkets of any kind. We don't even cover the major bake-offs. The paper pays our way to all conventions. It even paid one reporter's way to an assignment in Israel. I'll bet she was the only one on that plane who wasn't going at the expense of the

Israeli government."

The one editor, who indicated that her paper makes a distinction in policy, said she is more likely to attend conferences sponsored by trade associations because they are less product oriented and because they deal with health related matters. Another editor who claimed there is no difference in policy nevertheless mentioned that she usually accepts association offers. "We pay our own way," she said. "They may take care of accomodation expenses."

#### Policy Makers

Question: Who determines this policy for the staff of the women's section of your newspaper? Have any of your policies regarding these free gifts and trips changed over the past five years? If so, are they more or less lenient?

On more than half the papers the managing editors have a hand in forming the policy regarding free gifts and trips. Sometimes the decision is a joint one between the managing editor and publisher. At one paper the women's editor, managing editor and publisher work on it together.

The publisher hands down the freebie policy at one of the papers in the highest circulation group. At another paper the code is defined by the present "chairmen of the policy." In one case, the city editor determines the rules but the women's editor pointed out that she has much latitude.

One spunky women's editor insisted that she makes all the decisions concerning her women's staff. And she proceeded to explain that the trouble with most women's editors is that they don't stand up for their rights. She believes that even if it means putting your job in jeopardy, it is

important to run your own show. And she will not take criticism of her women's staff from any other department unless they have some constructive criticism to offer.

A food editor who receives daily trip offers said she turns down most junkets without even mentioning them to others. But if the trip sounds worthwhile, she'll talk it over with the Sunday editor.

At one paper with no set policy, the women's editor feels free to make her own decisions. She said, "I don't have to consult the managing editor about accepting a free gift offer or a free trip so long as it falls during my vacation."

One editor always submits a conference invitation to her managing editor with an explanation of why she feels she should or should not attend. "That way he knows I'm discriminating and when a trip comes up that I feel we should attend, he'll know I have a legitimate reason for wanting to go."

#### Discrepancy Between Policy and Practice

Question: Do you think there's a discrepancy between editorial practice and policy on your paper? Do people take more or less liberties than allowed? Why is this so?

A third of the editors automatically ruled themselves out on this question because their newspapers have no set policies regarding freebies. An editor at a major daily said she doubted that there was any breach of the code of ethics at her paper. She pointed out that if it happened, the person might be suspended from work for a week. Another editor said, "Because we're a small paper, we're not offered freebies. I don't know of anyone on the paper being offered a gift or accepting one."

Only one editor suspected that some newspeople on her paper took more liberties than were allowed, but she could not document this. The rest of the editors felt certain that there was no discrepancy between policy and practice at their papers. As one editor explained, "This type of thing went on more in the past but seems to be disappearing now. It puts your job on the line and no one wants to risk that."

### Discounts for Writers

Question: Do you allow your writers to accept discounts on consumer items that appeal to them from their news sources? If so, what are the conditions?

The question of whether or not newspaper people should accept discounts on items from their news sources is unsettled. Some journalists feel that accepting these special offers destroys their credibility. Others look upon it as a friendly gesture that can do no harm. Some say it depends upon the situation.

This is borne out by the responses of the editors in this survey. Two editors said they were never offered discounts and so had no opinion. The rest of the answers were split, with half the editors saying they are free to accept discounts and the other half saying it is not allowed.

A small town editor said that local merchants frequently offer her discounts or free repair service. But she said, "I simply feel this is a gesture of friendship and has nothing to do with the fact that I work for the newspaper." She also said that a camera company had recently offered a discount on their cameras to the staff and some people did take advantage of it.

One editor lamented that these discount offers create a problem. She is not allowed to accept them but finds that it requires tact to

refuse them without offending someone. At another paper, the women's editor can accept discounts on products from a local aluminum company. "The same thing is offered to home economists," she said. "It's simply a professional service."

Sometimes the condition under which the discount is offered determines whether or not the editor can accept it. For instance, an editor cannot accept discounts from local businesses, but she was allowed to order appliances from one company's wholesale catalogue. The items were offered at a "special editor's price" but she noted that the same offer was available to non-newspaper groups. One women's editor said that each year her fashion editor gets a 30 percent discount on clothing but "only in a convention setting."

One editor felt she could take the discount without it influencing her writing: "Yes, we can accept the discount if the related story is objective and not a product promotion."

Evidently, these discount offers have been the subject of heated debate at some papers. One women's editor said, "We were offered special editorial prices--about half the regular price--on kitchen appliances. It was debated for about six weeks at the office until it was finally decided that we could accept the offer. By then, I had lost interest."

#### Receiving Gifts at Home

Question: How would you react if you should discover that one of your women's staffers was receiving gifts at home from her news sources?

Most of the editors said they would take some kind of action in this situation. Although cases are rare, they do exist. One editor recalled that a few years ago management insisted that one female

reporter return a fur stole.

The majority of editors said they would first issue a warning to the writer. Several editors said they would report it to the front office. One editor would insist that all gifts be returned.

Three editors said it would mean an immediate dismissal. One of them pointed out that it would be a guild arbitration point.

An editor at a major daily said, "I'd try to give her the whole benefit of the doubt. But if I heard of it happening again I'd have to step in. I recently had to fire someone because of this. I feel that it's morally wrong."

Another editor explained that the practice of accepting gifts at home would have to stop, but added, "I can't legislate someone else's ethical code." Two editors said they would not interfere in the matter. One simply said, "I wouldn't likely find out about it and I wouldn't care; it's her business." The other editor felt that fairness in the situation was the important thing. She pointed out, "If she were treating the individual fairly it would be alright. But if she were promoting the products, I'd ask that the story be toned down or cut out."

#### Basis for Newsworthiness

Question: On what basis do you determine the newsworthiness or educational value of a particular tour, conference or contest sponsored by industry?

"The amount of reader interest in the subject" was by far the most frequent reason given for determining the newsworthiness of an industry-sponsored event. One editor said, "If I think that 25 percent of my readers would be interested in the topic, I'll go. But I can't afford time for events that are too specialized." Several editors said that if

local people were involved, the paper would definitely want to cover the event. One food editor recently attended a national bake-off because 10 percent of the finalists were from Wisconsin.

The novelty of the event or the newness of the program material also influence their decision. One editor pointed out that the topic should concern something she would have to deal with in the future, such as fabric innovations or lifestyle changes. Another editor praised a company for holding a seminar in connection with its cooking contest. She said that it was forward thinking and liberal. "No product emphasis marred the presentation. In addition, the company sponsored a study of newspaper food pages," she said.

Many editors consider the qualification of the speakers before accepting the invitation to attend. Several said they would request a detailed program with a list of speakers and topics.

A food editor stated emphatically, "If they don't have an agenda prepared, I won't go. I expected detailed information about the program. My time is too valuable to waste." Another editor mentioned that she would expect to leave the seminar with a much better understanding of the topic.

Good past experience with a sponsor encourages editors to go again. One editor explained, "Many industry-sponsored trips are educational and worthwhile. When good speakers are included, they serve as a refresher course for the editor." She said that she would like to participate in more like the one sponsored by the meat institute to demonstrate the processing of meat from the cattle on the farms to the retail outlets.

The newspaper's travel budget limits some activities. One editor pointed out that since her paper pays travel expenses, the cost of attending

must be considered. She confessed, "I'm leery of out-of-state trips. One of our food editors goes to the fall fashion showing in New York. And the food editor attends a few conventions during the year. But we're more inclined to attend things here in the state since they're accessible by car."

#### Tie With Advertising

Question: Does your newspaper accept ads on the condition that an article in the women's section tie in with the ads? (i.e., a feature on home decorating to accompany an ad from a furnishings store)

Does your paper give preference to news releases from advertisers over those from non-advertisers?

A recent APME survey revealed that some newspapers still offer combination deals--editorial space in exchange for paid advertising. However, three-fourths of the editors in this study were certain that their papers' editorial practices have no link with advertising.

Most editors were staunch in their opposition to the practice. One editor replied, "No, and if the paper ever started to accept ads on this condition I'd quit. There's no difference either in our treatment of advertisers and non-advertisers--of course, almost everyone local advertises with us."

An editor at a major daily explained that her management is almost fanatic in its insistence upon a separation of editorial and advertising departments. "At one time people who worked on the advertising floor could not even set foot on the editorial floor." This has relaxed somewhat in recent years, but any association between the two is strictly forbidden. She said, "I pay no attention to the ads. In fact, the article

may be totally opposed to the ad next to it. This has actually happened a couple of times."

"I've had some public relations people try to influence me by telling me how many full page ads their company has placed with our paper. It's a sure way for their information to land in the wastebasket," one editor said.

One editor explained that people in the advertising department would like her to work up stories to tie in with their ads but she refuses to do it. However, she added, "Probably there is a slight preference for the material from advertisers."

Three of the editors believe there is an occasional tie between editorial and advertising departments at their paper. One of them pointed out that her paper sometimes runs an article on a local retailer to tie in with his ads. Another said that she tries to relate articles in the special editions to advertising such as a feature on terrariums to accompany an ad for a florist shop.

However, another editor said that this sort of connection is more common in the entertainment section and for fund raising activities.

The following questions were answered by the editors on uncoded cards drawn from a file box. The cards were not examined until the end of the interview period so answers are completely anonymous.

#### Benefits of the Job

Question: Certain benefits, as well as detriments, accompany every job. Women's editors are often required to work overtime without pay. Do you consider the free meals, gifts and trips offered women's editors and

staff by business to be among your deserved job benefits and partial compensation for those extra hours?

- 1) Yes, the free offers are a type of compensation or job benefit
- 13) No, I don't put free offers from business in this category
- 1) No, they aren't offered
- 1) Not enough experience in this area to answer positively

The majority of editors do not consider free offers from business to be a deserved job benefit or compensation for long work hours. Comments written at the bottom of the cards express this view:

"I don't believe anything to be deserved and as far as I'm concerned they are unnecessary."

"They are not acceptable under any justification."

"I try to take compensatory time off, and my editor agrees with this policy."

"Free offers are not accepted. Occasionally meals are accepted--but because of coverage of 'news' story--not from a business or PR person."

"The meals involve covering stories at the same time, usually after regular working hours, so they are actually a nuisance. I'd rather eat at home."

"I have never had a problem with overtime without pay. It just isn't necessary."

"Theatre tickets may be an exception--used three or four times a year and spread among the staff--My staff hates "free meal" affairs. We pay for trips--don't take gifts."

The single affirmative response was not qualified.

Travel Expenses

Question: If business did not pay travel and accomodation expenses to newsworthy out-of-state events, could you attend? If so, who would pay the bills?

- 14) Yes, I would be able to attend
- 0) No, I would not be able to attend
- 1) Doesn't apply; no out-of-town trips (necessary)
- 1) Not certain as to paper's policy

These responses indicate that if businesses were to stop paying travel expenses to their seminars and conferences, women's editors would still be able to attend "newsworthy" out-of-state events. At the 16 papers in the study, bills would be paid by:

- 7) Total newspaper budget
- 2) Women's department budget
- 2) Women's editor
- 2) Partly by newspaper budget; partly by women's editor
- 1) Food department budget; occasionally by editor
- 1) Not certain as to paper's policy
- 1) Doesn't apply; no out-of-town trips (necessary)

One editor who indicated that she would be able to attend, added, "if it was newsworthy." Other comments express a similar selective vote:

"If I thought it was important enough and would benefit my professional capabilities as they relate to my work."

"If it was necessary to go, the paper would reimburse me."

"I sometimes pay my way to certain beneficial meetings."

Weighing Free Gift and Trip Offers

Question: What influences your decision of whether or not to accept free gift and trip offers?

- 8) Policy of paper
- 4) Potential for news feature
- 4) Never accepted
- 2) My own integrity
- 2) Few offers
- 1) Value of offer
- 1) Frequency of offer

(Several editors indicated that their decision is based on more than one factor; the total number of responses is 21.)

Half of the editors indicated that their paper's policy dictated their decision of whether or not to accept free gift or trip offers. A personal philosophy that it is wrong to accept freebies influences two editors' stands on the issue.

One-fourth of the editors revealed that the potential for a news feature influenced their decision. One of them wrote: "Our only interest is in the news value; something which would be of interest to our readers primarily as consumers." Another qualified her answer: "Never accept free gifts. Trips evaluated on the value of news they offer." And a third said, "Still have to justify either my conscience or my time away from the office."

Four of the editors pointed out that they never accept free gifts or trips. One explained that she receives no trip offers and no gifts other than sample food items. And one indicated that she had no choice

in the matter: "Few offered--usually gifts just sent."

Favorable Influence

Question: Please think carefully about this question and answer as frankly as possible: Do special offers (personal tours, free gifts) influence you favorably towards a client or his product?

- 0) Yes, it's impossible not to be favorably influenced by generous offers
- 5) No, I'm not influenced one way or another
- 9) No, they're trying to buy my favor. I'm "turned off"
- 2) Happens too infrequently to take notice of it

These findings suggest that if business hopes to "win friends and influence women's editors," the freebies game is the wrong route to take. About half the editors indicated that they are "turned off" by these offers. In fact, it is obvious that some editors have strong feelings on the matter. One editor wrote: "I reject this as much as a politician or firm who tries to influence my news judgment. Although the women's pages are of a different nature than the news pages they still must be guided by objectivity and news judgment."

Another editor explained that she is turned off because they do try to influence editorial material. And they are trying to make a person feel obligated to use the material. One editor was blunt about it: "It's cheap and shabby. It means they have no faith in their product standing on its own merits."

One editor said that "a product should be worthy in itself. It shouldn't have to be sold via trips and gifts." And an editor who senses that free offers are a means of buying her favor added, "Usually it is

the truth. An occasional fine 'thank you' has been accepted, I must admit. Maybe I feel I would be susceptible so I turn them off."

About one-third of the editors claim they're not influenced one way or another by special offers. One editor indicated that she has built up resistance: "After 20 years as a 'company wife' as well as my own work experience, I'm inclined to be more objective than susceptible."

One editor expressed the feeling that it was human to be somewhat swayed by a generous offer, but she added that she could "take it or leave it." One way or another, it does not matter.

As if to explain why she is not influenced by offers, one editor noted, "The policy of the paper is negative about free gift offers." Another pointed out that this was outside her experience: "Happens too infrequently to take notice of it. Certainly any gifts or trips that I've been offered had such minor value that I can't recall them."

Other editors noted that they lacked experience with this but some gave their opinion anyway:

"Occasion hasn't arisen. The Girl Scouts get as much publicity if they don't bring in cookies as if they do, but it possibly could create good staff feelings."

"There basically are none of the above mentioned offers and if there were it simply is not our paper's policy to be 'bought.' As an individual, I detest pressure by sales persons."

#### Industry Writing Awards

Question: Have you designed any articles or illustrations aimed at winning a contest or award sponsored by a company or association during the past year?

1) Yes

15) No

Only one editor gave an affirmative response and it was qualified this way:

"Contests sponsored by universities, journalism publications, press associations or other professional competition. Never for profit or business interests."

However, two editors indicated their intention of participating in writing competitions within the coming year. One said she plans to enter the Wisconsin Press Women's contest as well as some home furnishings contests.

One editor explained that she never enters because: "(I) always run out of time. Seem to see pattern in awards...everyone will get their turn." Another wrote: "Haven't time, wouldn't qualify anyway--and NOT INTERESTED!"

An editor who wants to see an end to the contests suggested: "The more papers boycott this sort of thing the sooner they will stop."

At least one of the papers included in the study does participate in industry-sponsored journalism contests. But material is not designed to win the judges' favor. One answer read: "In fact we deliberately avoid this. Our entries in the food contest sponsored by the American Meat Institute deliberately avoid pictures and recipes which have meat in them."

During the latter part of the interview, one food editor said, "I feel that if editors had their own association awards to judge their peers, it would be more objective. But company sponsored nutrition awards are of benefit to everyone. They're pushing good food and there's nothing wrong with that."

Should PR Freebie Offers Be Continued?

Question: Would you like to see the practice of offering women's editors free gifts and special discounts continued? Would you place any limits on it? If so, what would they be?

4) Yes, continue practice

12) No, should be stopped

Three fourths of the editors interviewed would like to see the practice of offering women's editors free gifts and special discounts stopped. One editor wrote: "There are obvious dangers involved with this and I think the practice is hazardous to both the women's editor and reader." Another wants the practice stopped because it is "too difficult to set limits."

One editor is not too concerned. She explained, "It has stopped as far as I personally know." Another wrote that this is outside her experience but added, "It would seem that honest business practice would care for a cessation of this kind of promotion."

Four editors think that business should continue to offer free gifts and special discounts to women's editors. Two of the respondents suggested the the following limits be placed on the practice:

"New products--food and cosmetics."

"Limit it to food products which can easily be tried and tested. It would also keep food editors on top of what is new."

But the lack of definition which characterizes this whole problem of freebies and special discounts is well illustrated by one editor's suggestion. She wants the practice continued "within reason of course, which is the way it is done here now. Anything excessive would only cause jealousy among peers."

## CHAPTER VII

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS INFORMATION SERVICES

Interview Section E

The purpose of this section was twofold: to identify what type of information women's editors would like from their public relations sources and to find out what changes they'd like to see in public relations information services and practices.

Interviewer: It's possible that public relations persons could do a better job of working with you and other women's editors. I'd like to find out what type of material you want from your business sources and if you'd like to see any changes in company practices as they relate to you and your paper. The results will be published and should prove useful to both women's editors and their public relations sources.

Type of Information Wanted

Question: First of all, I'd like to know what type of information you prefer to receive from your public relations sources. That is, do you prefer news of events, research findings, how-to-do-it stories concerning company products such as recipes or decorator projects, basic information, experience or personality stories with a local angle, awards or contest winners, or some other type of information? I realize this may differ according to the subject matter, so I'll name the subject and I'd like you to respond with the types (or type) of information you want concerning each one, o.k?

Food  
Textiles and clothing  
Furnishings and housewares  
Cosmetics and beauty aids  
Children's toys  
Home gardening  
Consumer economics  
Other (please specify)

(Editors were handed a list of the various types of information.)

Because only the food editors were consulted at three of the papers, the total possible number of responses under the food category is 16; under the other subject areas it is 13. (Refer to Table V.)

Women's editors expressed definite interest in certain types of information. They have the greatest need for research findings, explanatory articles and basic or general information about areas of interest to their readers. They clearly put the greatest emphasis on information about foods and nutrition. The total number of responses under "foods and nutrition" (57) is nearly double that for "consumer economics" (30), the next highest subject area. This wide margin cannot be entirely attributed to the higher number of editors responding in the food category. In fact, several editors said that they use each type of story as it relates to food and nutrition.

Three-fourths of the editors interviewed said they want research findings about food and nutrition, food recipes and decorator how-to stories. Editors also expressed a high interest in basic nutritional information, general information about the care and construction of fabrics and clothing and both general information and research findings in the area of consumer economics.

News of events: Fewer than half the editors indicated an interest in news of events under any subject area. One editor pointed out that she

TABLE V

## TYPE OF INFORMATION WANTED

	Event		Research		How-to		Basic		Filler		Experience		Award		Total
	N	I-IV V T	I-IV V T	I-IV V T	I-IV V T	I-IV V T	I-IV V T	I-IV V T	I-IV V T	I-IV V T	I-IV V T	I-IV V T	I-IV V T	I-IV V T	
Food	16	3 3 6	9 4 13	3 3 12	8 3 11	2 0 2	4 2 6	5 2 7							57
Clothing	13	2 0 2	6 1 7	3 1 4	8 0 8	1 1 2	3 0 3								29
Furnishings	13	2 0 2	1 0 1	11 0 11	7 0 7	1 0 1	3 0 3								28
Appliances	13	0 0 0	6 0 6	3 1 4	5 0 5	1 0 1	2 0 2								20
Beauty	13	0 0 0	7 0 7	5 1 6	5 1 6	2 0 2	2 0 2								25
Toys	13	1 0 1	6 1 7	2 0 2	6 0 6	1 0 1	2 0 2								21
Gardening	13	1 0 1	2 0 2	7 0 7	4 0 4	0 0 0	2 0 2								18
Economics	13	3 1 4	7 1 8	1 1 2	8 1 9	0 1 1	2 1 3								30
Total															
		16	51	48	56	10	23					24			

Information categories: news of events; research findings; how-to-do-it stories concerning company products (i.e., recipes); basic information (i.e., good nutrition, fiber content); spot news or fillers; experience or personality stories with local interest; awards or contest winners.

Key: I-IV = circulation size 75,449 and under; V = circulation size 100,500 +; T = total of groups I - V.

mainly does feature articles; hard news is more the property of the city desk. Another editor said that if the event was really newsworthy she'd like to know about it but that some public relations person's ideas of "news" don't agree with hers. For instance, she could get excited about the opening of a consumer awareness center that demonstrated new products on the market but not about the promotion of some company officials.

Research findings: Research findings are important to most editors, especially in the areas of food and nutrition and consumer economics. One editor stressed that research information is only valuable if it applies to the whole industry. She wants companies to describe not only their own work but other research being done in the field. Another editor pointed out that the expected retail cost of product developments and new textiles should be included with a description of the research.

One editor qualified her interest in research findings this way: "I like research results but I probably wouldn't believe them if they came from industry. I'm not impressed by the combination of research data and the soft sell. Chances are the research wouldn't be published in its entirety anyway. I place greater trust in research conducted by universities."

Explanatory or "how-to-do-it" articles: Editors are quite interested in the how-to-do-it type of articles, particularly recipes and articles on home decorating. Editors emphasized, however, that this type of story should be tied to some special interest. They want recipes that deal with nutritional problems such as cholesterol-free diets and diets for the elderly. Recipes should have at least one outstanding feature such as low cost or quick preparation time.

Several editors said that articles on home decorating need to take

a realistic approach, keeping the budget of the average reader in mind. Safety is another important consideration of furniture design. Also, the do-it-yourself trend has created a demand for information on home-made furnishings.

Articles that describe how to shop for home appliances should deal with cost, convenience and safety as well as general shopping hints. This, too, should be news-oriented. For instance, they would like to get information that concerns special problems such as household aids for the handicapped or the elderly. One editor recently did a feature explaining how arthritics can more easily cope with their housework.

A few editors said the worst public relations job is done by the cosmetic and beauty aid industry. They pointed out that this is an excellent area for the how-to type of article, such as how to pumice heels or do Christmas hair styles. With this kind of story, the local angle may not be as important, one editor pointed out.

In the area of gardening and household plants, editors were again most interested in the explanatory article. The ecology theme has sparked a lot of interest in the care and arrangement of indoor plants. Also, in keeping with the natural food trend, more persons are reading about how to grow their own vegetables and herbs.

A few editors mentioned consumer economics and toys in connection with how-to-do-it stories and wanted information on home-made toys. Another said that she can use articles on how to fix things around the home. Of course, the area of consumer economics relates to each of the other subject areas.

One editor said that the most important subject area to her readers is "how to cope with pressures and tensions." A short time ago, she ran

an article dealing with the way to handle jealousy between siblings. Another story concerned ways to help older persons adjust to the social and physical changes of aging.

Basic information: Because a women's section is feature-oriented, editors have a great need for basic or general information. This is especially true in the areas of food and nutrition, fabrics and clothing and consumer economics.

Several editors pointed out that the general public is becoming more conscious of the connection between adequate nutrition, good eating habits and good health. They are concerned not only about the variety and appeal of different foods but about the wholesomeness of the foods they eat. Basic nutritional information and low cost meal plans are high priority topics.

The history of various foods and the traditions connected with them are important too. Two food editors said that descriptions of food products should include the percentages for each ingredient and the nutritional value of each. They also want to know about the food additives in different products.

Many editors are more interested in the care and labeling of textiles and clothing than fashion trends. Their concern is from the consumer point of view: comparative shopping, the characteristics of various fibers, wearability of clothing, flammability and laundering procedures. One editor complained that information on new fabrics never cites the retail cost of the material or where it can be purchased.

The consumer aspect is equally as important in the area of home furnishings. Information on new furnishings should include the retail cost, characteristics of the material, durability and care. One editor

said that she wished material on home furnishings would tie whole furniture arrangements together instead of describing only individual pieces. Another said she is looking for floor plans of furniture arrangements.

One small town editor said that the cause of women's rights is not all that important to many of her readers. But she said the topic could be used if it tied in with something else such as sex discrimination in credit granting.

Filler: Editors expressed the least interest in filler material. This is a bit surprising in the light of their responses to an earlier question (Interview Section B) in which half the editors said they want to receive more filler items. Perhaps the discrepancy here is due to the fact that filler refers to the length rather than the type of information. Since filler items are usually general information, it's likely that the editors did not distinguish between the two.

Experience: The editors acknowledged that stories dealing with people get priority over those concerning only company products. However, only a small number of editors expressed interest in receiving the experience or personality story from a public relations person. Several editors said they doubted that the public relations practitioner would have information on local people, and, in this type of article, the local angle is practically a must.

One food editor said that sometimes a public relations tip-off about some visiting personality is just a gimmick to try to get you to do a story about a company representative. But when it really concerns some well-known personality or expert in the field, she's definitely interested. However, she would expect exclusive rights to the story.

Another editor pointed out that she likes to link personality

stories to practical information. For instance, a recent article concerned a local woman who has been offering a laundering service in fine linens for about 50 years. Her shop, which is unique in the nation, is closing down. The story included her secrets for removing spots and stains.

Articles about contests and award winners: Several editors said they want to hear about industry-sponsored cooking and sewing contests. As one editor pointed out, contests appeal to many readers.

A food editor explained that if the contest relates to an entire industry rather than a specific company or product, it can be very intriguing. However, she was disappointed with the way one company ran its cooking contest this year. She explained, "They qualified it so that the participants were required to use products from specific companies as well as the basic food of the industry...They turned it into a super commercial--so I threw out the release on the contest."

Another editor said that she's interested in awards but hears about too many of them. Someone else complained that releases concerning contests or awards are usually too promotional.

#### Product Emphasis in Releases

Question: Do you sense a trend towards more basic information and less product emphasis in the releases you receive? If so, which industries seem to be pioneering this trend?

Those companies which avoid overt product mention and brand names in their releases should be encouraged by responses to this question. More than half the editors sense a trend towards more basic information and less product emphasis in the releases they receive.

Six of the editors think the food industry is the most outstanding

in this respect. Two editors referred to the meat industry in particular, commending it for sending out materials on the various cuts of meat and their standardized names. Some have noticed a greater emphasis on nutrition in food company releases. Both the food and the gas companies have adopted a broader outlook, one editor said.

The home furnishings industry also received two votes. One editor has found that furnishing companies are using fewer brand names in their releases and noted that they are sending out many useful articles on home decorating.

One editor could see a reduction of product publicity in every area except cosmetics. She said, "Releases are more sophisticated now. Even the jewelry releases explore different ways to wear jewelry instead of merely describing it."

Nevertheless, this feeling was not unanimous. Six of the editors could see no change in product puffery. In fact, one food editor finds more emphasis on specific products than ever before. Another said, "They're still pushing products but I do sense more honesty."

One editor complained of double tactics: "Some companies are doing both. They explain how to stretch the food dollar in one release while they are introducing more expensive convenience foods in another. It's a contradiction--I feel that I can't trust them. They're always promoting their own products. It's necessary to use information from all the companies in order to get a balanced view."

#### Presentation of Information

Question: Which generally proves most useful to you--a detailed news release, a skeleton story idea, a brief summary followed by a few facts

or a tip-off on upcoming events? Why?

The three methods of presentation preferred by the editors are: the detailed news release, a brief summary followed by a few facts and a tip-off on upcoming events.

Seven of the editors like the detailed news release because it includes all relevant information. As one editor explained, "I can always tear it apart and use what I want." And someone else said, "The less work I have to do on a release; the more likely I am to print it."

One editor explained that the detailed release gave her something to go on and saves her having to dig up the information herself, but added, "Let us draw the conclusions." Another editor stipulated that the subject should warrant a detailed treatment if it's presented this way.

But six editors said they would prefer a capsule of the material followed by a list of the important facts. They emphasized the importance of getting to the core of the material. As one editor put it, "It's quick to read and easier to deal with. I can tell right away what the outstanding idea or feature is, so I know immediately if I want to use it."

For the same reason another editor prefers a story idea presented in skeleton form. She explained, "Each day I get a high stack of mail so I need to know at a glance what the story is about."

A good editor at a major daily said that she would welcome any form but the detailed news release. She said, "They send out the detailed release, hoping we'll run it as it is. Many are wordy and take too much time to read." She suggested that the release simply state the basic facts and include a phone number so that the editor can phone for further information if she's interested. As she pointed out, "It puts the obligation on you. Recently I received a single page letter inviting me to phone

if I had any questions on soybeans. This meant I didn't have to wade through a lot of material and I did follow it up."

Several editors said they'd also welcome a tip-off on an upcoming event, especially if it was local. One editor who has little use for the written release pointed out that news about events is more important than general information that you can find in the library--"the sort of thing that's in most public relations releases."

Another editor stressed the importance of putting the essentials in the lead. One editor spoke for most: "The form doesn't matter but it should be brief--preferably no more than one page. If it's lengthy it gets pushed aside and may never be read."

#### Story Tips versus Written Releases

Question: Would you prefer that public relations persons send you more story tips and fewer written releases so that you can have leads for your own articles? Why?

Despite a preference for concise materials, two-thirds of the editors would rather get written releases than story tips. This is especially true in the four lowest circulation size groups. Three out of four editors in the highest circulation size group prefer story tips.

Editors at smaller papers find the written release more valuable because it saves them time. Many pointed out that they get story tips from local sources. One editor said, "This applies especially here at our paper because we're working with a skeleton staff--we need facts, not ideas." A couple of editors expressed the opinion that it is an editor's job to figure out her own leads; the public relations material should serve as background information for the stories. One added, "I

don't trust public relations tips anyway."

Someone explained that the written release gives her the two alternatives, "I can always take an idea from a release and develop it myself or I can use the whole release." Story tips from public relations sources are superfluous, according to another editor, unless they tie in with something local, such as the attendance of a company representative at a local event.

Those editors who prefer story tips to written releases pointed out that they don't use half of the material that's sent to them by public relations persons. A food editor remarked, "I haven't run across a story yet from a public relations person that I couldn't live without. The information is usually too general and not that new. It's most helpful when it involves people, not products." She said that she'd appreciate an exclusive tip on someone visiting her area such as a travelling chef.

Story tips get a high rating because they can be judged quickly. One editor pointed out that the written releases could be just as helpful if they were simplified and condensed. But she cautioned, "The 'Are you interested?' letter is a waste of time. Without seeing some of the material, I can't tell whether it's good or bad."

#### Format and Length of Release

Question: A) What are your preferences for the format of a release: One or both sides of a page? Double or triple spaced? Pages loose, gathered and stapled, gathered with a paper clip? B) What size paper do you like best? C) What length news release do you generally prefer to receive: brief one or two page story; single page release; two page release; over two pages?

The editors were practically unanimous in their suggestions for the format of public relations releases:

Information should be typed on one side of the page only; double-spaced; stapled; on regular 8 x 11 inch paper.

Nearly half the editors said the length of the release really depended upon the subject matter. But most stressed the importance of keeping it as brief as possible. One said, "Strip it to the bare facts." Another: "Definitely no more than one and one-half pages. If it's three or four pages, it automatically gets set aside. I never get to most of them."

At a paper which recently converted to cold type, the women's editor wants scanner-ready copy. She said she would probably use more public relations releases if they came in this form. A special editing pen is used to change or delete material. The material is simply cut and pasted and then it's ready for the computer.

#### Additional Copies

Question: Would you like to get more than one copy of a written release; of an illustration; of a recipe? If so, how many copies would you like of each?

Sending more than one copy of a written release to an editor is a waste of time and money. None of the editors interviewed are interested in receiving additional copies. As one pointed out, she can always photocopy the original if it's needed for editing or layout purposes.

Similarly, all the editors agreed that one copy of an illustration is sufficient. However, one food editor suggested that when a company sends out a correction notice or an appendage to an earlier release,

a photocopy of both the original illustration and the written release should be enclosed. She said that this would make it much easier for her to locate the original in her files since she often files material according to the main subject in the photograph.

Two of the editors in the highest circulation size group said they would like to receive two copies of each recipe. That way, one can be sent to the presses and the other retained in their files.

#### Use of Public Relations Illustrations

Question: A) Are you more likely to use a release that has photographs or other illustrations included?

B) Which types of illustrations do you use: photographs, maps, line drawings, graphs, cartoons?

C) What size photographs do you prefer?

D) Can your paper handle three or four color process printings? Do you print color photos from business sources in color? Do you ever run color in black and white?

E) In which of these forms can you use photos: transparencies, negative color; mats; black and white photos; reproduction proofs; unprocessed film?

F) Do you have any policy regarding exclusives on photos? If so, please explain how it differs with respect to the type of story, subject matter, type of illustration, time of the year or other influencing factors. (Probe on this question to find out if such factors as circulation area, particular editions, and other print competitors are important.)

G) Do you generally rewrite captions?

H) What is the greatest number of illustrations you would use with

a major feature in food? fashion? home furnishings?

Most of the editors who work on middle size papers, half the total, indicated that they are more likely to use releases if photographs or other illustrations are included. Two editors pointed out that even if the illustrations are not used in the paper, they capture the editor's attention and may help her to visualize the concept better. All the editors in the lowest circulation size group said the inclusion of an illustration did not make them any more inclined to use a release. This could be due to the fact that they have limited space. One of them explained that most of her illustrations are local except for recipe photos. Only one of the editors in the highest circulation size group said she can be persuaded to use a release because of a good illustration. The large papers do most of their own photography but one editor said she uses many fashion illustrations because of the high quality of the photos from this area.

In addition to photographs, line drawings are occasionally used in all but two of the women's sections. However, the major papers have their own staff artists and suggested that a line drawing from a public relations source would have to be of excellent quality before they would use it. One editor said that line drawings usually don't reproduce well; they are too faint.

Three-fourths of the editors said they sometimes use graphs to illustrate semi-technical material or sociological studies. Several said they would like to see a greater use of graphs especially to point out trends.

Cartoons and maps are used by more than one-half the editors. One editor expressed an interest in caricatures and another said that she has

been searching for a good syndicated cartoon that ties in with women's interests.

Most of the editors want 8 x 10 inch photographs. However, the three editors in the lowest circulation size group said they prefer 4 x 5 photographs.

Eleven editors, including all those in the two largest circulation size groups, can handle three or four color process printing. However, only eight of the editors run color public relations photographs; four of these are in the largest circulation size group. One-fourth of the editors occasionally run a color photo from a public relations source in black and white. But most editors would do this as a last minute substitute. (The various forms in which editors would like to receive photos are listed in Appendix C.)

One women's editor said a reproduction proof would be used only if it was on slick paper and well done: "Reproduction proofs tend to lose quality." Another stipulated that a story would have to be sensational before she'd use either a reproduction proof or unprocessed film. Color transparencies are used at all the papers in the two highest circulation size groups. Negative color is used chiefly at the larger papers. Only two editors use mats.

Only the papers in the two highest circulation size groups expect to receive exclusive photographs. Most of the smaller papers indicated they had no local competition anyway. But one editor at a small paper said she would be inclined to run an exclusive photo before another, especially in the areas of foods and fashions.

Papers in the 30,500 to 75,449 circulation size group want photos to be exclusive to them within their circulation area. One editor said

this included both print and broadcast competitors. Editors in the highest circulation size category expect illustrations to be exclusive to them in the state. One Milwaukee editor said she also wanted the material exclusive from the Chicago papers. Another editor whose paper originates a syndicated column said the materials must at least be exclusive to them in the midwest, preferably in the U.S. and especially with regard to color photographs. One editor said she realized that this exclusivity could apply only to feature articles; duplication on news events is unavoidable.

Only two of the editors normally use the captions attached to public relations photographs. The majority of editors rewrite at least 50 percent of the captions because they are too wordy. One editor finds that she must rewrite fashion lines but that the food captions are generally better.

The greatest number of illustrations any of the editors would use with a feature on foods is five. But one food editor said she would never use this many public relations photographs in a single feature. Some editors would use as many as six in a fashion or home furnishings layout but three illustrations is a more common number.

#### Difficult Photographic Subject

Question: With a topic that's difficult to illustrate photographically without being commercial, such as freshness dating for foods, would you prefer a photograph showing labels or another type of illustration such as a graph or a line drawing? Why?

Rather than using a photograph in which there is a prominent display of brand names, most editors would prefer a line drawing. One editor thought that a line drawing would have greater impact than a photograph in a topic

like "freshness dating of foods." "Line drawings are better than photographs when you want to point out details such as numbers on a label," explained another editor.

Graphs are not quite as popular. One editor thinks that people shy away from them. But a few editors said that graphs would be helpful in this case if it was not too complicated. The idea of a cartoon incorporating some humor was also suggested.

More than one editor said she occasionally retouches photos anyway, and two food editors said they would not ban the photo if the subject was well demonstrated and especially if it included a variety of brands.

#### Complaints About Illustrations

Question: What complaints, if any, do you have about the illustrations you receive from public relations sources?

The most frequent complaint about illustrations from industry is that they look posed and phony. Several editors mentioned that fashion photos often lack imagination: "Models are placed against unnatural backgrounds or blank walls."

One editor said, "Occasionally you'll get photographs where the chicken looks uncooked and unappetizing." Another said, "The food in illustrations has to be real and look it. And it should be appealing.

A naked plate with a pork chop on it won't make the grade." One food editor said that photos are sometimes too cluttered with props. Another complained that many photographs look stilted: "Sometimes the object gets lost because they always have a body in the picture."

About half the editors notice a prominent display of brand names in public relations photographs. Cosmetic photographs were mentioned by

several editors as being the worst offenders. One editor pointed out that a cosmetic photograph is often no more than a tube of lipstick or a bottle of perfume on a stand, the type of thing you see in magazine ads. She feels they could be a lot more interesting, perhaps by including people. Another editor said that only the liquor illustrations have a blatant display of brand names.

Photographs were also faulted because of too many studio or still shots. One editor said she'd like to see more action shots, especially in fashion photographs.

The composition and quality of some photographs is poor, according to a few of the editors. One editor said this is true of about 50 percent of the photographs. Another editor, who looks first for clarity and good composition in a photograph, said she's been unable to use the fashion photos because they are so grainy. A food editor complained that some of the photographs aren't sharp enough; they have a mealy texture.

One editor at a major daily said she rarely uses public relations artwork because the line drawings are too faint. Two editors said they dislike pictures of people or things lined up in a row, especially company officers.

But one-fourth of the editors had no complaints at all about the public relations illustrations. "Most are far better than we could do," one admitted. Another said the photographs are eye-appealing and imaginative. Several had high praise for the color in food photographs.

#### Advance Timing of Materials

Question: How far in advance of the useful printing date do you like to receive material? Does this differ for written releases, black and white

photographs, color photographs? If so, how?

The results of this question clearly illustrate that every editor has her own individual working schedule. Most of the small papers plan their columns no more than two to three weeks in advance. However, the range varies from a few days to at least six weeks on the higher circulation papers. Generally, editors appreciate receiving material well ahead of time, especially if it has a holiday or seasonal tie-in. One editor remarked that it was particularly distressing to receive Christmas material on December 15.

"The key to getting everything done is to plan things in advance," one editor said. She plans her color layouts for December in October. Others also emphasized the importance of getting color photos well ahead of time. More than half the editors want color photos at least a month in advance. About 50 percent said they need black and white photos at least two or three weeks before release.

One editor wishes that public relations persons would tell her in advance what materials they are planning to send. This would enable her to request it in time for use in a special edition. She complained that much worthwhile material arrives too late for use.

#### Press Kits

Question: Do you generally make use of any part of the press kits that public relations persons put out to launch a new product line? If so, how do you use them?

Would you change press kits in any way to make them more useful? Would you prefer to receive a series of articles and illustrations over time? If so, why?

Mention press kits and women's editors respond with a unanimous "too commercially oriented." One editor said that companies are very competitive when they're trying to introduce a new product on the market and this is evident in their materials. She called it an "obvious sell."

Because of the overt product emphasis, six of the editors never use any part of the press kits they receive. One said, "It's extraneous material. It's ridiculous for them to inundate us with the stuff." Another editor explained that she automatically tosses out materials filled with brand names.

However, half the editors make selective use of the material in press kits. One editor said she uses information that is general enough to tie in with something else, i.e., articles that apply to an entire industry rather than specific products. One food editor occasionally extracts a photograph from a press kit; nothing else. She pointed out that she does not have room in her products column for detailed information. Another food editor thumbs through press kits for ideas but rarely saves anything.

However, two editors were less critical. One said she is toying with the idea of a products column and generally saves product sheets for later use. A recent article on the latest convenience foods incorporated product information from press kits. Someone else said she was impressed by a press kit that she had recently received because it was well put together, and contained educational materials, including a magazine on creativity. Another editor said that she has no complaints about press kits and finds that they usually have good recipes and background material on product development.

A quarter of the editors indicated that they would prefer to

receive a series of articles over time since they can't use all the material presented in a press kit anyway.

But half the editors would rather stick with the press kit. One editor insisted, "I certainly don't want weekly installments of a sell. I'd rather get it all at once." Another editor pointed out, "With a kit, I can plan my pages ahead of time and it gives me the option of using as little or as much as I like." And an editor at a major paper explained that she can't run a series because her news space varies so much from day to day.

Those editors who opt for the press kit had some suggestions for improvement, the main one being to tone down the product emphasis. Several editors stressed the need to simplify and condense material. One editor said, "Aim for a one-page product description rather than a book." Another wants to get the facts presented in a direct concise style, without flowery descriptions. She recommended that the kit include the company's name, phone number, account represented and the person to contact for further information.

A women's editor at a major daily said that companies get much more news space by staging events than by sending product publicity to editors. "Each year this city has a circus parade that's sponsored by a local beer producer; another company recently sponsored a free Bernstein concert. In both cases the event was so big that the media couldn't avoid covering it." She admitted that this type of thing takes a great deal of money and imagination. But she insisted that the way to get coverage is to come up with an original idea: "One smart public relations person came into our office and showed us a way to recycle glass jars. They were really attractive and unusual, so we did a story on it."

Seasonal Material

Question: Is there a need for information tied to seasonal events, such as Thanksgiving? Or do you prefer timelessness?

About two-thirds of the editors said they have a definite need for material that's tied to seasonal events. One editor pointed out that readers expect the turkey recipes at Thanksgiving and the articles on Christmas decorations and toys in December.

The editors had one major complaint, however. They said that materials linked to specific holidays rarely arrive too soon. One editor pointed out that materials connected with Thanksgiving often arrive two or three days prior to it or even a week afterwards. She said that she was still receiving Christmas features in the middle of January. Two editors complained that they prepare their Christmas layouts in October, but appropriate materials arrived weeks later.

"Public relations people are good about sending seasonal material," one editor said. "But I find it hard to come up with things for the bridal tab other than a few jewelry council items. I receive only about two bridal dress photos a year."

Seasonal material is limited in its use and so a third of the editors in the study prefer materials that have no specific release date. A food editor at a large paper pointed out that she's inundated with holiday photographs from public relations sources. General materials stand a better chance of being used. "For example, if I get 16 Halloween photos, I might use one and the rest are dead when Halloween is over," she said.

The editor at another major daily explained that she does all her special holiday features herself so the public relations material is only

useful as a source of ideas. A small town editor also finds the general articles "more usable more often."

### Changing Editorial Needs

Question: Are public relations persons keeping pace with your changing needs? Have there been any marked changes in what you are looking for from your business sources over the past five years? If so, what are they?

Public relations persons can put a feather in their cap. About two-thirds of the editors interviewed think that they are keeping pace with changing editorial needs. One food editor said: "The public relations persons I know are on top of things. They're aware of trends and they come up with novel ways of presenting things." An editor at a small paper stated: "They seem well attuned to what's going on." And another editor has found that public relations people are becoming more personal in their approach, that is, more aware of what's going on at the local level.

Some editors praised their public relations sources for an awareness of the expanded consciousness of women. One editor has noticed great emphasis on the changing family, consumerism and legislation affecting women. Another editor has sensed a broadening interest in the working woman's problems.

One food editor pointed out that the consumer movement has forced companies to become more responsive to the consumer. "There is a stronger emphasis on nutrition and good health in many food company releases now," she said. "Also, some companies have taken note of the do-it-yourself trend and are developing products with this in mind. For example, they are offering flour in unbleached forms because of the interest in natural foods."

But a few editors qualified their praise. One women's editor said: "Public relations persons are getting more honest. But they've picked up the liberated woman jargon without really changing their attitudes. I was impressed by the sociological survey conducted by one company. It was worthwhile information, unconnected to the company's product. More companies should be conducting research on changing social attitudes."

According to another editor, companies in general are keeping up with the times, but there are still a few who think women do nothing but cook. One food editor pointed out that companies were slow to come up with low-cost meal plans and recipes which fit in with the trend towards the "natural" foods. Another said that her paper has converted to cold type but that some public relations people are still sending her mats.

Two editors at small papers complained that public relations persons seldom ask what they want. One said: "After three years, they still don't know my name." But a food editor at a large daily explained that she gets a letter about once a year from most companies asking what improvements she would like to see in their materials. "One company wonders why I never use their materials," she added. "I've told them several times that the quality of their photographs is poor, but I haven't detected any change. They ask for advice, but they don't take it."

About half the editors claimed there have been marked changes in their editorial needs in the past five years. They pointed mostly to the consumerism movement and the women's liberation push as having affected almost every topic covered in the women's section.

One editor said it is simply a case of dealing with issues as they arise nationally. She explained that she is interested in social issues and information that can help readers cope with their problems. Subjects

that relate to consumerism, medicine, day care, welfare, changing life styles, problems of the elderly and the handicapped appear frequently in her columns. She finds, in contrast, that many companies are still trying to sell her plain product descriptions.

#### New Directions for Industry

Question: Do you detect any new directions in the food, textile and home furnishings field? If so, how will this affect your criteria for selecting material for your paper in the future?

Most editors would not claim any special foresight. Instead they pointed out that consumer demand, changing lifestyles and the supply of raw materials will determine new product development.

The consumer movement has forced industry to pay more attention to the quality and safety of their products, one editor said. She credited the food industry for becoming more nutrition conscious. But, she added, this is truer of some companies than others. She said that she is disgusted by the fake chemical foods that some food companies try to push off as convenience foods. And she is convinced that many of her readers would not be fooled either. In contrast, she said, are the companies who responded to the natural food trend by coming out with products such as unbleached flours. She expects food companies will do more in the future to help the person with special dietetic needs: the diabetic, the elderly, the person with unusual food allergies.

Several editors noted that people are less interested in high fashion and name designers than they used to be. The cookbook approach of saying which designs will be "in" next season does not work any more. It's a matter of individual preference. One women's editor senses that

the fashion industry is caught in a state of flux. She said: "The industry is schizophrenic. They try to attach a certain glory and allure to expensive high fashions and yet they hope to sell garments to the average consumer. They will have to resolve this dichotomy."

One editor pointed to the shortage of natural fibers and the escalating prices of both natural and man-made materials. The textile industry, she reasoned, will have to come up with a solution. Fabrics that have greater versatility may be one answer. For instance, a fabric that responds automatically to temperature changes has already been developed.

Noting the increased popularity of home sewing, editors commented that pattern companies were quick to branch off into areas other than clothing, such as the stuff-and-sew furniture. The ecology trend prompted new designs in furnishings, such as the terrarium coffee table. Public concern over high consumption and waste forced industry to assess their part in polluting the environment, someone else said. She referred to the efforts of some companies to recycle their containers and predicted more efforts in this direction. For example, designers are experimenting now with the idea of recycling plastic furniture.

Changing lifestyles influence the work of industrial designers to a large extent, one editor explained. This accounts for the informality of new furnishings like the beanbag chair, built-in couches and water beds. She pointed out that the increased mobility of society is fostering a demand for nomadic furniture that is lightweight, disposable and easy to care for.

The introduction of the metric system of measurement will mean an overhaul of packaging and design, one editor pointed out. Pattern

companies have been using both measurements for a while now. But most food companies are not yet including metric measurements in the recipes they send to editors.

#### Complaints about the Public Relations Profession

Question: What are the greatest complaints, if any, you have against the way the public relations persons you know operate?

The most common complaint women's editors have about the public relations practitioners is that they try to grab space for free product advertising. Several editors pointed out that many of the releases they receive are full of product publicity. "They are naive," one editor said, "to hope that we're not going to edit it." One said she is especially annoyed by the practitioners who visit her office and try to sell her a bill of goods. She said that it is fairly easy to spot the honest ones, the ones who have real news to offer. And she added: "It's a two-way street. If they play it straight with me, I'll cooperate with them."

Some editors said that although they were conscious of the product push, they simply ignored it. "After all, it's part of their job," one said. Another stated: "They're all individuals. Some are pushy and obnoxious; some are merely doing their job. It takes a special person to do this kind of thing and I don't envy them the task."

A fourth of the editors said that public relations persons are ignorant of newspapers' editorial requirements. One pointed out that most practitioners don't take the time to study different papers and assess individual styles. Another said: "If they'd just buy a copy of our paper and study it they'd know whether or not to come in." However, another editor believes that as news becomes more automated, public

relations persons are developing a better concept of what news is and how it should be written.

One editor thinks that practitioners have a good grasp of what news is but usually choose to ignore it. A food editor at a major paper has found that local public relations persons who are aware of her problems come up with better news stories than practitioners outside the city.

Only two editors blamed public relations persons for attempting influence and pressure methods of getting into the news column. Most felt that practitioners are smarter than to try that.

More than one editor complained that practitioners never issue request forms or phone to get the editor's viewpoint. One editor said: "They simply keep sending in material that lands in the wastebasket."

Two editors pointed out that companies don't keep their mailing lists up to date. One editor said she is still receiving mail addressed to the previous editor, although she has been at the paper for several years. The other editor claimed that some of the mail arriving at her office bears names that date back ten years.

A bone of contention with two editors is the duplication of releases within their newspaper offices. The same releases are sent to the women's desk and to the city desk. They pointed out that this could go unnoticed and result in two similar articles. In addition to annoying the editor, this is a waste of time and the company's money.

One editor has found that practitioners attempt to check the flow of news concerning their companies or clients. She dislikes the fact that she always has to go through the public relations officer in order to speak to the company employees. And she added: "They are usually full of sweet talk. They never bring up news unless it puts their company in a

favorable light. For instance, they'd never call to tell you about something like the high injury rate among employees."

According to one editor, public relations people often choose poor hours to visit. She said: "They'll arrive unannounced just when I'm under deadline pressures. As a result, we're both brisk. I can understand why they must meet so many 'no's.'"

But six editors interviewed had no complaints at all against the public relations profession. One said: "Of course they're trying to get news space. But they can manage this without pushing. Many of them are top-notch people; they turn out good material that helps me keep on top of things." Another praised practitioners for an obvious willingness to face up to problems within the industry. She admires them for coming up with releases that explain their position.

A food editor said that many public relations people are among the sharpest people she knows. She pointed out that local practitioners are conscious of her problems and don't approach her unless they can offer the type of information she is interested in. Another editor said she has found public relations practitioners "most gracious whenever I've contacted them about something like a recipe that failed."

#### Personal Contact

Question: Do you have enough personal contact with your public relations people? For what reasons should they be visiting you: to supply background information for stories; to allow you to ask questions; or for other reasons?

Three-fourths of the editors said they already have enough personal contact with their business information sources. Although two editors

stated that they enjoy having local public relations persons call on them occasionally, most editors prefer contact by mail or telephone.

Editors emphasized the fact that they work under deadline pressures and friendly office visits take up too much time. One women's editor said: "You'd go out of your mind if they all called on you. Besides, usually they just see their own area, not the overall picture. It's much easier to throw something in the wastebasket than to haggle in person." Another editor said that she resents passers-through, "especially the ones who try to pull the wool over your eyes."

An editor at a major daily explained that she has a good understanding with local public relations persons. She said: "They let me know about events that would interest my readers. In turn, I cooperate with them." She stressed, however, that she does not socialize with them. She guards her objectivity to such a degree that she will not join the local press club because it admits public relations persons.

According to one food editor there is no sense in making a personal visit to deliver releases. "After all, I have no time to lunch with these people. And if their material is good, I'll use it. If it's poor, they're certainly not going to persuade me to change my mind."

Two editors who work at large dailies emphasized that they see too much of public relations persons. One complained that they always choose the wrong time to visit.

Only two editors said they do not have enough contact with their business information sources. One felt that with increased communication, practitioners would become more aware of her news requirements. She added: "I'd be impressed if they cared enough to ask." The other editor thinks that an occasional office call would give her a better idea of what they

have to offer. She recently interviewed a cosmetic company representative who stopped at the paper. "We did a feature on her work history and printed her ideas on skin care although we never use the company's releases."

Other editors said contact with company spokesmen is important because it gives them a chance to ask questions and get background information.

One editor referred to a recent publicity forum she attended. "Forty groups were represented and we had a chance to speak with them individually. In turn, they asked us what changes we'd like to see in their information services. This is the type of thing that fosters better public relations."

#### Ways to Improve the Relationship

Question: Is there a specific way in which the relationship between women's editors and the public relations persons who disseminate information to them could be improved?

Women's editors appear to hold a wide range of views concerning public relations practitioners and their function. It would appear that their opinions and understanding of public relations are based on individual experiences.

One editor said many journalists look down on public relations people and associate them with the prostitution of journalism. She said that many of them are pushy in their actions and flowery in their speech. She thinks it's unlikely that journalists would try to develop a better relationship with the public relations profession.

On the other hand, some editors sense that public relations people talk down to them. One editor pointed out: "Public relations practitioners

think that the women's editor is a push-over. It irks me that they assume the women's page is free access because the women's editor heads it. It's also annoying to be referred to as a society editor. It implies that you're not a newswoman. They should realize that most women's editors today are trained journalists."

Several editors said that the key to an improved understanding between the two fields is to keep communication lines open. They stressed the importance of personal contact through visits, phone calls and mail surveys. One editor said: "A lot of public relations people are dumb about editorial requirements. They should examine individual newspapers; learn the editors' needs and interests."

A small town editor suggested that public relations persons issue request cards to women's editors, including with each a stamped self-addressed envelope. That way they would know whether or not the releases have been helpful and if the editor is interested in receiving more.

One editor pointed out that the home furnishings industry makes a concerted effort to improve their relationship with women's editors. She said they send out personal letters--not form letters-- to editors, invite them to attend seminars and offer to give them personal tours. "When you arrive they give you a personal welcome." She was especially impressed by the way in which the June Furniture Mart was handled. A famous designer spoke to the group and was available afterwards for interviews with each of the editors. Typewritten copies of the speech were issued to the editors as well as a bundle of good factual material. She feels that well conducted industry-wide programs are well received by editors.

More than half the editors stated that the editor/practitioner

relationship is acceptable the way it stands now. One couldn't see how change was possible: "Their job is to promote their product or client. Mine is to sift out the news from the flood of materials that I receive." Another editor said that she did not have time to worry about how the public relations person was going to do his job better. She explained: "I'll always have the choice of deciding what goes in my columns. It's up to them to decide how they can be of service to me. And believe me, I have lots of choices; the well never runs dry."

A women's editor who has worked with many public relations people insisted that she does not want the relationship improved. She said: "They are natural adversaries and they should stay that way. It's the healthiest situation. It might create problems if we became friends; they could lean on me. There's a certain group that I trust, but there are others that I'd never accept as friends. That's why I don't socialize with them."

One editor pointed out that it's a two-way street. "They do everything they can to promote a product through the newspaper and there's just so much that we can do for them. I refuse to mention brand names and I can't always go along with their promotions. But I try to reciprocate."

A food editor believes that the only way public relations people can improve their relationship with women's editors is by giving all sides of the story. "It appears that their minds are stuck in a funnel. I'm afraid that I've got a general built-in distrust of the public relations profession. I listen to them but I feel it's my obligation to double-check what they tell me. And I imagine that it will always be this way."

Improving Public Relations Information Services

Question: What more than anything could improve information services from business public relations sources?

Women's editors want it clearly understood that the editorial department of a newspaper is distinct from the advertising department. They have no use for product puffery. What they're looking for is solid, consumer information.

One editor said: "They should stop thinking only in terms of their specific company or product and think, instead, in terms of the entire industry." Another said: "I'm turned off by sell techniques. It only yields negative results."

At a paper which has broadened its concept of the women's pages, the editor complained that many of the business releases she receives are geared toward the traditional women's section and the happy homemaker. She said that if she is going to use any of this, she has to completely rewrite it so that it applies to both sexes and people of different ages.

An editor who works at a large paper emphasized that copy must be unique or at least have a local angle. She pointed out that, with the newsprint shortage, many women's pages have been cut back. Editors are particularly choosy about their material. Articles can't be a rehash of what's appearing in national magazines.

To be meaningful to readers, information should have a personal touch, an editor explained. It should relate to the reader. And it needs to be presented in such a way that readers understand how they are involved.

Another editor stressed the importance of fully identifying any persons mentioned in a release and of explaining why these people are

important to the paper's readers. "The less complete a news release is, the more phoning we have to do, and the less likely we are to use it."

"Public relations persons would have more success if they became aware of our news policy and the types of information we're interested in," an editor said. "We're likely to publish news about an event if it's one day old, but not a week old."

One editor summed up her recommendations in three phrases: better trained public relations persons; better writers with a good knowledge of what they're writing about; and a better conception of newspaper requirements. Someone else mentioned that editorial needs and policies vary considerably from one paper to another. She said: "They should learn more about the limitations and requirements of the individual newspapers." An editor recommended that every public relations person first get experience working on a newspaper.

"Keep communication open on the local level," was one editor's advice. She would appreciate news tips but finds that public relations people hold back. She also cautioned that practitioners should not talk down to news people.

A food editor had this advice: "Be more concise. Get the information in a nutshell. Try to put the nugget of information in the lead. It takes me hours to go through my mail each day. It's frustrating and unnecessary." Another editor also emphasized the importance of being direct. "Don't jazz up the material," she warned. "If it doesn't have to be shortened and rewritten, it has a much better chance of being used on a small paper like this one where time is valuable."

According to one editor, information should be timely, newsworthy and complete. She suggested that it's intended only as background

material at times, and it should be so labeled.

Two editors had no suggestions for improvement. "For what they're doing and what they're supposed to do, they do a decent job," one concluded.

## CHAPTER VIII

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS PUBLIC RELATIONS

Results of the Questionnaire

To get an over-all picture of the editors' attitudes towards public relations and public relations practitioners, a measure of the degree of positive feelings was found for: - each individual

- each circulation group
- the total sample

No appreciable difference was found among the circulation groups. Each expressed some degree of positive feeling. On a scale of one to nine, with one representing the most favorable attitude and five expressing neutral feelings, the mean of the total scores was four.

Examination of individual scores revealed a wider range in attitude. An editor in the lowest circulation size group and an editor in the second highest circulation size group expressed more favorable attitudes towards public relations than did the others. An editor in group III had a neutral score and an editor in the highest circulation size group had somewhat negative feelings towards public relations and practitioners. Because the degree of difference in positive feelings among groups is only marginal, it would seem that attitudes towards the public relations field result from the individual experiences of the editors.

Attitudes Towards Practitioner Competence

Editors were divided on their answer to this question with more than one-half believing the practitioners they know are competent.

Two editors do not have faith in the competency of public relations people. Three are unsure. After filling out the questionnaire, some editors pointed out that they have had no personal acquaintance with practitioners.

Statement: The public relations practitioners whom I know are highly competent in their trade.

<u>Reaction</u>	<u>No.</u>
Strongly agree	1
Agree	10
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	<u>0</u>
Total	16

Statement: The public relations persons whom I know are insincere and untrustworthy in their dealings with the press.

Strongly agree	0
Agree	0
Neutral	2
Disagree	10
Strongly disagree	<u>4</u>
Total	16

Statement: When working with the news media on a news story which may be unfavorable to their firm or client, the public relations practitioners whom I know give an objective presentation.

Strongly agree	0
Agree	6
Neutral	4
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	<u>1</u>
Total	16

### Attitudes Towards Practitioner Ethics

Sincerity and honesty: None of the editors believe that practitioners are insincere and untrustworthy in their dealing with the press. In fact, four of the editors strongly disagree with this statement. Two gave a neutral response because of lack of experience.

Objectivity: Despite this apparent confidence in the honesty of practitioners, editors were almost equally divided on the question of objectivity. Six editors agreed that the practitioners they know give an objective presentation. Five disagreed and one strongly disagreed. Four were neutral.

### Attitudes Concerning the Relationship Between Women's Editors and Practitioners

Communication: Editors were divided on their responses to this question, suggesting that there are wide differences in the amount and effectiveness of the communication that individual editors have with their public relations information sources. Five of the editors indicated that communication is poor or does not exist. Two of them strongly agreed with this. However, eight of the editors disagreed and three strongly disagreed with the statement. So, close to two-thirds of the editors think that they have effective communication with their public information sources.

Friction between editors and practitioners: It's obvious that women's editors as a group have not defined the type of relationship they should adopt with public relations persons. Eight of them agree that some friction between women's editors and practitioners is a necessary and healthy thing; three of them feel strongly about this. The other half

disagree, which seems to indicate they believe editors and practitioners are each capable of working together without disputes; two of these editors feel strongly about this.

Statement: Communication between my public relations source and myself is poor or nonexistent.

<u>Reaction</u>	<u>No.</u>
Strongly agree	2
Agree	3
Neutral	0
Disagree	8
Strongly disagree	<u>3</u>
Total	16

Statement: A certain amount of friction between women's editors and their public relations sources is a necessary and healthy thing.

Strongly agree	3
Agree	5
Neutral	0
Disagree	6
Strongly disagree	<u>2</u>
Total	16

Statement: It's possible for women's editors and public relations persons to work together more cooperatively, to the benefit of both.

Strongly agree	5
Agree	9
Neutral	1
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	<u>0</u>
Total	16

Improved cooperation: A strong majority (14) of the editors think that women's editors and public relations practitioners could work together more cooperatively than they do now. One editor disagreed with this; one had no opinion.

Attitudes Concerning the Information Services Provided by Public Relations Sources

Helpfulness of news material: All but one of the editors agreed that the public relations news material which their department receives provides a helpful service.

Unsolicited material: The editors' interest in receiving public relations materials was substantiated by their responses to this question. Only one editor would prefer that unsolicited public relations material stop coming into her office. One editor does not care on way or another. The other fourteen still want to receive unsolicited materials; three editors are particularly anxious that the service not be stopped.

Advertising angle in the news releases: Although they want to receive public relations materials, 11 of the editors agreed that the news releases are full of product puffery and plug the firm or client involved. Four of these strongly agreed with the statement, apparently regarding releases as a form of advertising.

Value of photographs versus releases: Only two of the editors agreed that public relations photographs prove far more valuable for the women's section than the written releases. So, most of the editors are equally as interested in receiving the written releases.

Interest in news tips from public relations sources: Even though the news tips from public relations sources may not always meet their news

requirements, all but one of the editors indicated that they welcome them. Four of the editors apparently really value these news tips because they strongly agreed with the statement. The single editor who disagreed had strongly negative feelings.

Statement: Public relations material directed to this department provides a helpful service.

<u>Reaction</u>	<u>No.</u>
Strongly agree	1
Agree	14
Neutral	0
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	<u>0</u>
Total	16

Statement: If I had the choice I would prefer that all unsolicited public relations material stop coming into my office.

Strongly agree	0
Agree	1
Neutral	1
Disagree	11
Strongly disagree	<u>3</u>
Total	16

Statement: Most of the public relations news releases received by my news department are full of puffery and plug the firm or client involved.

Strongly agree	4
Agree	7
Neutral	0
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	<u>0</u>
Total	16

Statement: The photographs sent out by public relations sources prove far more valuable for the women's section than the written releases.

<u>Reaction</u>	<u>No.</u>
Strongly agree	0
Agree	2
Neutral	0
Disagree	13
Strongly disagree	<u>1</u>
Total	16

Statement: I welcome news tips from public relations people though they may not always meet the requirements of my news department.

Strongly agree	4
Agree	11
Neutral	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	<u>1</u>
Total	16

#### Attitudes Towards Public Relations "Freebies"

Compensation for low pay and long hours: Six editors disagreed and ten strongly disagreed with the idea that free gifts and trips offered by businesses are compensation for low pay and long work hours. One editor noted in the margin that "some" trips are worthwhile, but the overall stand on this issue is clear.

PR pressure on women's departments: Respondents were almost evenly divided on the question of whether or not women's staffs are pressured to a greater extent than other news departments by free company offers. Seven editors agreed that the women's department is pressured more than

other editorial departments. One editor had no opinion on this. The other eight editors disagreed. The most plausible explanation for these differences in opinion is that individual newspaper policy and varied experiences help to form these attitudes. It is likely that editors at larger papers have had to deal with such pressures more than small town editors.

#### Attitudes Concerning the Ethics of the Press

Dependency upon public relations materials: Only two women's editors believe that the news media are abdicating their job of news gathering to the public relations practitioner. Six of the editors disagreed and eight strongly disagreed with this statement. They evidently feel they can accept the services of public relations practitioners without endangering or replacing their responsibilities as journalists.

Prostitution of journalism: Seven, or nearly one-half of the editors strongly disagreed with the accusation that many women's editors trade off news space for free gifts and junkets. Another five disagreed with the statement. Three editors had no opinion because, as they mentioned afterwards, they have had little communication with other women's editors. One editor, however, agreed that this does happen.

When questioned about the honesty of their own departments, the editors unanimously agreed that they are rarely, if ever, persuaded to back a company or product by the offer of free gifts or trips from business. In fact, thirteen editors strongly agreed with this statement which can be interpreted to mean that they would never accept public relations payola.

Statement: My news department is rarely, if ever, persuaded to back a company or product by the offer of free gifts or trips from businesses.

<u>Reaction</u>	<u>No.</u>
Strongly agree	13
Agree	3
Neutral	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	<u>0</u>
Total	16

Statement: The free gifts and trips offered newspaper staffers by businesses are just compensation for the lower salaries earned by the press and/or the extra long hours.

Strongly agree	0
Agree	0
Neutral	0
Disagree	6
Strongly disagree	<u>10</u>
Total	16

Statement: Women's news staffs are pressured to a greater extent than other news departments by free company offers.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	6
Neutral	1
Disagree	6
Strongly disagree	<u>2</u>
Total	16

Statement: As some critics claim, the news media are abdicating their job of news gathering to the public relations practitioner.

<u>Reaction</u>	<u>No.</u>
Strongly agree	0
Agree	2
Neutral	0
Disagree	6
Strongly disagree	<u>8</u>
Total	16

Statement: Many women's editors trade off news space in return for free gifts and junkets.

Strongly agree	0
Agree	1
Neutral	3
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	<u>7</u>
Total	16

## CHAPTER IX

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine women's editors views of public relations materials and practices. The study was done on a sample of newspapers representing all the daily papers that circulate in Wisconsin.

Data were collected by administering a structured interview and a written questionnaire to 16 editors. Simple frequency counts were used to analyze responses. Descriptions of the results include the editors' spontaneous remarks.

Summary of Major FindingsUse of Public Relations Materials in Women's Sections of Newspapers

Use of public relations materials does not appear to be directly associated with either circulation size or the volume of mail received. Instead, it is a reflection of the individual editor's policy and opinions concerning public relations materials.

Of the various public relations information sources, educational institutions are credited with providing the best all-around information service. Federal government agencies are also considered good information sources. Editors appear to trust these sources because they do not represent private interests. Also, much of the information from these two sources has local implications.

Editors use less than one-fourth of the material they receive from public relations counseling firms and public relations departments

of advertising agencies; all but two use less than one-fourth of the material from corporate public relations people. The chief complaint about this material is that it is too product oriented.

Both the dairy and meat industries were credited with providing excellent information relating to nutrition and consumer problems. Several editors said that the worst public relations job is done by the cosmetic and beauty aid companies.

Three-fourths of the editors retain public relations materials at least part of the time for use as background information in articles.

About half the editors frequently rework public relations materials. The most common reason for doing this is to pull out the less important details. Other important reasons were "to put it in the style or format of the newspaper" and "to tone down the bias or favoritism reflected in the story."

Only six of the editors, four of whom are in the highest circulation size group, never use public relations materials in their original form. Editors at the larger papers are more concerned about exclusivity than those at smaller papers.

One-fourth of the editors always identify public relations material used in their news columns. Most editors, when they identify the source of the material, will use the business name rather than a generic term.

Two-thirds of the editors sometimes give brand names in articles. However, the majority will substitute generic terms where possible.

#### Rejection of Public Relations Materials

"Strong product emphasis" was the most common reason given for rejecting public relations materials. Secondary reasons were "insufficient

news value" and "no local angle."

The most frequent complaint about illustrations from industry is that they look posed and phony. About half the editors reject photographs because of a prominent display of brand names. Photographs were faulted next because of too many studio or still shots.

Editors make little use of public relations press kits because they are too commercial. They suggested that public relations persons tone down the product emphasis and condense the materials.

#### Use of Recipes and Free Product Samples

Companies and associations are the chief sources of recipes for half the editors and an important source for another third.

Only one of the editors regularly tests recipes from business sources before printing them. She has test facilities at her paper. Half the editors, mainly those at smaller papers, never test recipes, counting on the reliability of the companies.

None of the editors at papers in the two lowest circulation groups rewrite the business recipes or change ingredients. Food editors at the larger papers are more likely to alter recipes for clarity or simplification.

Editors want to continue receiving recipes from business sources. They complained, however, that both recipes and photographs are too product oriented. Recipe releases should include nutritional information.

Editors at smaller papers are fairly disinterested in free food samples. Most of the editors at the higher circulation size papers find them helpful, especially if they include information about the availability and retail cost of the product. They do not want to evaluate a new

appliance unless it involves a totally new concept.

#### Newspaper Policies and Attitudes Concerning Public Relations Freebies

Editors at the smaller papers get few freebie offers. However, offers are frequent at some of the larger papers. One food editor gets free trip offers every day; another receives freebie offers about twice a week.

Newspaper policy regarding public relations freebies varies greatly from one paper to another. Half the editors said they never accept free trips, but at other papers the decision is arbitrary. Six of the papers have no set policy regarding the acceptance of gifts or trips. Policy tends to be more clearly defined at the larger papers. Three of the four papers in the highest circulation size group have a strict "no freebie" policy.

Women's editors do not consider free gift and trip offers from business to be a type of job benefit or compensation for long hours or low pay. In fact, half the editors said they are "turned off" by freebie offers; the others claimed they are not influenced one way or another.

Three-fourths of the editors would like to see the practice of offering women's editors free gifts and special discounts discontinued. They also indicated that if business were to stop paying travel expenses to seminars and conferences, they would still be able to attend.

Half of the editors said that their decision to accept free gift or trip offers from business is based on their paper's policy; the potential for a news feature is also important.

"The amount of reader interest in the subject" was the most frequent reason given for determining the newsworthiness of a particular tour,

conference or contest sponsored by industry. "The novelty of either the event or the program material" and "the qualifications of the speakers" also influence the decision to attend.

#### Recommendations for Public Relations Information Services

Women's editors expressed definite interest in research findings, explanatory articles and basic or general information in areas of interest to their readers.

The greatest emphasis is placed on food and nutrition information. Three-fourths of the editors said they want research findings about food and nutrition, food recipes and decorator "how-to" articles. They are also interested in nutritional information, basic information about the care and construction of fabrics and clothing and both general information and research findings in the area of consumer economics.

Editors at smaller papers prefer the written release because it contains all the necessary information and, if well-written, can be used with little editing. They get story tips from local sources. Three out of four editors in the highest circulation size group would rather get story tips from public relations people but insist that they be exclusive.

Editors in the middle-range circulation groups are more likely to use a public relations release if it includes a photograph or other illustration. Editors at smaller papers have less space for photographs; large papers have their own photography departments.

Four of the six editors who run public relations photographs in color are in the highest circulation size group. Editors want color photographs at least a month in advance of the expected release date, especially if they have a holiday or seasonal tie.

Only the editors in the two highest circulation groups expect to receive exclusive photographs. Group IV editors want illustrations to be exclusive to them within their circulation area; editors in group V require photographs to be exclusive to them at least within the state, and from all major competitors.

Editors prefer contact by mail or telephone to personal visits and suggested that public relations persons include their names and telephone numbers with their releases.

The editors' most definite recommendation for public relations persons is to think in terms of an entire industry rather than specific products. Material should be news-oriented and related to readers' interests. Releases should be unique or at least have a local angle. Copy that is brief and concise stands the best chance of being used.

#### Attitudes Towards Public Relations and Public Relations Practitioners

Editors appear to hold conflicting attitudes towards public relations and public relations practitioners. This is reflected in praise of public relations on the one hand and criticism on the other:

They believe that the practitioner is generally competent in his field and is keeping pace with changing editorial needs but is often ignorant of the editorial requirements at individual newspapers.

The editors say they are rarely pressured by public relations people to change or hold back unfavorable stories. They also point out that most practitioners are sincere and honest. Yet, space-grabbing for free advertising is the chief complaint against public relations practitioners.

The majority do not believe that they are abdicating their news

gathering function to the public relations practitioner. However, all but one do not want the flow of public relations material to stop.

Almost all think that women's editors and public relations practitioners could work together more cooperatively than they do now. Yet, over half claim they already have good communication with their public relations sources.

### Conclusions

It appears that editors realize the scope of "news" has expanded beyond their own range and that public relations practitioners help cover the areas they cannot handle themselves. However, editors are cognizant of their readers' needs and interests. Inundated with public relations materials from many sources, they can afford to be selective. This study suggests that public relations persons who follow these recommendations will stand the best chance of getting news coverage for their clients in the women's sections of newspapers.

- 1) Use a subtle public relations approach. Promote your industry as a whole rather than pushing specific products.
- 2) Study the editorial requirements of individual newspapers.
- 3) Send request cards to editors to find out what they want and what changes they'd like to see in your materials. Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.
- 4) Keep mailing lists up to date.
- 5) Don't send editors volumes of material. Provide brief, concise copy and include details on how you can be contacted for further information.
- 6) Releases should be news-oriented and related to changing social and economic conditions. Material that has a local angle gets priority.

7) Editors are most interested in research findings, explanatory articles and basic information in areas of reader interest. The consumer viewpoint should be represented.

8) Establish credibility by quoting experts in your field.

9) Don't duplicate releases at the same newspaper.

10) Illustrations should be natural-looking. Find an alternative to the studio or still shot where possible.

11) Provide exclusive news tips on local events.

12) Don't offer freebies but do organize seminars that explain progress and change within your industry. Use authoritative speakers and provide a detailed schedule prior to the event.

13) Always welcome press inquiries. When possible, let news persons speak directly to the experts in your organization.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

This study is the first formal research known to have been made on the attitudes of women's newspaper editors towards public relations materials and practices. As a pilot study, it provides the first basic data on the subject and the foundation for further investigation.

The findings made in this study cannot be generalized outside the sampling area without qualifications. Replication of this research in other parts of the country would contribute to a broader understanding of the symbiotic relationship between women's editors and public relations practitioners.

This study presents a general picture of editors' attitudes towards public relations information services. Others might look at a specific area of the editor-practitioner relationship in greater depth. For

instance, it would be interesting to learn why editors tend to use more material from some companies than from others within the same industry. How do they develop trust in certain sources? Does the frequency of material from a company enhance its reliability?

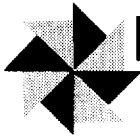
Most editors prefer generic terms to brand names. However, they complained that many generic terms are complicated or obscure. Editors might be sent a list of generic terms with duplicate suggestions for each product. The editors' preferences could be determined and suggestions made for further product descriptions. The study could also assess readers' understanding of generic terms. It would be valuable to find out if generic terms and illustrations without brand name labels still lead readers to specific products.

One editor said that she was certain her readers can identify public relations material in newspapers. But there is no research to support this. A study might be undertaken to find out, other than company and brand names, what provides clues to the identification of source. Also, if readers can recognize public relations information in newspapers, is it as credible to them as other news material?

This study has approached the editor-practitioner relationship from the editor's viewpoint. Other studies should investigate practitioner attitudes. How do they visualize their relationship with the news media? Do they see themselves as responsible not only to their clients but to society as a whole? What do they see as the future role of the public relations person in our communications system?

APPENDIX A

Forms



Department  
of Agricultural  
Journalism

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences  
University of Wisconsin Madison 53706

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September 27, 1973

Dear

In area daily newspapers, I've noticed varied use of public relations materials on news pages of special interest to women. This observation has led to a master's study concerning the use of business public relations materials by women's editors of newspapers.

To gather the necessary information, I plan on interviewing 16 women's editors selected through random sampling. You're in my sample so you figure importantly in my research.

My questions will focus on three aspects of the editor-public relations person relationship--use editors make of business public relations materials; opinions on releases, illustrations and practices; changes women's editors would like to see in public relations information services.

My immediate purpose is to collect data for my thesis. However, results should prove interesting to both women's editors and their business information sources.

The interview will take slightly over an hour. Your candid comments will certainly add to the value of this research, but rest assured that neither you nor your paper will be identified in connection with the answers you give.

Since I hope to visit editors within the next two weeks, I'll be phoning you soon to see about setting up an appointment. I realize your time is valuable and really appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jayne E. Simms

The Role of Public Relations  
As Related to and as Seen by  
Newspaper Women's Editors

Questionnaire

What is your reaction to each of the following statements? That is, do you---Strongly agree---Agree---Disagree---Strongly disagree---with the statements made? Please circle the correct answer.

1. Public relations news material directed to this feature department provides a helpful service.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

2. If I had the choice, I would prefer that all unsolicited public relations material stop coming into my office.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

3. The photographs sent out by public relations sources prove far more valuable for the women's section than the written releases.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

4. The public relations persons whom I know are highly competent in their trade.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

5. The public relations practitioners whom I know are insincere and untrustworthy in their dealings with the press.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

6. When working with the news media on a news story which may be unfavorable to their firm or client, the public relations practitioners whom I know give an objective presentation.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

7. Most of the public relations news releases received by my news department are full of puffery and plug the firm or client represented.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

(-more-)

8. I welcome news tips from public relations people though they may not always meet the requirements of my news department.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

9. As some critics claim, the news media are abdicating their job of news gathering to the public relations practitioner.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

10. The free gifts and trips offered newspaper staffers by businesses are just compensation for the lower salaries earned by the press and/or the extra work hours.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

11. Women's news staffs are pressured to a greater extent than other news departments by free company offers.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

12. Many women's editors trade off news space in return for free gifts and junkets.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

13. My news department is rarely, if ever, persuaded to back a company or product by the offer of free gifts or trips from businesses.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

14. A certain amount of friction between women's editors and their public relations sources is a necessary and healthy thing.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

15. Communication between my public relations sources and myself is poor or nonexistent.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

16. It's possible for women's editors and public relations persons to work together more cooperatively, to the benefit of both.

Strongly agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX B

Explanations of Public Relations Information Sources  
(These were available for the editors' reference.)

Public Relations Information Sources

Public relations wire service

Public relations counseling firms or public relations departments of ad agencies

Corporate public relations people

Trade associations

Local and state government agencies

Federal government agencies

Educational institutions

Professional organizations

Fund drive organizations

Public relations wire service: Patterned after a major news service which collects news items and transmits them over teletype circuits to news media, it uses, instead, public relations initiated news items. The services are organized to handle releases from subscribers. These releases are sent over a closed teletype circuit to media outlets which have the printers installed without cost.

By individual teletype arrangements, releases can also be sent to other media. In these cases, the media outlets already have a teleprinter on hand which can receive the messages, but the cost of the transmission is paid by the public relations wire service.

The nearest public relations wire service is located in Chicago and is operated by the Chicago City Press Association. Most of the 132 subscribers are located in the Chicago area or are major organizations with Chicago offices. The types of subscribing organizations include: industrial and commercial public relations firms, educational institutions, associations, hospital and charity, unions and government agencies.

Certain copy standards are required. Chicago is the only service with a word limit (900 words) on releases handled. Product publicity, or a release which might be construed as advertising, is not permitted. Tape used for sending out the message over the service's network is preceded by the public relations news service heading.

Public relations counseling firms or PR departments of ad agencies:

These handle accounts for companies or associations. Often, the materials are sent to the media on paper bearing the firm's letterhead, rather than that of the client. Of course, the name of the company, association or product is mentioned somewhere in the release. A firm dealing with more than one related business, such as several food companies, might include mention of different company names in a single release. Similarly, more than one brand name product might be included in a recipe. These firms frequently send out photographs and other illustrations featuring company products.

Corporate public relations people: Many large corporations have their own consumer relations department. These include large food corporations, appliance companies, textile firms, clothing and pattern manufacturers, finance companies, houseware industries and manufacturers of gardening aids. Materials bear the business' letterhead.

This also encompasses independent retailers who disseminate their own consumer information.

Trade associations: Quite often, producers or merchants engaged in the same type of business form a state-wide or national organization. By working together, they can more effectively promote their product or service. Much of the emphasis in their promotional literature is placed on the overall reputation and good-will of the industry. Company or

brand names are not mentioned in publicity materials.

Such a group might be a brotherhood of peach growers, fashion merchandisers or pottery makers.

Local and state government agencies: State government agencies seem to concentrate on consumer protection information. Releases often describe the status of legislation dealing with the business community or public affairs programs.

Materials can be identified by a government insignia.

Federal government agencies: Various federally sponsored agencies disseminate information of national interest. Each agency deals with a specific subject category such as agriculture, product safety standards or foods and drugs.

Releases may explain the status or meaning of federal legislation. However, more often they cite figures concerning production levels, the number of injuries due to a certain cause or the results of a particular study. Warnings concerning dangerous products or unlawful practices frequently come from these sources.

Educational institutions: University information specialists send out releases on a regular basis to newspapers within a defined region, such as a state or the Midwest. Generally, a particular authority is cited in the lead. Those directed to the women's pages concern such subjects as consumer economics, nutrition, child development, horticulture and home furnishings.

Releases bear the university department letterhead.

Professional organizations: This refers to a brotherhood of persons engaged in the same line of work or service and holding prescribed qualifications. Such fields as medicine, home economics and newspaper

editing have professional organizations.

Press releases might deal with the results of a study conducted by the association or the announcement of a change in the organization's code of ethics or practices.

Fund drive organizations: These organizations can be either local or national in character. Quite often they are permanently established to offer ongoing aid to such projects as national safety programs, help for the poor or disabled or continuation of the arts. However, others are formed temporarily to help out in a crisis or to create support for a community improvement project. Therefore, some, but not all, can be identified by organization letterheads. Local fund drive organizations are likely to contact you personally.

APPENDIX C

Tables

SECTION B

TABLE 1  
Number of Public Relations Releases Used.

No. of Releases Used	I	II	III	IV	V
0-5	1	1	2		1-food only
6-10	1			3	1-food only
11-15			1		
16-20		1			1-food only
26-30					
31 and over		1 (about 50)			1-food only

TABLE 2  
Releases Accompanied by Illustrations.

	I	II	III	IV	V
None	1				
Less than 1/4	2	2	2	2*	1+1*
About one-half		1	1	1	2*
Practically all					

\*Represents food section of paper only.

TABLE 3  
Background Information

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Often	1	1			2	4
Sometimes	2	1	3	2	2	10
Never		1		1		2

TABLE 4  
Feature vs. Filler

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Feature	2		2	2	4	10
Filler	1	3		1		5
Same no. of each			1			1
Yes, receive enough filler	1				2	3
No, don't get enough	1	3	1	3		8
Receive too many	1		2		2	5

TABLE 5  
Treatment of Public Relations Materials

	I				II				III				IV				V			
	Often	Occasionally	Seldom	Never	Often	Occasionally	Seldom	Never	Often	Occasionally	Seldom	Never	Often	Occasionally	Seldom	Never	Often	Occasionally	Seldom	Never
Original Form	1	1	1	1	1	2			1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	4
Reworked	1	1	1		1	1	1		1	1	1		2				2	1	1	
Incorporated			3		1		2							3			4			
Story Ideas	2	1			1	2			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	

TABLE 6  
Verification

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Always					3	3
Usually		2	1	1	1	5
Occasionally		2	1	1	1	5
Never	3	1	2	2		8

TABLE 7  
Local Company Criticized

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, send reporter to investigate	2	2	2	1	3	10
No, don't investigate						
Sometimes, depending upon situation					1	1
Does not apply	1	1	1	2		5

TABLE 8  
Follow-up on Press Advisories

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Often	1		2	1	1	5
Occasionally	1	1	1	2	3	8
Seldom	1	1				2
Never		1				1

TABLE 9  
One-sided Releases

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Make an effort to get opposing point of view		1			3	4
Throw it out	2	2	3	2	3	12
Rewrite, using own ideas			2	1		3
Present as one point of view	1		1	1		3

TABLE 10  
Re-running Same Release

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, frequently						0
Occasionally				1		1
Depends on type of article				1	1	2
Hardly ever	2	1	1			4
Never	1	2	2	1	3	9

TABLE 11  
Sending Tear-Sheets

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Always			1		1	2
Occasionally	1		1	1	1	4
Seldom	1	2	1		2	6
Never	1	1		2		4

TABLE 12  
Identification of Source

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Always		2		1	1	4
Occasionally	1	1	2		1	5
Seldom	2		1	1		4
Never				1	2	3

TABLE 13  
Commercial Addresses

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, use commercial address	3	1	2	2	2	10
No, don't		2	1	1	2	6

TABLE 14  
New Products Column

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes			1		2	3
Irregularly				1	1	2
No	3	3	2	2	1	11

TABLE 15  
Generic Terms

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, use generic terms	3	1	3	3	3	13
No, don't use them		2			1	3

TABLE 16  
Brand Names in Articles

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes	3		2	3	2	10
No		3	1		2	6

TABLE 17  
Duplication of Material

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Duplication causes a problem				2	2	4
Unimportant, rarely happens	3	2	2		1	8
Can edit or reject syndicated column		1	1	1	1	4

TABLE 18  
Requests to "Kill" a Story

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
More than once a month		1				1
Once a month						0
Less than once a month			1	1	3	5
Never	3	2	2	2	1	10

TABLE 19  
Critical Phone Calls

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
More than once a month		1				1
Once a month						0
Less than once a month		1	1		4	6
Never	3	1	2	3		9

SECTION C

TABLE 1  
Source of Recipes

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Business is chief source	1	1	1	3	1	7
Important, but not main source	1	1	1		2	5
No	1	1	1		1	4

TABLE 2  
Testing Recipes

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, test recipes					1	1
Test occasionally			3	1	3	7
No, do not test	3	3		2		8
Tested by others					1	1

TABLE 3  
Problems of Recipe Testing

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Cost involved		1	1			2
Time involved	1	1	2	1	2	7
Lack of test kitchen facilities		2	1	2	1	6
Not considered necessary	2		3	1	1	7
Dislike it		1				1

TABLE 4  
Dependable Sources

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, depend upon certain sources	1	1	1	2	3	8
No, special sources	2	2	2	1	1	8

TABLE 5  
Rewriting Recipes

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes			2	2	4	8
No	3	3	1	1		8
Change ingredients:						
Yes			1	1	2	4
No	3	3	2	2	2	12

TABLE 6  
Recipes Without Illustrations

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Often	1	2		1	1	5
Occasionally	2		2	1		5
Seldom		1		1	3	5
Never			1			1

TABLE 7  
New Product Evaluation

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Want free food samples	1	1	2	2	3	9
No unsolicited samples	2	2	1	1		6
Yes, trial evaluation		1				1
Not interested	3	2	3	3	4	15

TABLE 8  
Importance of Recipes

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, want recipes	3	2	3	3	4	15
No, discontinue		1				1

SECTION D

TABLE 1  
Frequency of Free Gift Offers

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
More than once a week					1	1
Once a week				1		1
Once a month			1			1
Less than once a month	1	1	1	1	2	6
Never	3	3	2	1		9

TABLE 2  
Policy Regarding Free Gifts and Trips

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Accept gifts under a certain value		1	1	1	1	4
Never accept free gifts	1	1		1	2	5
Never accept free trips	1	2	1	1	3	8
No set policy	2	1	2	1	1	6

TABLE 3  
Excursions: Companies vs. Trade Associations

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, policy differs				1		1
No difference	2	1	2		1	6
Don't know				1		1
Does not apply	1	2	1	1	3	8

TABLE 4  
Discrepancy between Policy and Practice

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes					1	1
No	1	2	2	2	2	9
Not applicable	2	1	1	1		5
Don't know					1	1

TABLE 5  
Policy Maker

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Publisher					1	1
Managing editor	2			1	2	5
Women's editor				1		1
Publisher + editor	1		1	1		3
Managing editor + Women's editor			1			1
Publisher + Managing editor + Women's editor	1					1
City editor	1					1
Chairman of the policy					1	1
No one		1	1			2

TABLE 6  
Discounts for Writers

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, allowed to accept	2	1	1	2	1	7
No, against policy	1	2	1		3	7
Never offered			1	1		2

TABLE 7  
Receiving Gifts at Home

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Issue warning	3	1	2	2	2	10
Immediate discharge		1		1	2	4
No action		1	1			2

TABLE 8  
Basis for Newsworthiness

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Interest to many readers	3	3	3	2		10
Novelty of event or material to be presented		2	1		2	4
Qualifications of speakers				1	3	4
Exclusiveness of event		1				1
Scientific backing	1					1
Timeliness of the topic	1				1	2
Good past experience with sponsor					1	1

TABLE 9  
Editorial Tie with Advertising

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
No, against policy	2	2	2	3	3	12
Happens sometimes	1	1	1			3
Don't know					1	1

TABLE 10  
Favoring Advertisers

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, slight preference for advertisers	1		2			3
No difference	2	3	1	3	4	13

SECTION E

TABLE 1  
Less Produce Emphasis

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, more basic information	2	1	3	3	2	11
No change	1	2			2	5

TABLE 2  
Method of Presentation

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Detailed news release	1	1	2	2	1	7
Skeleton story idea					2	2
Summary plus facts	2	1	1		2	6
Tip-off on coming events	1	2			3	6
Depends on material				1		1
No preference					1	1

TABLE 3  
Story Tips vs. Written Releases

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, want more story tips	1	1		1	3	6
No, find written releases more valuable	2	2	3	2	1	10

TABLE 4  
Format of the Release

One side of the paper	15
Both sides of paper	0
No preference	0
Double spaced	8
Triple spaced	3
No preference	6
Pages loose	3
Stapled	7
Paper clip	3
No preference	3
Size; 8 x 11	15
Other	0
No preference	0
Length:	
1 or 2 paragraphs	1
1 page maximum	2
2 pages maximum	2
Over 2 pages	0
Depends on subject matter	7
No preference	3

TABLE 5  
Additional Copies

	Single Copy Only	Two Copies
Written release	16	0
Illustration	16	0
Recipe	14	2

TABLE 6  
Exclusives on Photos

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, want exclusives				2	4	6
No, don't need exclusives	3	3	3	1		10

TABLE 7  
Photo Captions

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, rewrite captions often	1	2	3	2	2	10
No, use attached captions	2					2
Rewrite about 50 per cent		1			1	2
No response				1	1	2

TABLE 8

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## Use of Illustrations

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
More likely to use release if illustration is included		2	2	3	1	8
No difference	3	1			3	7
Depends upon quality and type of illustration			1			1
Photo size: 4 x 5						0
5 x 7	3					3
8 x 10		2	2	3	4	11
no preference		1	1			2
Multiple color printing:						
yes	2	1	1	3	4	11
no	1	2	2			5
Run PR photos in color:						
yes	1		1	1	4	8
no	2	3	2	2		9
Run PR color in black and white:						
yes	1	1	1		1	4
no	2	2	1	2		7
rarely			1	1	3	5
Usable form for Photos:						
transparencies		1		3	4	8
negative color	1		1	2	3	7
mats		1	1			2
black and white	3	3	3	3	4	16
reproduction proofs	3	2	3	3	1	13
unprocessed film	1	1			2	4

TABLE 9

## Maximum Number of Illustrations Used in Single Feature

	N.A.	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six
Food	3	2	4	1	1	5	
Fashions	5	2		4	1	2	2
Home Furnishings	5	2	1	5	2		1

TABLE 10

## Difficult Photographic Subject

Prefer photo, even if brand labels show	1
Prefer graph	7
Prefer line drawing	13
No illustration	1

TABLE 11

## Complaints about Illustrations

Phony-looking, posed photos	10
Prominent display of brand name products	7
Too many studio or still shots	5
Poor composition and quality	4
No complaints	4
Poor artwork	1
Posed photos of company officers	1
Unimaginative	1



TABLE 15

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## Changing Editorial Needs

	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Yes, PR people keeping pace with changing editorial needs	1	3	3	2	2	11
No, PR people are lagging behind	1			1	2	4
Not sure	1					1
Marked changes in editorial needs:						
Yes, noticeable changes	1	1	1	3	3	9
No changes	1	2	2		1	6
Not sure	1					1

TABLE 16

## Complaints Against the Public Relations Profession

Space grabbing for free advertising	7
No complaint	6
Ignorance of newspaper's editorial requirements; no concept of what news is and how it should be written	4
Attempted influence and pressure methods of getting into the news column	2
Attempts to color and check the free flow of legitimate news	2
Disregard for the paper's style or individual editorial needs	2
Duplication of releases at one paper	2
Talking down to editors; attempts to sell them a bill of goods	2

TABLE 17  
Personal Contact

Yes, enough personal contact now	12
No, need to see them more often	2
See too much of them	2
Reasons they should visit:	
Allow me to ask questions	3
So they become aware of my requirements	3
To supply background information	2
To develop friendly relations	1
To get better idea of what they can offer reader	1

TABLE 18  
National vs. Local Source of Materials

	National				Local			
	0	-1/4	1/2	all	0	-1/4	1/2	all
Group I		1	1	1		1	1	1
Group II		1		2		2		1
Group III				3	1	2		
Group IV				3	1	2		
Group V		1		3		3		1

TABLE 19  
Advance Timing of Materials

Written Releases	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Couple of days in advance	1	1			1	3
At least a week before	2	1	2	1		6
One month in advance		1	1	1	2	5
Six to eight weeks before				1	1	2
Does not apply						0
No preference						0
<hr/>						
Black and White Photos						
Couple of days in advance	1				1	2
At least a week before	2		2	1		5
One month in advance		2	1	1	2	6
Six to eight weeks before				1		1
No preference					1	1
<hr/>						
Color Photos						
Couple of days in advance		1			1	2
At least a week before	1		1			2
One month in advance	1		1		2	4
Six to eight weeks before				2	1	3
Does not apply	1	2	1	1		5

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