**The Mirror: Who’s Scoping Whom?**  **By Kerry Brown**

As a student of media, you’ve probably considered its relationship to culture. Companies spend billions of dollars asking what we want, yet we look to them for our “cool” forecast. If you’ve pondered at length, you’ve probably concluded that discerning who’s calling the shots is like solving the chicken and the egg.

In *Merchants of Cool*, a documentary on the self-promotion of popular culture, Douglas Rushkoff found that the suits won’t hide their efforts to steal your style. If you’re a trendsetter, they’ll come right up and ask you. “We have correspondents out in the field who report on what’s going on... They send all that stuff in... We look for trends and themes,” explains Dee Dee Gordon of Look-Look, a keystone research company specializing in youth culture.

MTV employs Look-Look's guerilla tactics as well, sending Senior VP Todd Cunningham to do some of this interviewing. “The research efforts at MTV are certainly legendary,” he admits. “Ever since the very beginning, there’s been a kind of feverish addiction to research and understanding young people.”

Theorist John Fiske corroborates the empowered audience perspective, arguing that when the survival of a product depends on its popularity, consumer opinion calls the shots.

But, Rushkoff noted that feedback can also enable companies to impose their own *brand* of cool. Sponsoring a hip-hop concert completely revamped Sprite’s traditional image in a single night. The successful mental equation: hip-hop is cool, Sprite is hip-hop, therefore Sprite is cool. Suddenly the media knew how to tell cool-determiners what was cool.

In their Propaganda Model, Herman and Chomsky support this Big Brotherly view of media methods. To their thinking, consumers are more like victims of a phenomenon they call “manufactured consent.” Those behind the force-feeding? Advertisers.

MTV grew especially inclined to the bidding of its sponsors before the days of Carson Daly. According to Rushkoff, it fell out of audience favor because it stopped listening and continued injecting. But, after sending researchers like Todd Cunningham into the streets, its cool status suddenly revived.

If, after all the theory, you’d still call it a draw, you’re stuck at the same impasse as Rushkoff. The catch-22 of consumerism is that media reflects consumers and consumers strive to keep up with media.

Moral of the story? Listen to your publics. (And good luck with your identity.)

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**Senior PR Students Launch Campaign**  **By Carla Briggs**

Ever wonder how you can put theory into practice through service? You can do it through a communication class called Public Relations Campaigns. The course allows students to apply principles from classes to real-world settings.

Each year, Professor Nance McCown chooses a non-profit client in the area for which the class plans, constructs, and implements a public relations initiative. Though the clients vary, the criteria remain the same each year—clients are non-profit organizations that can substantially benefit from public relations consulting, but cannot afford to pay for it.

This year the seven seniors in the course launched an international media campaign for client CURE International’s new initiative called CURE Clubfoot Worldwide.

To prepare for the launch, students researched various publics by creating, distributing, and analyzing electronic and direct mail surveys for the media and donors, and by personally interviewing select CURE donors. Based on the findings of these three research methods, the team assembled a series of documents to report recommendations for future action to the client.

After the research, the team created materials for the campaign including a logo, tagline, and theme. Students also developed a media kit including a news release, fact-sheet, background, brochure, and pitch letters.

After assembling and mailing the media kits, the team moved on to planning the future of CURE Clubfoot Worldwide by developing action plans for future campaign activities. As the last step of any good PR project, students suggested methods for evaluation of how effectively the initiative accomplished and continues to meet its goals.

Throughout the project, Campaign students learned valuable real-world lessons about the obstacles, methods, timelines, frustrations, and satisfactions involved in a major public relations campaign. The course also provided a chance to gain expertise in preparing a professional proposal, assembling reports, and giving a professional business presentation to the client. Most rewarding; however, was the knowledge that the time donated in service to CURE International will have a measurable, positive effect on children’s healthcare in the developing world. In the words of Professor McCown, PR Campaign “gives you experience like none other you can receive in college.”

If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity in the future, there is a simple application procedure and a few eligibility requirements. Contact Nance McCown: NMccown@messiah.edu with any questions. And most importantly, make sure to keep a slot open during your senior Fall for PR Campaign!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
The Communication Department wishes you a safe and blessed Christmas Break.

FEATURES

New Faculty Member Hired
The Communication Department is happy to announce the hire of Nance McCown as a full-time communication lecturer. Professor McCown currently teaches as an adjunct, but will take on more classes and a shiny new bunch of advisees with the new job description.

End of Semester Wrap-Up
Before you get caught up ringing the old year out, follow these to-do’s to keep you from kicking yourself in the new one:
- Make note of professors you’d like recommendations from and finish strong in their classes
- Check MCSquare and campus bulletin boards for carpooling information
- Get contact information from job or internship connections you make over the holidays (**friends of parents/other family members = easy networking**)
- Clean the perishables out of your fridge (you’ll thank us later)
- Check your e-mail for last-minute housing checkout and vehicle registration updates

For Old—What?!
Don’t get caught singing the wrong lyrics to one of the season’s oldest carols. According to HowStuffWorks.com, a good translation of the Scottish phrase "auld lang syne" is "times gone by." So, when we sing Auld Lang Syne, we’re saying, "We’ll drink a cup of kindness yet for times gone by."

“There is all the difference in the world between having something to say and having to say something.”
- John Dewey

OPPORTUNITIES

Graduate School Fellowship
The Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship Program will grant a fellowship to seniors or recent graduates for graduate education in international affairs or a related specialty. The program provides up to $28,000/year for two years of graduate degree study leading to a Master’s in international affairs or a relevant field. Applications are due January 26, 2007. For application materials and a list of qualifying fields of study visit http://www.howard.edu/rjb/rangelprogram_old.htm.

Job & Internship Fair
Hungry for another menu of career and internship opportunities? Nothing to do on Valentine’s Day? The CVC Job and Internship Fair will be hosted at the Eisenhower Hotels, Conference Center and Resort on February 14th. More information and a searchable list of employers can be found at http://www.collegecentral.com/cumberland/. Come with multiple resume copies and high expectations!

Communication Department Work Study
Alas, one among our work study crew graduates this semester, leaving an opening in the department for a new one. Work study students clock five hours a week on projects like creating the department newsletter, updating the prospective student contact list and department web site, and editing open house presentation materials. In other words, it’s a great portfolio builder. E-mail Dr. Arke at earke@messiah.edu with questions and interest.