

Why You Should Get Hip to Young People

JUST WHAT IS your responsibility, as a businessman, to young people?

It is, though too briefly stated, to convince them your business is worthwhile. As an occupation. As a producer of a beneficial product or service. Otherwise, *they will do their own thing*. And their own thing may be in competition or in opposition to what you are doing.

We're getting around to asking: Do your public relations efforts include activities uniquely directed to young people?

These efforts should view young people from three premises: that they will become your customers; your employees; or will hold positions in the future that will affect the conduct of your business.

Involvement is the key word to getting better understanding of what you do, why you do it, and what the end results of your business efforts are.

Golf superintendent associations sponsor scholarships. Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, as a part of its "Safety Side of Pesticides" campaign, developed an essay contest for elementary and high school students. Cleveland's forestry department works with Boy and Girl Scouts of America and other youth groups who have conservation requirements. (A tree-planting project last spring brought out 1,500 young people.)

What about a young people's tour of your business? A tree- or grass-growing contest? A plant identification contest? Most youth groups have a community service requirement. How about a cemetery spruce-up campaign for Memorial Day? Many businesses cooperate with area vocational schools, offering employment to satisfy the curriculum's on-the-job training requirements.

You can think of a dozen more ways to involve young people if you will just take time to give it some thought. No time? Then how about getting a young person to give it some thought?

You in the industries this magazine serves have an unprecedented opportunity to favorably influence young people toward your profession. The "now words" are ecology and environment. These are outdoor things. This is your bailiwick. Author Odom Fanning in his new book, "Opportunities

in Environmental Careers," (See The National Greenscape, pages 10 and 12 for publisher's address) says environmental jobs will double by 1980.

You have an inspired generation from which to pick your future employees. They seek with a fervor a world that's a healthier, more beautiful, more enjoyable place to live. Aren't the aims of your business efforts in line with that goal? Then take steps to tell them so.

Your industry is tailored to the younger generation. It's vigorous, rugged, challenging, creative. It requires the hardiness and enthusiasm of the young. The constant need for improvisation and innovation is worthy and welcomed exercise for the young, inquisitive mind.

Your industry is in excellent position to correct a situation that may be one of the strongest contributors to young people's disenchantment with business. They are educated to be individualists, then find themselves in a business world of conformity.

Throughout a young person's formal education, he is taught to think for himself, plow new ground, sow new seeds. Educators constantly boast of how much more youngsters are learning these days and how much earlier they are learning compared with older generations. But with degree in hand, they've discovered it is the old military game of "hurry up and wait" and "conform."

With heads bursting with principles, theories and enthusiasm, they're then de-energized by job classifications, union work quotas, pay categories, seniority rights, standard operating procedure, and, in some instances, just plain age discrimination.

Your industry incorporates so many work description variables that you have the chance to better your competitive position for labor by offering to shape the job to the man, rather than forcing the man to shape to the job.

It is interesting to speculate. If industry did as much to cultivate young people's energies and talents as it does to get their spendable income, would there be a segment of the younger generation shouting for the destruction of The Establishment?

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