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USING FOCUS GROUPS TO EVALUATE IN-HOUSE PUBLICATIONS
FOR WOMEN'S NETWORKS

A Thesis
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Degree
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Nancy B. Hild

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DEDICATION

To my husband, Alex, whose patience throughout the many months
of distraction was supportive to the point
of greatness--my deepest thanks.

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ABSTRACT

In Fall 1982 The University of Tennessee Commission for Women began publishing a quarterly newsletter to raise the visibility of the Commission among University women and to provide information to these women about subjects uniquely relevant to them. This thesis has a dual purpose. It is an overview of the basically new phenomenon of this type of in-house periodical put out by women, for women, within a male-dominated heterogeneous organization. And it is an attitude study designed to indicate whether one of these publications, Networker, is successfully meeting its objectives.

Because the publication was only 18 months old when this study was done and no previous research had been undertaken, it was decided to conduct a series of focus group interviews as an initial way, (1) of generating ideas for changes, (2) of facilitating the development of a later comprehensive readership survey, and (3) of evaluating the work of the staff after a year and a half.

The group discussions were helpful in pointing to areas that need attention in three categories: distribution, content, and design. In addition, the study generated more than a hundred ideas for changes, improvements and future experimentation.

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INTRODUCTION

In the early 1800s, about 60 percent of all workers in cotton mills of the Atlantic seaboard, Virginia northward, were women. It was a group of young women at one of these mills, the Lowell Cotton Mills in Massachusetts, who decided that an in-house publication might ease the growing rift between the largely female employers of the company and their male employees. The result of their discussions was a little newspaper named Lowell Offering, which made its debut in 1840 (Pikus, 1977, p. 48).

Thus was born the first known internal publication put out by women, for women, within a male-dominated organization. While employee publications can be traced back 20 centuries to ancient China (Fillman, 1976), company publications in the United States were basically a development of the Industrial Revolution. Some studies show that the Lowell Offering may have been not only the first company publication targeted to women, but the first employee publication of any sort in this nation (Fillman, 1976, p. 11).

The 50 or so women who became the newspaper's staff, reviewed books, debated religious and social questions, compared thoughts and experiences, and generally advised and helped one another. The publication appeared somewhat regularly for several years, and its influence became such that Charles Dickens, while touring New England, visited the Massachusetts cotton mill with the expressed purpose of talking with the publication's staff (Mather, 1973, p. 20).

Employee publications continue to flourish. But until recently those targeted to women were rare and unofficial. In fact, little attention was given to women even in early general-interest American magazines. Mather quotes Helen Woodward from The Lady Persuaders: "The almanacs and chapbooks were for men, with only gallant and condescending side-glances at the ladies" (p. 17). Some attempts were made to fill the gap with underground and non-affiliated feminist journals such as The Revolution, a nineteenth-century women's rights paper edited by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and published by Susan B. Anthony (Mather, p. 17).

If women were addressed at all in company publications, it was in parochial and, by today's standards, patronizing terms. Bentley (1944) wrote a small, handy guide to editing an employee publication in which he wrote:

Few components of the employee publication have caused so much argument among editors as the women's page. It is only in recent years that special sections of industrial publications have been written directly for the feminine sex, except for those organizations where women workers predominated. Today, however, even in publications primarily for men, many have their special departments for beauty aids, parties and dress patterns.

Here you need a woman editor or correspondent. You'll probably have to enlist a file clerk or an operative from the factory, or perhaps your secretary. Whoever she is, you will still be responsible . . . for what appears in her department.

She should know something about cooking, housekeeping, shopping, and marketing. She should have some knowledge of the interests of older women--knitting, crocheting, dressmaking. Familiarity with etiquette is desirable. She should be up on movies, party games, child training, and "heat problems." Here are some reminders of subjects worth considering: recipes and menus, household hints, etiquette problems, party ideas, housecleaning suggestions, society news, fashions, beauty hints. (p. 52)

Throughout the euphoric postwar years of the late 1940s and 1950s, feminism, as begun by the likes of Susan B. Anthony and the Lowell Cotton Mill employees, was a dormant issue. Not until Betty Friedan erupted on the scene in 1963 with her bestseller, The Feminine Mystique, did the women's liberation movement become irreversibly ignited. Betty Friedan's book was a clear invitation for someone to start writing to women, about women, on issues of relevance to them (Mather, p. 42). Except for token pieces, however, the mass women's magazines ignored the calling. This led to the launching of an alternative, a feminist press.

It was a slow beginning. Not until mid-1968 did the first journal put out by the new women's liberation movement appear. Called Notes From The First Year, it was written and published by a group of women in New York City (Mather, p. 1).

Barely two years later, the scene was dramatically different. Newsweek took note: "The women's lib press has grown to include at least a dozen newspapers, two quarterlies, two annual journals, and scores of local newsletters which reach hundreds of thousands of women" (April 26, 1971, p. 65).

By 1973, according to Mather's best estimates, more than 560 American women's liberation periodicals existed, most of which were newsletters. In addition, such periodicals were beginning to appear in other countries, including Canada, England, Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Africa, and Uruguay (Mather, p. 2).

Why did so many periodicals crop up in nations already liberally supplied with newspapers and magazines? At least one reason, says

Mather, is that feminists distrusted the coverage given to the goals and needs of women in the establishment media. Women did not trust the way their views were being presented for them, to them, by male intermediaries.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the development of one specific genre of women's periodicals, those newsletters published "above-ground" within corporate, institutional and academic organizations, by women, for women, with the expressed blessings of what is generally a male-dominated top management.

It will examine the questions: How are such publications justified? How widespread are they? What are their objectives?

In doing so, the literature will show a profile of what is considered the standard employee publication, a rationale for producing any kind of in-house publication, and an exploration of the reasons for conducting readership surveys for these periodicals.

This discussion will be presented so as to serve as a benchmark for a case study and readership survey of one such periodical, Networker, published at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, by the Commission for Women, an advisory body to the Chancellor.

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

By 1982, when Networker was born--a full 20 years after Friedan's Feminine Mystique--women were still fighting for equality and still painfully aware that they had a long way to go. The majority of American college students by then were women, but the faculties instructing them were still mostly male (Time, July 12, 1982, p. 20). Only 12 percent of state legislators nationwide were women. Nineteen of the 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives were women, and only 2 of the 100 senators were women. When Time magazine assessed their position in society in a lengthy cover story that year, it reported that women were earning about \$.66 for every dollar earned by a man. Seventy percent of all classroom teachers were women, yet for the same job, they made an average of \$3,000 a year less than their male colleagues. While more than a third of all candidates for M.B.A. degrees were women, only 5 percent of the executives in the top 50 American companies were women. According to some experts even this figure is inflated, being fueled by some entry-level or middle-management personnel.

"The statistics I have show that two percent of women are executive officers or hold high managerial positions," says Dr. Norma T. Mertz, director of the Southeast Sex Desegregation Assistance Center. "And of that two percent, the majority are in female intensive or female related industries."

According to the Time article, the median salary for women

managers and administrators in 1982 was \$12,936, as compared to \$23,558 for their male counterparts.

The University of Tennessee mirrored the national scene. By 1983, only about 21 percent of the full-time faculty were women. Of the tenured faculty, 85 percent were men, 15 percent were women. Of 1,011 full-time faculty members, 19 women out of 425 were full professors (4 percent), while 112 out of 241 (46 percent) were assistants, and 80 out of 345 (23 percent) were associates (Mertz, 1983).

"Consistently," Dr. Mertz commented, "women have more time in the positions, more teaching years at the University, before they achieve tenure. Also, on the average, they earn lower salaries in every rank."

According to the latest statistics from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), UT female professors are paid an average salary of \$2,700 less than their male counterparts (Lyons, 1983).

Time's statistics showed that from 1960 to 1980 the percentage of married women in the work force had risen from 32 percent to 51 percent. The number of children with mothers who worked (31.8 million) had become, for the first time in history, larger than the number of children with mothers at home (26.3). One out of eight families was headed by a woman. Female heads of households averaged \$134 per week while male heads of households averaged \$214 per week.

Bette Ann Stead wrote in her book Women in Management, 1978:

Because of the poor professional climate facing women and because there has never been a movement toward reducing women's food costs, rent, and other bills because they are women, women need as much preparation as possible to get an equal chance for success in the professional arena. (p. 290).

Clearly, the problems and issues arising from this whirlpool in the core of our society called for new ways to communicate with both the men and women caught up in it. Goals needed to be defined, directions described. Those sucked into the movement, willingly or otherwise, cried for explanations and guidance. They sensed, even before Betty Friedan said it, "there can't be any serious consideration that women will go home again" (Time, p. 23).

Others echoed:

I certainly don't think the clock will be turned back, not because of any kindness on the part of society, but because it does not suit society for women to be in the home. It is not economically possible, it is not convenient, and it's not practical. The wife economy is as obsolete as the slave economy. (Elizabeth Hardwick, Time, 1982, p. 23)

Background of the UTK Commission for Women

Feminism, said Time (July 12, 1982, p. 21), was the last focus of the civil rights movement and the more general social activism of the late 1960s. It was the politics of long frustration and new anger, and it was men who took the heat.

According to Dr. Mertz, The University of Tennessee was relatively untouched by the civil rights struggle of the 1960s. There was no organized pressure on the university to do something about the situation of women. Nevertheless, perhaps in anticipation of trouble, or to avert the possibility, Chancellor Archie R. Dykes appointed a Task Force on Women in December 1971 to "assess the present state of women--students, faculty, and staff--at the University . . ." and to "recommend a set of guidelines for development of an affirmative action plan

to insure equality for women at UTK" (Minutes, UTK Commission for Women, 1980).

After nearly a year, the task force, composed of faculty, administrative, and student members, reported that inequities existed in many areas of the University. They provided over 80 recommendations to help redress them. Among the most important recommendations were development of a comprehensive affirmative action plan and establishment of a Commission for Women, which would hear grievances; investigate inequalities; and educate students, staff, and faculty about sex discrimination and sex bias (UTK Commission for Women, 1980).

A Commission for Women was established and began meeting in January, 1973. Each academic year subsequently, a Commission was appointed by the Chancellor to advise him on ways to improve the status of women at the University. The Commission worked directly with the Vice-chancellor for Planning and Administration. The size of the Commission varied, usually between 20 to 25 members. Commissioners were appointed to serve one-year renewable terms, many serving up to three years. They served on a voluntary basis while fulfilling the responsibilities of their daily jobs. They met monthly, September through May, generally for brown-bag luncheons to report on issues they were researching, and to discuss new problems.

Over the years the Commission has addressed such issues as tenure, promotion, and salaries of women at the University; sexist language in the college curriculum; recognition of women's accomplishments; the establishment of child-care facilities; sexual harassment; rape awareness; assertiveness training; improved campus safety; the needs of

re-entry students, who tend to be older women; and the appointments of women to high-ranking administrative positions (Commission for Women (CFW) Minutes, 1972-1982).

From the beginning, members recognized the need for some way to communicate directly and effectively with those they represented. How could they let those women know the Commission existed? How could they tell them about the efforts being made on their behalf? How could they generate feedback so they could accurately represent women's needs and concerns to the administration? How could they keep their constituents informed about day-to-day opportunities for them such as seminars, speeches, courses, films, workshops, etc.? How could they pull the women together, creating a fellowship of mutual support? How could they fulfill their charge to "educate students, staff, and faculty about sex discrimination and bias"? They agreed that a publication was needed, an autonomous publication under their supervision, written by women, for women, about women.

While commissioners identified the need for a communications tool early, not until a decade later, was one finally launched. A graduate assistant to the Commission was selected from the University's School of Journalism to serve as editor, and in November, 1982, Networker was born.

The Problem

The Commission for Women has met for 10 years with the job of making recommendations to the Chancellor on planning, implementation, and evaluation of University programs, policies, and services designed

to improve the status of women. In that time, the Commission has never conducted an attitude survey to determine what issues are uppermost in the minds of women affiliated with the University. Nor has it gathered data to determine how aware women at the University are of the Commission's existence as a body to hear grievances. Nor does it have specific data on how well informed women are about the inequities uncovered by the Task Force and similar groups. Assumptions based on observation and informal feedback have served to guide its relationships with its constituents, and to some extent, its recommendations to the Chancellor.

When Networker was launched, these same assumptions served as stepping stones to formulate editorial policies that guided the first year of the publication. This writer believes that an attitude survey to identify issues of concern to the newsletter's audience, and to measure the reader's level of awareness of issues and the Commission's activities is long overdue. This writer also believes that a readership survey following a year of publication is due and would be useful in planning future issues. One rationale for the publication was a belief on the part of the Commission that women at the University did not know of the Commission's existence or of its research and recommendations. Lack of visibility was a major concern. As a result of no definitive data being collected to date, the following questions come to mind:

Is the newsletter improving the Commission's visibility?

Is it reaching its audience?

Is it focusing on issues and topics of concern to the reader?

Is it succeeding in "educating" the reader on the existence of sex inequities?

Assumptions

The attitude survey undertaken for this paper will explore the following assumptions:

Assumption One: That Networker has raised the visibility of the Commission for Women;

Assumption Two: That Networker is credible and that readers have a positive feeling toward it;

Assumption Three: That the Commission for Women and its publication, Networker, are focusing on the issues and subjects that its audience wants to read about;

Assumption Four: That readers are satisfied with the present format and design of the newsletter and do not want to see it changed; and

Assumption Five: That Networker is reaching its audience, and readers want to continue receiving a publication whose purpose is to focus on subjects for women.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Women's Networks

It's been called many things . . . the single most powerful force for women in the future of this country (Stern, 1982) . . . the social revolution of the Eighties (Welch, 1982) . . . history's first real communications system for women (Donna Allen, quoted in Welch, 1981).

What the accolades refer to is networking, the newest form of the buddy system, known to men since business began, but just recently discovered by women. "In the corporate world, a woman's survival, not to mention her success, depends on how good she is at networking," says CBS vice-president Kay Wight (Welch, 1981).

Welch defines networking as the process of developing and using contacts for information, advice, and moral support while pursuing a career (p. 27). Men have used informal networks for a long time to help them advance professionally. Their relationships have often been referred to as the "Old Boys' Network." As more women reach middle and top level management positions in organizations, they have found such useful contacts unavailable to them. Consequently, they have begun to establish their own networks in response to their need for links with others who can help them professionally (DeWine & Casbolt, 1983).

"The idea of creating for ourselves what the Good Old Boys do so naturally seems to have hit everyone at the same time," writes Carol

Kleiman (1980, p. 8). It was so long in coming, says Dr. Mertz, because "the notion of us, God forbid, using friends to get ahead seemed a violation of friendship." Stern agrees.

The desire to form networks indicates a desire to tap into other women as resources, other women who can help them directly or indirectly by providing mutual support, career assistance, and useful business contacts. Women who get together in this way set out consciously to use other women and to gain their help, concepts which have been quite threatening up to now. (p. 19)

No more. Kleiman lists 1,400 women's networks in what is recognized as the first attempt to compile a list of such organizations in the United States. In doing so, she discovered that women have formed networks for virtually all phases of their professional and personal needs. There are political and labor networks; artistic networks; business, health and sports networks; and such specific professional networks as ones for doctors, lawyers, educators, scientists, and architects. They span race, religion, age, and economic classes. But they all have two common purposes--peer support and what Kleiman calls "unabashed self-interest" (p. xii).

DeWine and Casbolt (1983) studied these networks and ranked their objectives. They said women are turning to networks for the following purposes (p. 61):

- receive information
- meet other women
- obtain career guidance
- attend educational programs
- promote one's business, or one's career
- give information
- recruit women for jobs

A brochure published by a network group in Baltimore explains why:

Women of high rank in management are still very few, and the traditional prejudices against women in positions of authority are still widespread, though subtle. Consequently, despite the appearance of career success, executive women experience isolation and encounter discrimination. They face many invisible barriers, some only vaguely sensed by themselves, that belie or qualify their apparent success and restrict future opportunity. (Welch, p. 33)

While efforts are underway to nationalize some of these networks, most of them are local or regional organizations. Kleiman says she believes that the wave of the future actually lies in "in-house" networks, those made up of women employees in the same organization (p. 36). They are rare, Kleiman says, but they are growing.

Welch distinguishes among these groups between overground and underground networks (p. 41). She says overground groups meet in company space, sometimes on company time. They use the interoffice mails, the copy machines, and the official bulletin boards. Sometimes they have a small expense budget allotted them by a cooperative management. They are usually autonomous, with management exerting no obvious control. "It goes without saying that these groups are not troublemaking," she points out. "Their focus is usually on self-education and internal communication."

Underground groups keep their activities carefully separate from the workplace. They pay their own expenses. Sometimes their membership is secret. They are not necessarily any more action-oriented or more demanding than the overground groups, but they feel free to be so if the need arises (Welch, p. 41).

This discussion will focus on the overground organizations because their characteristics more closely resemble the subject of this paper.

No known compilation of in-house women's networks exists. Networks appear and old ones stop functioning at such a rapid pace, any list would soon be obsolete. A few, however, are cited consistently in the literature. One of the earliest--perhaps the first--was formed in 1973 at AT&T in New York. It no longer exists (Kleiman, p. 37).

A women's network at Ralston Purina in St. Louis was started in 1975. Called Women in Business (WIB), the group has three main objectives (Management Review, August 1981, p. 43):

- to create an environment for career development;
- to further the company's corporate objectives; and
- to serve as a support system for sharing information.

WIB has operated with the full blessings of top corporate executives since it was started (Management Review, p. 43). The group has a company newsletter, and the Ralston Purina company library offers a "WIB Bookshelf" of career development books, most of them focused on the special needs of women.

At WIB's monthly meetings, which take place from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m., partly on company time, corporate officers are often present to explain their jobs and department functions, and to discuss such matters as planning, development, and recent company performance (Management Review, p. 43).

The meetings serve two purposes. They provide an opportunity to learn what corporate officers do, and they offer a chance for members to let corporate officers know there are women in the corporation who are interested in and capable of furthering their careers.

The WIB newsletter is available to anyone who wants to receive it. It is distributed on the last working day of every month to

approximately 400 Ralston Purina employees. Among its features are human interest stories and personnel changes among women employees at the company; stories on citywide women's assistance programs, and features on national trends that relate to women, such as companies' implementations of child-care centers and housecleaning services. The publication has become so popular that its readership now includes both sexes (Management Review, p. 44).

WIB is not without its problems. One of the largest mentioned by leaders of the group is scheduling programs that touch on things of interest to everybody. WIB has people with doctorates and master's degrees; it has middle and entry-level managers, clerks and secretaries.

The situation is symbolic of a fundamental problem facing women interested in networking. "To whom do we owe our allegiance?" asks Dr. Mertz.

On the one hand we sense it is counter to our interests to align ourselves with the secretaries and the students. Yet, if we don't band together to help each other, things will never improve for anyone. We are torn very much by this ambivalence.

Even so, several other companies, including Anheiser Busch, Monsanto, and McDonnell Douglas, have noted WIB's success and turned to it for information on starting women's networks at their own organizations (Management Review, p. 44). An in-house network, called Networks, was formed at Equitable Life Assurance Society in New York in 1977. Equitable's management helps finance the network with \$3,000 annually, a subsidy used to publish a newsletter and to sponsor seminars and lectures (Kleiman, p. 37).

There are active in-house women's networks at Metropolitan Life

Insurance Company, the Columbia Broadcasting Company (CBS), the Port Authority of New York, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (Kleiman, p. 37). Other corporations where women's networks have been established include Hoffman-LaRoche, Metropolitan Life Insurance, General Electric, Atlantic Richfield, and Scholastic Magazines (Management Review, p. 45).

"House networks . . . seem to be doing better than when I wrote about them in the first edition of this book," Mary Scott Welch wrote in 1981. "On my recent loop around the country, at almost every network gathering I addressed, women came up to me with enthusiastic reports on their progress in organizing where they work."

She cited three of the newest efforts: at Shell Chemical Company, at Pacific Northwest Bell in Washington State, and in the Sun Company, Philadelphia. "It appears that corporate managers, instead of resisting and even fearing these internal networks, may begin to help get them started," she said (p. 252).

Such groups are not confined to corporate institutions. They are forming and functioning just as successfully within university communities. One of the earliest was an advisory board and publications staff set up in 1971 at Rutgers University School of Law. Its main purpose is to publish a quarterly scholarly magazine called Women's Rights Law Reporter. The magazine is aimed at lay and legal people and contains legal summaries, case comments, and articles on women and the law (Mather, 1973).

Since then, many other universities have set up a women's network group, and support their publications.

University of New York, Buffalo, began sponsoring Women's Voices, which is produced today by a voluntary coalition of 10 women.

The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, has the Office for Women's Resources and Services, and publishes a four-page newsletter called Continuing Conversations. The newsletter reviews books and announces competitions, conferences, seminars, internships, women's studies activities, and speakers.

The University of Montana, Missoula, has the Montana Women's Resource Center that, among other things, publishes Montana Women's Resource, a 16-page newsletter containing lengthy features on such subjects as incest and self-defense murder. Unlike most feminist periodicals, this one carries advertising.

The University of Wyoming sponsors a Women's Center that publishes a six-page monthly newsletter called Peaceweaver.

The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, has a Center for Continuing Education of Women, which publishes Newsletter, an eight-page publication.

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, has a Women's Center that publishes Women's Vu, a monthly newsletter.

Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, has the Program on Women, with its publication of the same name, a four-page newsletter.

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, has the Office of Women's Studies, out of which comes Women's Studies News.

University of Wisconsin System, Madison, has an Office of Women which funds University Woman, a monthly newsletter. Founded in 1978, it is distributed through intercampus mail to 1,500 administrators,

faculty women, clerical staff, and students. It has two expressed objectives: to provide information and to educate readers for the purpose of influencing decisions.

Ohio State University, Columbus, has the Center for Women's Studies, which publishes Sojourner, monthly, September through June. The publication contains editorials, reports on research, grant information, positions available, and other information of interest to women. Unlike the majority of such publications, Sojourner is sold through subscriptions, which costs two dollars annually.

This is by no means intended to be an exhaustive list of publications targeted to women within academia. It merely illustrates that a number of them do exist. Presumably the complete list would be much longer.

Justifying Women's Publications

In 1972, when UTK formed its Commission for Women, the top five editors of Redbook, "the magazine for young women," were male (Pikus, p. 138). Of the "big three" women's mass-circulation magazines (Good Housekeeping, Ladies Home Journal, and McCall's) only McCall's had a woman as top editor. It was conditions like this that led to the development of a feminist press, and eventually to the development of institutional and corporate publications designed for women.

Marian J. Swoboda, special assistant to the president on women's affairs, University of Wisconsin, says the trend to single out women as a target audience of special publications within universities began in the early 1970s (Swoboda, 1983). Today she senses a push in some academic circles to merge these publications into mainstream periodicals--

a push motivated largely by (1) the conditions of inflation and federal cutbacks in support of higher education, and/or (2) dwindling concern at the highest administrative levels about sexism as an issue. But, she affirms, until discrimination is eliminated, there is a need for these autonomous women's publications.

"If the publication is eliminated, especially with the conservative push in this country under the Reagan Administration, everything will revert back to being done in the male mode," she asserts. She points to the recent report called "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform" in the Chronicle of Higher Education (May 4, 1983, p. 11) as evidence that this may already be happening. "This is supposed to be a complete and thorough evaluation on the status of current education in this country," Swoboda said, "but there is not one mention of the inequities between men and women on campus. As long as the so-called gender gap exists, it remains a man's world, and the necessity continues for publications written for and controlled by women, speaking directly to women.

Profile of a Newsletter

That the idea was conceived is hardly remarkable. That Networker gestated a full decade while hundreds of other feminist periodicals sprang forth might rightly earn it the label given to it by Dr. Swoboda of a "Joannie-come-lately."

Late it was in the scheme of feminist periodicals; but in the forefront of a trend if viewed from the perspective of an in-house publication put out by a women's network, targeted to women within a mixed-sex organization, with the blessings and support of top management.

Among other experts, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, management consultant and Yale professor, believes the future of women's networks, with all their incumbent communications tools, lies in such in-house networks as the UTK Commission for Women, and its Networker (Kleiman, p. 37).

What kind of a publication is Networker? What are its characteristics and its objectives? How do they fit into the larger picture of similar publications? Most importantly, is it accomplishing what the Commission hoped it would do? These are some of the questions around which this paper is centered.

To assess Networker, it is necessary to establish some criteria according to which any publication can be evaluated. This assessment will be divided into three categories: design, rationale, and content.

Design

From a 1974 survey of business communicators, Mary Anne Gillis Culpepper drew up a profile of the typical newsletter. She said it is four pages long, published monthly, and has a median circulation of 5,500. It costs \$.17 per copy to produce. One person, working full time, puts out the newsletter, occasionally assisted by one part-time worker. Production time per issue is approximately 54 hours. No advertisements are accepted. It is printed on 70 or 80 pound white off-set paper, 8½ x 11 in size. Black ink is usually used, but red ink is a popular second color. Approximately one-fourth of the printed material in the newsletter is art.

Body type is a transitional typeface, set 10/12 or 10/11, justified in three columns 13 to 14 picas wide, or two columns, 16 to 20 picas wide. Sans serif or transitional typefaces, justified, are most

frequently used for captions. Headings are usually sans serif typeface, most frequently 24 point. The largest is 30 to 36 point, and the smallest is 12 point.

Many of the newsletters set their copy on IBM typewriters. By far the most popular production method is offset printing.

Culpepper identifies some trends in organizational publications. In general, she says, the trend is toward a less expensive, more readable publication. Replacing the coated paper of the 1960s is the relatively inexpensive, standard offset paper. Instead of the two colors of ink favored earlier, a single color is now used most often. The typical editor, unlike his or her predecessors of the 1950s and 1960s, has no staff. Body type has changed from 8-point to the larger 10-point, to improve readability. More art work is being used.

Two years later, in 1976, Alison Pikus analyzed the trends of company publications. She surveyed 374 members of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), District IV, and conducted a content analysis of 144 selected publications divided into four formats: newsletters, magazines, magazine-tabloids, and newspapers. Among newsletters she found:

- The offset printing process was used by 91.1 percent of all respondents;
- The page size of the majority of respondents was 8½x11;
- Forty-three percent of all newsletters analyzed were issued on a monthly basis;
- About 70 percent of all newsletters studied cost less than \$.25 per copy;
- About 52 percent indicated a press run of less than 5,000;
- The three-column format was the most popular, with frequent use of the two-column format, and some use of a four-column format; and
- About 53 percent (53.3) of publications had fewer than 10 pages. (p. 138)

Rationale or Purpose

David Mortensen (1973), University of Wisconsin, wrote that Marshall McLuhan, probably more than any other person, has been responsible for advancing a radically different view of the role of channels in communicative experience. In a landmark essay, "The Medium Is The Message," (1964), according to Mortensen, McLuhan shows why the meaning of message content cannot be understood apart from the impact of the medium itself (p. 137). ". . . the latest approach to media study considers not only the 'content' but the medium and the cultural matrix within which the particular medium operates," wrote McLuhan (Mortensen, p. 142). "Technological media are staples or natural resources, exactly as are coal and cotton and oil" (Mortensen, p. 151).

In his essay "On Reopening the Questions of Selectivity in Exposure to Mass Communications," (1968), Elihu Katz wrote that the fashion in research now is not to ask "what the media do to people," but "what people do with the media." He said the notion of selective exposure is basic to theory and research on the flow of mass communications and helps to explain the repeatedly observed fact that the mass media do not easily persuade people to change their attitudes or practices. He said that communications campaigns reach the already-converted and that others simply tune out. Hence, the generalization that the mass media typically reinforce people in their attitudes and practices, but rarely convert them. Whereas the media had once been thought capable of impressing their message on the defenseless masses, it appears that the audience has quite a lot of power of its own.

This power has been translated into the theories of selective

exposure, perception, and retention. Selective exposure is defined as the tendency for people to expose themselves to those communications that are in agreement with their existing attitudes and to avoid those communications that are not. Selective perception is the tendency for people's perception to be influenced by wants, needs, attitudes and other psychological factors. It suggests that different people can react to the same message in different ways. It involves the receiving and interpreting of a message, or as it is called in many communication models, the decoding of a message. Selective retention is the tendency for the recall of information to be influenced by wants, needs, attitudes, and other psychological factors (Severin & Tankard, 1979).

Many experiments have been conducted on the theories of selective exposure, perception, and retention--Sears and Freedman (1965 & 1967), Allport and Postman (1947), Jones and Kohler (1958), Levine and Murphy (1958), Wilhoit and de Bock (1976), Cooper and Jahoda (1947)--to name a few.

One such study by Sears and Freedman, in 1965, concluded that neither experimental nor field studies provide convincing evidence of the operation of motivated selectivity. Prompted by this, Katz, in his essay, looked again at the evidence from mass communications studies that support the notion of selectivity for the purpose of obtaining support, and attempted to examine other possible reasons for selective exposure.

Katz found that the existing studies deal primarily with the observed correspondence between a person's attitudes and the communications to which he exposes himself. He said they are virtually silent

on whether individuals actively avoid communications that negate their beliefs, and whether the search for reinforcement is accelerated under conditions of dissonance. Katz wrote:

Freedman and Sears emphasize the motive of "utility," suggesting that people want information when it answers a felt need or serves a practical purpose. When nonsupportive information is useful, the authors suggest, people will prefer it to less useful information that is supportive.

Freedman and Sears appear to mean by utility any piece of information that helps in the performance of a role or the successful completion of a task. In other words, the notion of utility in this broader sense is nothing short of a functional approach to mass media exposure. It asks, "What do people do with the media?" (Mortensen, p. 168)

Katz says "useful" information may also be rejected, even when it seems to answer an objectively defined need, if the receiver perceives himself or herself as useless. He cites the series of studies by Seeman (1966), which demonstrated that individuals who rank themselves near the "powerlessness" end of a scale manage to avoid learning information which would be of use to them in their specific situations. "These are studies of selective learning rather than selective exposure, but their import seems very much the same," Katz wrote (Mortensen, p. 168).

Katz said that, apart from the quest for support and for utility, mere interest would seem to be a factor in selectivity. The desire to see one's self-reflection and the desire to keep watch over things in which one has invested one's ego are part of this. "Interest as a basis of selective exposure is a different sort of thing than exposure on the basis of seeking support," he contends (Mortensen, p. 169).

He concludes that the hypothesis that individuals seek information that will support their beliefs and practices and avoid information

that challenges them still seems viable. He argues that the supportive selectivity hypothesis is, in part, a special case of an approach to the problem of exposure in terms of "uses" or "gratifications."

Tankard and Severin explain in their Communication Theories (1979), that the uses and gratifications approach to understanding communications attempts to determine the functions that, for example, a newsletter, is serving for its readers. It represents a shift of focus from the purposes of the communicator to the purposes of the receiver. The authors say the uses and gratifications approach was first described in an article by Elihu Katz in 1959. Blumler and McQuail (1969) used the uses and gratifications approach as the overall research strategy in a study of the 1964 General Election in Britain. The central aim of their study was to find out why people watch or avoid party broadcasts. They found that the two most frequently mentioned reasons for watching were (1) as a source of information, and (2) as reinforcement of existing attitudes (Tankard & Severin, p. 251).

These findings complement those of John Pavlik, whose research for a master's thesis in 1980 concentrated on a company employee newsletter published by the Honeywell organization. He wrote:

Many editors are concerned that their employee newsletters may not be fulfilling the informational needs of employees. The findings of the present study indicate that part of this communication problem may lie in the selective pattern of employee newsletter readership. Employees tend to develop their own purposes for reading a newsletter, depending on their psychological and social motivations. As a result, employees may choose not to receive, or interpret correctly, the messages management feels they need to receive. To deal with this problem it is important to visualize an organization's employees as segmented target audiences, each with its own purposes for selectively reading the company newsletter. (p. 57)

Pavlik listed four main reasons (uses and gratifications) why members of the Honeywell organization read the company newsletter:

1. To keep track of what people are doing within their organizations;
2. To find out what is going on;
3. To improve their advancement possibilities; and
4. To keep track of changes in management personnel and policies.

Pavlik pointed out that any organization can view its members as diverse target groups, segmented by the differing purposes that each group has for using a company publication.

It is important to identify each of these media-use purposes because they can indicate important categories of information that an organization's employee communication media currently overlook. Then, by viewing the employee audience as segmented into groups with these diverse media-use purposes, it will become possible to produce and target messages with a better chance of being received. (p. 63)

Jeffrey Davidson (1981), writing in Personnel Journal, listed reasons why it is advantageous for management to fill these needs and keep their employees informed. He said it is his observation that communicating through in-house publications achieves the following results:

- encourages cooperation;
- promotes team spirit;
- defines the roles of supervisors; and
- increases employee participation.

Another role for an organization's newsletter could fall under what Severin and Tankard call the "agenda setting function," or the

capability of a medium to select and emphasize certain issues, thereby causing those issues to be perceived as important by the reader (p. 253). They cite Bernard Cohen's catchy statement on the power of the press as succinctly capturing the notion of agenda-setting: "It (the press) may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (p. 253). The research on agenda setting as a function of the media is inconclusive by Severin and Tankard's estimation. While studies show striking correlations, they say these studies do not establish irrefutable causal direction. The authors ask, Which comes first, the public's agenda or the media's agenda? (p. 254).

By contrast, the cultural norms theory, which states that mass communication has an indirect effect on behavior through its ability to shape norms, offers much more promise, say Severin and Tankard. Melvin DeFleur, who developed the theory, is quoted by the authors this way:

Essentially, the cultural norms theory postulates that the mass media, through selective presentations and the emphasis of certain themes, create impressions among their audiences that common cultural norms concerning the emphasized topics are structured or defined in some specific way. (p. 255)

Thus, it is suggested that by identifying and focusing on a specific target audience and by conveying repeated messages over a period of time to members of that audience, the media can have a powerful effect on shaping values and thereby influencing behavior.

This may be why an International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) study of employee communications as viewed by Chief Executive Officers (CEO) revealed that the printed word ranked second

only behind face-to-face communication as the most desirable way to reach an audience (Williams, 1978). "The best plan is meaningless unless everyone is aware of it and pulling together to achieve its objectives," said one CEO in the study (p. 7). Another said:

If employees understand what you're trying to do and get involved in the process, feeling like they're really a part of it, then the job gets done much more easily, and there are fewer grievances and fewer problems. (p. 8)

"It (the in-house publication) gets to all employees" said a third. "They can take it with them. Those absent can pick it up the next day. No other method hits them all" (p. 9).

Content

Garth Bentley's (1944) tips for editors of company publications continue to be echoed by subsequent writers in management journals (i.e., Purcelli's "Tips on Producing a Good-Looking Association Newsletter--Inexpensively," 1980, and West's "Keep it simple II", 1981). Bentley reminded editors that the best newsletters are simple, using familiar words and short sentences. He said that too many adjectives, too many adverbs, and involved sentences are taboo. Paragraphs are short and type masses are broken up frequently with subheads. Absolute accuracy is essential, he said, and impartiality is important. Know your readers, he stressed.

Years later Jim West (1981) news editor of the Oil and Gas Journal, was still pleading with editors of internal publications to "keep our writing simple and to the point. We fail our job if we let words get in the way of information" (p. 69).

However, Malcolm Burne (1978) said that some companies take

simplification too far and appear to be talking down to employees. For example he said the use of cartoons to explain a complicated idea often lends a condescending tone to a report. He said some organizations get so carried away with the use of brightly-colored pictures, bold headlines, and big type that their newsletters tend to look like a child's reading book.

Pikus (1977), on the other hand, found content does not take its cues from format or design qualities. The same subjects, she said, were likely to be treated in magazines, newspapers, and in newsletters. Her studies also revealed that no matter what the format, the overwhelming majority (80.5 percent) of all respondents to her survey had no written editorial policies to guide the selection or tone of content for their publications.

She cites a study by Harlan Logan, former publisher's consultant, who has examined numerous failed publications (p. 23). His conclusions, she said, were that these periodicals failed primarily because they lacked two things: (1) editorial reason for existence, and (2) a clearly defined editorial policy.

She also cites James McCloskey in her discussion of editorial objectives. She said McCloskey wrote: "The important thing is to have a purpose. The cardinal error is to publish a magazine or paper with no more tangible policy or objective than . . . vague hope . . ." (p. 24).

On written objectives, Baird and Turnbull (1961), as quoted by Fillman, put it more cryptically: "An employee publication without a

definite set of objectives is like the proverbial ship without a rudder, and its aimless journey is destined to be short and disastrous" (Fillman, 1976, p. 17).

"If the company is to get its money's worth, it should make up its mind what it expects the publication to do, and then assist--or permit--the editor to accomplish it," Fillman quotes McCloskey. "Management should not expect more performance out of its publication than was built into it" (p. 19).

The objective of Fillman's research was to determine whether most corporate internal publications have utilized specific written objectives. Although he found that most of the available literature showed most company publications have been published without the aid of specific written objectives, 76 percent of his respondents did operate with written objectives.

From his study, Fillman devised a list of objectives typical of the 80 members of the Industrial Communicators Council (ICC) whom he surveyed in 1976. He admits that because only 43 questionnaires (53 percent) were returned, it is difficult to generalize from the results. The top ten objectives as he found them were: (p. 56)

1. Explain company efforts in environmental protection;
2. Discuss mergers, expansion, new facilities;
3. Recognize exemplary performance;
4. Discuss economic topics;
5. Humanize management;
6. Promote employee pride in work and company;
7. Discuss problem areas in environmental protection;
8. Report money spent on environment;
9. Highlight individual contributions to the community;
10. Provide information on company insurance programs.

The Networker

Design. Networker is a six-page newsletter, published quarterly. It is typeset on an IBM Selectric typewriter using a 12-point Letter Gothic typeface. Paste-up is on 11 x 17 paper, which is reduced to 78 percent before being printed commercially, using offset lithography. Headlines are produced with a Kroy 80 lettering machine, using Helvetica, Souvenir, and Flash typefaces ranging in sizes from 14 point to 36 point. It is printed in black ink on 60 pound ivory-colored paper, 8½ x 11 in size. Clip art supplies all graphics; no photographs are used. Layout includes the three-column and two-column format.

The newsletter has a circulation of 3,000. It is distributed through campus mail to every woman employed by the University in a faculty or staff position. Names and addresses are supplied by the administration. Students receive copies from drop-off spots located in dormitories, classroom buildings, and the University Center. When students ask to have their names added to the mailing list, copies are mailed directly to them.

Printing costs for Networker run \$250 per issue. Paper costs another \$250. Miscellaneous expenses are minimal, covering such items as postage, telephone calls, typing paper, copying, and clip art. They are estimated to be under \$25 per issue. Total cost for each issue of the publication is \$525, or \$.17½ per copy.

Networker is staffed by an editor, who is a graduate student in communications working one-quarter time for the Commission. She is assisted each school term by one undergraduate journalism student who writes for the newsletter in exchange for college credit.

Rationale. Networker exists to communicate with University-affiliated women at the grassroots level. It does not attempt to speak specifically to women in the highest management or academic positions, something the Commission felt it was already doing through its membership. Nor does it address itself to male readers, although everyone is a welcomed reader. "There is something very attractive about women just communicating among themselves at this point," says Commission Chairperson Gail Clay (1983).

We have to be in relative agreement about our goals, and to do that we must all have the same facts, before we can convince the male-dominated power structure that we are aware of and seriously concerned about certain issues. Women supporting women, women linking together in formal networking structures is a new concept for us. We're still learning how to do it.

In publishing Networker the Commission wants a tool that can educate women on the inequities surrounding them, one that can provide an environment of mutually shared information. The publication is fundamentally a tool for the dissemination of information. A secondary role is to raise controversial issues and assume an advocacy role.

Content. Unlike many internal publications, Networker operates with written objectives. These objectives, developed by the editor in consultation with Commission members, do not spell out specific content for the editor, but rather provide guidelines for the selection of news and feature articles.

These objectives are:

1. Raise the visibility of the Commission for Women among its constituents;

2. Provide information for women at UTK about subjects uniquely relevant and useful to them;

3. Highlight the achievements of women, that these women may serve as role models for others;

4. Review the current literature so that readers can find and use material that is of particular interest to them; and

5. Act as a forum for the reasoned and rational discussion of ideas and issues, facing controversy with openness, courage and honesty.

These objectives materialized in 1982-83 into such articles as:

1. Raise the visibility of the Commission:

--"CFW Speaks for Women to the Administration"

--"Meet The Commission"

--"Commissioners' Corner," a regular editorial feature
written by members of the Commission

--"CFW Finds Campus Lighting Inadequate"

--publicity for CFW luncheons and speakers

--publicity for the CFW-sponsored Women of Achievement awards
ceremony

2. Provide information on subjects uniquely relevant to women:

--"Top Jobs Up For Grabs at UTK"

--"Support Group Aids Widows"

--"Group Focuses on Eating Disorders" (on anorexia)

--"Part-time Faculty Benefits Reviewed"

--"Women's Study Program Adds Courses, May Become Major
Specialization"

--"Child Care Center Extends Hours"

- Book Sale to Benefit Graduate Studies for Women"
- "Educator's Convention Solicits Manuscripts on Women in the Media"
- "Women's Peace Group Forms Panels"
- "Honorary Sorority Recharters"
- "Committee Names Candidates for Women's Athletic Director"
- "NOW to Discuss Status of ERA"
- a series on local women's network groups
- a column containing announcements of upcoming seminars and workshops for women
- a feature called "Did you know..." with tips on resources available to women such as child care referral, the women's center, career resource center, counseling center, ombudsman's office, etc.

3. Highlight the achievements of women:

- a regular column called "Women on the Move" naming women and their accomplishments, including books published, research they are conducting, grants received, honors conferred, notable promotions, etc.
- a regular column containing the schedule of all women's athletic events and each team's national standing at the end of the school term
- "Engineers Receive Grant," on the Society of Women Engineers
- "WUOT Airs 'Genuine Risk'," a play produced by a female faculty member
- "Women's Coordinating Council Picks Winners for Literary Contest"

4. Review the current literature:

- "The Armchair Reader," a regular feature reviewing current books of special interest to women
- "Library Features Books on Women"
- "How To Get Heat Without Fire," from a forthcoming book of poems by a female English professor

5. Act as a forum for the discussion of ideas and issues:

- "The University: A Chilly Climate for Women?"
- "Is A Military Career For You?"
- "Professionals Share Views On Women In Administration"
- "Defining Feminism: One Man's Perspective"
- "Psychology Students Sort Out Sex Roles"
- "ERA: This Time Will It Fly?"
- "Are You Safe On Campus?"

Why Do A Readership Study?

Many studies have been done on the content of internal publications, and whether or not they contain the types of information their readers want to receive. Janice Collins (1977) did a study of the University of Georgia employee publication, where she sought to answer such questions as (1) what does the editor perceive as the newsletter's goals and objectives? and (2) what is the usefulness of the publication as a source of information? She pointed out that newsletters are as necessary to communication within university communities as they are within commercial organizations, and that few readership studies have been published concerning internal publications at universities. She

quotes the Chronicle of Higher Education, February 3, 1970:

Today in an era of physical bigness that has brought repeated alarms to student and faculty alienation, many university administrators feel they need regular and reliable ways of communicating with their most immediate publics--students, faculty members, and staff. (p. 5)

Edward Paul Salek (1980) did a readership study of a national trade association newsletter in which he quoted Rowena Ferguson, author of Editing the Small Magazine, 1958:

Readers may be taken for granted too easily. Because the readers are going to get the magazine anyway, that is, because it is going to be handed to them free, since they work for a company or belong to an organization, the editors and others responsible for the publication may tend to lose sight of reader interest. When the editor forgets the reader, the magazine becomes what the editor or head office wants, or thinks the reader should have, rather than what the reader wants. Although the periodical still circulates, the reader feels no stake in it and may even drop an issue in the wastebasket unopened. Particular vigilance is necessary to compensate for the lack of the spur provided by open-market circulation. (p. 10)

Salek also includes salient quotes from Walter Anderson, author of How to Conduct a Readership Study (1979):

Although not a proven science, readership surveys can provide the editor of a publication with some measure of reader reaction. A survey will produce results which will enable the editor to determine what the readers think of the physical appearance of the publication, the contents, the editorial slant, and the nature of the audience. It can also reveal attitudes about other aspects of the organization, such as overall communications, company policies, benefits, etc. Since most responses will be favorable, it can reassure management that the publication is worthwhile and that the editor is doing an effective job. If nothing else, it will show readers that you are interested in their opinions, that you are willing to make the publication as interesting and valuable to them as possible, and that the organization respects the readers enough to ask for their opinion.

According to John F. O'Connor, editorial director at Purchasing Magazine, few business magazines use data from readership surveys as a

guide when planning editorial policy (Folio, July 1981). He says this is the result of the "intellectual arrogance" of some editors who believe they can tell their readers what is important to them. But this attitude can create difficulties for magazines by causing them to lose their editorial rapport with their readers, he says (p. 44). If editors do not know what information their audience needs, they lose readers and jeopardize the future of their magazines, he believes.

He adds that editors who do decide to use research often fall into the trap of asking readers what they want to read, rather than what they need to know. This type of editorial research will reflect only very individualized desires that rarely will be appropriate for the magazine as a whole.

One area of potential concern to the Commission for Women and its publication was addressed in a study by John Teunessen (1975) on the credibility of employee magazines. His hypothesis was that because the two magazines he studied are put out by management, they are perceived as biased by employees and, therefore, are low in credibility. His surprising results showed that the magazines were perceived as both biased and credible. The bias did not interfere with credibility, he found, because readers did not expect objectivity. Teunessen suggests the periodicals were perceived as credible because the articles were not controversial. The content was mainly informational. Controversial articles, on the other hand, did create low credibility by causing disagreement, provoking employees to take a positive or negative stand either for or against a viewpoint.

The study is reminiscent of the classic experiment by Hovland

and Weiss (1951) with Yale University undergraduate students to determine whether a trustworthy source produces more attitude change than an untrustworthy source, and whether an untrustworthy source might actually produce attitude change in the opposite direction from the communication (Zimbardo & Ebbesen in Basic Readings in Communication Theory, C. David Mortensen, 1969, p. 279). Hovland and Weiss concluded that more attitude change is produced by a message attributed to a high-credibility source, and untrustworthy sources appear to produce negligible attitude change (Mortensen, p. 283).

The two studies (Hovland & Weiss; Teunessen) have obvious differences, which help to explain the discrepancies in their findings. While the former strove to identify repercussions of perceived trustworthy sources, the latter focused on the effects of perceived objectivity of the source. (The qualities are dissimilar, as shown by Teunessen's study where management was perceived as both trustworthy, i.e., credible, and non-objective.)

While Teunessen worked with the transmission of information presumably to maintain or create good morale and organizational cohesiveness, Hovland and Weiss dealt with persuasion and attitude change of opinions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Because the Networker target audience is small (3,000), it was predicted that returns from a random sample survey would be too small to provide adequate research data. Therefore, it was decided to conduct a series of focus group interviews as an initial step toward evaluating the publication. The purpose of the research was to generate as many different ideas as possible while testing the assumptions made in Chapter I.

According to Goldman (1962, p. 62), the group depth interview is most frequently useful and appropriate in the developmental and exploratory phases of research. It is frequently used to make it more likely that the correct questions are asked in large sample surveys that follow. Goldman also points out that group interviews conducted at several points along the developmental stages of a (publication) help (the editorial staff) make decisions based on (reader) reactions before large investments of time and money are committed.

However, it should be pointed out that focus groups are used not only in the initial stages of product development. According to Antilla (1982), they have been a popular and useful research tool since the 1950s to explore new markets and to keep in touch with established product users so that attitude changes don't catch management unaware.

"With their ability to uncover complex motivations, focus groups have been found effective in explaining what people like or don't like about all manner of things," she wrote (p. 79).

This quotation reveals the basic nature of data available through focus group interviewing. It is a method for collecting useful qualitative information. It will provide insights into whether a product is used, and if so, how and why. This method does not yield quantitative data. It will not tell a researcher how many people read a publication or how much of the publication is read.

Philip Levine, executive director of research at Ogilvy & Mather, New York, believes focus groups are best used in the planning and idea-generating stages. He says the qualitative information can then support later quantitative studies. He maintains they should not serve as a substitute for quantitative work (Advertising Age, Feb. 4, 1980, p. 522).

Irving White, a pioneer of the focus group concept, disagrees. He says he can get more out of relating to consumers on a face-to-face basis than anyone can get out of a questionnaire. Quantitative data, he says, is not useful in development of strategy. He says he uses quantitative data as an adjunct to his qualitative work, a procedure directly opposite to that which the majority of researchers follows (Advertising Age, Feb. 4, 1980, p. 522).

A review of the literature reveals that this majority tends to use focus groups for three major purposes: (1) to develop questionnaires, (2) to determine questionnaire formats, and (3) to develop hypotheses. Groups provide researchers with the language people use to describe their experiences and their feelings in relation to the product, concept or group being studied. This is valuable in wording questions for a questionnaire. Groups help with the formulation of hypotheses by suggesting reasons why consumers use a product.

According to Goldman, there are five requirements of the group depth interview. They are objectivity, reliability, validity, intensive analysis, and marketing applicability. The first four, he notes, are required of any scientific research, while the last is more relevant to marketing studies (p. 62). For the purposes of this paper, an attitude survey is considered to be a marketing study.

Goldman says the avoidance of a biased interviewer improves objectivity. He states that respondents are very sensitive to the attitudes and opinions of the group moderator and if these are obvious during the discussion, it can greatly affect the data. He suggests that the moderator observe strict neutrality (p. 65).

Reliability is obtained when the information produced is representative of the population the respondents represent. To the extent that it is representative, the information can be generalized to the larger population. The question of reliability, or generalizability of the sample focuses on the purpose of the group depth interview, says Goldman. He explains that the basic function of the group interview is to indicate why, not how many. It focuses on understanding the motives of behavior rather than cataloguing the number of individuals who behave in a particular way (p. 67). Therefore, it is useful in establishing the range of attitudes held by consumers, but it does not reveal the representativeness of these attitudes--that is, how many people adhere to any given opinion. Group interviewing does not preclude quantitatively adequate sampling, he says, but in most cases it makes it very expensive.

Validity is the extent to which a study really measures what it

sets out to measure. Goldman says the group situation attempts to get as close to the actual (reading) decision as possible (p. 67). For example, group participants may be given time to scan issues of the publication being studied and asked to read only those articles that appeal to them. By then asking them which articles they chose to read and why, the interviewer may decrease the discrepancy between attitude expression, which may show up on a questionnaire, and actual reading behavior.

A fourth requirement of the group depth interview, according to Goldman, is that the data be intensively analyzed. Discussion material of this kind, he points out, defies routine analysis. Qualitative analysis of group interview material focuses on two levels. First is the superficial level where opinions are easily verbalized. These give some indication of the attitudes that group members are willing to express to others. On another level, comments are analyzed for clues to subconscious motives. These motives may be revealed in such data as: what topics are discussed, with what degree of intensity, and the temporal sequence in which they are said. This paper departs from Goldman's specifications for "in-depth interviewing" and follows instead the traditional procedures for focus group interviewing as defined in Chapter III under Definition of Terms, page 55.

Goldman says,

The group depth interview is designed to solve marketing problems. Even if a study satisfies the other four requirements, it is just an academic exercise if its findings cannot be put to use in the market place. The group depth interview has been used to explore attitudes about corporate images, public relations, personnel-turnover rate, recruiting appeals, health problems, container design,

political issues and many other marketing and social problems. The full potential of the method has yet to be realized. (p. 68)

Four group interviews were held to evaluate Networker. Groups represented the three target audiences: female staff, faculty and students at the University. The fourth group was composed of members from the Commission for Women, who represent all three target groups. The interviews were held on four consecutive nights in a conference room in the University Center.

Questionnaire

One of the first steps was to develop a questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed to function as a guideline for the moderator to ensure that all the issues identified for examination were discussed. However, the moderator was instructed to make it clear to participants that they were taking part in a brainstorming session, a free-wheeling exploration of ideas, and the format would not include a one-on-one question-and-answer session. Group members were expected to interact with each other rather than with the moderator. In an effort to instruct participants in their role, the moderator explained that focus groups are interactive discussion groups, not moderator to group member only.

"In contrast to the individual interview in which the flow of information is unidirectional, from the respondent to the interviewer, the group setting causes the opinions of each person to be considered in group discussion," Goldman writes. "Each individual is exposed to the ideas of the others and submits his ideas for the consideration of the group" (p. 61).

Antilla adds to this that moderators count on the interaction of group members to stimulate ideas that might not surface in one-on-one interviews (p. 79).

Questions were grouped under three headings: Format and Design, Content, Distribution. The moderator was free to approach these topics in whatever order seemed natural for the group situation. Questions dealing with general knowledge about the Commission for Women and the physical appearance of the publication were considered warm-up questions. It was suggested that the moderator might begin with these as a way of allowing participants time to become comfortable in the group setting.

Moderators

A second step in setting up the study was to select and train moderators to lead the discussions. It was considered preferable for continuity to recruit one moderator to lead all groups, but when this was not possible, two female graduate students in the College of Communications agreed to lead two sessions each. They were new to campus in 1983 and had not become familiar with Networker, female issues on campus, or campus politics. A two-hour training session was held with these moderators one week prior to the interviews to acquaint them with the publication and the purpose of the study. Training also focused on the mechanics of moderating focus group interviews. The training session was held in the conference room where the focus groups later convened. To avoid bias and to promote objectivity, it was decided that the editor would not moderate the discussions, participate in any

way in the group interviews or even be present. According to Gage (1980) the choice of moderator boils down to using an in-house person or hiring someone unaffiliated with the product. Both have advantages and disadvantages. Gage notes that the degree of involvement in the project is directly proportional to the ability to ask the critical questions and to know what the marketing goals are. But the in-house moderator is usually deeply involved in the project. With such a vested interest, the in-house moderator's ability to lead the discussion objectively may be affected (p. S-21). Goldman not only rejects the idea of using in-house moderators, he refuses to hold interviews in the presence of clients. He said he has seen them sit in a room and grimace and turn red when their products are criticized. It was simply too much feedback to the participants. Goldman insists on a setting with a one-way mirror (p. 64).

Edward Fern, assistant professor of marketing at The Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, challenged the notion that moderators are even crucial to the focus group process. In a 1982 study he found that individual interviews produced significantly more ideas than unmoderated discussion groups, but that groups led by moderators produced only slightly more ideas than unmoderated discussion groups. He determined that individual interviews are about as effective as focus group moderators in eliciting relevant ideas (p. 9), but that unmoderated groups are less productive than individuals (p. 11). Focus groups do outperform unmoderated groups in terms of the total number of ideas generated, he said. But the magnitude of the difference dramatically decreases when relevant ideas is the dependent measure. He

offers several possible explanations for this that might have some bearing on the Networker survey. He said the warmup conversation may have suggested that wandering from the relevant topic areas was acceptable so long as everyone felt at ease and comfortable. He also suggested that the outcome may have something to do with the sample of women used in the study. The population from which the respondents were recruited for his unmoderated discussion group was highly educated and may have had an abundance of leadership talent. This may have reduced whatever advantage focus groups are thought to have. The differences, he said, could have been significant had women from a different socioeconomic group been selected (p. 11). This is important when remembering that moderators for the Networker study were inexperienced. That may not be a significant limitation because all participants in the groups were highly educated and, if Fern's assumption is accurate, therefore highly self-motivated.

The role of moderator for the Networker study was to guide the discussion, keeping it within relevant and useful parameters. She was to participate in the discussion herself as little as possible. According to Goldman (p. 64), the most important factor in producing usable information from the group depth interview is the relationship between the moderator and the panel member, and that among the panel members themselves. The first job of the moderator, then, according to Goldman, is to structure the roles of all the participants. The moderator is to explain to them in a comfortable and friendly manner the purpose of the session, the length of the session, and the manner in which it will be conducted. Good rapport, he maintains, is crucial in establishing

candidness from the group members. He said the verbal activity or passivity of the moderator is determined by the nature of the group and its goals. With alert and articulate people, the moderator can assume a more passive role. In a more talkative group or in a very quiet group, a more active role is required of the moderator, either to inhibit or encourage more discussion. Occasionally, to provoke a response, Goldman suggests playing the devil's advocate, requiring the moderator to take a very opinionated role.

Group Participants

Selection process. As noted, four groups were formed to participate in the study. The groups consisted of women selected from the faculty, the staff, the student body and the Commission for Women. The establishment of group cohesiveness, says Goldman, is dependent in large part on their sharing a common interest. This was an easy criterion to meet for the study of Networker since the publication is targeted to a homogeneous audience. Within this target audience are the subgroups of faculty, staff and students. An effort was made to obtain a representative sample within subgroups of various disciplines, ages, races, ranks and length of time at the University.

In keeping with the conventional wisdom that focus group participants should be strangers to each other, efforts were made to recruit widely throughout the University, avoiding acquaintances who might upset the dynamics of the group and inhibit responses. In a further effort to maintain their anonymity, group members were not introduced to each other. However, it should be noted that these efforts were not entirely

successful. Commission for Women members obviously already knew each other. Some participants in other groups had a professional or extra-curricular acquaintanceship with each other prior to their coming together for the group discussion. And in every case, before the sessions had concluded, group members exhibited frustration in not knowing each other and insisted on making their own introductions. Fern's study on acquaintanceship (1982) showed that focus groups of strangers generated significantly more ideas than focus groups of acquaintances, but the difference in number of relevant ideas between the two groups was not significant (p. 10). "Researchers using this technique might be well advised to ensure that strangers are recruited and that they remain strangers throughout the group session," he said. "The effect of acquaintanceship on focus group productivity has not been adequately resolved" (p. 10).

Recruiting. Antilla says that panelists are generally recruited with newspaper ads, from association lists and by a variety of other means (p. 79). Recruiting of participants for the Networker study was done in two ways. The University telephone directory was used to select faculty and staff members at random, taking care to draw from as wide a base as possible. Students were recruited primarily by addressing classrooms within the Women's Studies Program, where a cross-section of undergraduate and graduate students from a diversity of majors was gathered for classes. After the research project and its goals were explained, volunteers were solicited; each was asked to sign a circulating paper and to provide a telephone number, major and

and classification. Recruits were selected from this list, again with an attempt to obtain as wide a representation as possible. Although the publication attracts some male readers, male volunteers were not selected for the study because they are not part of the target audience. They may be included in followup research, especially if the editorial objectives are broadened to include an attempt to appeal to a male readership.

As Fern points out (p. 12), a frequent problem facing focus group researchers is that some participants cancel at the last minute. This was a factor of the Networker research. Cancellations and no-shows averaged 17 percent. Fern suggests that one way to ensure the preferred group size is to overrecruit respondents to replace those who cancel at the last minute. However, he adds that if all of the recruited respondents arrive, the moderator must either use all of them, which may cause the group to be too large and unmanageable, or pay those not used and send them home. He said his study indicated that the current practice of overrecruiting is probably justified (p. 12).

Rewards. Antilla says panelists are generally paid anywhere from \$15, to cover their transportation, to more than \$100. An average program, consisting of three separate groups, will cost up to \$5,000 per session (p. 80). Budget-wise, research for Networker was atypical. Panelists were not paid a fee. Sessions were scheduled over the dinner hour, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. so they would not interfere with most work and class schedules. A complimentary buffet dinner was served. Other rewards were intangible. Panelists were asked to participate in the

study to help the Commission for Women better serve the needs of women at the University. Follow-up letters were sent to each participant, thanking her for her vital role in shaping the Commission's objectives and the publication's usefulness. Some participants said they found it rewarding simply to meet with their coworkers and fellow students in what they termed a fulfilling "rap session" on the concerns of women at the University. This shared interest within a small, common society may explain why they were less interested in anonymity and more interested in getting acquainted.

Size. Conventional wisdom dictates that focus groups function best when they contain 8 to 12 members (Fern, p. 2; Antilla, p. 80; Gage, p. 5-19). However, focus groups can consist of as few as five members, and as many as 20. Some researchers say the ideal group size depends on the seating arrangements and the interviewer's personal style (Fern, p. 2).

"Little agreement is found among brainstorming researchers on optimal group size," Fern says.

Slater (1958) found five members to be optimal for discussing a human relations problem. Osborn (1953) suggested 5 to 10 members as optimum for brainstorming. Other have found no difference in the number of ideas produced between five and nine-member groups and between four and seven-member groups. (p. 2)

Fern said his study gave some credence to the principle that group size has an effect on focus group success. His study showed that focus groups of eight members generated more ideas than focus groups of four members. However, he said eight-member groups do not produce twice as many ideas as four-member groups. Therefore, the synergism

hypothesis of some focus group researchers that the superiority of groups over individuals increases as group size increases, was only partially supported (p. 12).

Focus group size for this research project was set at eight, an optimal size according to many authorities. The conference room comfortably accommodated eight people. Because dinner was served, crowding was undesirable. Hence, groups of eight and nine were recruited. The smallest actual group to form numbered six participants. One group contained eight participants, and two contained seven participants. Future research of this nature should take seriously the problem of cancellations and over-recruit approximately 20 percent. A similar undertaking by this researcher would also include careful selection of a site that permitted flexibility in accommodating various numbers of people.

Research Setting

Discussions within each of the four focus groups were held at a conference table in a room approximately 11 x 19 feet in the University Center. Four microphones were positioned on the table facing in four directions so that no microphone was more than 20 inches from a speaker. The recording equipment was set up by two experienced technicians and tested daily to assure that it operated properly. Although the taping device was plainly visible, moderators nevertheless pointed out to participants that their conversation was being recorded. No videotape was made of the sessions, and there was no facility for one-way viewing of the meetings.

Sessions were held one per night for four consecutive nights. Each lasted two hours, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Data Preparation

Eight hours of recorded conversations yielded a transcript of about 32,000 words. These transcripts eliminated non-essential conversation and are, therefore, not a verbatim written record. Every comment was then extrapolated from the written transcript, paraphrased in some cases so it would make sense out of context, and coded. See Appendix A for Code, and Appendixes B through E for coded remarks from each group. Comments are not in sequential order. They are grouped together under the predetermined headings of Format and Design, Content, Distribution, and Ideas. It is acknowledged that a subject dropped and returned to later may have more import than a subject discussed only once, but no attempt has been made to weight the remarks. As explained earlier, this is not an in-depth psychological study. The researcher is not qualified to determine import of remarks based on timing, sequence, identity of speaker, tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions, or any of the other indicators employed by psychologists. Therefore, all remarks are given equal weighting. It is recognized that this may result in some distortion. Comments are not mutually exclusive; some fall into more than one category. There is always an element of subjectivity attached to such decisions, and this researcher acknowledges that cases could be made for adding or eliminating comments in a category. Some ideas surfaced more than once. Similar ideas within a focus group were counted once. If the same idea was

presented in a separate focus group, it was counted again in the final tally that yielded 117 ideas.

Comments within a focus group (exclusive of those identified as "ideas") were listed only once; this procedure does not take into account the fact that the same comment may have been made again later by someone else in the group or may have elicited nods of agreement from other group members. Without a visual record of the proceedings, non-verbal modes of communication have not been preserved. Again, this study emphasized the diversity of comments made and does not offer data that weights the comments. However, when the same comment was made in a separate focus group, it was recorded again. Thus, the findings are reported in the appendixes separated by focus groups to show uninfluenced repetition of comments or ideas. By keeping the findings separated by groups, the researcher was able to isolate the interaction phenomenon.

Demographics of Groups

Faculty. Seven female faculty members participated in this focus group discussion. Of these, all were Caucasian. One was non-American born. One was a full professor. Three were associate professors. One was an assistant professor. Two were instructors. They represented the following disciplines: foreign language; English; speech; health and physical education; music; literature; and philosophy.

Commission for Women. Seven female members of the Commission participated in this discussion. Two were administrators. One was an

undergraduate student. One was a graduate student. Three were members of the faculty. One was black.

Students. Six female students formed this focus group. They included two juniors, three seniors and one graduate student. They represented the following major fields of study: business; home economics; English (2); political science; and economics.

Staff. Eight female administrative staff members participated in this group. Among them were: an assistant dean, a senior administrator, two assistant directors, one director, one administrative assistant, one information specialist, and one counselor.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, Goldman's definition of "group" is adopted. He specified that a group is a number of interacting individuals having a community of interests (p. 61). Furthermore, he says that this common interest should be relevant to the topic under discussion (p. 62).

However, this study does not attempt to examine Networker through Goldman's procedure of "group depth interview." That is, it does not seek profound information on readership behavior motivated by subliminal stimuli that is not usually accessible at the level of interpersonal relationships (p. 63). Depth interviewing, says Goldman, seeks to bring these motives to light. As the researcher and the moderators were not skilled, experienced, or educated to attempt this sort of examination, the study rather tends to reflect Wells' definition of focus group interviewing as mentioned by Szybillo and Berger

(1979). They explain that focus groups share the behavioral science foundation of group depth interviews but differ from them in that they entail greater moderator involvement and less reliance on psychological theories for interpretative analysis (p. 29). The group discussions about Networker were held to provide broad, general information about the reader's attitudes and to generate ideas for improvements.

Antilla defines focus groups as in-depth interviews led by moderators (p. 78). However, Goldman points out that the word "interview" has a very imprecise meaning when used in conjunction with focus groups. An interview, he says, implies an interviewer rather than a moderator. The role of moderator as used in focus group "interviewing" is to use the group as the device for eliciting information (Goldman, p. 64). Therefore, one must keep in mind when reviewing this study that the more successful the interviewer was in leading a group member to ask a question, rather than having to ask the question herself, the more successful the session was considered to be. This did not preclude the moderator from assuming what was considered her most important function--that of assuring that all topics to be examined were discussed, and that the discussion remained relevant.

Limitations of the Survey

Even the best of focus group studies have drawbacks when examined in light of standards for academic research. The basic function of focus groups is to uncover opinions or motivations. What is the range of opinions held by people? And why do they do or think certain things? Focus group research seeks qualitative, not quantitative

data. The quality of information is based on a single judgment, by the researcher/editor in this study, or by the client/policy-maker in other cases. Because the selection process was not statistically random, the results cannot be generalized to other readers or other publications. One persistent problem, says Antilla, comes from clients who delude themselves into thinking that the qualitative results of focus groups can serve as a substitute for quantitative survey research. "If 12 people are sitting at a table and 4 say they agree with a concept, some people conclude that means one-third of the market agrees with the concept," she says (p. 81).

A related problem, she points out, is that some people look for a cheap way to answer problems that cannot be solved without taking a random sample in the market. One of the advantages to a focus group survey is its relatively low cost. However, it is likely that some of the ideas and opinions expressed widely in the focus groups would be reflected in a broader randomized sample of the same population. In addition, the discussions have the advantage of offering insight to the spectrum of opinions held by readers that can later be tested quantitatively in a randomized sample.

A problem common to focus group research is finding effective moderators who can control group discussions but not dominate them. A good moderator is thoroughly familiar with the objectives of the study and is able to spot and probe key points made by group members to dig out information the panelists find difficult to articulate. As Goldman points out, a myriad of emotional subtleties are conveyed by gestures alone, and a skilled moderator can recognize these as clues

to further probing (p. 66). The lack of experienced moderators for this survey must be recognized as a limitation.

Another problem common to focus groups is the difficulty in recruiting good participants. Goldman says if the group members do not interact with one another, but each member directs his or her remarks to the moderator, this is not a group. It might better be described as multiple or serial interviewing, since the advantages of the group setting are precluded (p. 61). This characteristic was manifest to some degree in two of the focus groups in this study, although once the group members become accustomed to each other, the behavior diminished.

Recruiting problems surface when dealing with desirable group sizes. Slightly larger groups in every case would probably have added to the positive dynamics of conversation in the Networker study.

There is little agreement among focus group researchers on the exact methodology to be used. Controversies over size of groups, the effects of acquaintantship among group members, the productivity of groups versus individual interviews, the importance of a moderator's presence and the role of the moderator have all been discussed in this paper. Some see this as one of the method's assets, for it allows great flexibility, greater detail of response, and the use of realistic language for the case at hand (Szybillo & Berger, 1979). For disciplined, academic, replicable research, it is a limitation.

The focus group concept is a fairly simple one, and most researchers agree that it has a place in test marketing, says Gage (p. S-21). But how, when and why it is used is as open to debate and interpretation as the information it generates. Focus groups should

be part of a total research project, advises Goldman. Susan Antilla adds, "When used properly, this form of qualitative research can be invaluable for helping companies understand marketing problems" (p. 82).

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

Format and design. Networker uses clip-art drawings for the few pieces of art that appear. Three of the four groups suggested that photographs would be an improvement to the newsletter. Three groups mentioned the logo on the cover page. Two of them praised it and indicated it made the publication look more interesting. A member in one group said she found it offensive because it seemed to reflect a white woman. She thought that would create the impression among blacks and other ethnic women that the publication was not for them. She suggested redesigning the logo as a trilogy of faces. The fourth group (staff) had no comment on the logo. One person objected to the male cheerleader used in conjunction with the Lady Vols athletic schedule. One person thought the woman used with the column "Women on the Move" did not reflect reality because she was too perfectly groomed and too attractive. Several people suggested introducing at least one additional color of ink.

The few comments on body copy typesize and typeface indicate that group members, in general, thought the typesize was a little too small and difficult to read. One member commented that the script typeface was especially difficult to read. Another said she appreciated the use of different typefaces.

Opinions varied on length of the newsletter. Some said the

length was good and anything longer would probably not be read. One person said she would like it longer so that more in-depth articles could be included on a wider variety of topics. Three people said they would prefer something shorter, perhaps one page that could be put on the bulletin board.

One person liked the color. Three people did not like the color, one saying it looked too official. One person suggested changing the color with each issue.

The name got mixed reviews, from terrific and appropriate, to "cutesy" and misleading. Several suggestions for modifications were made, all of which seemed to indicate a desire for amplification that would express the idea that this publication is for university women. Some suggested eliminating the prominence of the slug "UTK Commission for Women." They thought this would help reduce the public relations flavor and would appeal to more readers.

Readers criticized Networker for its overall drab, dull, institutional, official, busy, dry, formal, serious appearance. Participants in general called for a publication that was more appealing to look at. Too much print and not enough illustration was a common complaint. Others wanted a clearer typeface that was easier to read. Some wanted it organized differently so that subjects were categorized and grouped together.

Content. This portion of the discussions was aimed at getting an idea of how successfully Networker was (1) meeting the editorial objectives, and (2) meeting the needs and desires of the audience. A

primary objective was to raise the visibility of the Commission for Women through the publication. Comments indicated that the publication had been somewhat successful in achieving this goal with faculty and staff women, but not with students. Those who learned about the Commission through Networker said they found information on who the members were and when the luncheons sponsored by the Commission were held especially valuable. One person asked that specialities of each Commission member be listed to facilitate contacting the right person when help is needed.

Another objective is to highlight the achievements of women so they may serve as role models. This was being done mainly through a regular column called "Women on the Move" which included short paragraphs on 6 to 12 women who had been promoted, published a book, received an award or otherwise done something outstanding. While some said they liked the brief sketches with many names, several said they would prefer longer articles that were profiles of a single woman who had achieved something commendable. As one student put it, "'Women on the Move' tells us who got there. We want to know how they got there." It seems that a combination of both treatments of content might help achieve this objective. Some faculty women, on the other hand, perceived "Women on the Move" not as role-modeling, but as a self-serving method of women patting each other on the back. They questioned whether this accomplished anything and suggested the Commission would better serve women by attempting to get wider publicity for the accomplishments of women. On the whole, the idea of role-modeling was appreciated, but participants did not think Networker went far enough.

More human interest was needed through in-depth profiles of individual women.

In trying to determine whether Networker was satisfying the needs of its readers, the group discussions revealed numerous suggestions for future stories. Some participants liked short, factual articles, others wanted in-depth, interpretative pieces. Some called for a stronger editorial posture or advocacy role by Networker, others preferred that it offer many points of view or no point of view. Some said they were interested only in local news; others said they looked for news of a more general nature pertaining to women on the national or international level.

Students in general found the publication's content irrelevant. It did not focus on the subjects that concerned them. Faculty women, in general, wanted it to be, in one person's words, "a call to action," not just an information vehicle. They wanted strong position articles. Students tended to agree with this. One student said that if she were editor, she would be radical.

Sexual harassment, campus safety, and rape awareness were three issues that cut across the concerns of all women. Faculty women thought tenure, promotions, and salaries were the most important topics. For staff women, it was the promotion of women to higher ranks of office.

The discussions were studied to determine whether the information that appeared in Networker was perceived as credible. An assumption made when launching this study was that readers had a generally positive feeling toward Networker and believed the information they read in it was accurate, fair and complete.

Some group members hinted that they had reservations about how objective the newsletter was, given that the Commission was appointed by the Chancellor. They said they would like something more courageous, more hard-hitting, but doubted that Networker could do that, even if its editor wanted to, because it was an official publication from the Administration. They saw it, therefore, as somewhat superficial. Comments in general, however, seemed to indicate that most found the newsletter informative and credible in spite of its perceived biases and official restraints. This seemed to support Teunessen's findings (1975) that readers of employee magazines can accept a publication as both biased and credible. Most participants, however, while not wanting to eliminate the announcements and news items, called for the addition of more in-depth articles. They wanted to be challenged to think about issues they may or may not have been aware of.

Distribution. This section of the study included questions of frequency and timing of the publication. It also was aimed at determining whether the newsletter was reaching its readers, and what they thought of a separate publication for women as opposed to incorporating the information into a more general, widely circulated publication.

Among staff women, distribution was irregular. All of them had received at least one issue, but several had not received all issues. There was some question about whether women who are affiliated with the University-wide staff, as opposed to the local campus staff, were receiving copies. A similar picture emerged among faculty women. All had received at least one issue, but many had not received all issues.

Here, a question arose whether part-time faculty and instructors were on the mailing list.

Few of the students had seen the publication prior to the study. They either had never noticed it at newsstands, or had not bothered to pick it up if they did notice it. (Unlike faculty and staff women, students did not receive copies in the mail. Networker was made available to them by placing issues on campus newspaper newsstands in various classroom buildings and residence halls.)

Almost everyone said the newsletter should come out more frequently. Publishing once a quarter did not give the Commission enough visibility, and it did not encourage feedback from readers. Suggestions ranged from weekly to bi-monthly. One person suggested that coming out at the beginning of the quarter rather than at mid-quarter would improve its usefulness. Another thought the Fall issue should come out on registration day and be expanded to introduce the Commission. It would contain information about all the women's organizations on campus.

There was little disagreement that a publication dedicated to subjects of interest to women is needed and wanted, although some hoped that such a publication might not always be necessary. There was some debate on whether it should be sent to men as well as to women. Some questioned whether men would read it. Until now Networker has been sent to top male administrators. Some suggested expanding that male audience to include deans, heads of departments and other select male administrators and professors who are considered likely to share the information in Networker with female advisees and employees. Male

students already have had access to Networker from pick-up points around campus and have been observed reading it.

Summary. In general, Networker was most favorably received by staff women, and least favorably received by students. Distribution problems have troubled the publication, with many potential readers not receiving issues on a regular basis. These distribution problems and a publishing schedule that is considered to be too infrequent have contributed to a continuing lack of familiarity with the Commission by a large number of women, especially students.

The single most desirable design improvement appears to be the addition of photographs. A second major improvement would be a typeset publication with larger typesize. Several members suggested that thought should be given to changing the color of the paper and to designing a new logo.

More in-depth articles on every issue, sometimes taking an advocacy role, would increase the newsletter's appeal to all audience groups.

As was hoped, the focus group interviews generated numerous ideas in every category. The groups produced a total of 117 ideas, with staff women generating the most (36) and students generating the least (17). Appendixes B through E contain the actual remarks that were coded to produce this summary.

Recommendations

Appraisals of Networker should not stop with a focus group study. Evaluation should be an on-going process. The focus group discussions

were very successful in providing leads to future studies. Below are some specific suggestions, some recommending changes based on the discussions already held, some recommending additional research.

1. Conduct a demographic survey to obtain statistics on the readership that would include ages of readers, percentage of students living off-campus, percentage of black women, percentage of international women and the countries they represent, percentage of women students in each college.

2. Conduct a statistically randomized readership survey to further evaluate the opinions and suggestions made in the focus group discussions.

3. Update the mailing list.

4. Test and possibly redesign the logo.

5. Improve overall appearance of newsletter, possibly starting with having the newsletter typeset by a printer.

6. Use photographs.

7. Test and possibly change color of paper.

8. Remove "Commission for Women" from masthead and replace with "For Female Students, Faculty and Staff."

9. Improve distribution, especially to students. It is apparent that efforts are needed to get the publication into students' hands and that leaving the publication at campus newspaper distribution stands is not doing the job. Attention should be focused on determining the most effective way to get the publication to the reader.

10. Write profiles of and interviews with women who can serve as role models.

11. Study story idea suggestions in appendixes and follow through on appropriate ones.
12. Make special effort to cover issues of interest to students.
13. Increase frequency of distribution.
14. Write articles dealing with the activities of individual Commission members. When the Commission makes recommendations to the Administration, follow-up articles should be written to inform readers about progress and results. A future readership survey should measure more closely the success of Networker in acquainting women with the Commission.

It should be remembered that a publication such as Networker does not compete in the open marketplace and is not judged on sales statistics. It is an organizational or managerial communications tool, and editorial objectives should remain uppermost in mind. However, any attempt by an organization to communicate should include a conscious effort to interpret the news and information it provides. Networker should not avoid controversy. It is precisely this lack of a candid appraisal of controversial issues that has so often in the past led to the rise of an underground press. As Pikus (1977) points out in her analysis of the status and trends of company publications, the most critical error of all is the consistent, bewildering, head-in-the-sand refusal to communicate forthrightly on the most vital and controversial issues of our times. This lack of candor, she said, is called "the zone of management silence" (p. 72). A number of ideas for stories on issues not yet reported offer Networker a long shopping list for future articles that support the goals of the Commission and provide

opportunities for in-depth candid comment. However, this may not be a realistic expectation of an editor's time as long as the editor is a graduate student working one-quarter time for the publication, without a staff, while meeting the demands of fulltime course requirements.

CHAPTER V

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

What kinds of things can be found from focus groups? How can they be effectively applied? Goldberg and Larson wrote in their book Group Communication (1975), that small-group decision-making and problem-solving permeates our lives and is one of the basic processes upon which our society relies (p. 158). However, they point out that understanding the basic group problem-solving strategy requires dispelling a myth.

The myth is that problem solutions are either right or wrong. People and groups frequently approach problem situations with the belief that their task is to "solve the problem correctly" or to "make the right decision." Most problems that confront individuals and groups, however, are not the kinds of problems for which there are accurate or inaccurate solutions. This is especially true of problems that confront groups; indeed, problems with "absolute" solutions are seldom brought to groups for deliberation. If there is a right or wrong answer to a problem, then the process of discovering the right answer ordinarily consists of doing some research, or looking up the facts. (p. 140-41)

Herein lies the heart of the advantage of focus group studies. Rather than revealing statistically "correct" data that can be generalized to wider audiences, they provide for a search of the broad range of possibilities as to what problems may exist and how they may be resolved. Business history is replete with examples of organizations whose management blundered along for years, with no knowledge that certain problems existed, until conditions had deteriorated to a point that corrections were, at best, costly, and at worst, no longer possible.

Periodic focus group discussions, followed by relevant statistical studies, might have avoided these disasters by helping to identify problem areas before they became major expenses to the company. Donald Shields wrote in a book he coauthored with John Cragan (Applied Communication Research, 1981), that an important aspect of focus groups is that they allow the group participants to "make full use of the purposely provided opportunity to unburden themselves of frustrating experiences, on the one hand, and to share happy experiences, on the other" (p. 313).

The goal of focus group interviews, he wrote, is to gather such things as information, client reactions, and fantasies regarding a product, or company or service (p. 314). Focus group interviews are an exploratory research tool most useful for generating insight into the way people perceive the subject at hand.

Shields stresses two major areas in the successful use of focus groups: skillfully using interview techniques, and understanding the dynamics of small-group communication.

The interviewer needs to recognize that even temporary interview groups begin to form a definite structure, enabling the group members to assume and fulfill various group roles, and allowing their communication to flow processually, at times being very task oriented, at other times laughing and joking and being more socially oriented. None of these characteristics of groups should be thought of as bad, for they are a fact of group life. However, without a knowledge of group dynamics, the interviewer does not know whether he is letting the dynamics of group communication work to facilitate the eliciting of information, or encouraging these same dynamics to interfere with the eliciting of information. (Shields, p. 314)

Therefore, future studies using focus groups to evaluate an in-house publication should attempt to include the use of a moderator

skilled in group dynamics. It might be useful to plan interviews that last longer than two hours. Shields states that role structure within a group will not fully stabilize until an hour or two of interaction has elapsed. "With knowledge of group communication dynamics, an effective interviewer can help the groups get over the role struggle hurdles and improve the content of the communication exchange," he added (p. 314).

In addition to being skilled in group dynamics, the moderator should be thoroughly familiar with the subject being discussed. It is important that the interviewer prepare carefully for the sessions. Shields defines this preparation:

The interviewer must . . . know the product's uses, have some idea of the product's strengths and . . . weaknesses. The researcher gains such a familiarity by doing his/her homework. The researcher can look at the client's product brochures, advertisements, and product portfolios. The researcher can ask the client what he thinks of his product, and how he thinks his market sees it. The researcher can draw from personal experiences with previous research on similar products within the industry. Without such preparation, the interviewer will be ill-prepared to plan the agenda for the focus group interview, and will be completely unable to develop scenarios which can assist in eliciting dramatized exchanges. With such preparation, the researcher will be sufficiently knowledgeable to allow agenda planning and to anticipate issues and themes around which he/she needs to build scenarios. (p. 316)

Finally, future researchers using focus groups might wish to utilize Shields' method for data analysis. He suggests the "Q" approach to communications research, based on N. Van Tubergen's QUANAL Program for Q-analysis.

The data elicited from the focus group interviews . . . can be confirmed and validated by content analysis of the . . . themes and concurrent validation across groupings. Constitutive meanings of the dramas can be checked empirically by the administration of Q-sorts containing dramatic

depictions of the relevant . . . themes. Respondent sorting behavior can then be factor analyzed by the use of Q-type factor analysis to provide Q-arrays of the descending importance of the content themes. (p. 319)

Focus groups can be a useful method for editors of small, in-house publications to gather valuable information that helps them keep their periodical on track, accurately targeted to their homogeneous audience. Often, as illustrated in this paper, focus groups are used as an initial research tool to learn the broad spectrum of opinions and concerns of the publications' readers. They help the editor identify undetected problems. A good example is the suggestion by one minority reader in this study that the logo used by Networker is perceived as a white woman and may therefore be interpreted as symbolizing a "whites only" publication. The newsletter may be excluding numerous ethnic and minority readers inadvertently. Such issues raised by focus groups can be examined later using statistically randomized samples of the readership to gather quantifiable data that can be generalized to the whole audience.

Once the results of focus group research have been compiled and carefully analyzed, the next logical step in evaluating an in-house publication would be the development of a questionnaire. The researcher should study the available literature on questionnaire development to learn how to design an effective tool. Elements such as length of questionnaire, wording of questions, incentives for encouraging a high response rate, etc., are all discussed in numerous publications.

The questionnaire would then be mailed to a random sample of the target audience. The researcher should be familiar with principles

of statistical polling and surveys. When results are analyzed, decisions can be made concerning desirable changes for the publication. To assure that a publication continues to meet its editorial objectives, the editor should follow up this survey with additional research to test the effectiveness of changes. One possible research design would include a pre-test and post-test to determine changes in readership opinions or behavior as the result of one or two significant changes in the publication.

Another study might be to examine what sociologists call the expressive vs. instrumental functions of readership behavior. Some readers prefer reflective, philosophical, and intellectual articles, while others prefer strong headlines, interesting lead sentences and short articles that get to the point with facts and statistics. The staff of a publication such as Networker with a specific targeted audience might find it useful to know if such reading habits within its audience follow the traditional male-female role consistency model--that is, is there a correlation between gender and preference for human interest vs. factual treatment of issues?

No publication can operate successfully for long periods of time in a vacuum. Perhaps no product that an organization hopes to market is more important than the ideas it wants to communicate to its special audiences. It is difficult to imagine a company trying to market its consumer products without first conducting carefully conceived research on consumer reactions. The same ideals and goals are pursued by successful organizations concerning their publications. They periodically conduct pre-tests and post-tests that enable them to

remain sensitive to readers' needs and reactions. They have clearly defined objectives for their publications and they constantly test reader perceptions to determine if the publication is achieving its goals.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

CODE FOR IDENTIFYING SUBJECTS OF DISCUSSION

The following designations were used to codify transcripts of the focus group discussions. The remarks from each focus group (faculty, Commission for Women, students and staff) were extrapolated and identified as referring to Format (F), Distribution (D), Content (C), or Ideas Generated (I). The designations were further broken down to identify subcategories within each category. Therefore, we have F-1 referring to graphics, F-2 referring to typesize and typeface, etc.

F1-7: Attitudes on format and design. Exploration of Assumption Four that readers are satisfied with the present format of the newsletter and do not want to see it changed.

- F1 = Graphics
 - F2 = Typesize and Typefaces
 - F3 = Length of Newsletter
 - F4 = Color of Paper
 - F5 = Name of Newsletter
 - F6 = Overall Appearance
-

D1-5: Attitudes on distribution. Exploration of Assumption Five that Networker is reaching its audience, that readers want to continue receiving it as a separate publication for women only.

- D1 = Is Networker reaching its audience?
 - D2 = How much of any single issue is read?
 - D3 = Is frequency or timing a problem?
 - D4 = Should the newsletter be sent to women only?
 - D5 = Should Networker remain a separate publication?
-

C1-4: Attitudes on content of publication. Exploration of Assumption One that Networker is meeting its editorial objectives, Assumption Two that Networker is credible and readers have a generally positive feeling toward it, and Assumption Three that it is satisfying "uses and gratifications" requirements of its readers.

- C1 = Networker has raised the visibility of The Commission for Women.
- C2 = Networker is credible and readers have a generally positive feeling toward it.
- C3 = The newsletter is presenting role models by highlighting the achievements of women.

C4 = The Commission for Women and Networker are focusing on the issues and subjects its readers want to know about.

I = Ideas. Enumeration of ideas generated from the discussions and listing for easy reference.

APPENDIX B

COMMENTS REFERRING TO FORMAT AND DESIGN

Appendix B contains all of the comments coded to fall under F1-7 (Format and Design). The Appendix is divided into four subsections to allow for a breakout of these comments by individual focus group. Appendixes C, D, and E follow the same format for the other research categories: Distribution, Content, and Ideas Generated.

Faculty

F1: Graphics

I remember the logo.

I like the illustrations. That catches my eye first. When there is just a lot of the print word, I seem to glance over that. The illustrations catch my eye and make me stop to read.

Perhaps some color somewhere would help play up a feature.

I like the logo.

Yes, the logo is good.

I have some criticism of the illustration used for "Women on the Move." She is young, no wrinkles, wearing her "dressed for success" suit. Hair is neatly in a bun. How about something that looks more like what most of us look like? For one thing, most of us end up wearing glasses. A lot of us have wrinkles.

F2: Typesize and Typefaces

I like the use of different typefaces, boxes, and underlining. It helps to break up the page.

F3: Length of Newsletter

I might like something more like a flyer, rather than something this lengthy.

Perhaps it should be shorter, almost like a bulletin, and it could be tacked up on the bulletin board, instead of being in the booklet format.

I think Networker is too lengthy.

F4: Color of Paper

NO COMMENTS.

F5: Name of Newsletter

The title Networker is very cutesy. It suggests that women can manage to create the kinds of ties together that men have. This is not going to happen because there is no female equivalent for male bonding. We call it friendship, but friendship never got us anywhere. In fact, friendship can work against us in the professional world. When women make very superficial and practical alliances, it doesn't have the same effect.

F6: Overall Appearance

It may be a little too crowded or too much.

I remember what it looked like when the editor asked me to come talk about it.

The headlines are excellent for telling me what I need to read.

Commission for WomenF1: Graphics

The first thing that I see when I look at it is the logo, the symbol of the woman. To me it is a white woman. It doesn't reflect anyone who is non-white or third world. So probably, if I were not a member of the Commission, I would not pick it up. I don't like the logo; I don't like it at all.

It seems to me if you're going to catch someone's attention, you need something on the front page besides just type. I think we do need a logo.

What are the budget considerations? Could you use another color ink? Could you put Networker in different colors?

I think if you could have some pictures, that would make it more interesting. For some reason I am always attracted first to pictures.

I would like to see pictures instead of just straight copy.

F2: Typesize and Typeface

NO COMMENTS.

F3: Length of Newsletter

I'd like to see Networker expanded so that information of interest to all our readers can be included and there could be more in-depth pieces.

F4: Color of Paper

The color makes it look like an official document because it is the same color as the Chancellor's newsletter.

F5: Name of Newsletter

Maybe we should eliminate the logo and make the title more interesting, like "Networker, a Magazine for Faculty, Students and Staff."

Maybe we don't need to make "Commission for Women" so prominent. We've been publishing this long enough to have gotten our name across, and it is mentioned on the back page anyway.

F6: Overall Appearance

It is institutional looking.

When you see it on the newsstand, it doesn't really stand out.

Pictures instead of just straight copy would make it more interesting.

Assuming we had the money to do it, we would like to see something typeset with photographs.

Maybe newsprint would be better. I like the feel of newsprint.

I think the official format turns off students.

It looks just like one more administration mouthpiece.

But I think it needs to look professional.

Pictures would help more than anything I can think of to get a balance between something colorful and creative, and a professional look.

StudentsF1: Graphics

The most interesting thing in terms of looks and whether it would draw my attention is the art work on the front, the logo.

I think the fellow above the Lady Vols schedule could be done away with.

I'd add some color to it.

Photographs would be nice.

F2: Typesize and Typeface

There is no way Networker is going to get students' attention coming out once a quarter with no pictures and small print.

F3: Length of Newsletter

NO COMMENTS.

F4: Color of Paper

I'd change the color. It isn't real noticeable.

F5: Name of Newsletter

The name is deceptive. It's not clear.

Maybe if the word "Women" were in bigger print. It just doesn't grab you. It could say "Women's Networker," instead of just Networker.

How about "Networker Addressing Women's Issues"?

If it said "Women" somewhere prominently, I would pick it up, because then I'd know it pertains to me. "Networker" doesn't tell me anything.

F6: Overall Appearance

It looks drab.

It's dull.

It's not organized very well. Announcements should be on one page.

Then a major article, then some literature or poetry. There are just little dabs here and there, no structure to it at all.

If anything, it looks choppy.

It looks like a classified section or something.

It needs to be packaged better.

Administrative Staff

F1: Graphics

The graphics are all right.

Put a few photographs in.

Put less on the front page and add a photograph.

If they are trying to offer role models to other women, photographs are helpful. Many times I recognize a name, but I can't put a face with it.

F2: Typesize and Typeface

I think it is hard to read. The type is small.

I think the standard type is much easier to read than the script. The script is really hard to read.

F3: Length of Newsletter

Six pages is fine. That's good. Much longer and I don't think we'd have time to read it.

F4: Color of Paper

The color is all right.

I think the colors should change with each issue. They all look alike. When I get mine in the mail I'm not sure if it's one someone stuck back in my box or it's the new one.

The color turns me off.

F5: Name of Newsletter

The name is terrific.

The name is great.

I think the concept of networking is so important to the women's movement that using this as the title of a newsletter gives it a larger perspective.

It's very appropriate.

F6: Overall Appearance

It looks busy on the page.

I think the design is o.k. A clearer typeface might make it easier to read.

It has a tendency to run together.

It is so busy on the front, so much print and all the same size.

I like the use of large print quotes to break up the text. It keeps it from being a large block of print.

The front page makes me think it's some kind of a report I have to read. It looks dry. I'll read it another day when I have more time.

There is some kind of psychology to the way it looks. It looks dry and formal.

It doesn't strike me that way. Maybe I'm preconditioned to want to read it.

If you didn't already want to read it, I don't think it would attract you.

It looks too serious.

The first two issues with the box insert are easier to read. Then the issues after that are just all print. I would be less likely to pick it up.

In any kind of marketing, the first thing you want to do is create interest. The first opportunity you have to create interest with this is on the cover.

Maybe enlarging it would help, put it on bigger paper.

One of the problems with that is, I keep these newsletters in a file drawer and they fit. I have a problem with the Chancellor's newsletter because it comes on legal size paper and I have to fold it. Then I have a bulky corner. When you get into off-sizes, they are not as easy to handle.

APPENDIX C

COMMENTS REFERRING TO CONTENT

Faculty

C1: The Networker has raised the visibility of the Commission for Women

I knew the Commission existed before the newsletter began.

I don't know that I knew about the Commission before the newsletter began.

I didn't know who the members were before the newsletter began.

I don't know what is wrong, but I never connected the Networker with the Commission for Women.

I'd like to know the specialities of the Commissioners so that if I have a specific problem I know who to call to discuss it.

C2: Networker is credible and readers have a generally positive feeling toward it

We get so many publications that come down from above, and they all have sort of a public relations look to them. This one does too.

I think the information is super.

When I read it, I thought it was quite good.

I really like the diversity of news and features in Networker.

We want articles that dig a little deeper. Don't just present a factual, public relations piece. Don't just say a committee decided something, or the Commission is supporting something. Get underneath for interpretation.

A lot of it is superficial. We need to get to some of the substantive issues. Then I'd be more inclined to read it from cover to cover.

I want a publication that is going to be a call to action, rather than just one that informs.

If they really want us to communicate, even among ourselves, I don't think this publication asks me to do that.

Many of the things the Commission has done are really terrific. But they don't have the reputation for beating the bushes to find out what problems people have.

I associate it with the Chancellor's office and therefore don't pay too much attention to it.

If the Networker were not tied in with the Commission so closely, if it had a slightly independent space so that it could be more of a forum for issues that women want brought to the Commission's attention, then it might lose some of the in-house public relations aspects that it has.

The Commission should generate some kind of atmosphere of trust, maybe by looking like they fight.

This seems like a tentative, white glove attempt to communicate.

There must be a very selective outlet for getting information for "Women on the Move." Where does this information come from? Are these really the only ones?

There are some very practical middle-class feminist issues, i.e., dress for success, availability of child care, tenure, promotions. And then there are other feminist issues such as the exploitation of women part-time faculty. It's a fact. They really are exploited. But Networker doesn't use that word. It just gives us stories about how we are going to get benefits one of these years.

Too many women have told me they feel a kind of gag rule, an implicit censorship, more here than other places they've been. In an atmosphere where women are encouraged to "dress for success," there is no atmosphere generated of trust between women.

Even the title, Networker, is very cutesy. It suggests that women can manage to create the kinds of ties together than men have.

Why can't they let women speak for themselves in this publication. Women have been "spoken for" for a very long time.

C3: The newsletter is presenting role models by highlighting the achievements of women

I think the strongest feature of Networker is the way it highlights the achievements of women.

Where I grew up women were segregated from men in universities almost in the way that the south used to segregate races. Women could not be recognized for scholarship and leadership potential when weighed against male candidates. They had to have their own society. Men and women

were judged separately, and the women's world could never be as good as the male world. We weren't part of that. So I find that all the things I hear with labels of women on them tend to imply that women must once again segregate themselves because that is the only way they can find their identity or function. It is a little scary. It says to me, go back to where you started. Forget about being a part of your profession and being able to compete as any man could compete in that profession on equal grounds.

I have trouble defending the concept because women have always given awards to other women and, while it's nice to have those awards, the real recognition is when they compete with everybody else and are recognized as outstanding in whatever the category.

I see a difference between giving awards to women and recognizing women for awards they received elsewhere, or recognizing them for achievements they made in the real male/female environment.

"Women on the Move." I scan it, but it's like so much of the information we get from other administration-produced newsletters. It is never comprehensive.

When you have something like Networker, where women, a powerless group, are patting each other on the back for looking powerful, it comes across as kind of a sop, a Valentine candy. Maybe it's just that this publication makes an attempt to make it appear that there is a community interested in what women are doing. Maybe it's just that the publication makes it so clear that the facade is not the reality.

C4: The Commission For Women and Networker are focusing on the issues and subjects its readers want to know about

I look at it from an interest point of view. I'm looking for things that I am interested in.

I don't really save it as a reference.

I use it for information I can share with some of the undergraduate students I teach.

I look for coming events, changes, programs and opportunities.

I look at it mostly for news about specific people on campus. I want to know what different women are doing, not just faculty women.

I am much more interested in the local rather than the national news. I can get the national news elsewhere. I want the local stuff that I can't find out any other way.

I like the national news.

Much of the material in here I do not know about, but I don't pay much attention because it is not particularly what I need to know, or am interested in.

The things I remember longest after reading Networker are the articles written by local people whom I know.

I find Networker quite helpful in keeping up on what is going on around campus as it relates to a course I teach. For example, I first learned through Networker about a speaker's appearance on campus that my students might have wanted to hear.

I liked the piece about the work being done on women writers at the University Press.

I had not hear about the new edition of Roget's Thesaurus before reading of it in Networker.

I suggest the Commission and Networker focus on opportunities for faculty beyond tenure and promotions, such as grants and conferences.

The most important issue the Commission is working on is tenure and promotions.

I am concerned about the cutbacks in benefits for faculty, especially the cutbacks in psychological care because typically more women than men need psychological counseling. I have seen no evidence in Networker that the Commission has considered fringe benefits cuts as they affect women.

Networker says the Commission is pushing for an insurance plan for parttime workers. Why are they focusing on something that one or two percent of the employees will be affected by, and not addressing the larger issue of cutbacks in benefits for all of us?

In my opinion, a lot of the information in Networker is duplication. I'm thinking of the Lady Vols schedule and the Brown Bag Lunch Series. This information comes to me in other ways.

The story in a recent issue on the international women's congress in the Netherlands seemed irrelevant to me. How many students are interested in reading this? How many of us faculty women have submitted our abstracts to the University of Groeningen, or plan to attend?

I think the most pressing issue is campus safety. There is a lot of rape around that we don't hear about. Those blue telephones are not enough.

I think salaries is the most pressing issue.

I think the most important issue is a feeling of being stifled. There are not many opportunities to advance. The opportunities for taking a sabbatical, for trying new things, for grants, don't seem to be there.

I agree. I hear a lot of women who are working on their PhD's say they do not have confidence in a promising future. They are asking why they are doing this if it is going to take them so many more years in grade without promotion than their male counterparts.

It's getting even harder for women because there aren't that many new positions opening that can be filled by women or men. As the job market tightens up, it seems to get disproportionately harder for women to compete.

I'd like to see more discussion in Networker on the problems faced by part-time faculty, who are mostly women. How do different departments handle their part-time people?

One subject work exploring might be to explain what a major in women's studies is worth to a graduate. What kind of jobs could that student be prepared to seek?

I'd like to see in Networker a breakdown of all the various women's organizations.

There is one issue that is perhaps for me the hardest aspect of life at the University. That is the inability to create any sense of a women's community. I don't mean a communication of practical issues, but some way in which there is really an interest in women's solidarity as people. It has to do with a feeling I get, particularly among non-tenured women faculty, that they can't really be who they are. They can't say what they think because they are being watched. There is just not enough trust, in general, among women here. I would like the Commission to find out why and what can be done about it. It makes all of us like an island.

I'd like to see Networker talk to women who have their tenure and report on some of the pitfalls. How can other women sustain those who are facing that hurdle? What are the obstacles?

Networker would mean more to me if it gave me information I could not get elsewhere, at least not without a lot of trouble. In fact, I'd like it to give me the information and make a case that went beyond just the facts.

Many of the things the Commission has done are really terrific. But they don't have the reputation for beating the bushes to find out what problems people have.

There is not enough editorial comment in Networker.

I have the same reaction to the column "Women on the Move," that I have

to professional journals that have a section with some similar title. I look through it for a name of someone I know to see if they have moved or gotten a grant and I've always enjoyed that, but I'm never able to defend it when the association says it needs more space for articles. I guess I would prefer to see articles that really tell me more.

We want a publication that is going to be a call to action, not just one that informs.

I enjoy the book reviews.

What we need are some position editorials that are not written by people on the commission. Maybe presented in a debate format, pro and con.

I'd like to know the specialities of all the commissioners so that if I'm having a problem, say with salaries or child care, I could know who to contact. The "Meet the Commission" column does not go far enough.

If I'm going to keep this information as a reference, I'd like to have the Commissioners' telephone numbers. I would like to know how long each of them has been on the commission. And I'm curious to know how they get selected for their appointments. The column gives us their credentials. We're not going to challenge that. But I want to know how they can help me. The way it is now goes back to the public relations thing. It looks like the justification for appointing these people.

Commission for Women

C1: Networker has raised the visibility of the Commission for Women

We've been publishing this long enough to have gotten our name across, and it is mentioned on the back page anyway, so we don't need to make our name so prominent on the masthead.

Before the newsletter, very few people knew the Commission existed or what it did. Now I think if you asked, one out of three would know there was a commission. Not all of that has been brought about by the newsletter, but it certainly has helped.

C2: Networker is credible and readers have a generally positive feeling toward it

The fact that Networker looks like the Chancellor's newsletter affects Networker's credibility positively and negatively. The faculty and staff see it as something official. The students simply think it is not for them.

I see the newsletter as an information source. And there is some good information here.

I like that it goes into depth about some things.

It is not as creative as it could be. It is sort of cut and dry.

One thing I've liked about Networker are the articles that have to do with subjects not specifically connected with the University, but have to do with what's occurring in the women's movement in other places.

I like the reviews of current literature.

It brings together a lot of different kinds of information about women into one publication.

It's a way of communicating with the other women on campus. There just isn't any other way to accomplish that.

I enjoy it. Sometimes the articles have been too short. I want to know more about some things.

C3: Networker is presenting role models by highlighting the achievements of women

Mentioning the achievements of women is important. We don't know what each other is doing any other way.

"Women on the Move" is interesting, but not the most popular part of the newsletter for me. I'd rather see profiles of people that go into more depth about their activities.

Professional journals always have something like "Women on the Move." Those columns are read because people may spot someone they deal with infrequently and they want to know if these acquaintances have a new position or have a new accomplishment.

"Women on the Move" is purely positive. That's nice, especially when the publication otherwise stresses issue-oriented ideas. Something positive offers encouragement. It seems to say, "Yes, there might be all these problems, but look, here are some people who have made it anyway."

I like "Women on the Move" because it is succinct. I like that format. But I would also like to see the profiles.

I like it as a way of recognizing women--a book published, some research finished.

C4: The Commission for Women and Networker are focusing on the issues and subjects its readers want to know about

I don't think very many Black students have read it. To them it is something for the faculty and staff. It is not for their age group. It really doesn't affect their lives.

I don't think students in general pick up something like this. They see written up in the corner "UTK Commission for Women," and students think that it is for faculty and staff.

I wouldn't pick it up. It is not part of my course work. I'm not going to have a test on it.

There are some undergraduate issues that could be explored in the Networker, for example health issues and eating disorders.

None of the lead articles are something that undergraduates would be interested in--insurance plans, part-time faculty benefits, etc. Why would a student read it? It doesn't say anything they want to know.

I see the newsletter as an information source, and there is some good information here.

It should not go into real depth on issues, but tell people the highlights and where they can go to get more information.

Maybe we should have on the front page of each issue a visible topic of interest to the students as well as the faculty.

I am not as interested in the factual information as I am in an exploration of the issues in depth. That is something the daily newspaper doesn't do.

I wonder how vulnerable it would make us to funding problems if we take strong advocacy positions on issues.

I don't think it would be a problem. If there wasn't an official place to air our views, the need would still exist and the women would come together in an informal way with an even less feeling of restriction.

One thing I like about Networker is the articles that have to do with what is happening in the women's movement in general, for example, the articles on Title IX, and the one on the new edition of Roget's Thesaurus. I would like to see even more of that. Even though the news is probably available in other places, having it readily accessible in Networker means I can keep up with what's going on.

I think information stories on projects people are involved with are more important than the names of people.

People read such columns as "Women on the Move" to find out if someone they know has been promoted or has won an award or something.

We seem to want all things. We want short, informative news articles and we want long, in-depth interpretative pieces. We want local news and we want national news.

I was glad to know about the International Congress in the Netherlands even though very few people, if any, will go from here. Also, it may have been of interest to the international students. Maybe one of them read the story and talked to someone at home and someone from another country will go to this conference as a result of the information being passed on.

Equal pay for equal work is an issue Networker needs to pay attention to.

I'd like to see more diversity in the issues covered.

A lot of students have never felt any discrimination or felt it was any problem to be a woman. It hasn't affected them yet. So they are not really interested in a publication that tries to address these problems. For them the problems don't exist. We might break our backs to serve up a publication that focuses on issues relevant to the student, and the student still won't read it.

If it looks like something interesting, they might glance at it anyway. I think the official format turns off students.

If it said "students" on the front, it might help.

Students

C1: Networker has raised the visibility of the Commission for Women

None of us here tonight knew about the Commission for Women before this group discussion.

Networker might raise the visibility of the Commission among those women who receive Networker, but not many of us get it.

If the Commission wants more attention, it needs to have more editorial comment. It needs to take more of an advocacy position.

The Commission for Women is basically invisible to women students.

I've never heard of it.

If I had seen copies of Networker, I'd know more about the Commission

because the articles mention the Commission numerous times and it lists the names of the members.

C2: Networker is credible and readers have a generally positive feeling toward it

I had never heard about Networker before being asked to come here. I think it is an excellent idea.

If I felt the Commission was addressing all those issues it says it is in a way that was getting something accomplished, I'd feel good about that. But I don't feel that the Commission has been addressing those issues, especially the health clinic problems, which have existed for years.

This doesn't seem like a real aggressive type of organization. And it seems there is a need for it to be aggressive. We need some force behind us, not just a commission that "addresses" the issues. Attacking is more what is needed.

This seems like a sorority newsletter for professional people on campus.

The newsletter is strongest in dealing with three objectives: promotions, tenure and salaries; sexual harassment; and women's accomplishments. Then it gets weaker in supporting the rest, such as child care facilities, rape awareness, encouragement of appointments of women to high ranks, etc.

Does Networker ever follow up on things? When it speaks to the Administration about an issue, it would be nice to know what happens, what the administration did.

I can't find a position. It's just straight news, no pro or con arguments.

It should be from a woman's viewpoint. Maybe it could be in a forum where more than one position is stated.

How do they appease the Chancellor, who has the power to strike them down any time he wants, and still take advocacy positions that would appeal to their audience?

The article on the student literary contest was good.

This seems to be something directed to women, but done within male guidelines. I can't relate to that. We just do things differently and this is so straight, so businesslike.

It seems like club news.

The articles are so cut and dry.

A lot of what we've said is negative, and I think this has a lot of the right ideas.

Right ideas, with a bad presentation.

It needs to be better organized. It should have whole sections devoted to one topic.

In general, the information in Networker is good stuff, very practical.

None of the articles are specifically bad or not well written. It's just too fragmented.

I tend to ignore things that have women's this or that every other word, or gay rights, or black civil rights, because I think they've lost their objectiveness, lost the ability to see both sides of the coin.

The information seems generally credible. Articles give numbers to call for more information. They give times and places for things. The editor makes it credible. Anything she puts in here she gives the origin of the information. She gives credit where credit is due, which of course makes the thing more believable. There isn't any sensationalism in here. Far from it.

I would say the reporting seems to be fair, accurate and boring.

A problem with Networker, and with other publications on campus, is that they tend to bring up things and then they drop them without any follow-through.

If I were writing it, I'd be radical.

I get the feeling this wants to go somewhere, but it's not there yet.

C3: The newsletter is presenting role models by highlighting the achievements of women

"Women on the Move" tells who got there, but we as students want to know how they got there.

"Women on the Move" doesn't grab me. The names mean nothing to me. I don't relate to the people. Even the students seem to be doctorate students.

C4: The Commission for Women and Networker are focusing on the issues and subjects its readers want to know about

We need articles of a very practical nature. What are our prospects in the business world? That's why we're here, to prepare for the business world.

I want to see some political things that affect women. I'd like to read position articles on ERA, abortion, etc. I want both the conservative and the liberal viewpoint expressed.

The article "Top Jobs Up For Grabs," about university positions opening up, was good. We need more of that sort of thing, on opportunities that are available.

The article "The University: A Chilly Climate for Women" caught my eye. That articulated things that I've been feeling and noticing and not really understanding.

The article on Title IX was something I enjoyed reading. I wasn't aware of that kind of discrimination before I read that article.

I'd like to see more about women who are married and have families and can still get out and have a career.

Does the university have any kind of a daycare center? That's a subject a lot of women are interested in.

Many of the issues the Commission deals with--tenure, promotions, salaries--don't apply to me.

I think they are important to me. Even though I'm a student now, I want those opportunities available so that it will be easier for me when I get out there.

"Women on the Move" tells who got there, but we as students want to know how they got there.

Campus safety is definitely something that needs attention. It is really bad when you have to plan your whole evening on where you can park so you won't have to walk far after dark.

I'd like to know how female students stack up at the university in such areas as getting scholarships, grants and awards.

It's not a matter of it not being well written. It's just that the whole content is not really pertinent to students.

The student-oriented articles need to be up front. When students look at "Faculty Gains New Benefits," that doesn't grab us.

I'd like to know what my opportunities will be when I get out of school. What are the different pay scales? Is my salary going to be 60 percent of a male counterpart's? What are the obstacles I'll have to deal with because I am female?

Most people read things when it is valuable to them either because it is interesting, or they need to know the information.

I'd like it to raise some questions, not just give me the facts. This doesn't ask us to think about anything.

Administrative Staff

C1: Networker has raised the visibility of the Commission for Women

I knew about the Commission before the newsletter began printing.

Networker has contributed a whole lot to my knowledge of the Commission. I really wasn't aware of the Commission's activities until I began to read about them in here.

I didn't know who was on the Commission until I received Networker with everyone's names in it.

The publicity about Commission luncheons and the statements about each of the members are very helpful.

The visibility of the Commission could be improved. There isn't enough about them, what they are doing, what their plans are for the year. The newsletter is a positive thing, but there should be more about what the commission is doing.

C2: Networker is credible and readers have a generally positive feeling toward it

A lot of people feel the Commission is more or less a tokenism. This certainly isn't the image the Commission wants, or that women want it to have.

Networker does a good job of providing information uniquely relevant to women.

Networker is really good. The big problem is, how do you get people to read it?

Put something on the front page that is light, something to offset "Commission for Women." People see that identification and might think "I have no interest in that liberal stuff," or that it has no impact on them.

The information is very believable.

I never question the credibility of what I read in Networker.

The Commission is real important because it can say things as a body that most of us would not have the courage to do individually.

C3: The newsletter is presenting role models by highlighting the achievements of women

Many of our young women come into Career Planning and Placement when they get ready to interview for jobs and they don't have any idea what kind of position to apply for. Unless they are in traditional female fields, they don't know what they are qualified to do. It would be very useful for Networker to run profiles of women in various fields to serve as role models for women students. Maybe we could do it on our alumni women. Our female students really do need role models.

I second that, and not just for students. Professional adults need them too.

That is something that would perk up the newsletter, having it focus in on one person for a profile or an interview.

It would make it seem more like a person you knew, not just a name with a title attached to it, which is how it appears in "Women on the Move."

Yes, a human interest approach.

An extension of that idea is that women who are currently on the University staff need to be encouraged to apply for jobs at a higher level when they are available. It seems to me that one of the biggest problems the University has is that there are very few women in positions of power and authority.

If they are trying to offer role models to other women, it helps to add photographs to a story. Often I may recognize a name, but I can't put a face with the name.

For role modeling, let's emphasize the Lady Vols more.

C4: The Commission for Women and Networker are focusing on the issues and subjects its readers want to know about

Networker serves as a tool for me to bring me closer to the University community. I do a lot of my work off campus. I feel that I'm more informed about what is actually taking place on campus when I read Networker.

I like to read "Women on the Move." I like to see names of people I know.

I read the article on the insurance plan and realized that here was a problem I didn't even know existed.

I remember the story on the bookstore that made a donation to our women's athletic program. I decided if they can support our team, I can support their store.

I didn't realize until I saw it in Networker that there is a child care referral information service.

One thing the Commission needs to add to its list of concerns is job safety. Office hazards, standards for office workers, effects of working with computer terminals, these are all things that the women staff have expressed an interest in.

Many students don't know what types of jobs or all the varieties of jobs that a degree can lead them to. A helpful thing for Networker to do would be to list the types of degrees and the jobs they might lead to.

Dual-career families is another important topic.

I'd like to see Networker not only announce the opening of top-level jobs, but after they are filled, find out whether any women applied for them and exactly what the search process involved. Did anyone make an effort to go out and look for a qualified woman and encourage her to apply? If so, was she among the final list of candidates?

There is a huge gap that is almost impossible to bridge between exempt and non-exempt personnel. If you are a secretary in a corporation, often you have some opportunity to move into an administrative position if you want to. I'd like the Commission to find out how non-exempt women can move up if they want to.

I'd like to see an article that explained the difference between all the women's organizations on campus. I get them all mixed up.

I'd like more information on the re-entry student.

Unless we are actively involved with the women's movement, most of us don't get the journals that contain the articles that would interest us. It would be very helpful if there were more reprints in Networker. It would act as a consciousness raising.

Someone might have a specialty area and be reading a journal in her particular discipline. It might be something very pertinent that we would all like to know. That is what networking is really all about. Someone discovers something and passes it on to someone else. That is how we get information around.

I'd like to see one page with all kinds of helpful information on it like where to go for this service or that product, like you get from Welcome Wagon. I'd cut it out and save it. That might be what would make people think Networker is really special.

When I get my newspaper at night, I go through the index and turn to the specific things I want to see. Then, if I have time, I go back and read the rest.

Put some things on the front page that are light or hot topics. The label "Commission for Women" might make people think it is too liberal or has no relevancy to them.

One who sees it as liberal and does not see herself as liberal will ignore it.

General office workers probably ignore it.

The kind of woman who doesn't want to deal with the problems of being a woman will ignore it. Women who are concerned with the problems and issues don't mind talking and reading about them.

The non-reader doesn't want too much change. She doesn't want the status quo to stir. Networker is threatening to her.

Someone who is working just to supplement the income of the family and she isn't interested in advancement might not want to read it. She isn't going to get involved with something that will hopefully create change.

Some women are simply oblivious. They don't care. They don't feel it is for them; it's for someone else. It's for a bunch of radicals.

There are a lot of articles in here that could be of interest to students, like the one on rape and the one on campus safety.

Students would like to know about resource people they can talk to.

I wish Networker could educate students against sex role stereotyping. We still have to remind students that men can go into home economics and nursing, and women can be doctors.

There must be a lot of women who are struggling with the problems of raising children and holding full-time jobs. It would be useful to have some articles directed toward this topic.

APPENDIX D

COMMENTS REFERRING TO DISTRIBUTION

Faculty

D1: Is Networker reaching its audience?

Everyone here has seen at least one copy of Networker before tonight.

The mailing list needs to be updated.

I have not received it regularly.

I did not know it was available at newsstands.

I have seen it at some stands, but I never see it at all the stands.

I have never heard any woman I work with mention this publication. I am not sure they are getting it because I haven't gotten it regularly.

I wonder if the continuing part-time people or the instructors are getting it.

I have not gotten all of the issues.

I received two of them.

If the publication is not getting into the hands of the people who might read it, then nothing else matters.

In one issue is a form for nominating people for Women of Achievement. I never saw that issue at all.

I never saw it either, and there were people I would like to have nominated.

D2: How much of any single issue is read?

I don't read it thoroughly.

I usually read the front page.

I glance through everything.

D3: Is frequency or timing a problem?

I think it might be better to have a newsletter that is more frequently done.

More frequent printing would remind me that the Commission is around better than coming out just once a quarter.

Why is Networker published only once a quarter? Is it possible it could come out more frequently?

If it was a choice between making the publication more glossy and having more illustration, or keeping it in its present form but coming out more often, I would prefer that it come out more often.

I think the publication needs more visibility by coming out more often.

It would be better if Networker came out more often. Then the news could be more timely.

D4: Should the newsletter be sent to women only?

I find that all things . . . that tend to imply women must segregate themselves because that is the only way they can find their identity or function is a little scary. It says to me . . . forget about being a part of your profession and being able to compete as any man could compete in that profession on equal grounds.

Maybe Networker isn't so vital in my life because I'm afraid that, oh boy, here we go again, back to where all we can do is talk to women. You really need to become a part of the male community.

But, it doesn't have to be an either/or situation. You can function in both ways. The women's groups become another resource, but not one that replaces the scholarly field.

The heart of the question is, to what extent are women going to separate themselves from the rest of this community, only talk with themselves, about their own experiences and their own problems?

The academic community really separates women from each other and forces them into individual career paths. But these career paths get frustrated. Can women improve their individual chances and opportunities by creating some kind of community in which there is some trust and communication? Or should they fight each other the way men would have us do?

The time has come for women to help other women on campus, to find ways where we can strengthen one another.

I think the Commission should have more input into the Chancellor's newsletter. That is a way to reach the whole community. It should supplement Networker, so that Networker isn't the only way the Commission communicates.

It would probably be too expensive to send it to all the men. But I think it should get into the hands of department heads and every major office. At least these people tend to scan things, and they could make the information available to people they thought would be interested in it.

Eventually, we would like to think that we are all on the same level, that all women are treated equally, but I think the reason for the segregation now is simply for visibility. I think we need to get over it, but you cannot really get any impact if you are not visible. In the beginning you need to be separate to be visible.

If we're talking about communication and we're communicating only with ourselves, doesn't that box us in?

My point is, if we're trying to make an impact, how do you make the best impact? If it is just a function of talking to ourselves, we can do that forever while the world goes right on by without us. I am questioning the role of Networker in helping to make something happen outside.

If women learn to talk to each other through this vehicle, then one can assume that it is a legitimate avenue of communication. But if women can't even talk to each other because the trust just isn't there, then no matter how many issues of Networker are put out, it's not going to do any good.

D5: Should Networker remain a separate publication?

The Commission should have more input into the Chancellor's newsletter. This should supplement Networker, not replace it.

I am very much opposed to combining the newsletter with other special interest newsletters. We definitely need to keep our own publication.

I think by having it attached to other newsletters it would lose its punch.

I wouldn't mind putting Networker in the Beacon. But it would be entirely different, something with more punch to it, not the short factual items.

Commission for WomenD1: Is Networker reaching its audience?

I don't think students in general pick up something like this.

I don't think very many of the black students read it.

We should make sure there are plenty of copies available to the Women's Studies teachers so they can distribute them to their students.

If you leave the newsletter out where you leave the Beacon, students will pick up the Beacon and leave the newsletter. You've got to do more than leave it at the Beacon drop-offs.

Mail it to the female residence assistants.

There is a whole group of people we're not getting in touch with, and that is the international students.

I'd like to see a real effort made to reach the students.

We should distribute copies to the different campuses, for example the Agricultural School, the Veterinary College, and the Agricultural Extension Service.

I think women students feel left out. A lot of the publication is centered on the professional woman.

D2: How much of any single issue is read?

When I get it, I read every headline. Then I read the subjects that interest me. That is the way it should be. I don't think every article should necessarily be of interest to me. That means it would be too focused.

D3: Is frequency or timing a problem?

I've often thought it would be nice to publish it more often so that it could be used as a calendar of events.

It seems to me you have to make a decision whether you want it to be a calendar or something different. If you want a calendar, you have to do it more frequently and probably limit the space.

I don't think Networker should be a calendar of events. A daily newspaper should be a place for people to go for that kind of information.

D4: Should Networker be sent to women only?

Although I'm involved in a lot of organizations for women, my goal is someday for this not to be needed.

I think it should be distributed to every male faculty and staff member.

Do you think they would read it?

Some would. If the men never get exposed to these ideas, nothing will ever change.

I think the newsletter should remain just for women, but copies of it should be made available to each department for the men to read.

I'd rather concentrate on getting it to the women.

A male faculty advisor might glance through it and pass on some useful information to his advisees.

Men teach courses that contain information of special concern to women. For example, I know a professor who uses The Cinderella Complex in class. These men might find Networker useful, and they might encourage their students to read it.

I believe Networker should continue to concentrate on providing information that is uniquely relevant to women. But this information should be available to men as well as women. Obviously, other publications are not giving us this information. That is why we have Networker in the first place. It's not just the women who aren't getting the news and points of view. The men aren't getting these things either.

I would like to see the day when we don't need a Commission for Women, or a separate publication. I think right now we do. And women still need to be speaking primarily to women. But I would like to see every faculty member and every administrator get Networker.

D5: Should Networker remain a separate publication?

I think it would be best to stay separate.

If we go into another campus newsletter, we should have our own page or section that identifies us as a separate interest group.

I think it would be good if other groups on campus contributed to Networker, but I prefer that it remain separate.

Students

D1: Is Networker reaching its audience?

I have not seen the newsletter before tonight.

I had seen it occasionally before tonight.

When I think about it, I've seen it at the entrance to the library, but it is nothing I've ever reached out to grab.

I had never heard about it before I was asked to be in this discussion.

It might raise the visibility of the Commission among those women who receive it, but not many get it. Putting it by the Beacon is bad. So many things are put beside the Beacon, you learn to just ignore the stuff.

D2: How much of any single issue is read?

NO COMMENTS.

D3: Is frequency or timing a problem?

I would think that coming out more than once a quarter would give it more visibility.

There is no way Networker is ever going to get student's attention coming out once a quarter.

I think a lot of the problem is that they are spreading themselves thin, only putting out one issue a quarter and trying to cover everything that a student, faculty and staff woman is going to need. There is no way to do it except scattered and pragmatic.

Is there a way they can publish more than once a quarter?

It should be published once a week.

Once a month.

If it is once a week, you get where you look for it.

D4: Should the newsletter be sent to women only?

Yes, I definitely think it is a good idea to have a publication just for women. I'd want to continue it.

Men would read it if it had family-oriented discussions of issues, or if it had information they could use in discussions or in class.

A professor who is concerned enough about students would want to know what is concerning his female students.

It's hard enough to get women's issues discussed in the first place without complicating the issue by appealing to men too.

The only group we have on campus is the Women's Coordinating Council and that is only a programming committee so it's very limited in what it can do. I think it's important to have this women's group that can address the issues.

D5: Should Networker remain a separate publication?

Could it be made a supplement to the Beacon?

It would be more visible if it were part of the Beacon. Everybody reads the Beacon.

I wouldn't want it to be a part of another newsletter.

If Networker were combined with another special interest publication, it would just fragment us even more. It would lose its special appeal. It would be detrimental.

It's hard enough to get women's issues discussed in the first place without complicating the issue. That doesn't mean that within Networker you couldn't include news of interest to all the subgroups, like black women, women in specific departments, etc.

Administrative StaffD1: Is Networker reaching its audience?

I have received copies of Networker before tonight.

I don't remember seeing every issue.

I don't receive all of them.

I found that I had not received some of the issues.

I've seen all of them.

I'm in the University-wide administration, not just campus, and we've been left out.

I always make my copies available to students. We have a lot of students who come through our office and I always make a point of putting it out front in a real visible place for them to see.

I think everybody in my office gets one.

I'm in an office of about 13 women, and I don't think anyone else gets it.

Everybody in my office gets it.

Could there be an effort made to put it in spots where students have more access to them. I put the copies I get in the lounge and those who have read it didn't know about most of the workshops, etc., listed in there and they seemed real pleased to find out.

Copies should go to the Panhellenic Building.

I don't think the Beacon drop-offs is the answer. People ignore everything except the Beacon.

I think Networker is really good. The big problem is, how do you get people to read it? The people who could benefit the most from it are the likeliest ones to throw it in the waste basket. Most of the women around here don't take any interest in anything that has the word "women" on it.

I will see that it gets around from now on. I will put a routing slip on it. If they don't read it, at least they have been exposed.

I don't think students are reading this. They are not aware of it.

It seems more geared for professional women than any other audience.

D2: How much of any single issue is read?

I at least skim through all of it.

I read all of it.

D3: Is frequency or timing a problem?

Do they plan to put it out more than once a quarter?

I think it should come out more often.

It should come out monthly.

Every other month.

I forget about it, there is such a long period between issues.

It should come out at registration rather than mid-quarter, and it should be put next to the scan forms. Everyone has to pick up a scan form.

D4: Should the newsletter be sent to women only?

I think men should be added to the mailing list.

Some men will read it. They really want to know what the women are doing.

D5: Should Networker remain a separate publication?

NO COMMENTS.

APPENDIX E

IDEAS GENERATED

Faculty

The mailing list needs to be updated.

I think it might be better to have a newsletter that is more frequently done.

I might like a newsletter more like a flyer, rather than something this lengthy.

Perhaps some color somewhere would help play up a feature.

On the name, if you could include as part of the name the UTK Commission for Women.

I suggest that the Commission and Networker focus on opportunities for faculty other than tenure and promotions, such as grants, and conferences that are available or could be made available.

If Networker were not tied in with the Commission so closely, if it had a slightly independent space so that it could be more of a forum for issues that women want brought to the Commission's attention, then it might lose some of the in-house public relations aspects that it has.

The Commission should interview the members of the fringe benefits committee and ask them how much does the fringe benefits committee consider these cutbacks will affect women.

The Commission should be advocates. There is a lot out there that isn't being addressed.

Maybe the Commission should take off the white gloves--not exactly put on boxing gloves--but take off the white gloves.

We want articles that dig a little deeper. Don't just present a factual, public relations piece. Don't just say a committee decided something or the Commission is supporting something. Get underneath for interpretation.

Since the Commission members get their appointments from the Chancellor, they should get him on record saying how he thinks these cutbacks in benefits will specifically affect women.

I'd rather see a concentration on fewer issues, explored in depth.

I'd like to see more discussion on the problems faced by part-time faculty, who are mostly women. How do different departments handle their part-time people?

A lot of people do not know the diversity of courses that are being offered through the women's studies program. One subject worth exploring might be to explain what a major in women's studies is worth to a graduate. What kind of jobs could that student be prepared to seek?

One thing I'd like to see in Networker is a breakdown of all the various women's organizations. Who can belong to what? Is there any hierarchy? Which memberships are appointed, elected, open to the public? Which are student organizations? Which are feminist organizations? What are the projects and goals of these various groups?

I'd like to see more coordination between the program people, those who plan speakers, and what is going on in the classroom. It would be nice if our curriculum could somehow coincide with appropriate speakers. Is this something the Commission could work on?

The thing Networker could do is talk to women who have their tenure. Find out what some of the pitfalls are. How can other women sustain those who are facing that hurdle? What are the obstacles? Are there more obstacles put in women's paths than in men's?

Networker shouldn't be the only way the Commission communicates. It should have more input into the Chancellor's newsletter.

There should be a letters to the editor column for feedback.

We should get a note in our box that said, "Don't forget to forward your achievements to 'Women on the Move' for the next issue."

Why can't some of the information in Networker be fed into the local papers? Perhaps this could be done through the University public relations office.

If departments are not giving the same kind of publicity to women who have written books or gotten grants, then the Commission ought to put pressure on them to do so. The departments should be submitting the same news releases for women that they do for men.

Networker should take a really good look at the realities of part-time employment by women. The upper administration keeps saying these women want to work part-time. But that isn't the point. They should get paid commensurate for their time.

We want a publication that is going to be a call to action, rather than just to inform.

What we need are some position editorials that are not written by people on the Commission. They might be identified as "a feminist view of such and such," or "a non-feminist view."

What about treating an issue with a two-column format, a yes-no, I think this and I disagree. Give us a debate.

Maybe more students could be brought into the newsletter with contributions.

On the column that appears once a year when the new Commission is formed, the one that introduces all the members, I know it is important to know titles and where people are from, but if I'm having a problem--say with salaries or child care or any of the issues that the Commission says it is addressing--to whom do I go? Which Commissioners are really keen on that? I'd want to know who to go to and ask her to take up a subject at the next Commission meeting. I want to know their specialties.

If I'm going to keep information about the new members as a reference, I'd like to have their telephone numbers. That saves me from having to go through the directory. Also, I'd like to know, for example, if she is interested in sexist language, so that if I have a problem when I'm reviewing some books, I could ask her for her feedback.

Networker could list two or three things that each Commission member has done on the Commission and those things she wants to pursue while on the Commission. That way, even someone from the local newspapers who wanted information would know who they could go to.

Commission for Women

Maybe we should leave the logo off until we get a new one that you can't identify with a race.

I would like to see a new logo designed, maybe a trilogy so that it doesn't represent any one race or ethnic group. My suggestion is a trilogy of faces facing in different directions, one white face, one black face, one third world face, maybe a woman wearing a turban or something.

We need some lead articles that are of special interest to students.

I'd like to see some articles that would coordinate the Women's Center and the other women's organizations, and explain how they fit together.

I'd like to see Networker expanded so that information of interest to all our readers can be included. And there could be more in-depth pieces.

Maybe we could replace the logo with an expanded title, like "Networker, a magazine for faculty, students and staff."

Could you use another color ink, perhaps put Networker in different colors?

We should make plenty of copies available for the Women's Studies teachers so they can distribute them to their students.

You've got to do more than leave the newsletter at Beacon drop-offs to get student readers. You could put copies in Smokey's or Rafter's, the cafeterias in the University Center. Lots of people read while they eat.

We should mail copies to the female residence assistants for them to post or give to interested students.

The one thing Networker can do that the daily paper doesn't do is focus in-depth on interesting women. How about some profiles of women, interviews that explore their personalities and their accomplishments. Get their positions on certain issues.

We should take stronger advocacy roles on issues on an editorial page, but leave the other pages for more objective reporting. Also, we should solicit other viewpoints. People can write in and get their opinions published on the editorial page.

Networker could co-sponsor with the Women's Coordinating Council a random survey to find out what the students want and need.

You could give a questionnaire to the resident assistants, to Panhel-
lenic, and to the Women's Studies classes.

Would it help to have a standard form for submitting articles to Networker? It would contain topic, name of source to contact, etc. A miniature of it could be included in each issue of Networker to let people know they exist and encourage people to submit ideas for articles. Maybe four or five of the same suggestions would show a concern that could develop into something major.

Even just a statement in Networker that said, "Is there a subject you're interested in? Let us know."

It would be easy to put an advertisement in the Beacon once a week, like, "Something on your mind? Write Networker."

It would be nice if Networker could establish a relationship with one person in each organization that deals with the concerns of women and have that person responsible for submitting something. For example, books that have been purchased for the Women's Center, or someone in Women's Studies has reviewed a book.

Maybe those of us on the Commission should be assigned to go to certain meetings and write up a summary of what has happened.

When someone submits a story idea to Networker, the editor should send a note acknowledging that it was received. To keep from discouraging people when their ideas are not used, the note could say something like: "We received your suggestion. Thank you. We can't use it this time, but I'll keep it on file. I appreciate your interest. Keep it up."

We on the Commission should watch for articles in other publications that might make good reprints.

I think that it should be prominently displayed on the masthead that the newsletter is for all women--students, faculty and staff.

This could replace "Commission for Women."

I would even put "students" first. They are the hardest to reach.

Pictures would make it more interesting.

Newsprint paper would be better.

I'd like to see the Fall issue done over the summer so it could be available the first day of classes. I don't think there is any Beacon that is read more than the first day issue. This Networker could be a bigger issue with all kinds of features. It would explain about the Commission, talk about its objectives, review what happened the previous year, and introduce readers to the different women's organizations on campus.

We should distribute copies of Networker to the off-campus colleges--Agriculture, Veterinary, and Agricultural Extension Service.

We should try to reach the international students by putting copies in the International House.

Pictures would help more than anything I can think of to get a balance between a professional looking publication and one that is interesting to look at.

I'd like to see the staff expanded to include a reporter who could do in-depth and interpretative stories, and someone who could take pictures.

If there are any courses in Women's Studies that deal with contemporary problems where students are assigned to do term papers, Networker might be able to use excerpts from them, either to reprint or to use as a jumping off point to do a whole separate article on the subject.

The editor should insert notices from time to time asking for relevant essays written by students.

Students

Could Networker be made a supplement to the Beacon? It would be more visible if it were a part of the Beacon.

How about putting a notice in the Beacon that the publication is out.

I think they should have articles written by female students.

It should contain poetry, art work and photography.

It should have articles on people who have won scholarships.

It needs more student input.

I'd like to see more about women who are married and have families and can still get out and have a career.

I'd like to know more about the push for a daycare center.

Networker should follow up on things.

Change the title to "Networker, addressing women's issues."

Put in an information and services exchange.

Maybe it could offer writing assignments to a class so they could get out and interview people. There is no way one person can get around.

How about a forum where advocacy positions can be stated.

It might help to have an index on the front page that tells what is inside.

Add some color to it.

Photographs would be nice.

I think it would be good if Networker could network with other groups in Knoxville.

Administrative Staff

It would be nice to put a controversial feature article on the front page to make you want to read it.

Put something snappy on the front page, a teaser, to make you read it.

A table of contents on the front would be helpful.

The Commission should add to its list of issues that of job safety. Office hazards, especially those connected with computer terminals, are of major concern.

We need some feature articles on women in non-traditional fields who can be role models for our students. How they got there, what they did to prepare, what courses they took, what problems they've encountered, etc.

I think it would perk up the newsletter to have profiles or interviews with women.

Many students don't know what types of jobs or all the varieties of jobs that a degree could lead them to. It would be useful to have an article on the types of degrees and the jobs they prepare you for.

Articles on dual-career families are needed.

I'd like some follow up to be done on the job searches to find out if any women applied and if so, were they among the final list of candidates.

Could there be an effort made to put Networker in spots where students have more access to them.

I think the colors should be different for each issue.

I'd like to see a report about each of the Commission meetings to learn what they are doing.

Why not put follow-ups on things in the Beacon after they have been first addressed in Networker.

How about a list of the Commission's priorities. What order are they working on things?

A weekly column by a Commission member in the Beacon would be nice.

Do an article explaining the differences among all the women's organizations.

The problems of the re-entry student need some attention.

Let's get some input from the readers. Solicit ideas for articles. Ask for suggestions of what they might like to read.

Every newsletter should have a letters-to-the-editor column.

Readers could be asked to submit articles they've come across that might be of general interest to readers.

Maybe a survey could be inserted in an issue, asking what they want to read about.

Networker could serve as a referral service for women. Let them know about doctors, where to drop their dog off, housesitters, etc. Ask people what they need to know when they are new in town, and then provide them with the information.

Networker could be a clearinghouse. For example, a lot of women don't know where to go to find child care.

How about a story on the women's health clinics in town, to explain the services they offer. There is some concern they are only abortion clinics.

Run stories from front page to inside pages to get people to turn inside the newsletter.

Put some things on the front page that are light or controversial to offset the officialness of "Commission for Women."

Put a piece in the Beacon to promote Networker. Publicize what is coming up in the next issue of Networker just before it comes out.

Target certain people to get personal copies, like sorority presidents.

Include pictures with stories about people. Many of the faculty pictures are on file at Photographic Services. They only cost 65 cents for a 2 x 3 head shot.

Emphasize the Lady Vols more.

There are probably a lot of articles being published, and grants for research being received, etc., that the editor doesn't know about. Promotions, awards, etc. It might be good every now and then to have a tear sheet in Networker, like the Alumni Magazine does, that says "Be your own reporter" that encourages readers to report news.

Could Networker print statistics occasionally? For example, what percent of our engineering students are women?

The pages should be larger, I think.

What about a page just for women students?

An article is needed about being a parent and holding a career. Do it from the employer's point of view. What are they doing to allow women to function fully on a job and at the same time take responsibility for a family?

Solicit ideas for Brown Bag Lunches.

VITA

The author was born in Hartford, Connecticut, and spent a childhood travelling with her military family. In Seoul, Korea, she worked for the city daily Korean Times when the country's president, Syngman Rhee, was overthrown and control of the newspaper passed to the revolutionary government, resulting in widespread censorship. She graduated with a B.S. degree in journalism from the University of Maryland where she was a political columnist and a member of the editorial board for the school's daily newspaper. During those years she also worked for United Press International in Washington, D.C., participating in the coverage of such historic events as the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the 1963 Martin Luther King Civil Rights March. In 1965 she moved to Paris, France, where she pursued language studies at the University of Paris. Following a year in Turkey as a columnist for the Ankara Daily News, she joined the U.S. Information Agency in Washington, D.C., as a writer and editor specializing in Middle Eastern affairs. She is married to attorney Alex Hild and has one daughter, Lauren.