Here's an idea that has worked for many organizations throughout the country. In fact, it's the only idea I've developed that has produced results every time it's been tried.

It's called the Key Communicator Network. It allows an institution or company to get good news out to the staff and community quickly. It also guarantees that rumors will never take an organization by surprise and enables communicators to deal with sparks instead of fires. Best of all, it costs little or no money to carry out.

Essentially, it's a network of key people who establish solid two-way communication between an organization and its publics.

Continued on next page
Research shows that people tend to believe their friends and neighbors more than they believe the media or publications. Research also shows that people make major purchases based on what others tell them about a product or a service. A recent issue of Madison Avenue added a current research finding to the classic studies on the topic. Whirlpool found that people put much more stock in what friends and neighbors said about their products than they placed in what ads said.

Most people are like the gentleman in the following true story:

A school district started teaching reading a new way. At the end of the year, test scores were up, kids were reading better, and everyone seemed to like the program. The school district's public relations efforts explained the program's successes in a newsletter, on cable TV and on the radio.

One Sunday, a taxpayer bumped into the assistant superintendent of schools coming out of church. "How come the new reading program isn't working?" the taxpayer asked. The puzzled school official asked what the taxpayer meant. "I've seen the propaganda you fellows have put out saying how great the program is, but I know it's not working," the taxpayer said.

The administrator asked why the taxpayer felt that way. "My next door neighbor works in the school where they use that program, and he told me the kids aren't learning anything in those reading classes."

Like the taxpayer, most people will believe neighbors, friends, and relatives before accepting what the media tell them. (Most of us spend quite a bit of time cultivating relationships with media representatives and keeping them informed. We must do the same with key employees and community members if we want to gain understanding and acceptance of our programs.)

Who Is a Key Communicator?

Key communicators are people who talk to - and are believed by - lots of people. They are usually not the formal power-structure people. They may be barbers, beauticians, and bartenders. They are frequently dentists, gas station owners, fire fighters, post office clerks, and news agency owners. Within the organization, they are the informal leaders of the group. In most cases, they are people who have never used a computer and don't think computers are necessary.

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HSUS Vice President, Companion Animals Phyllis Wright SHELTER SENSE Deborah L. Reed Production Assistant Lee Manary

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Editor's note: Letters from a dot matrix printer seem impersonal to some people.

Send a brief description of your organization's experiences setting up and using a computer system.
Community organizations and residents and HSUS members actively support local, state, and national humane efforts by responding to the Humane Society of the United States' (HSUS) alerts, supporting HSUS educational campaigns, and by channeling local news to HSUS headquarters and regional offices.

According to HSUS New England Regional Office (NERO) Director John Dommers, consistent, immediate action bolsters HSUS efforts to expand and improve animal programs and legislation. He suggested the following:

* Immediately telephone and send letters or telegrams to legislators, state officials, local administrators, and other decision makers in response to HSUS Action Alerts that support or reject specific animal legislation or projects. The HSUS Action Alert program has proven effective due to quick response by HSUS members. If you are not an HSUS member, please join.

* Mail news clippings about animal cruelty, legislation, hunting, and trapping; new animal shelters and programs; rodeos, zoos, circuses, and animal contests to the nearest HSUS regional office and the HSUS headquarters in Washington, D.C. The HSUS' budget allows for neither extensive newspaper and magazine subscriptions nor use of a professional clipping service. Local news clippings update The HSUS on important animal issues so that more animal problems can be solved.

* Support important HSUS educational efforts such as the "Hot Car" campaign to end tragic deaths from heatstroke when animals are confined to parked cars on hot, humid days. Distribute The HSUS' two-color "Hot Car" poster and flier, for example, to area merchants, shopping mall associations, veterinarians, supermarkets, car dealers, and others who will prominently display them from early summer through the fall. Contact HSUS headquarters to order free, limited supplies of the "Hot Car" poster and flier (tell us how many you would like, and we'll try to accommodate you) and to inquire about other HSUS educational campaigns.

* Help the nearest regional office place public service announcements (PSAs) on area radio and TV stations and in weekly advertising papers. The HSUS has printed radio spots, 30-second TV spots, and a variety of reproducible ads that are ready for use. Topics include pet overpopulation, spaying and neutering, Easter pets, leash laws, seal clubbing, weather-related pet problems, and more. By contacting public service directors and editors, you can encourage their use of these important animal messages.

* Write letters to the editors of local newspapers, magazines, and other publications concerning important animal issues. Whether the topic is free-roaming pets, pet overpopulation, hunting and trapping, animal cruelty, or another subject, a brief, well-documented letter will arouse the public's thought, interest, and, perhaps, positive action. Refer to HSUS publications. Send a copy of your published letter to your regional office and to Shelter Sense.

Continued on next page

Following is a list of the HSUS regional offices and their directors:

**HSUS Great Lakes Regional Office**
735 Haskins St.
Bowling Green, OH 43402-1696
Sandy Rowland, director
(Serves Ohio, Ind., Mich., W.Va.)

**HSUS Gulf States Regional Office**
5333 Everhart Road
Bldg. A, Suite 209
Corpus Christi, TX 78411
William Meade III, director
(Serves Ark., La., Okla., Texas)

**HSUS Mid-Atlantic Regional Office**
Lansing Road
Bedminster, NJ 07921
Nina Austenberg, director
(Serves Del., N.J., N.Y., Penn.)

**HSUS New England Regional Office**
P.O. Box 362
East Haddam, CT 06423
John Dommers, director
(Serves Conn., Mass., Maine, N.H., R.I., Vt.)

**HSUS North Central Regional Office**
2015 175th St.
Lansing, IL 60438
Franz Dantsler, director
(Serves Ill., Iowa, Minn., Mo., Wis.)

**HSUS Southeast Regional Office**
325 John Knox Road
Bldg. E, Suite 209
Tallahassee, FL 32303
Marc Paulhus, director
(Serves Fla., Ga., N.Car., S.Car.)

**HSUS West Coast Regional Office**
1713 J St., Suite 305
Sacramento, CA 95814
Charlene Brennan, director
(Serves Calif., Idaho, Ore., Nev., Wash.)

As an animal worker, community resident, or HSUS member, you cannot singlehandedly do all that is needed to improve animal welfare, but you can do something! Your efforts are very important.

To become an individual voting member of The HSUS, send a check or money order for $10. Voting memberships include the quarterly publication, The Humane Society News, as well as periodic reports and alerts. Address membership correspondence to The HSUS, 2100 L St. N.W., Washington, DC 20037.
A new book about small-animal health care is an excellent resource for veterinary clients and shelter managers. Small Animal Health Care: A Primer for Veterinary Clients, by Amy Ward, DVM, describes the development, transmission, diagnosis, and treatment of various canine and feline diseases using brief, understandable terms.

Chapters include sections on diseases that require vaccinations; internal and external parasites; and other medical problems and treatments. Each section contains space to add a veterinarian's recommendations.

The illustrated, 152-page, spiral-bound book costs $19.95. To order a copy, send check or money order to Veterinary Publishing Company, 690 S. 4th St., P.O. Box 13265, Edwardsville, KS 66113.

According to HSUS Vice President Phyllis Wright, animal organizations should develop a small library of useful materials such as the above-mentioned book, and staff members should be given the opportunity to refer to them on a regular basis.

Cat owners may recognize the tabby's innocent but playful look on artist Thaddeus Kremeich's Little Favorites -- four unique, colorful cat portraits now available as note cards from The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

Each package of 12 cards and envelopes includes three each of "Basil's Cabinet," "Chauncey's Toys," "Walter's Other Window," and "Oliver's Chrysanthemums" (pictured here). The original color portraits by "Uncle Tad" are collector's items.

Each package of 4-1/2" x 6-1/4" cards costs $5; three or more boxes cost $4.50 each. Orders will be sent by UPS and must be delivered to a street address (not a post office box). Allow three weeks for delivery. Send check or money order payable to The HSUS to "HSUS Note Cards," 2100 L St. N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

Animal organizations occasionally inquire about federal or private grants for projects such as new shelters or spay/neuter clinics. Such grants are available, depending upon the locality, but they may not be easy to find without a lot of research.

For example, a county or city government may employ a grants person: Call to inquire about application procedures. Visit the nearest city with a large public library to inquire about its section on grants resources. Ask for the reference librarian.

Some animal-related projects may qualify for general community development grants. Also, local companies sometimes sponsor grants for worthwhile community projects. The Foundation Center, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10010, publishes information about funding sources. A collection of their materials is located in many libraries nationwide.

While handling the necessary research, phone calls, and letters to locate grant assistance, always maintain a professional attitude. If your organization is awarded a grant, write a thank-you letter to the sponsor. Above all, use the grant appropriately and wisely. Share your findings with Shelter Sense to assist other animal organizations.

The HSUS Companion Animals Department is compiling a list of areas that require cat licensing.

If your community requires cat licensing, and you did not respond to The HSUS survey of community animal-control, -shelter, and education programs, which was mailed to local organizations in late 1983, please send a copy of your licensing ordinance to us as soon as possible. Address your letters to "Cat Licensing List," Companion Animals, The HSUS, 2100 L St. N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

A May spay/neuter campaign, made possible for one Washington State humane society by community organizations, veterinary clinics, the media, and other animal-welfare groups may interest animal organizations nationwide.

The Kitsap County Humane Society (1731 Charleston Beach Road, Bremerton, WA 98312) developed posters of cats and dogs that promote spay/neuter surgeries. Over 10,000 small poster handouts were distributed at shopping centers, and large posters were displayed in veterinary clinics, retail outlets, libraries, and other public buildings.

According to Roger K. Childress Jr., executive director of the Society, the cost of materials and printing was donated by area veterinarians and animal-welfare groups. The local newspaper agreed to feature the importance of spay/neuter surgeries, and other media donated space for public service announcements (PSAs).

Groups that wish to inquire about the poster drawings and slogans should call Childress at (206) 377-1485. •
Here's How the Program Works in a Community.

The chief executive officer (CEO) or someone designated by the CEO (frequently the community relations director) works with staff members to identify key communicators in the community. A formal study could be conducted, but usually a committee of employees who know the community well can identify the kinds of people being sought.

Aren't These People Too Busy To Serve?

The appeal of the key communicator system is that people meet only once - for one hour. Busy people who don't want to serve on committees that meet every third Tuesday find the invitation refreshing. When they receive an invitation from someone with an impressive title to meet once to help the institution or company communicate better with the community, they feel honored.

Our research found that a letter usually attracts half the people invited. The letter, followed by a phone call from the inviter's secretary, brings attendance to about 75 percent. A phone call that comes from the administrator instead of the secretary usually guarantees a 90-percent attendance rate.

Should Critics Be Included?

Critics definitely should be invited. In a group of 10 people, one or two critics usually add a needed bit of credibility to the undertaking. Our research shows that after involvement in the key communicator process, critics become supporters, without having a negative effect on others.

How Many Key Communicators Should Be Identified?

We don't know. Some organizations work with 100 in a community of 20,000 people. Another has 800 in a town of 22,000. When I told one CEO that I thought the number was too large, he said, "It works." He's right.

What Takes Place at the Meeting?

Information is shared in a give-and-take fashion with key communicators. An explanation of their role is provided. They are told how rumors get started, the kinds of problems the organization faces, and what the organization has accomplished. They, in turn, may volunteer what they have learned from the community. Also, they may provide additional names to add to the list.

Should Their Names Be Publicized?

Organizations using the idea are split on this question. Some list names in newspapers and newsletters, provide key communicators with buttons to identify them, and even hold a one-year dinner meeting to thank them. However, others feel that the low-key approach is more effective. They especially recommend that all of the members not be brought together for any one meeting, fearing that the power in the room might be harnessed some day against the organization.

What's the Payoff?

As the organization builds credibility by leveling with key communicators, ambassadors are developed. These people will be quick to squelch false rumors and will share good news about an organization. And they are believed.

How Powerful Can This Communications Network Become?

Perhaps the best way to answer that question is to report that teachers' unions have threatened to go to court to force school board members and administrators to release the names of key communicators in school districts. When strikes occurred, the school management team - working with key communicators - found it appreciably easier to communicate with the community than the teachers did. (Note: Many teachers' groups have wisely initiated the key communicator program, too.)

Why Don't More Organizations Use the Idea?

Some feel it's too simple. It doesn't require elaborate equipment, and it may not seem as impressive as a multimedia presentation. But it works and works and works.

This article is reprinted from the April 1984 Communications Briefings with the publisher's permission. For a free sample of Communications Briefings write P.O. Box 587, Glassboro, NJ 08028.

WANTED - Shelter manager for Texas Gulf Coast area organization. Training in all shelter operations required. Salary commensurate with experience and qualifications. Send confidential resume to P.O. Box 742, Santa Fe, Texas 77510.

WANTED - Shelter manager. Humane society with 8,000 animals per year. Experience in animal care, humane work necessary. Administrative skills essential. Send resume, references to C. O'Keefe, Lehigh County Humane Society, 640 Dixon St., Allentown, PA 18102.
Bus-Stop Posters

Chicago Steps Forward For Animals

Unknowing bus passengers are learning that there is a humane society/animal rescue league in their community.

The Kentucky Humane Society Animal Rescue League (241 Steedly Drive, Louisville, KY 40214) recently displayed posters at local bus-stop passenger shelters, asking for community support of its programs. The posters show a cat and a dog with the slogan, "We're Nobody Till Somebody Loves Us." According to Executive Director Gloria Fedele, smaller versions of the poster were placed in local store windows and veterinarians' offices.

A new Chicago animal-care complex provides comprehensive emergency treatment for sick and injured animals and allows for a fully operational city spay/neuter program as well as expanded pet-adoption and public-education programs. The $8.4 million facility, dedicated by Chicago Mayor Harold Washington last March, is named in honor of David R. Lee, Chicago's first animal-care control director. Located on 5.3 acres, the new building can house 545 dogs and 48 cats in individual settings. There is a meeting room, which accommodates 100 people. Public viewing areas within the medical complex, holding units, and adoption facilities are designed to increase public confidence in the city's animal care and control. The old building reportedly lacked proper supplies and equipment, thereby failing to fulfill city animal-code requirements.

Chicago officials and HSUS regional directors celebrate the city's new animal-care complex.

From left to right are Alderman Niles Sherman, chairman of the Animal Care and Control Committee of the Chicago City Council; Peter Poholik, executive director of Animal Care and Control; Chicago Mayor Harold Washington; HSUS Great Lakes Regional Director Sandy Rowland; and HSUS North Central Regional Director Frantz Dantzler.

Continued on next page
Spay Inc. publicizes its program in several ways. Information is posted on various bulletin boards, handed out at supermarkets and during rabies clinics and placed in beauty parlors and doctors' offices. Radio spot announcements and newspaper advertisements are helpful, too.

The most direct, personal contact with the public is made by monitoring newspaper pet-giveaway columns. Spay Inc. suggests to advertisers ways to properly interview potential adopters and alerts them to adoption pitfalls: cruel cult practices, vicious guard dog trainers, and people who sell animals for medical research. Spay Inc. urges advertisers to spay or neuter their animals and to refer Spay's telephone number to anyone who adopts kittens or puppies that are too young to be sterilized.

Spay Inc. is a small organization comprised of approximately 20 workers and assisted by various volunteers. Organized by seven people, Spay Inc. has prevented much animal suffering, said Galer. The group avoids voting memberships, which it feels causes disunity through conflicting, uninformed views. Meetings are held twice a year.

In the beginning, the group's fund-raising activities centered around flea markets and rummage sales. An annual charity fair was sponsored by a local shopping mall. Eventually, the organization opened a thrift shop. Although the shop is located in an unheated basement that opens onto a parking lot, business has prospered. The shop accepts nothing on consignment. Donations of clothing, household items, and antiques are accepted.

Spay Inc. routinely consults price guides in order to ensure maximum returns for any valuable items it sells in the shop. Galer said Kovel's *The Complete Antique Price List* cost about $13 and has helped them price items. "Underselling valuable donated items is inexcusable," she said.

The shop maintains a "treasures wanted" file and notifies customers when desired items are donated. Spay Inc. also notifies doners when and for how much their valuable items were sold, which encourages future donations, said Galer.

Besides fund raising, Spay Inc. sponsors dog training classes and accepts donations from the Washington Cat Fanciers club. As the group's program is publicized, other animal lovers make tax deductible donations.

Although Spay Inc. receives neither public funds nor private grants, it has never lacked funds since its 1971 origin. Galer proudly claims the organization has arranged for the sterilization of more than 30,000 animals since that time.

You can help the Tompkins County S.P.C.A. (1640 Hanshaw Road, Ithaca, NY 14850) install an appropriate computer system to maintain its animal records.

Jim Anasiewicz, director, would like to hear from groups that now use such a system. He's interested in the computer and software types used and how well they work. Any materials that document the way groups researched and chose a computer system would help Anasiewicz prepare a proposal to install a system at the S.P.C.A.
Hot Cars Are Deadly!

Each summer, thousands of cats and dogs die in agony after they are left inside cars.

Even when car windows are left slightly open, the rapid heat buildup inside the car can reach over 160 degrees in just minutes.

Pets don’t perspire like people do. They cool themselves by panting. When the air becomes too hot, animals may suffer brain damage and die.

Heat stress causes heavy panting, glazed eyes, rapid pulse rate, dizziness, vomiting, or a deep red or purple tongue.

If your pet becomes overheated, take these emergency steps:

- Apply ice packs or cold towels to the head, neck, and chest.
- Don’t give unlimited amounts of cold water. Let your pet lick ice cubes or ice cream.
- Gently spray the animal with a hose to cool it.
- Get your pet to a veterinarian immediately.

When it's hot, leave your pet at home in a cool place.

[This space for your organization’s name and address]