

## EDITORIAL

What are the new buzzwords, the fads, or, if you want to phrase it more unkindly, the clichés in “the new South Africa” (a cliché in itself)? It is not hard to guess. Topping the list is “negotiations”, closely followed by “communication” itself, succeeded by “mediation”, “intervention”, “compromise”, “scenario”, “climate”, “tolerance”, “nation building”, “grassroots”, etcetera. One of these etceteras is “semiotics” (recently reinvented by the marketing world), and another is “communication consultant”. These words proliferate, can be heard in every boardroom, conference room and armchair in South Africa. They are glibly thrown into sentences which, regrettably, few understand (including the users). They run the risk of becoming (a) pretentious, (b) boring and (c) meaningless like other fakes and fads before them, such as “ambience”, “raison d’etre” and “relate”.

The message is clear: communication scientists and practitioners (the real ones) have a new responsibility. And that is to prevent the fakes from tarnishing the credibility of their profession by watering down their most important responsibility - the improvement of communications in all sectors of South African society. Beware of the impostors, who trade their vicarious knowledge for R4 000 a day. Those who pass themselves off as “communication experts” without the necessary training in communication theory and research. Those to whom words come easily. Those who push for recognition undeserved. The instant experts, the flashes in the pan who know how to win friends and influence people.

Of course, if they do get away with it, it will only be a reflection on the real experts’ ability to communicate; to market themselves and their knowledge adequately. Then they allow others where they don’t belong. Unfortunately, we do not have the exclusive right to the use of the word “communication”, such as the French have to the word “champagne”.

This issue of COMMUNICARE represents the quality and training of people knowledgeable in the field of communication worldwide. We are proud to publish research on the relationship between job satisfaction and communication flow by an internationally renowned reader in management, Christopher Orpen, from Bournemouth Polytechnic. To hear about the most recent developments in interactive marketing from Peter Schäfer in Switzerland. Contributions from our own soil are no less impressive, such as two excellent empirical investigations on media usage by blacks (Bekker and Groenewald), and media effects on white students (Booyesen). Ferreira’s article provides us with a long-awaited contribution from the technicians, whilst Basson et al provide another most welcome input from postgraduate experience, this time from the UOFS. Nokwanda Sithole’s last word will certainly make us sit up and ponder the long road that still lies ahead, in spite of February 2, 1990.

**Nina Overton**