



CHEMICAL MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

APRIL 3, 1991

## PUBLIC OUTREACH STATUS REPORT

Here's introducing the Public Outreach Status Report. We don't want to add to your paper pile, so we won't publish regularly--just when there is something to report. And as with any first issue, there's lots to report.

Before we go into some detail on the Public Outreach Program, a word about the advertising part of that program. Ads will start appearing in magazines in the last week in May and the first week in June. Some publications in which you'll find the ads include: Time, US News, People, Life, Money, Esquire, Self, Smithsonian, National Geographic, Audubon, Atlantic and the New Yorker.

The ads will address concerns the public has about the chemical industry and will be straightforward and informal in approach. In advance of the campaign rollout, companies will receive a package containing, among other items, the rationale for the program, preprints and a media schedule.

CMA 083564

## A PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM

by Jon Holtzman  
VP-Communications

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

At its November 1990 meeting, CMA's Executive Committee and Board approved an accelerated five-year public outreach program for communicating the commitment of Responsible Care®.

The program, which includes 51 specific activities to reach ten audiences, is already getting underway. Implementation will continue to accelerate throughout the second quarter of 1991.

The program was developed by over 50 representatives of 27 member companies working on six special public outreach task groups. The task groups had been asked by the Public Perception Committee to develop proposals to communicate with:

- o employees
- o plant communities
- o local activists
- o state and local officials
- o federal officials
- o media
- o national public interest groups
- o educators and students
- o shareholders and analysts
- o the general public

Implementation task groups, based largely on the groups that worked this summer (but with lots of room for more volunteers) are carrying out workplans to deliver specific outreach programs.

### NOT THE ORIGINAL INTENT

It was not the original intent to go public with Responsible Care when the initiative was approved by the Board two years ago.

- o There was concern that publicity would damage the initiative by giving it a "public relations" flavor, obscuring its real concentration on improving industry performance.
- o There was a feeling that it would be better to wait until we had quantifiable evidence of performance improvement to prove serious intent and commitment.

However events, and new advice, intervened.

#### **Events:**

- o In 1989 the Valdez Principles were offered as the way to judge environmental commitment of companies. Shareholders

and analysts are entitled to know that our industry has also worked on an initiative - one that preceded the Valdez Principles by more than a year.

- o **There is a rising tide of environmental awareness** in the country and an increasing willingness of citizens to get personally involved.
  - 80% of Americans now identify themselves as environmentally concerned.
  - In 1986 over 70% of Californians voted in favor of Proposition 65, a duplicative initiative that 29 of 30 California newspapers editorialized against.
  - The National Wildlife Federation increased its membership from 4 to 6 million and its budget from \$25 to \$100 between 1980 and 1990.
  - The Sierra Club, the World Wildlife Fund and the Environmental Defense Fund increased their combined memberships by over 400,000 in one year - 1989.
- o **Favorable public opinion** about the industry continues to **decline**.
  - Between 1980 and 1990 those who believed the industry was underregulated climbed from 56% to 74% while those who believed the industry was essential decreased from 49% to 37%.
    - In 1965 55% of the public held "very to mostly" favorable opinions about the industry; those feeling "very to mostly" unfavorable were only 4%. By 1990 feelings had changed dramatically with 39% holding unfavorable opinions and only 14% holding favorable ones.
- o **CMA's Public Advisory Panel has advised going public** for two reasons.
  - They like the Responsible Care process and they want to prevent backsliding by having the industry commit publicly.
  - They point out that it is more credible to say "what you are going to do, then do it" than it is to try to take credit for already completed actions.
- o **Finally McDonald's decision** to abandon the polystyrene clamshell container in favor of paper because of public pressure, not environmental benefit, was sobering.

**New Advice:**

- o **Feedback from the 1990 Earthday introduction** of Responsible Care was positive. Based on a nationwide sample survey, 36% of the public **said the industry was "heading in the right direction"** with the initiative; a further 15% said they would withhold judgment until they saw how performance changed. Only 12% were negative to the initiative.
- o Research conducted to develop potential messages for outreach suggested the public didn't need immediate "facts and figures" to feel industry was being responsive. They considered a public statement of commitment a "favorable fact."
- o Environmental communications consultant Peter Sandman advised:
  - Never communicate as a result what you haven't stated as an objective.
  - At the heart of Responsible Care is the issue of public involvement. If you advise the public what you have done after the work is completed you don't give them a chance to participate, a chance to affect the decision.

THE NATURE OF RESPONSIBLE CARE

Making Responsible Care a success requires a change from thinking about compliance to thinking about how we can best respond to the public.

Responsible Care can't just be a simple extension of all of the good things we have always done. We have to demonstrate our commitment with improvement in our performance and with a change of attitude about the public and the "validity" of their concerns. All of us who work in the industry must be part of the improvement and believe in the change.

The public will never get that message if it has to interpret that the ABC Chemical Company quality program, and XYZ Chemical Distributors' "on-time delivery" program, and ACME Chemical Company's "ACME Cares" program are all just Responsible Care by another name.

If the public is to sense this basic change going on in our industry - and our survival requires no less - this must be more than just an individual company's effort. **The public must see an entire industry on the move.**

We need to build momentum for each company and for the industry by letting the public see unity - that we're all walking and talking Responsible Care. This will help each company individually, too - to know that they're part of something bigger.

## CONCLUSION

**At its heart Responsible Care is about being a good listener, a good neighbor and a good citizen.**

And that means going beyond what we absolutely have to do. It means being responsive to and respectful of our friends, our neighbors and other citizens.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH COORDINATING GROUP ACTIVITIES

The Public Outreach program is organized along audience lines, with each work group responsible for several audiences. The work groups report to the coordinating group, which in turn reports to a committee of CMA's Board of Directors, the Public Perception Committee.

What's important, however, are the activities of each group, and the major ones are listed below. There are others, and the work plan of each group is available by calling John E. Slavick at 202/887-1210. As you read through the list, think about how you can participate or weave an activity into your company's activities.

## GENERAL PUBLIC OUTREACH

### Progress Report

- o Selection of media and a placement schedule for the next 18 months has been completed. The foundation is print, keyed on the use of mass circulation weeklies. (TIME, People, National Geographic, etc.)
- o A tracking research firm - Millward/Brown - has been contracted for and data collection begins in early April.
- o Chiat/Day is developing a package of five ads for the first 12 months of the campaign. Research is focusing on the tone of the advertising.
- o Creative work is being tested and is being presented to the Public Perception Committee March 27 and the Board in April in expectation of a May 15 launch date.

## **MEDIA AND NATIONAL PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS**

### **Progress Report**

- o Funding for creation of the Environmental Reporting Forum has been approved. Jon Holtzman will serve on advisory panel to help shape the scope and content of the forum, which is aimed at improving environmental coverage by radio and television.
- o Presentations by leading industry figures to national public interest groups have been scheduled. Gene McBrayer (Harvard Club), and Roger Hirl and John Burns (Society of Toxicologists) have recently appeared in public forums with leading environmentalists.
- o Regional media status reports (briefings) are being planned for West Virginia, Illinois, California, Louisiana and New Jersey as well as other chemical manufacturing areas, to kick off the outreach program.

## **EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**

### **Progress Report**

- o The first draft of the Education Resource Guide has been mailed to member companies and Chemical Industry Councils for review. Publication is scheduled for the spring.
- o Special articles on education have ordered for ChemEcology, and an education advisory board for ChemEcology has been named. The first education supplement of the newsletter is being planned for the May/June issue.
- o An ad hoc committee of the Board of Directors is being formed to consider broader aspects of education and recommend CMA activities for educational support. The group will be chaired by Dick Barth, CIBA-GEIGY.
- o Plans are proceeding to expand the 30 year old Catalyst Awards program to recognize junior high and elementary teachers for excellence in science teaching.

## **STAKEHOLDERS AND ANALYSTS**

### **Progress Report**

- o A letter from Bob Roland to member company CEOs encourages inclusion of Responsible Care information in financial communications with shareholders, financial analysts, institutional investors and the business media.

- o A benchmark survey is underway to determine the financial community's awareness of Responsible Care and the effect of environmental performance on investment decisions.

**EMPLOYEES, PLANT COMMUNITIES  
AND LOCAL PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS**

Progress Report

- o The Responsible Care Progress Report is on schedule and should be completed in April.
- o The script for a video updating Responsible Care is complete. The video will stress outreach and provide examples for the CAER, Pollution Prevention and Process Safety Codes. Completion is expected in mid-April.
- o Results of the second Responsible Care Public Opinion Survey indicate little change in attitude toward the industry in the past year. The public continues to view industry unfavorably.

**STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS**

Progress Report

- o A detailed outreach plan calling for plant visitations, a speaker's bureau, senior executive meetings with state officials, and state citizen advisory panels was unveiled at a meeting of the Federation Advisory Council March 28. Implementation of the plan is expected to accelerate in the third quarter of 1991.
- o The task group is identifying the role the State Chemical Associations will play in each Outreach group's activities.

**FEDERAL OFFICIALS**

Progress Report

- o A letter to each Member of Congress has been drafted for Gene McBrayer's signature explaining Responsible Care.
- o Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, and New Jersey have been selected for first briefing of Congressional delegations on Responsible Care. Plans are also being developed to brief congressional staff of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

**RESPONSIBLE CARE PUBLIC ADVISORY PANEL'S  
THOUGHTS ON "CREDIBILITY"**

The Public Advisory Panel discussed the topic of gaining credibility for evaluation of performance under the Responsible Care initiative at two of their recent meetings. The following is a summary of their thoughts and suggestions.

PANEL DISCUSSION - NOVEMBER 16/17, 1990

1. Try to achieve a state of rational alertness on the part of the public.

The panel experience with the Houston CAER line fit into their concept, ie; witness explosion, experience plant emergency planning, get information immediately over the CAER line.

2. Make people aware that there is a place they can go to learn about chemical industry or facility-related news (emissions, emergency planning, etc.) if they are concerned.
3. Make reporting on these issues and this information routine, not dependent on a charismatic plant manager; so people can look in a regular place, on their own, if they want to.
4. I'd like to see, or know there has been, some third party evaluation of the evaluation process, some standardization of the process of self-evaluation. This is to assure the evaluation process is honest, not biased to make the facility look good.
5. Distinguish between internal and external goals of the credibility of evaluation. Self-evaluation will not address external credibility. Self-evaluation is okay, but be careful about using it publicly.
6. How will you help the public distinguish between the good guys and the bad guys? Otherwise the kinds of improvement you achieve will be masked by bad headlines. The public will have to have a way to judge who is in what camp, or you'll all be lumped together.
7. In a generation or two improved performance alone might change attitudes - but it won't change them over the short term.
8. Local panels, who are involved in systematic information sharing and in consulting on self-evaluations, could lend credibility to your self-evaluation process. Involve the community advisory panel in the process. Educate them about Title III data.



This will up the ante for companies who decide not to have a panel. Not participating may mean a facility is giving up a chance at credibility.

9. You should constantly raise the level of failure for your self-evaluation on a pass/fail system.
10. Make copies of codes easily and widely available in the community so that interested parties can question your performance.
11. Prevent system distortion of information so that communication tells the truth. Avoid sanding off the edges to make it smooth. Peer review can help.
12. Create a three-tier program of evaluation for members:
  - (1) A company self-audit.
  - (2) Volunteer retire audit teams.
  - (3) A community (outsiders) audit team.

All levels would provide useful and valuable information. But as you move from self-audit to outside audit, the greater the external credibility.

13. Others have outside auditors that seem to work out well. Fire Departments are rated by the insurance industry, achieving evaluations that have direct impact on community insurance costs.
14. Remember that evaluation is only one small point in making judgements. Trust is a very important factor.

#### PANEL DISCUSSION - JANUARY 25/26, 1991

1. The key issue is self-evaluation. There was a consensus that third party auditing is essential for credibility. A parallel was raised in the Houston plants - where the companies operate their own fire and security systems, not involving external authorities in first response or in incident investigation. It is not that their competence is questioned, rather that there seems to be a strong bias against external review.
2. There is a serious potential problem in the case of a catastrophic event. The panel accepts that even if Responsible Care is operating at full capacity, there could be such an occurrence. The concern is that all of the work done on the program could be discredited in this type of situation. If Responsible Care had been better known at the time of the ARCO and Phillips incidents, the program's credibility would have been seriously injured. The panel sees a need to develop a crisis management program to protect the Responsible Care "franchise" in the event of an

incident involving fatalities or significant disruptions at both a member's and a non-member's facilities.

3. The general credibility of the majority of corporate member company people and their commitment to Responsible Care was raised. The panel believes that those in the industry who are viscerally committed to Responsible Care represent a progressive minority in the industry. There is a sense that this group is tolerated by the rest, i.e., that the "rest" sees Responsible Care as "just another program", rather than a new organizing of change that the public would feel to be appropriate that would be both profound and discernible...like The Reformation, or the Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Metanoia)...a "sea change", to be less biblical.
4. The language of the codes is sometimes equivocal - the wording put forward by the dean of tort lawyers in the Product Stewardship code is an example. The industry, all lawyer jokes aside, has a tendency to see the legal opinion as a very important consideration in the shaping of the code. But this opinion should not be more important than the thrust of the code itself.
5. The term "public relations" is morally bankrupt; and yet, done properly, is exactly what is needed to make Responsible Care work. The Panel feels many companies see p.r. as something that is added on after decisions are made, and they hire "communicators" to spread the word. Part of the real strength of Responsible Care to date has been the involvement of senior management in the business of communication with external and internal audiences. The kind of relations with key audiences, like the public, that will contribute to the success of Responsible Care will be qualitatively different and will require different kinds of staffing decisions both at plants and at head offices. The panel has the sense that some of the "traditional" p.r. practiced by many big companies - and hence likely by member companies - will be directly counter-productive for the Responsible Care program.
6. In the same way that industry public relations, advertising, and other public faces of the member companies must be complementary with the concept and application of Responsible Care, so must the industry's lobbying activities be congruent with the objectives of Responsible Care.
7. The CMA representatives that come out to the panel on a regular or occasional basis have credibility with the panel. The panel is mindful of the dangers of confusing individuals with organizations. Perhaps the secret of Responsible Care will be to create the kind of program that equates industry credibility with individual credibility within the company and personal credibility in the outside world.