

CHEMICAL MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM

This material is intended to assist those showing the CMA videotape "Public Outreach." The videotape includes comments from citizens on-the-street, members of focus groups and CMA Board members, as well as explanations of successful outreach campaigns and specific information about the theme of the chemical industry's outreach. The information presented here is not necessarily a script, but can be used as an additional source of material for presentations.

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. The majority of activities, however, will not be ready for implementation until the first and second quarters 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 media                           |
| o plant communities         | o national public interest groups |
| o local activists           | o educators and students          |
| o state and local officials | o shareholders and analysts       |
| o federal officials         | 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 being formed.

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.
  - 75% 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 **The cost of debating state initiatives is increasing.**

In 1986 all industry spent \$5 million in California to unsuccessfully oppose Proposition 65. In 1990 industry spent approximately \$12 million to successfully oppose Proposition 128 (and benefited from a downturn in the economy and a poor strategy by opponents). In both cases one issue was involved...in one state...in one calendar year.
  
- 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 the 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.

#### SHOW VIDEO

The following videotape (19 minutes) has been prepared to give an overview of the public outreach program now being developed.

#### THE NATURE OF RESPONSIBLE CARE

Making Responsible Care a success will require 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 for the company 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.**

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

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