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"RESPONSIBLE CARE": A PROACTIVE ATTEMPT TO MOBILIZE AN INDUSTRY TO SELF-REGULATE, RESPOND TO CONCERNS, COMMUNICATE; USES CUSTOMIZED "COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION" TO MONITOR, ADVISE

The chemical industry is under intense scrutiny by activists, regulators, consumers, plant communities. Chemical Manufacturers Ass'n (DC) 2 years ago saw the need to strengthen its commitment to public relations. "In spite of past efforts, there are still too many incidents involving chemical operations," program dir Lori Ramonas told prr. "Politicians & government regulators will respond to concerns about chemicals, and our industry, **unless we respond first.**"

Concluding that **its pr problem was rooted in performance**, CMA devised "Responsible Care" (RC), a concept piloted in Canada. "A broad industry commitment to improve performance thru a process that ensures responsiveness to the public's concerns," program is adaptable to any sector & organization facing skeptical publics. Components:

TEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES CMA member companies adhere to a list of 10 by-laws, 4 on safe operations & 6 on communication with publics:

- O-1. **Develop & produce** chemicals that can be manufactured, transported, used & disposed of safely;
- O-2. **Give health, safety & enviro considerations priority** in planning for all existing & new products & processes;
- O-3. **Operate plants & facilities in a manner that protects** the environment & the health of employees & the public;
- O-4. **Conduct or support research** on the health, safety & enviro effects of products, processes & waste materials;
- C-1. **Recognize & respond to community concerns** about chemicals & operations;

"We're in this together."
Commitment to RC, tho costly in effort & cash, is a **requirement of CMA membership** because the industry is seen as a monolith -- people judge a company based on their collective knowledge of the industry. Rather than fight this perception, CMA posits that all members must maintain a single action plan, with One Clear Voice -- acting as a single entity because they're perceived as a single entity.

until last minute to get info needed for decisions. Because of this, it is 1 of only 2 categories which feel focus groups produce useful insights. Lack resources, feel unready for competition in the 90s.

- 5. **Networkers, 7%**. Only segment that specifically says it **values relationships**, preferably long-term. **References from a respected colleague are more important in selecting a consultant** than to any other segments. Only segment which disagrees with the statement: "We would use any ethical means to get a jump on competition."

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **Major First Amendment Threat Is US Supreme Court Decision** that forbids family planning clinics from even mentioning abortion -- if they get any federal funds. Almost every organization gets federal \$\$ in some way. Can gov't now restrict speech in schools, colleges, hospitals, industries, social agencies? All get federal money so apparently can be censored & gagged. Regardless of stand on pro-choice/pro-life debate, practitioners are put at risk by this extremely dangerous precedent.

¶ **Test Of Values, Rather Than Typical Values Statement**, is used by Scripps Memorial Hospitals (La Jolla). Publics are urged to apply this 3-part test: 1) "Does it provide the highest quality service?" 2) "Will it demonstrate respect for the rights of all individuals?" 3) "Is it performing in an efficient & responsible way?" Each question puts a commitment statement into "test us" form. Mike Bardin, dpa, told prr objective was to go beyond motherhood statements, provide a useful tool -- modeled on Rotary's "4-Way Test" of responsible conduct. (Copy from prr)

¶ **Product Placements In Movies Would Have To Be Identified** as such, under a petition filed with Federal Trade Commission. Center for the Study of Commercialism asks that films with placements carry a notice at the beginning -- "clearly displayed & clearly audible" -- stating that products used in the film paid their way into the movie. Group doesn't want to eliminate plugs, just let audiences know.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

AWARDS. Defense Information School inducts 3 into its Hall of Fame: Bill Corbett, immed past pres IPRA; Phil Neuhauser, mgr, NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab; and posthumously, Mjr. Charles Loring, awarded the Medal of Honor during the Korean Conflict.

Brigham Young University's first ever Communications Leader Award to Bob Dilenschneider, Hill & Knowlton, for leadership in and service to pr.

APPOINTMENTS. Peter Spina, pr mgr, Mobil Corp, elected vp-pa, reporting directly to CEO.



- C-2. **Report promptly to officials, employees, customers & public** info on chemical-related hazards. Recommend protective measures;
- C-3. **Counsel customers** on safe use, transport, disposal of chemicals;
- C-4. **Work with others to resolve problems** created by past handling & disposal of hazardous substances;
- C-5. **Participate with government & others in creating responsible laws,** regs & standards to safeguard community, workplace & environment;
- C-6. **Promote RC principles & practices** by sharing experiences to help producers, handlers, users, transporters, waste disposal firms.

CMA SEEKS ACTIVE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AT POLICY LEVEL

18-person Public Advisory Panel from a range of disciplines is a **mini court of public opinion**. "We have consumer activists, people from environmental groups, business & gov't officials, an academic, a farmer, an expert in business ethics," says Ramonas. "It's quite a commitment for them to devote so much time -- 4 to 5 weekends a year. They don't receive compensation or an honorarium. No one has resigned. They understand how significant their input is."

The panel is an industry effort & not a member responsibility, CMA assists companies wanting to establish panels at operating locations.

Panel encourages **candor & initiative**. "They tell us to go out & talk to people, to let them track us, to watch what we do & judge us accordingly. This, they say, is the only way we'll gain credibility." Panel helps develop communications materials for companies to use with boards of directors, management, employees, the public.

CODES OF MANAGEMENT PRACTICES COMING

Still in the works, these will require members to report progress on RC. "For example, we have one that looks to pollution prevention." Advisory panel reviews the codes to see if they focus on public concerns. "We need to know if they're on target, if they hit the big issues." Panel is adamant that CMA **couple safety improvements with invitations for public scrutiny**. To simply upgrade the processes without public involvement, they say, would perpetuate public's perception of chemical industry as arrogant.

CANDOR CAMPAIGN URGES QUESTIONING OF COMPANIES

CMA is readying an 800 number campaign which adopts panel's advice by saying, "Don't trust us, track us." "Outreach, pull in" program invites people to call to find out which chemicals are manufactured in their area, who they can talk to at local plants.

Panel acts as 1) a sounding board for public concerns & 2) a specially qualified focus group that directly impacts policies and programs. "It's unusual to have a public panel involved in the early stages of policy making, to have their input in strategy formation."

Strategy is to turn right-to-know laws (SARA III) inside out. Instead of just responding to inquiries, campaign urges people to **make** them. Participation studies show most will not call the 800 number or scrutinize their local plants, but the **invitation** to call, the ability to do so should they want to, makes them feel better about nearby plants and the industry in general. (RC Initiative won an award from the recently formed National Ass'n of Public Environmental Communicators. More info from Romanos at 202/887-1100)

MARKETERS LACK RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING SKILLS, INNOVATION, RESEARCH FINDS

Nationwide study of marketers shows most
a) tend to be reluctant about trying new & innovative ideas & methodologies; b) do not value relationships or long-term investment; c) focus on short-term goals.

"They may be buffeted by exterior circumstances, lack of management support, or are just close-minded themselves," says Carol Morgan, pres Strategic Directions Group (Minn.). "The results can be the same: **a lack of innovation at the helm of many marketing departments.**"

SDG scoped sample of 317 marketers with intensive questionnaire ranking 77 statements according to whether respondents agreed, disagreed, or felt neutral. Came up with 5 segments, **useful to practitioners who must work with them:**

1. **Sophisticates, 33% of the market.** Open, supported by management. Attend seminars, read industry pubs. Enjoy change. Focus on long-term rather than short-term strategies.
2. **Direct Answers, 16%.** Limited in sources of info, doubtful of info's usefulness. Do not believe in new marketing techniques, say that consultants tell them what they already know. **In working with consultants, seek experience rather than innovative approach.** Don't see research or professional development as priority.
3. **Mass marketers, 22%.** Dedicated to craft as a way of making money. Niche marketing not central to strategy. Claim to be open to ideas, but won't commit to new methodologies. **Not open to new consultants.**
4. **Constrained, 22%.** Say they haven't time or budget for research. Rely on internal info & secondary research. Work for organizations that wait

Point: Majority of marketers apply the "Not Invented Here" rule. They don't want anything to do with fresh ideas if they or their firm didn't make them up. Study illustrates again how marketing is an impersonal, mass, function -- the opposite of pr, which has to be personal & targeted. A marketer with 5 million widgets to sell needn't care who out there buys them, so customers become interchangeable parts. But pr must deal with the specific publics in place, whatever their attitudes may be.