

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE OVERVIEW--1982-83 AND BEYOND

The CMA Communications Committee has received and reviewed the recommendations of the Executive Committee. We fully understand and appreciate the economic circumstances as outlined by Mr. Simeral in his letter to the membership and by Mr. Roland during his visit with our Committee. We concur with the Executive Committee's recommendation for a revised communications program, to include indefinite suspension of consideration of television advertising, elimination, for economic reasons, of the present print advertising program, and a focus on issue advertising in support of CMA's advocacy program.

We support the Executive Committee's recommendation to integrate the ChemCAP assessment into CMA dues. We have a balanced communications program that reflects the involvement and best thinking of the chemical industry's communications professionals. The Communications Committee continues to be committed to making a positive contribution to CMA's advocacy effort in a cost effective way. Our basic goal continues to be: to increase recognition that the chemical industry is committed to doing a responsible job of protecting the public from the health and safety risks of chemicals. This is an issues-oriented goal. Few things are more localized, more personal, than health and safety issues. Therefore, the Department will combine its strong national communications program with local, focused, cost-effective programming.

By definition, an issue is in the public domain. Whether it be regulatory, legal or legislative, a chemical industry issue is a public issue, one which must be confronted, argued and negotiated in full view of the public. CMA must continually vie for the support of public opinion. Because without public understanding the chemical industry will rarely win in the legislative and regulatory arenas or the courts.

To gain this public support, new directions and strategies are required. The benchmarks of the new communications advocacy program are:

- o continual interaction between the government relations, technical and communications staff and committees;
- o concise priority issue identification that enables us to maximize resources;
- o develop reasonable timetables that permit adequate lead-time and long-term resource commitment;
- o target messages that have positive impact in specific geographic areas and Congressional districts;
- o develop coalitions to expand the results of our communications efforts.

The new program will employ a full complement of communications tools:

o General News Materials

Information is the key to persuasion. CMA informs the press about our positions with personal contact being the key. We distribute press releases, special news features, opinion pieces and backgrounders as an issue demands. Special reports from ChemEcology on current issues are also distributed. "The Chemical Industry Facts File" provides quick and easy access to information about issues for the press and broadcast media.

Contact with the press not only facilitates placement of CMA materials but has resulted in numerous television and radio interviews for CMA staff executives on each of the major commercial television networks, National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting System.

o Special News Materials

Even more tightly issue-focused are special news materials. The first package--on clean water issues--included a model speech and press release, backgrounders, suggested questions and answers for media interviews and video film clips. Aimed at local management across the country, the package will lead to more involvement at the local level on this issue. Similar packages will be sent out when the Association team identifies an issue which warrants such treatment. In development is a package on hazardous waste disposal.

To keep member-company communications personnel abreast of priority issues, a monthly newsletter will track press comments and reports. A similar newsletter will keep members of the press up to date on major issues and stories.

o Media Tours

Media tours will be planned around a specific issue. They will also be more targeted for maximum impact in specific geographic areas and Congressional districts. On the agenda for 1983: An increase in media tours by 33 percent, and an increase in target markets from 67 to 100.

o Broadcast

CMA now broadcasts a regular series of three-minute radio features, keyed to major issues of the Association and distributed bi-weekly to 1,900 stations. Usage ranges between 40-50 percent, high for this kind of programming. One-minute radio newsfeeds with actuality (voice of the person interviewed) are transmitted when immediacy of impact or reaction is desirable.

Ninety-second television news features are being developed.

Superfund and hazardous waste technology were the subjects of the first two features. CMA uses the satellite feed to deliver this programming. Sixty-seven stations from 84 markets requested the feeds, with 21 stations using the materials for a total audience reach of 18,469,000 people. The format of the news features enables a station to run them as is, add its own introduction and conclusion or substitute their announcers for our interviewer-narrator.

o Advertising

Advertising is an important supportive foundation for all of CMA's communications/government relations activities. CMA's new approach will be issue-specific, focused advertising.

o Education

CMA's Catalyst Awards program is building up a reservoir of goodwill and talent that the Communications Department intends to tap. The awards program has honored 134 college and high school teachers. Many of these teachers are favorably disposed to the chemical industry, and we are identifying the proper persons and the proper platform and media outlets for them. One advantage is local credibility. While the college professors could be suitable for regional or even national exposure, they and the high school teachers could command a great deal of authority and respect at the local level.

o Audio-Visual Materials

The postponement of consideration of television advertising (due to economic conditions) does not shut the CMA or industry out of television. The newsfeed gives CMA a highly visible television presence. Three public service announcements from "The Need to Know" film are being distributed to public service directors around the country for use on commercial, cable and public television. Both the 27 1/2-minute feature film and the "Doing Something" film are being distributed to community audiences, public and cable television stations and member companies. Production of future public service announcements is planned.

In the planning stages are the development of television story ideas for weekly shows and made-for-television movies that will portray business in a positive light. CMA is seeking real-life, melodramatic story ideas from its member companies. Also being planned are balanced panel television shows on media, business and environmental issues.

o Consumer Information

While most CMA member companies do not make end products, many influential consumer organizations keep a wary eye on the chemical industry. The Consumer Information Section initiates, develops and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between CMA and a wide variety of consumer, public interest, educational and other influential groups. The aim of CMA here remains the same: through a variety of materials, describe CMA's position on major issues, with perhaps a slight "twist" to the story to make it more consumer-oriented.

CMA works closely with "multiplier" organizations that can transmit its message to millions of viewers and readers at minimal cost. Among these organizations: American Women in Radio and Television, the National Association of Farm Broadcasters and the National Association of Extension Home Economists.

CMA also attends the national conventions of consumer-oriented organizations--exhibiting printed materials, answering questions about the chemical industry and keeping the lines of communications open to the millions of members represented by these groups.

o Publications

With the completion of the six "key issues" booklets and the companion leaflets, a major phase of the publication program has been completed.

CMA News, aimed at 5,000 mid- and top-level management personnel in member companies, keeps those readers up-to-date on a regular basis about CMA and its activities.

ChemEcology keeps its 30,000 general audience readers informed about the industry's efforts to improve the environment and the workplace. About half of ChemEcology's readership is students and teachers, about one-tenth is local government. It runs stories that seldom appear in the public media, as well as backgrounders on vital environmental issues, keeping the press and other publics aware of our position and progress.

o Pilot Regional Communications Program

A new element in the program that reflects our focus on state and local issues is the Pilot Regional Communications Program. The national purpose of the pilot program is to develop a model plan that other states and areas can use to attack their communications problems. Limited to one state, the pilot program will be molded to that state's communications needs and will be carried out by the state chemical industry council or its equivalent, along with support of the companies that make up the council. Funds will be made available by CMA for one year.

The Louisiana Chemical Association has eagerly accepted the task of being the pilot program area. It will begin its program under the guidance of CMA this fall.

To focus on issues from both a government relations and communications perspective, two new CMA groups are being formed. The Communications Committee has formed a Government Affairs Task Group that will work with its counterpart task group in Government Relations, the Legislative Communications Strategy Task Group. These two groups will assure that committee members and other task groups are addressing priority issues. They also will review grass roots lobbying implications of various communications programs and their potential effect on communications.

The Communications Committee is gratified to have a strong commitment from the CMA Executive Committee and the Board of Directors to support and participate in this new, balanced communications program. As in so many CMA activities, this program demands member company involvement.

The new communications program is what the member companies, CMA staff and others involved in its beginning had hoped for--a well-funded, well-staffed, balanced CMA advocacy program.

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