

Report to the Board of Directors
of the Manufacturing Chemists' Association, Inc.
by Cleveland Lane, Chairman
Public Relations Committee
February 9, 1971

We are told that public relations is one of the most difficult business functions to understand and justify. Its justification becomes readily apparent, however, when you trace an actual case history, like one we are living through now.

Two years ago we witnessed a sharp increase in public concern about the environment, and much expanded criticism of industry -- especially the chemical industry and its products. We have seen Earth Days, Nader's Raiders, Concern, Inc., Youth Forums, and the greatest attention to problems of the environment by all media any of us have ever seen. The public has been alarmed by a whole new series of dangers that never worried them before -- mercury, NTA, PVC, pesticides, cyclamates -- take your pick. Politicians have found their most popular issue since motherhood.

And now we see the logical, almost inevitable, result. Environmental proposals unveiled yesterday by the Administration are far reaching. And yet there are many who feel they do not go far enough. In fact, some would see the proposed Toxic Substances Act broadened to the point that any new chemical product would be barred from the market unless and until it has been federally certified as posing no potential hazard to human health or the environment.

So the classic course has been run from public arousal through legislative response. There has probably never been a clearer justification of the need for chemical industry public relations.

This case history points up several fundamental requirements for our industry:

1. We claim we are as concerned about the environment as anyone, and back this claim with enormous effort and expense. But we obviously lack credibility.
2. For the public good as well as our own, we must do all we can to recover reason and sanity in this drive for a better environment.
3. We must do all we can to convince the public that the chemical industry, its ability to solve problems, and its products, now so much criticized, are essential to the quality of modern life.

MCA public relations are designed to respond to these requirements. They operate on behalf of the whole industry, reinforcing our company programs. With limited budget and resources, all MCA public relations communications must be concentrated on key audiences. They are:

1. Decision makers -- legislators, public officials, and others whose actions can have direct or indirect bearing on our industry.
2. Thought leaders and opinion molders, including educators.
3. Other communicators who can be multipliers of our messages -- editors, writers, TV and radio broadcasters, columnists, home economists, and program leaders in clubs and associations.
4. Officials, educators and citizens in our plant communities.

The public relations operations are divided into three main program areas: Consumer Information, Environmental Health, and Community Relations. These programs are supported by two main functional activities. These are Media Relations, which produces all publicity and handles all contacts with press, radio and television, and Internal Publications, which writes, has printed, and distributes all MCA public relations documents, such as the food additives booklets. The current budget for these five programs and functional areas is \$113,000.

All the work in these areas is carried out by six professionals, reporting to the staff director, Vic Peterson. Their payroll costs, secretarial help, expenses and other departmental overheads, such as rent and equipment, are budgeted this year at \$274,260.

We have here a table showing the breakdown of the five program budgets, and the departmental budgets, as they are allocated to each of the five programs. The total budget is \$387,260, or 21% of the total 1970-71 MCA budget.

Today I asked the chairmen of three of our main subcommittees -- Environmental Health, Consumer Information, and Media Relations, to explain briefly the activities in their areas. After their reports, I will summarize, and then we will invite your questions.

The first is Jack Ryan of Olin, chairman of the subcommittee on environmental health.

* * *

CMA 069524

CLOSING REMARKS

You have heard some of the more important examples of how the MCA public relations programs work. These are designed to meet three specific objectives:

1. To demonstrate an industry-wide concern for an improved environment.
2. To broaden understanding of the industry's contribution to the quality of modern life.
3. To improve understanding of the industry's growth, dynamism and contributions to the economy.

MCA is taking the chemical industry's story directly to more than 54,000 decision makers, thought leaders, and editors, broadcasters and communicators who multiply our message to thousands of the general public. One newspaper with a circulation of 400,000 carried an eight-column feature based on our material. One TV newsclip was used by some 150 stations. There are many more examples.

The Public Relations Committee has examined this PR effort, not only in terms of the quality of its output, which is high, but in terms of its communications effectiveness. Considering the number of influential people, multipliers and the general public it reaches on a very limited budget, the professionals on our committee rate this effectiveness as surprisingly good. In these terms our industry is getting a real bargain.

We have in this program a proven implement which can be of real help to an industry in a time when public understanding is more important to its future than ever before. We are well aware that budgets are limited and priorities hard to set, but your committee respectfully submits that, in these times, the MCA PR program deserves your strongest possible support.