

# PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL

April 1991 \$5.00



INSIDE: 1991  
PRSA Guide  
To Professional  
Resources

## BIG "GREEN" BROTHER IS WATCHING

BUSINESS RESPONDS TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Earth Day '90 Revisited: A Progress Report



## Going for the "green"

**H**ow public relations professionals can help organizations effectively deal with environmental issues is the subject of this month's cover story. Full of useful terminology and references, Susan Schaefer Vandervoort's piece provides a theoretical framework along with practical tips for directing and nurturing an organization's environmental position with its many publics: consumers, advocacy groups, regulators, government officials, employees and customers.



"Green" has become good business. 3M's pollution prevention program has saved it \$500 million in cleanup costs over 16 years and continues to generate positive press and community relations. And Estee Lauder's "green" marketing success shows that ecologically safe cosmetics can be sold in the finest stores, especially when promoted along with environmental cleanup or conservation efforts.

On the eve of the 21st Earth Day, we also present two evaluations of the effects, accomplishments and environmental situations still to be resolved a year after the massive 20th anniversary celebration.

As the "greening" process continues, public relations professionals are being charged with converting complex, often adversarial relationships into cooperative efforts for mutual benefit. Proactive environmental programs by business and industry must be carefully positioned and marketed to appeal to and succeed with many different constituencies. It should no longer be difficult for a public relations counselor to get management's attention and budget for green projects. Fear of environmental disasters has created a booming market for crisis and risk management counselors, strategies and communications. In many cases, pollution control and reduction, waste management and recycling are necessary courses of action for an organization's very survival.

The trick for the public relations professional will be to balance the conflicting demands of the many publics involved when a green issue sprouts up. With the advent of environmental terrorism, there has probably never been a more critical time to clean up our global act. As Kermit the Frog would say, "It isn't easy being green." But the effort is worth it. And public relations practitioners are in a unique position to color this brave new world.

Susan L. Fry, Editor

### PRSA Public Relations Society of America

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The Public Relations Journal (ISSN 0033-3670) is published monthly, except semi-monthly in June, by the Public Relations Society of America, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003-2376.

The second issue in June is the **Register** issue. Of the amount of dues paid by members of the Society, \$25.00 is for a year's subscription to PRJ. Nonmember domestic subscription rates: \$45.00 a year; \$88.00 for two years; \$131.00 for three years. Canada and all other foreign countries please add \$3.00 to one-year rate; \$6.00 to two-year rate; and \$9.00 to three-year rate. Subscriptions must be paid in U.S. funds with check drawn on a U.S. bank. Single copies \$5.00 each. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to the Public Relations Journal, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003-2376. Members of the Canadian Public Relations Society receive the Public Relations Journal as a benefit of membership. © Copyright 1991 by Public Relations Society of America.

**Editorial Offices:** 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003-2376, (212) 995-2230.

**Advertising Offices:** 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003-2376

Display Advertising: (212) 995-5708

Classified Advertising: (212) 995-2266



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A growing number of Americans identify themselves as environmentalists. U.S. businesses are addressing concerns that include "green marketing" of environmentally friendly products and packaging, and pollution prevention. In this age of environmental activism, the quick fix is out. Companies wishing to be perceived as "clean" must carefully research, plan and promote their environmental public affairs programs.

*Susan Schaefer Vandervoort, APR*



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### 22 **Every Day Is Earth Day**

Was the 20th anniversary of Earth Day celebrated on April 22, 1990, just "eco-hype," or did it accomplish something? There's no simple answer. But what the massively publicized event did do is break down barriers between the "tree-huggers" and the mainstream.

*Josh Baran*



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### 23 **Business Changes Its Ways**

In many ways, Earth Day 1990 symbolized the beginning of a new era for business. The days of bolstering the bottom line at the expense of the environment came to an end. Millions of consumers—who now make purchasing decisions based on whether a product or company is "environmentally friendly"—made sure of that.

*A. Joseph LaCovey*



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An extensive public relations campaign helped Estee Lauder Cos. launch "Origins," an "environmentally sensitive" cosmetics line. Local promotional tie-ins with leading department stores across the country resulted in initial sales far exceeding projections.

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Cover: Jim Arndt Photography. Beth Little, a St. Paul, MN, schoolteacher and MOBIUS curriculum consultant, with the program's recycling mascot and a group of children who are studying about recycling and the environment.

*Public Relations Journal* is published monthly by the Public Relations Society of America, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003-2376.





## Big "Green Brother" Is Watching

### New Directions In Environmental Public Affairs Challenge Business

Susan Schaefer Vandervoort, APR

With environmental awareness at an all-time high, companies are adopting proactive strategies that address consumer concerns. Everyone is talking "ecospeak," the language of accuracy in describing environmental problems and solutions. The Big "Green Brother" monitoring industry represents a collection of activist, regulatory, media and consumer interests. Keeping the dialogue flowing is public relations' challenge for 1991 and beyond.

**T**his month we celebrate the 21st birthday of the environmental movement, launched officially on "Earth Day," April 22, 1970. In many cultures, turning 21 represents coming of age. The analogy fits: the environmental movement has come of age, with increased regulatory and legislative efforts, the growth of highly organized and sophisticated grass-roots and special interest groups, and constant media attention. Now, companies must practice their business in an environmentally sound manner or pay the price.

For public relations practitioners engaged in environmental counseling or "green marketing," this is a time of challenge and

opportunity. The emerging eco-climate of environmentally conscious consumers requires experienced communicators to take their place among the leaders of the management team. "Credibility is at the core of an effective environmental communications program," said Riff Yeager, CEO/president, Yeager Pine & Mundale, a Minneapolis-based public relations firm. "Professional communicators build credibility by understanding constituent issues and crafting a program that addresses these issues in a meaningful way." Companies not used to factoring public relations professionals into the decision-making process may find themselves managing by crisis rather than

practicing crisis management.

A number of companies are responding to the environmental challenge with a sense of entrepreneurial adventure. "If we made a lot of money destroying this planet, we sure can make money cleaning it up," said Paddy Carson, vice president for environmental affairs, Loblaw Cos., Toronto, Canada's largest food distributor, at an environmental summit sponsored by *Advertising Age* held in New York City on Jan. 29.

Carson, whose environmental marketing handbook, "Green is Gold," is now available (*Harper & Row, United States; Harper Collins, Canada*), was part of a panel discussion on the topic, "Products for the Green Market and Markets for the Green Consumer" at the New York summit. "We're moving away from a consumer society to a conservator society," he observed.

Carson decried corporate inaction resulting from environmental complacency and dependence on statistics. He reminded the audience, comprised of hundreds of corporate and agency executives, that in 1776 it took only 26 people to change the world. "Remember the Boston Tea Party?" he chided. "It only takes 2 percent of the population to turn the country around."

Photo: Jim Arnold Photography



## Two hot areas emerge

The environmental public relations umbrella covers two distinct areas. One is pollution prevention. Companies required to reduce their emissions or releases into the environment must embark on communications programs outlined under federal, state and sometimes local regulations. (See sidebar, below.) These public affairs programs often center on community relations. The other hot area is green marketing, in which public relations, advertising, promotion, merchandising and media relations are used to promote eco-friendly products. (See case study, page 24.)

Whether a company is improving its environmental record or promoting environmentally sound products, it will be the "clean" organizations who write the eco-speak lexicon.

There are four principles for beginners:

- Make your environmental policy real.
- Get out in front of the issues.
- Go beyond compliance.
- Communicate your actions.

An effective environmental public affairs

program, like any sound marketing campaign, requires strategic planning. Such programs must be:

- thoroughly researched;
- results-oriented;
- approached from a multi-disciplinary methodology;
- cautiously interwoven into accepted management principles;
- tested; and
- evaluated.

"It took us 200 years of industrial revolution to get into this mess," said Carson. "We're not going to get out of it instantly."

## Assembling the team

Companies starting pollution prevention or green marketing campaigns should assemble their environmental communications teams with the same care and thought that go into designing a sports team. The team should include players with managerial, operational, engineering and/or research and development, regulatory, legal, communications, marketing and human resources expertise.

There is also a need for "outside" perspective. Companies involved in manufacturing or production will want to include opposition representatives, such as community action groups, environmental activists, political or regulatory officials, and academics, once they have a strong internal team under way. Retailers will want to include consumers on their team, once their internal position is clear. These representatives will help environmental teams broaden their strategy and hone their tactics.

Management of many companies panics at the thought of including outsiders on an environmental team. However, history has proven that the earlier an organization involves an opposing or outside perspective, the earlier it can anticipate problems that throw an entire strategy off track.

## Elements of "ecospeak"

Environmentally sound practices have several attributes. Dr. Paul Demko, director of chemistry and environmental studies, Good Housekeeping Institute, New York City, has outlined four elements that con-

# ECOSPEAK: government style

**RCRA:** Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976; amended 1984. Regulates generation, transportation and disposal of hazardous waste by use of a record-keeping system that tracks hazardous waste from its "cradle to grave." Regulates leaky underground storage tanks. Created an office of solid waste within the EPA.

**CERCLA:** Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act of 1980; amended by SARA (Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act) of 1986. Provides for clean up of hazardous substances and creation of a National Priority List (NPL) and Superfund list of hazardous waste sites. Seeks to identify responsible parties in order to remedy existing problems. A Superfund trust fund was established to pay for clean up when liability cannot be determined.

CERCLA is the most significant statute affecting property transfers. To minimize their liability, potential landowners, tenants, lending institutions and others now commonly have environmental audits of land and buildings conducted in advance of the purchase or lease of property in order to identify past pollution problems caused by others. Liens can be placed on property to recoup clean-up costs.

The SARA Title III amendments of 1986 require emergency planning at the local level to respond to chemical spills, accidents and crises. Depending upon the type of facility and the quantities of chemicals involved, the law requires manufacturers to disclose their use, storage, manufacture or release of 360 hazardous substances, 720 extremely hazardous substances and over 300 toxic substances.

**NEPA:** National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Every federal agency must ensure that environmental considerations are given weight in decision making. This is often accomplished via an environmental impact statement (EIS).

**CWA:** Clean Water Act restructured in 1972. Involves the issuance of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)/state discharge system (SDS) permits intended to control discharges into national/state waters.

**CAA:** Clean Air Act restructured in 1970; amended 1990. Set performance standards for "new" and "modified" sources of air pollution, established non-attainment areas (geographic areas that do not meet one or more of the air quality standards for pollutants designated by the act), restrictions and

clean-up goals. Limits amounts and types of six criteria pollutants: particulates, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, ozone, nitrogen oxide and lead. Involves the issuance of air-quality permits to control pollution from facilities and processes.

The 1990 amendments to the CAA allow the EPA to regulate 189 air toxics and require better control technology. Pollution Prevention Act provisions make reduction of toxic waste a top priority.

**TSCA:** Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976. Regulates manufacture, processing and distribution of commercial chemicals that could adversely affect the environment or public health.

**The Refuse Act:** Also known as The Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (Refuse Act), prohibits discharges of refuse into navigable waters or tributaries if those discharges are likely to be washed ashore.

**Wetlands Regulations:** U.S. Corps of Engineers permits and state regulations regarding dredging, filling, removing or otherwise altering or polluting wetlands. — Linda Schutz, account supervisor, public affairs group, Yeager Pine & Mundale.





Fully compostable solid waste can be transformed to a soil-like product within 180 days. The final product is suitable for agricultural, land reclamation, landscaping and gardening use. The process has been used in Europe for many years.

stitute any environmental program:

- water conservation;
- energy conservation;
- solid waste reduction; and
- reduction of environmental hazards.

Demko emphasized at the *Advertising Age* conference that these elements can be addressed whether a company is manufacturing a product or creating a public information campaign. Dilemmas occur when a company sacrifices one of these at the expense of another.

For example, McDonald's was recently heralded as an environmentally conscious company when it agreed to remove foam hot cups and wrapping materials, and replace them with supposedly more eco-friendly paper cups and burger packaging. Just weeks later, scientific data were widely distributed maintaining that polystyrene has been sorely misunderstood and that McDonald's may have acted too swiftly before exploring the alternatives. The data was distributed by the Council for Solid Waste Solutions, a plastics industry group based in Washington, DC. The research was conducted by the environmental consulting firm Franklin Associates, Ltd.

Did McDonald's act in an environmentally appropriate manner or not? Undeniably, there is no one solution for the countless concerns facing our consumer society. At the very least, the Oak Brook, IL-based firm responded to consumer concerns.

Greenness efforts at Procter & Gamble focus on some of the same elements outlined by Demko's *Good Housekeeping* list, according to Geoffrey Place, vice president of research and development for the company. P&G was named the nation's

number one environmentally conscious company in a recent *Advertising Age*/Gallup Poll survey. The Cincinnati-based company focuses primarily on the following solid waste management principles as the core of its program:

- source reduction;
- recyclability/compostability;
- converting waste-to-energy; and
- landfill.

In 1988, for example, P&G began working with several of its plastic bottle suppliers to develop the technology to incorporate recycled plastic into their bottles. The company has begun distributing several products in these bottles, marked with labels stating their recycled plastic content.

P&G recently announced plans to develop a more compostable disposable diaper and also launched a \$20-million program to advance municipal solid waste composting nationwide. Composting is the controlled biological degradation of organic material.

The natural composting process can be accelerated at a composting facility where temperature, moisture and oxygen content are monitored. While P&G plans to increase the compostability of its disposable diapers, the company is also concerned with changing consumer perceptions of the product and the solid waste problem.

The company's research and development efforts of recyclable and compostable disposable diapers have received broad media coverage. Like McDonald's, P&G is lauded by consumers for its efforts. Both companies have made their internal policies real and have gotten out in front of the issues.

### Who governs practices?

While polls show McDonald's, Procter & Gamble and other companies are perceived as environmentally friendly by consumers due to their initiatives, environmental activist groups often dispute their claims. For example, while consumers view McDonald's new paper packaging more favorably than foam materials, the items are made of plastic-coated paper which is not recyclable, according to some environmental groups.

Sometimes, the publicity surrounding conflicting environmental claims can be worse than none. Rather than jumping on the green bandwagon in an effort to appear environmentally correct, companies will earn more long-term benefits and responsible reputations by carefully researching and preparing programs.

There is no single agency or association that governs what are considered environmentally sound business practices. However, there are a number of public and private initiatives that are under way.

Last March, the National Association of Attorneys General called on the Federal

**"If we made a lot of money  
destroying this planet,  
we sure can make money  
cleaning it up"**

—Paddy Carson  
Vice President  
Environmental Affairs  
Loblaw Cos.

Trade Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to "develop uniform national guidelines" for environmental claims. In November 1990, a group of 10 state attorneys general investigated environmental marketing practices.

The "Task Force," as they have called themselves, issued "The Green Report: Findings and Preliminary Recommendations for Responsible Environmental Advertising." In the report, the Task Force recommended "that the federal government adopt a national regulatory scheme establishing definitions for environmental marketing claims."

At the state level, New York, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and California have all adopted regulations governing the use of environmental claims. All are similar, but each is different in detail.

Environmental groups, too, are issuing approvals for businesses that operate in an environmentally sound manner. Last June, Green Seal, a non-profit organization headed by Earth Day co-founder Denis Hayes, announced a national program to give a green seal of approval to consumer

Photo: Procter and Gamble



products. The group will investigate products for their "cradle-to-grave" impact on the environment. Products currently under scrutiny include facial and toilet tissue, re-refined motor oil, house paint, light bulbs, and water conservation and energy saving devices.

Green Seal will test these products for such things as the amount of pollution generated in the manufacturing process, as well as recycling content of packaging and whether the product itself is recyclable. The group is seeking the input of manufacturers, public interest groups, trade associations and government officials in establishing its criteria for awarding seals. The group expects to begin awarding its seal this spring. (See "Resources," page 26, for information.)

Green Cross Certification Co. awards a Green Cross to certify the environmental claims companies make for their products and packaging. While the long-term goal might be a 100% friendly product, "the reality is that most manufacturing processes have some impact on the environment," said Linda Brown, vice president communications. She noted that a Green Cross is not an endorsement of a product, but certifies that a claim a company makes is true. "We certify the best performance in each category," Brown added. "We're not interested in the status quo." For example,



Concerned communities are promoting recycling to decrease waste disposed of in already-overflowing landfills.

the Oakland, CA-based group will certify products and packaging that contain the highest percentage of recycled material on the market. Green Cross' first awards were handed out last August.

Green Cross is the non-profit division of Scientific Certification Systems Inc., which verifies the performance of pesticides, grades the scientific handling of food, and researches the environmental claims of

## ENVIRONMENT

# A guide to "green" market research

Over the past year, several companies and polling firms have done research to take the pulse of green consumers. Listed below are a few landmark samples.

### "Green Action Trends"

Yankelovich, Clancy, Shulman

This survey goes beyond merely stating that consumers are developing environmental attitudes. The national survey of 1,400 people was conducted in June-July 1990, with follow-up surveys in October and January 1991. One portion of the research included a self-administered survey, which was returned by 865 respondents. It asked the respondents how their beliefs play a role in buying decisions in 45 different categories.

The survey found a "differentiation among product categories that shows people feel differently about different kinds of products." For example, a person claiming to be environmentally conscious might switch from an aerosol to non-aerosol hair spray, but that same person wouldn't necessarily change from disposable diapers to cloth ones.

Cost: \$15,000-\$17,500.

Contact: Yankelovich, Clancy, Shulman, 8 Wright Street, Westport, CT 06880; (203) 227-2700.

### "The Environment: Public Attitudes and Individual Behavior"

The Roper Organization

This survey was conducted for S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc., which is the proprietor of the information. It sampled a national cross section of 1,413 adults, 18 years of age and older. Respondents were asked 77 questions in extensive personal interviews done in their homes. The survey explored such subjects as responsibility for protecting the environment, solutions to environmental problems and interest in issues.

Cost: \$10.

Contact: The Roper Organization, 205 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017; (212) 599-0700.

A media kit that explains the survey and its findings is available free from S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc.

Contact: S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc., 1525 Howe Street, Racine, WI 53403; (414) 631-2000.

### "Environmental Poll"

The Gallup Organization

Gallup conducted a survey last April dealing broadly with Americans' perceptions of the purpose of Earth Day. A copy of the survey is available from Gallup.

Contact: The Gallup Organization, 47 Hulfish Street; Princeton, NJ 08542; (609) 924-9600.

Gallup has also done a recent environmental consumer survey for the Glass Packaging Institute. The national survey was based on telephone interviews with a sample of 1,012 adults, 18 years of age and older. The survey sampled consumers' opinions on recycling, recyclability and packaging issues. GPI will send interested parties a news release describing the results.

Contact: Glass Packaging Institute, 1801 K Street, N.W., Suite 1105-L, Washington, DC 20006; (202) 466-7590.

### "Second Annual Environmental Marketing Survey"

Gerstman & Meyers

This ad agency sponsored an in-person survey of 313 women ages 21 to 54 in malls in Dallas; Detroit; Erie, PA; Paramus, NJ; San Francisco; and Seattle. An article in the Sept. 3, 1990, issue of *Advertising Age* summarized the findings.

Cost: The survey, which was conducted by Joel Benson Associates, is available for \$50.

Contact: Gerstman & Meyers, 111 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019-2211; (212) 586-2535.

### "The Green Consumer"

FIND/SVP

This 300-page report explores the impact of the environmentally aware consumer movement. Chapters deal with the demographics of green consumerism and specific responses by a number of industries, and legislation and regulatory aspects of the movement.

The report is not an original survey, but a summary of work already done.

Cost: \$1,800.

Contact: FIND/SVP Inc., 625 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10011; (212) 645-4500. — Greg Bury, assistant account executive, public affairs group, Yeager Pine & Mundale.



products and packaging. The organization will also do a Life Cycle Evaluation of a product at a company's request.

In May 1990, the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES) issued the Valdez Principles. This code of conduct for business is designed to improve a company's entire environmental performance. Since then, 21 privately held companies have signed the principles, according to Michael Fleming, assistant to the executive director of the Boston-based group.

The principles are named after the Exxon Valdez, the oil tanker that ran aground in March 1989, causing a massive oil spill. Along with respecting the environment, they require a company to market safe products and services and accept responsibility for any environmental damage it causes.

In addition, the principles require companies to reveal any operations that might cause harm to the environment. They must appoint at least one director to represent environmental interests. And an annual environmental audit is required.

The number of signatories to the Valdez Principles is expected to increase within the next six months, Fleming noted. "We are discussing the principles with several publicly traded Fortune 100 companies," he said. Most of these discussions stem from shareholder resolutions before the boards of companies. There are 54 such resolutions pending, he added.

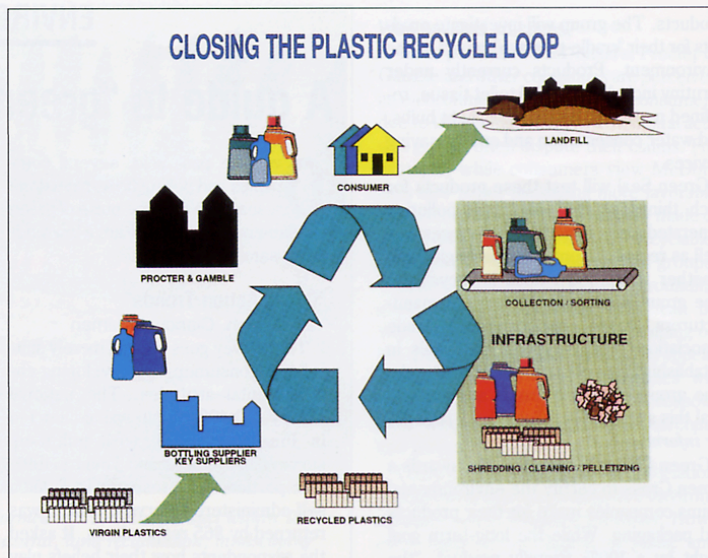
#### Focus on waste management

Along with expressing concern that businesses be good environmental neighbors, many environmentally aware communities are promoting recycling to decrease solid waste. Reduction of this by-product of the current American "throw-away life-style" by business and consumers will continue to be a key issue.

The solid waste management industry has come under more scrutiny. This industry has been the target of legislation and regulation, and community concern.

The attention is easy to understand. The trash crisis affects everyone, because everyone makes trash. And to quote an industry joke, "Everyone wants us to pick it up, but no one wants us to put it down."

The reality behind the joke is not funny. Many landfills are at capacity. New ones can't be sited due to overwhelming community opposition—known as the Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) syndrome. Incineration is viewed as the "Darth Vader" of our atmosphere. William D. Ruckelshaus, chairman and CEO of Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI), one of the largest publicly held solid waste management companies in the world, said, "New legislation, new regulations and an environmentally



*Collecting and reprocessing rigid and clear plastic cuts down trash at the end of the plastic chain. A family of four buying laundry and cleaning products packaged in recycled plastic would keep about 22 containers out of landfills in one year.*

informed public are transforming the waste business." Houston-based BFI has made a commitment to help shape the transformation by providing environmentally sensitive leadership.

If there is anyone who should understand the dynamics of environmental leadership, it is Ruckelshaus, who served as the first

#### "The environmental public relations umbrella covers pollution prevention and green marketing"

head of the EPA from December 1970 through April 1973, and again from 1983 through 1985. Under his guidance, BFI has made such nontraditional activities as recycling and yard-waste composting integral components of the company's business.

Even more innovative are the relationships the company is forging with state officials, regulators and communities. BFI's public affairs programs are capturing attention and proving that the company's eco-speak goes beyond posturing.

#### Educational relationships forged

One program that positions the company as an environmental leader willing to make an investment in an area of critical need is its environmental education program. "Recycling and environmental responsibility will be an integral part of our future," said Peter

Block, BFI's divisional vice president of corporate communications. "You have a choice: teach now or 'unteach' later. Unteaching is more painful and difficult, as all adults know. We're trying to help kids realize how important their role is in recycling resources and using recyclable materials."

In late 1988, two years prior to the celebration of Earth Day's 20th anniversary, BFI began its transformation by forging relationships with environmental educators and school teachers throughout North America. The effort was precipitated by requests from BFI field personnel who were being asked to lecture or provide materials on recycling to schools around the country. Block, already a Yeager Pine & Mundale client, approached the firm to develop an environmental public affairs program that could address this need.

The members of the working team were Bill Carter, a BFI recycling manager based in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; Annabelle Bourgoin, resource librarian for Edmonton's Centennial School; YPM account people; and BFI's Block, who led the team from his base at the company's headquarters in Houston.

An initial content analysis, which included an exhaustive literature search, revealed that private initiatives in public education would be a prudent direction for the company to take. At that time, industry leaders such as IBM and Pizza Hut were receiving praise from government leaders and

Chart: Procter and Gamble



educators alike for innovative approaches to educational sponsorship.

Once BFI focused on corporate-sponsored education, the team identified several audiences. Company managers, environmental education experts, teachers, students and residents of communities where the firm operated were targeted.

Primary research included in-depth interviews with BFI managers of recycling services and government and public affairs, and with the heads of environmental education in 10 states. The research validated the results of the earlier content analysis—there was a need for corporate-sponsored environmental education materials. Interviews with the educational personnel revealed that the most pressing need for environmental materials was in grades four through six.

The next phase involved students and teachers directly. Bourgoin allowed the

**"New legislation, new regulations and an environmentally informed public are transforming the waste business."**

—William D. Ruckelshaus  
Chairman and CEO  
Browning-Ferris Ind.

planning team to use her fourth, fifth and sixth grade students as a focus group.

Children can be candid and clear in identifying their needs. The Centennial School students provided BFI with the information it needed to develop a full-blown program.

Over the next two years, the company launched the MOBIUS™ Program, an educational program designed to help teachers, students and communities learn more about solid waste disposal alternatives and recycling. (See sidebar for story of how the MOBIUS mascot was born.) The program took its name from the German mathematician, Augustus F. Mobius, who conceptualized a continuous one-sided strip with a single twist that has been adapted by the recycling industry in the form of three arrows.

Follow-up research supported the idea that a private initiative in public education was a wise choice. Analysis of pending legislation at both national and regional levels indicated that environmental education would emerge as an area of need in the 1990s. In fact, the House of Representatives recently passed the Environmental Education and Training Act, which will authorize an average of \$12.5 million annually in grants to schools for curriculum

development and teacher training. Across North America similar resolutions are cropping up.

Now grade school students across North America are learning about recycling and the environment through the MOBIUS Program. Over 5,000 copies of the curriculum are currently in schools across North

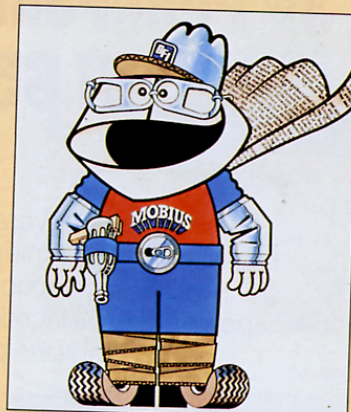
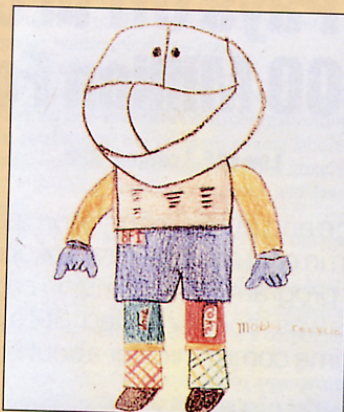
America, and more editions are requested on a daily basis.

The curriculum's centerpiece is the "Browning-Ferris Industries MOBIUS™ Curriculum: Understanding the Waste Cycle," for students in grades four through six. The curriculum is a model of a coalition-

*Continued on page 26*

## ENVIRONMENT

### How MOBIUS was made



The original MOBIUS sketch by Canadian student Scott Anderson (left), which featured a smiling face on a Mobius strip, was developed into a cartoon character incorporating recyclable materials.

One of the most gratifying aspects of BFI's environmental education program was the invention of the cartoon mascot MOBIUS™, the caped crusader of recycling. BFI management agreed that for children to positively identify with their program, they should be involved in its creation.

In the spring of 1989, a "Design the MOBIUS Mascot Contest" was held in Brimfield, OH; Edmonton, Alberta; Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Houston; and Quincy, MA. These North American cities had been identified as the company's pilot market. The contest itself was a mini-curriculum on recycling, a prototype of the final expanded version. Students learned the principle behind the Mobius strip, the continuous loop with a single twist in it now used to represent recycling as a three-arrow logo. Not only did the contest provide a winning mascot, but also market feedback for the curriculum development team. Regional winners in each of the five cities received savings bonds and their drawings advanced to the grand-prize competi-

tion. The winners' schools received matching cash prizes.

The drawing of then-fourth grader Scott Anderson of Edmonton was the unanimous choice of the national judges. Anderson saw a broadly grinning face in the Mobius strip, to which he added a newspaper chest sporting a BFI blue plastic recycling bin as hockey pants. He included other recycled materials such as soft drink cans and paper cups to ensure that his creation represented the mix of materials being recycled.

The original MOBIUS was transformed by a professional artist from Houston, who created a character that captured all of Anderson's originality.

Anderson, his family and teacher were flown as guests of BFI for a weekend in Houston, to receive the grand prize from CEO William D. Ruckelshaus, and for activities including a tour of NASA.

MOBIUS is used to identify BFI's environmental curriculum materials. The character also visits children in classrooms and at special events across North America.—S.S.I.



## Big "Green Brother"

Continued from page 19

style partnership reflecting extensive collaboration between the company, industry experts, teachers and outside counsel.

There is also a MOBIUS Fun Book for children in kindergarten through grade three, and support services provided by BFI that include a toll-free number to answer teachers' questions and provide additional resources, materials and local speakers. A life-sized costume of the MOBIUS character also is available for appearances at schools, parades and events.

The program also has an employee relations component. A curriculum guide and employee training manual help field managers to explain the program at community and business gatherings. Each manual comes with a scripted slide presentation and creative ideas to assist employees in personalizing their presentations.

BFI views the program as a success. More importantly, the critical audience—teachers—agrees. "We need companies like BFI to help in providing children with a quality education," said Bourgoin. "Our entire school district is using the MOBIUS program. It's creative, contemporary, and we couldn't have produced it on our own limited resources."

BFI's story is being repeated as other companies search for their own environmental position. (See case study, page 20.) By getting out in front of environmental issues, companies can expect higher profits, lower manufacturing costs and greater flexibility to bring out products in a timely fashion, according to Dr. Robert Bringer, staff vice president of environmental engineering, 3M, St. Paul, MN.

"While a proactive approach to pollution prevention has many tangible and intangible benefits, an improved environmental reputation stands out in our 3M experience as one of the most important benefits," Bringer said. Companies also benefit from improved employee morale and customer relations.

Of course, the true benefit of environmental responsibility and programming is saving and protecting the environment. Corporations, retailers, environmental groups, community action groups and private citizens share this common goal. Setting responsible environmental policies and communicating them clearly will serve both the corporate and public interest.

*Susan Schaefer Vandervoort, APR, is senior vice president of public affairs, Yeager Pine & Mundale, Minneapolis. She has been an active environmentalist since Sun Day, the nationally celebrated event that pre-dated Earth Day by a year.*

## ENVIRONMENT

### Practical tips for dealing with environmental communications

- ✓ Become an environmental expert. There are now dozens of books on environmental topics. Know your material. This is especially important now that there are so many "eco-reporters" who really know the issues and will tear you to pieces if you don't know what you're talking about.
- ✓ Know the big environmental groups (see list, below).
- ✓ Contact local and national environmental groups in advance of a campaign or an announcement, if appropriate. Their support or opposition can make a big difference.
- ✓ Publicize substantive newsworthy advances. Eco-reporters are sophisticated and will not publicize old-hat news, like promotional tie-ins or the latest cafeteria recycling program.
- ✓ Remember that many employees are concerned with environmental problems at their company. They are an important audience to reach when dealing with corporate releases.
- ✓ Know the environmental media, locally and nationally, and what they cover. Some are more feature oriented, others cover government regulation, and some cover business and the environment.
- ✓ Know the environmental issues that most concern your community.
- ✓ Don't overhype. The press is very sensitive to "green" exaggerations.
- ✓ When you have a technical message to communicate to an audience, make sure you convey it so it is easily understood.—*Josh Baran, general manager, Edelman Worldwide, Los Angeles.*

### Environmental Resource Organizations

- **Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies**  
711 Atlantic Avenue  
Boston, MA 07111  
(617) 451-0927
  - **Environmental Action Foundation**  
1525 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 745-4871
  - **Friends of the Earth**  
218 D Street, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20003  
(202) 544-2600
  - **Green Cross Certification Co.**  
1511 Telegraph Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(800) 829-1416
  - **Green Seal**  
1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 328-8095
  - **National Audubon Society**  
950 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10022  
(212) 546-9100
  - **National Parks and Conservation Association**  
1015 31st Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 944-8530
  - **National Wildlife Federation**  
1400 16th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 797-6800
  - **Natural Resources Defense Council**  
1350 New York Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 783-7800
  - **Sierra Club**  
730 Polk Street  
San Francisco, CA 94109  
(415) 776-2211
  - **Wilderness Society**  
1400 I Street, N.W., Suite 550  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 833-2300
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