



TO: Vinyl Institute Executive Board **DATE:** March 18, 1993
FROM: Robert Burnett **COPIES:** Other Issue Management
 Seminar Attendees
SUBJECT: Issues Management Presentation

Enclosed is a copy of the overhead material which Edward Howard & Co. presented to the issues management seminar in New Orleans. I thought you might find it helpful in understanding the dimensions of the issues management program and the variety of activities being conducted under it.

Please call me if you would like to discuss any aspect of the program or have any suggestions concerning it. Thanks for your continued support.

CTL006858

The Vinyl Institute Issue Management Program:

Tangible Results for the Vinyl Industry

1. Established the VI as the source for information about vinyl.
2. Produced communications tools and put information about vinyl into the hands of those most able to tell the product's story.
3. Galvanized the industry, laid the foundation for future.
4. The program appears to be favorably influencing buyer behavior.

The Industry Responds to Challenge

- ▶ VCM and Cancer -- Industry revised production, eliminated the hazard.
- ▶ FDA withdrew approval for the use of vinyl in liquor bottles.
- ▶ Attacks on PVC as a fire hazard.
- ▶ Formation of Vinyl Institute in 1982.

The Vinyl Industry's New Challenge:

- ▶ Claims that vinyl plastics could not be recycled.
- ▶ Claims that vinyl was an obstacle to recycling other plastics.
- ▶ Allegations that vinyl generated toxic by-products when incinerated.

The Vinyl Institute's Mission:

- ▶ To educate the public about the safety and performance of vinyl.
- ▶ To sponsor health and environmental research to assure the safe use of vinyl products.
- ▶ To develop marketplace opportunities for the expanded use of vinyl.
- ▶ To foster programs and communications with other industry groups.
- ▶ To protect existing markets from unwarranted attack.

Precepts for VI's Success:

- ▶ Rely heavily on scientific facts
- ▶ Respond to every challenge, no matter how small
- ▶ Seek alliances with third party experts who could effectively communicate the facts to key audiences

Research Conclusions 1989-91:

- ▶ Environmental concerns had hardened.
- ▶ Fire toxicity remained an issue.
- ▶ Environmentalism reaching other markets.
- ▶ Environmental concern was broad-based.
- ▶ Most markets seemed to be making their decisions about vinyl in a vacuum.
- ▶ The more the media seemed to know about vinyl, the more accurate their coverage.
- ▶ Trade publications and trade associations were seen as credible information sources.

Issue Management Program Objectives:

- ▶ To establish (or reestablish) vinyl as a safe and environmentally good product with all of its target audiences.
- ▶ To help halt deselection in leading-edge markets and maintain vinyl's leadership in other markets by neutralizing concerns.
- ▶ To establish the Vinyl Institute as the resource for information about vinyl and the environment, and other issues such as fire toxicity.

Program Strategies and Audiences:

Problem: Hard, scientific evidence, but facts not well known.

Strategy: Develop a fact-based campaign.



Problem: Vinyl's packaging market in jeopardy.

Strategy: Make communication to this market a priority.

Problem: "Greenness" spreading to all segments.

Strategy: Target communications to "gatekeepers" — those regarded as experts, particularly on environmental matters.



Problem: Limited manpower within the VI to effectively reach all audiences.

Strategy: Educate other VI member employees and customers. Develop alliances.

Problem: Unanswered allegations never died.

Strategy: Leave no challenge unanswered, no matter how small.



Problem: The industry's technical research was scattered.

Strategy: Create a centralized repository for all industry information.



Problem: Reaching all audiences required information in varying degrees of complexity.

Strategy: Package data in a variety of formats designed to fit audience needs.

Program Messages:

- ▶ Vinyl is not an unusual fire hazard and, in fact, because of its inherent flame retardant composition, actually stops fires from starting and from spreading.
- ▶ Vinyl is recyclable and is being recycled.
- ▶ Vinyl can be safely incinerated.
- ▶ Vinyl can be safely landfilled.
- ▶ Vinyl's overall impact on the environment is comparable to, or less than, competitive materials.
- ▶ Vinyl has a long track record of outstanding product performance and safe use.

Activities and Tactics - Year One

- ▶ Establishment of the Vinyl Environmental Resource Center
- ▶ Tools
 - A "Glad You Asked" wallet card.
 - "Vinyl Plastics and Solid Waste: Some Basic Facts" fact kit.
 - "Vinyl the Versatile Plastic" videotape.
 - Other collateral materials.
- ▶ Training — "On the Firing Line"
- ▶ Outreach
 - Briefings with targeted trade publications.
 - *"Issues in Vinyl Packaging."*
 - Retailer visits.
 - Speakers bureau.
 - Direct mail -- e.g., *Environmental Briefs*

► **Promotion of Vinyl Recycling Milestones**

- Publicity -- e.g., Nashville program, technical research results, new market research studies, new literature from the Vinyl Institute, case histories about vinyl recyclers, op-eds and feature stories authored by VI members and staff, and letters to the editor.
- Vinyl In Packaging (VIP) Awards -- three competitions with environmental/recycling innovation added this year.
- Publication of Resource Directories
 - *"Directory of Companies Involved in the Recycling of Vinyl (PVC) Plastics"* (July 1991)
 - *"Post-Consumer Vinyl Recycling in the U.S."* (May 1992)

► **Networking -- Europe, Japan, Australia, South America**

Activities and Tactics - Year Two

- ▶ **Support for End-Market Use of Recycled Vinyl**
 - "Buy Recycled Products" trade fair.
 - "Directory of Companies Manufacturing Products Made From Recycled Vinyl". (January 1993)
 - "Tool Pool" RFP.

► **The Partners Program**

- Partner Responsibilities

- To make contacts with local officials, opinion leaders.
- To monitor local media and alert VERCE to coverage.
- Speaking opportunities with local groups.
- To share information about vinyl with coworkers and encourage their involvement in the Partners Program.

- Partner Support

- Regular contact with Partners Program coordinator.
- Regular mailings providing updates.
- A Partners Handbook.

Evaluation

Remember our three objectives:

- ▶ To establish (or reestablish) vinyl as a safe and environmentally good product with all of its target audiences.
- ▶ To help halt deselection in leading-edge markets (packaging) and maintain vinyl's leadership in other markets.
- ▶ To establish the Vinyl Institute as the resource for information about vinyl and the environment.

Strategies and Results

Strategy #1: To develop a fact-based campaign to relentlessly promote vinyl's performance in face of the low level of understanding among key audiences.

Results: Facts have been the backbone of every communication device created for the program, including videos, training and briefing sessions, collateral materials, speeches and publicity. Vinyl's recyclability has been the core message of much of those efforts. In addition:

- Extensive media coverage.
- 3,000 copies of the "Directory of Companies Involved in the Recycling of Vinyl Plastics" have been distributed via VERCE alone.
- Over 2,000 copies of the "Directory of Companies Manufacturing Products Made From Recycled Vinyl" have been distributed in less than six weeks.
- The "Tool Pool" RFP has further demonstrated the industry's commitment.

- Over 20,000 copies of the "Glad You Asked" wallet card have been distributed, and it is ready to go into its second printing.
- Over 500 copies of the solid waste fact kit have been distributed by VERCE alone.
- According to a survey conducted among VI members in September 1992, nearly 1,900 people saw the "Vinyl the Versatile Plastic" videotapes in the first four months of distribution.
- Other resource materials have enabled the VERCE staff and VI staff to quickly and efficiently respond.
- *EnVironmental Briefs* now has a circulation reaching 15,000. Nearly three-fourths of those responding said the newsletter had a positive influence on their opinion of vinyl.

Strategy #2: Make communications to the packaging market a priority.

Results: Some of the issues management program's most ambitious activities have been targeted to this audience or its customers. There has been a steady stream of publicity for vinyl packaging in the trade publications reaching these audiences.

- 105 packaging industry decision makers attended the three "Issues in Vinyl Packaging" briefings.
- The "Vinyl in Packaging Awards" have received good coverage.
- The three briefing sessions with retailers: Kmart, Wal-Mart, Sears.

Strategy #3: Target communications to "gatekeepers" — especially those regarded as experts on environmental matters.

Results: Variety of activities targeted to opinion leaders.

- More than 3,000 individuals attended the June 1992 "Buy Recycled Products" trade fair, including the U.S. EPA Administrator William Reilly, who visited the VI booth and noted, "Standing on this floor feels great! I didn't know you could recycle vinyl like this."
- VERCE has established contact with more than 30 trade associations.
- A dozen presentations on environmental topics.

Strategy #4: Train industry employees and customers on issues facing the industry.

Results:

- Over 500 employees trained in "On The Firing Line" training sessions and by companies.
- Over 100 volunteers have been identified and enlisted in the Partners Program.
- The VI has become a full partner with other associations in setting strategy on issues affecting vinyl globally.

Strategy #5: Address all instances of misinformation and refute all allegations, no matter how small.

Results:

- Responded to over 30 individual inaccurate representations of vinyl's performance.
- The industry's ability to effectively address misinformation has also been demonstrated in the legislative arena:
 - North Carolina
 - Wisconsin

Strategy #6: Create a central source for gathering, managing and disseminating the industry's facts in order to use this information more effectively.

Results:

- VERCE has received 2,078 calls on the hotline, handled 2,328 information requests. 165 in February.
- Database exceeds 3,500 entries.
- VERCE is listed in at least 15 state and national recycling/environmental resource directories and databases.
- 3,000 plus copies of the Rolodex card promoting VERCE distributed.

Improvements In Attitudes Toward Vinyl

1. *EnVironmental Briefs* survey showed 71 percent of those responding indicated that the publication had had a positive influence on their opinion of vinyl.
2. 1992 Cambridge Associates did 200 telephone interviews with individuals in the packaging market:
 - ▶ Among current users of vinyl packaging, the majority (77%) had not changed and were not considering changing their use of vinyl.
 - ▶ Only 12% of current users reported using less vinyl, while 33% said they were using more.
 - ▶ More than three quarters (78%) said they would be using the same amount of vinyl or more over the next two years; only 19% expected to use less.
 - ▶ The majority of those surveyed (63%) said they believe vinyl packaging is as environmentally acceptable or recyclable as alternative plastic packaging materials.

- ▶ Among those interviewed, 46% believed negative attitudes toward vinyl are based on misperceptions; only 20% felt they were based on facts.
- ▶ When asked whether they felt more informed about vinyl packaging than three years ago, 54% said yes.
- ▶ When asked how their attitude toward vinyl compared to three years ago:
 - 18% more favorable
 - 11% less favorable
 - 71% about the same
- ▶ Those who were aware of the Vinyl Institute said:
 - Significantly more informed about vinyl.
 - More likely to feel vinyl packaging materials are as recyclable as other plastics.

Market Results

- ▶ Helped to prevent major market loss.
- ▶ Now positioned for major gains with economic upturn.

Summary

1. Program appears to be effective, particularly in the market considered the leading edge regarding environmental issues: packaging.
2. Vinyl industry has a model for addressing other concerns like attack on all organochlorines.
3. Positioned now to mount major offensive on behalf of vinyl as an environmentally good product around the globe.
4. Program demonstrates that a simple strategy of good science, well communicated, can succeed.