

Monsanto

FROM

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DATE: November 11, 1992

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SUBJ: Fleishman Hillard IAQ Proposal

REF:

TO: T. G. Iversen --

Tom, I have listed below some comments on the proposal submitted to the CRI by Fleishman Hillard for public relations relating to carpet health hazards.

The proposal was read by several people in the public affairs department and the comments listed are a compilation of everyone's input.

The Fleishman thrust is two-fold...to publicly refute Anderson's research and repair damage to the image of carpeting. The program in both cases is built on the assumption that we will be clearly able to prove her research is flawed.

If we are forced to operate in a gray area where we're sure carpeting is safe but can't prove Anderson's research is flawed, the approach would be somewhat different.

Overall, the proposal is very good. It is relatively comprehensive and covers most of the areas we feel are important. There are some elements that deserve comment.

p. 2 -- Industry & Allied Groups Outreach -- This is one area where individual CRI member companies can help by educating their work forces. At Monsanto we could initiate an employee awareness program and make our employees spokespeople for the safety of carpet.

p. 2 -- Media Outreach -- Responding to negatives is important but even more important is creating positive feelings about carpeting. What's required here is a pro-active program about the comfort and beauty of carpet. I'm thinking of a program similar to the Cotton Inc. "feel good" campaign for cotton garments.

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p. 2 -- "Erode the credibility of the Anderson study..." -- This kind of statement written down in a document is dangerous from a public relations viewpoint. It is possible that this document could fall into the wrong hands or be subpoenaed. There are several references like this throughout the document that could be phrased better. It would be better to say something like: "Determine the validity of Anderson's research and educate the public concerning its scientific credibility."

p. 4 -- Last paragraph, last sentence -- "The key is to discredit her methodology, results and motives" We need to be careful with this tactic. It may be necessary to publicly discredit and disgrace her but this is a risky endeavor. Even if we can prove she is incompetent, consumer advocates generally are difficult to discredit and we would run the risk of turning her into a martyr.

That's not to say it shouldn't be done, but we should be on very strong footing if we go this route.

p. 7 -- In-Store Video -- Our experience has been that consumers are not willing to stand and watch a long video in a store setting. If we can get the message across in just a couple of minutes this tactic would be worth it.

p. 9 -- Editorial Board Briefings -- Should be kept low key in states like Vermont. Editors in the N.E. react poorly to high powered p.r. agency types. A small group (1 or 2) consisting of a scientific type and a CRI spokesperson would be best.

p. 11 -- Create Partnership With American College of Allergy and Immunology -- This is a good tactic but perhaps there are several other organizations which might also help. The American Council on Science & Health is one to consider. It has been helpful to the Agriculture Group concerning health issues, has a credible reputation with consumers but is thought to be pro-industry by the media.

p. 12 -- Expand Linkages With EPA/CPSC -- This is an excellent tactic but saying that they have "effectively helped give the industry cover on this issue" is dangerous to write down in a document that could become public. If this document were to fall into the hands of the press, that kind of statement could ruin careers.

Consumer groups such as "Consumer's Union" were not mentioned in the proposal. We know that Consumers Union is looking at this issue and others are undoubtedly going to in the future. The carpet industry should have early contact and input with these groups before they lock themselves in with public statements on the issue.

Rita Hartmann, Loren Wassell and Beth Vanderbeck have made arrangements to confer with their government affairs counterparts at DuPont to talk about what can be done to work with government people like state's attorneys general.

In addition to these public relations initiatives, an advertising program to make the case for the safety of carpet would be very helpful.

Dallas