

CRISIS SCENARIO #2

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The Issue: The movement back to more "natural" household cleaning products is gaining momentum as consumers are eagerly looking for ways they can contribute to a cleaner planet. This movement was spawned in 1990 as the United States commemorated the 20th anniversary of Earth Day. Columnists, authors and activist groups scrambled to develop "earth saving" tips for the average American. A resulting herd of books, brochures, pamphlets, newspaper columns and media coverage espoused ridding the home of "hazardous" materials and substituting them with safer, natural cleaning products, such as vinegar and borax. Unfortunately, the authors of these materials often make exaggerated, misleading and inaccurate efficacy claims for these "natural" products. They also exaggerate the environmental and health "hazards" of modern cleaning products. And since these authors are seen as "environmental" experts, their claims largely are taken as gospel.

This movement will receive another boost of momentum as America, once again, gears up for its annual Earth Day observances. As a result, a whole new round of simplistic and misguided ways to "save the Earth" are likely to be espoused by those seeking to profit from jumping on the environmental bandwagon. Liquid chlorine bleach could very well become a target for these "save the Earth" activists in 1991-92.

Worst Case Event: A prominent ~~columnist~~ ^{newspaper} columnist targets the environmental hazards of liquid chlorine bleach in an article, which is syndicated to newspapers across the country. The columnist calls for consumers to boycott Clorox products, since "Clorox is guilty of ^{and consumers who use H+CCB are} widespread contamination of the environment." Local chapters of Greenpeace take up the cause by spearheading "anti-Clorox" picketing campaigns outside supermarkets in 10 major cities across the country. The picketing campaign is receiving ^{local and national} widespread media coverage ^{within several weeks.} in those cities, resulting in a dramatic drop in sales of Clorox products. In response to these concerns, Congress schedules hearings on the environmental safety of liquid chlorine bleach products.

Overall - Set up to crisis is excellent
#2 but "response" still needs a lot
of work and thinking, and
flushing out - pay particular
attention to developing strategy.

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Recommended Response: This event is every company's worst nightmare; the company must be prepared to take aggressive, swift action to protect its market franchise. Because Clorox is a consumer product, this event has the potential of turning it into the next "Alar."

BF
Assessment: The very future of the product ^{and the company} is at stake.

BF
Objective: Restore Clorox's reputation as quickly as possible. This cannot become a debate on the "science," because the issue is too emotional. ^(and that of the products)

BF
Strategy: Use, wherever possible, actual rank and file employees and their families to act as spokespeople to support the company. (Prior planning by crisis team has made sure that employees have been kept informed about this issue and relieved any of their concerns well in advance of this crisis.)

ACTION PLAN

~~Team's assessment of columnist~~ ^{The columnist} ~~is~~ is unalterably "green," but an independent scientist is dispatched to meet with the columnist and discuss the issue

Teams of scientists are dispatched to the 10 cities to conduct media tours.

^(independent of Clorox - or both?)

Fact sheets and brochures are distributed to all the affected supermarkets, and company representatives visit each of the supermarkets to provide support.

Team calls on sympathetic media, local, state and national governmental leaders, and consumer experts to make statements in defense of the product. Those statements are then widely distributed in the affected communities.

The team also considers the following actions:

(Some of these actions seem obvious as part of action plan - NOT "optional")

Advertising in major markets, using Clorox employees and their families who will testify to their faith in the product.

*Needs keeping up by Signifier
This is NOT the overall solution / umbrella strategy to the problem defined.*

Too simplistic

Also needs keeping up
press conference

Sales Force briefing
Chlorine Institute

2 What about Satellite Tour? UNR?
what's role / activity of other trade groups -
- how of chlorine manufac-

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- o Industry association advertising campaign: "Stop Environmental Terrorism." calling on Greenpeace and the columnist to be more responsible and less irrational in their approach.
- o Enlist the support of the union and the national union leadership since jobs are at stake.
- X o Conduct research to determine if and how a slander lawsuit against the columnist and/or Greenpeace could be effective.
- o Mass mailings to consumers in the ^e affected cities.
- (o Call for a public, independent review of all the toxicity and epidemiological data on chlorine to clear the air, once and for all.
- o If the situation truly grows desperate, the team agrees to consider the possibility of pulling the product off the market, pending a special review, assuming the review can be done quickly.
- (o Survey research is conducted on a daily basis to ~~determine the extent of the problem~~ ^{measure public reaction, severity of issue, changing attitudes, perceptions}.
- o In addition, special research is conducted to determine effective messages.

What about a more direct scientific counter attack pointing out ridiculous, unbased claims?

What are we doing to research issue - And analyze claims in research which columnist cites?

What are we doing to mobilize govt. officials - groups behind industry to debunk claims?