

World Chemistry Leadership Meeting - August 15, 2003, Ottawa Canada

Chemical Producers Association of Canada: Responsible Care
R. Dickinson and R. Paton

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Canada. Although there are many issues to discuss, I am going to spend a few minutes addressing just one of the selected findings from the last World Chemistry Leadership Meeting in Brisbane Australia. I am referring to point number 12. "*Education of primary and secondary students should emphasize the enjoyable aspects of science rather than rote learning*". I have chosen this point because it ties in nicely with the overall preoccupation of the public image of chemistry.

As an industry, we have always had a steep hill to climb from a safety perspective. Events like Bhopal brought this to crisis proportions. Now we are facing the next mountain to climb: long term health concerns.

When you start with a low level of credibility, it is difficult to state your case. Because of this perception, your audience's mind is closed before you even begin.

So how do you deal with perceptions as an industry, or as chemists and engineers working in the field of chemistry?

Our members, Canada's chemical producers, decided to start with action, and that action is Responsible Care. For the last 18 years, we have been on a crusade to bring a new ethic to the business of chemistry. Pioneers like Jean Belanger and Board members of CCPA realized early on that a program would not be enough.

Like the inventors of the Quality movement, radical thinking was required. And so, like the Demings and the Jurans, we had to invent a radical concept, and act on it, if we wanted to establish our credibility.

Our industry has found itself at a crossroads: we know we take Responsible Care seriously, that the ethic is well established, if not perfect. And now we want people to know more about us, to accept that we are accountable to them, and to know that we are a great industry that makes products that are an essential part of everyday life.

In Canada, we want them to know that we are a knowledge industry, one that takes Canadian natural resources and creates valuable products and jobs and that solves problems.

How do we go about doing that?

We have to rely in great part on the chemists and engineers who can be found all over Ottawa this week. They are our ambassadors to the communities in which they live and work.

Recently, we undertook a complete review of the ways in which we were talking to students and educators about the chemical industry. We are not finished yet, but one overwhelming conclusion is that our members are scattered across the map, participating in all kinds of worthy programs about science and chemistry. At CCPA, we've been contributing to the KEY foundation, which stands for Knowledge of the Environment for Youth. This is a great organization, but just one of many out there who have the ability to reach students and teachers and provide information about what we make and how we do business.

No one organization can coordinate all of the class visits and speakers that we need to get our message out. We have to rely on our own belief that science, and especially the science of chemistry, is worth talking about.

My spouse, who is a great student of teaching methods, told me about a Harvard study that looked at all of the different factors that go into teaching: including education and training, work environment, salaries and so on. The number one determinant of a great classroom experience, and of learning? Enthusiasm. No program can teach enthusiasm.

A great passion for your chosen profession, together with the willingness to get out there and share it with teachers and kids, is needed to improve the public image of chemistry.

Which brings me back to the finding from Australia: kids should be energized by chemistry and science. We have to work together to find ways to make it interesting and to inject students with a sense of fascination at what can be accomplished by science.

It starts with all of us. Each one of us, taking up the challenge to bring some of that enthusiasm to the classroom, either directly, or through the many great organizations out there trying to make science fun.

I am now going to turn over the presentation to my Chairman, Mr. Bob Dickinson, who is a chemist, and also the head of the leading Responsible Care organization in the world.

Bob Dickinson, Chairman, CCPA

President, Delmar Chemicals

Thank you Richard. I am going to pick up on your point about the similarities between Responsible Care and the Quality movement.

Historically, the quality movement owes much of its life to General Douglas MacArthur, who was charged with rebuilding Japan's communications equipment industry after the second world war.

It was because of MacArthur that W. Edwards Deming taught the Japanese about statistical quality control. Deming went on to become one of the dominant figures of Japanese re-birth, and is a pioneer of the quality movement we know today.

As Richard mentioned, Responsible Care also owes its life to a crisis. After Bhopal, some radical thinking was needed. When you look at the radical ideas of the quality movement, they seem obvious now:

- quality comes first, not short-term profits
- the customer comes first, not the producer
- customers are the next process with no organizational barriers
- decisions are based on facts and data
- management is participatory and respectful of all employees

Even though it sounds simple, to place the customer first- and really act on it-- is a very radical concept. To place quality before profit was heresy.

And so it was when CCPA's Board of Directors invented Responsible Care. The principles of their radical thought may still be considered drastic, but I think only to those who are not familiar with it:

- we are accountable to the public
- we work for effective laws and are committed to meet or exceed them in letter and in spirit
- we are committed to do the right thing, and, to be seen to do the right thing
- we respect all people

Interestingly, when you ask the public about the chemical industry, you will generally get a low opinion, especially against environmental benchmarks. However, if you were to ask the same questions of experts in environmental sustainability, the chemical industry either ranks number one or number two.

Today, our members are judged by their peers, by the public and by experts from industry against these principles and their related codes of practice on a regular basis. These

verifications are tough, and in my company we spend hundreds of thousands of dollars, and enormous amounts of human resources, to ensure that we meet this challenge.

For our company, incorporating the Responsible Care ethic, across the company, has provided substantial benefits.

Let me name some:

- we have become much more sensitive to our community and our relationship with the community and their concerns even though this takes a lot of work;
- we find that we learn constantly from the interaction with other chemical companies about safety in the workplace, the environment and transportation issues
- finally, we are much more sensitive to the long term health and environment issues that the public is concerned about, and this helps us to be even better with our processes than any regulator could impose

Responsible Care pushes us to perform. It is in itself a discipline to improve constantly, in the right way and for the right reasons. As a relatively small company, we have seen our efforts pay off in numerous ways.

Because of stories like mine, CCPA's approach to Responsible Care has been used as the model for a number of other industries, most recently the mining industry, in creating their approach to health, safety and the environment.

It took a long time for the Japanese to be viewed as manufacturers of quality goods, and in fact "Made in Japan" used to be a sign of poor quality. Today, no one would dispute the high quality that comes from companies like Honda or Sony. Enormous changes have occurred in perception over the past 50 years. And so we too must have a long-term view of how we can change the perception of the chemical industry, from one that pollutes to one that responsibly makes products that make our lives better, healthier and safer.

As a Canadian industry, we are leaders in Responsible Care. It is now practiced in 47 countries, and our peers in all of the chemical associations still rank us number one. As the leader, it is our job to push the envelope, to distrust complacency and to inspire and educate. I thank you for the opportunity to provide this brief overview of our passion for Responsible Care.

In closing, I want to thank you for your time and invite any questions for me or Richard about our industry, communications or Responsible Care in Canada.