



Social responsibility to be assumed by chemical industry and its effectiveness

Editor's note : Dow Chemical Korea Ltd. has sponsored "RC Seminar for SMEs in Korea" last two years and also sponsored "Academy for future strategy in chemical industry" this year.

Economic development and export increase had been among the major important social concerns until recent time before these concerns has become overshadowed by such advanced issues like quality of life, distribution of wealth, and well-being. What matters more to the society nowadays is "what should we do to have a healthier life?", rather than the material wealth. In other words, growth in quality seems to have become more important than growth in quantity.

Perhaps chemical industry is experiencing the severest environmental change, in a negative aspect, which has been brought about by the changed people's perception. To society, chemical industry is seen as those who cause pollution, doing business of high risk for major accident.

I strongly feel, as a person in chemical industry, that there must be reasons to justify such negative impression of chemical industry. First we can think of the role media play in fostering such negative perception in people's mind. Media, by nature, are constantly in search of attention—getting news — the better, the more sensational and more shocking is such news. Chemical accident can be the best news material, because in most cases it turns out to be a disaster that causes fatal man-made damage to the environment.

Chemical industry, in everyday conduct, is rather quiet and cannot produce attention— getting news, except in case of accident. These accidents tend to stick to people's brain as tightly as to create negative impressions on chemical industry. We have got so used to such negative public perception that sometimes we wonder if the industry we are involved is really so bad, if our working conditions are so dangerous.

What makes chemical industry fail to gain positive impressions from the society? Chemical industry seldom comes into a direct contact with the general public, or in other words has little end-user application. Major customers of chemical industry are companies who make final goods using as the raw material the chemicals we produced. There are hardly anything in our everyday living that are not made using chemical products, but we seldom see chemicals that are used in their original form.



Chemical industry is indispensable for people to lead modern and advanced lives, but its existence is invisible and unperceivable, and here lies the difficulty of chemical industry. Structurally chemical industry can easily be exposed to negative public perception, which we should redress and cope with.

Chemical industry has made meaningful contributions to the society, while characteristically it involves high human/environment risks, which are preventable. We must be sensible enough to take control of whatever dangers/risks our living implies, which is innately not without dangers. We prefer cars to walking, even though we know cars can be more dangerous.

Our time has become so fast that it is impossible for us to stick to train instead of airplane. There are so many things to do during the leisure time made possible by using airplane instead of train, or car instead of foot. (Discussion based on the existing prevalent life style, not discussing beauty of slow living)

Koreans have developed their own taste of cooked rice, and pressure cookers—often electronic pressure cookers—are favored in most homes. We sometimes hear the news about pressure cooker explosion, however such accidents does not necessarily reduce the number of people who use pressure cooker. There is some similarity in chemical industry to the steady pressure cooker usage. Chemical industry has to try its best to keep accidents at minimum.

It is also our industry's responsibility to have a broad and longer view. We need to make people know that we are the cornerstone of the modern society and are helping the society raise the quality of their life. This is good for both industry/company and people.

Company has become, in this new age, a place where workers deal with their financial need and realize their dream. Such attitude fosters sense of ownership and brings out the best out of the workers in their creativity and competitiveness, which are the seeds for empowering. As a good example of chemical industry—led social services activity, 'Outreach' turned out to be a driving force of enhancing the competitiveness.

What can be the most effective public relations approach? The customers of chemical industry are mostly companies and general public, who carry hardly identifiable characteristics. Our social contributions to this vague multitude should therefore be performed broadly and long-term, rather than one-time product advertisement or short-term public relations efforts. Community services activities, when performed in alliance with the social organizations, will most effectively help the

society rethink the negative perception they have retained against chemical industry.

Dow Chemical Korea had long tried to find ways for social contribution, and has been sponsoring RC Academy in partnership with KRCC.

Started in the U.S. as a petrochemical company, Dow Chemical applies systematized judgment in making management/operational decisions. Social contribution follows this decision making process, in which the evaluation committee reviews ideas described in each country's social contribution program and selects programs which reveal high result expectations. Dow Chemical's sponsorship to RC Academy, which has been decided upon in accordance with this decision making process, represents Dow Chemical's global level support for Korea's RC activity, or Korean chemical industry's social contribution. We hope the efforts that we are making in this cause will bear excellent fruit in near future.



A view on the Chemical industry's social services program

Chemical industry and people's life are so closely related that people sometimes do not notice they are living in the world of chemistry. Development of most industries, including information /telecommunication, life science, space engineering, environment, and energy, depend on chemical industry. Our everyday living, housing, wearing, and even what we eat, depend on chemistry and chemical products. Despite the huge benefits we get from chemistry, our general perception about chemistry is somehow negative, because most of the things that we think threaten and contaminate the environment involve chemicals. The need for chemical industry's social services has been growing now that chemical industry, like a double-edged knife, is making tremendous influence on our life and other industry.

'Come! Fun world of chemistry', along with 'Festival for the frontiers in chemical exploration', which chemical industry offered for the purpose of improving people's perception and as part of the services to the society, has proven to be a most effective social services program.

Open for the first time in Ulsan for the 618 elementary school students, 21 teachers, and 100 volunteers, it was an exceptional opportunity for the children to enjoy the 'fragrance of chemistry', not the 'stinking chemical industry'. The students were divided into 6 groups, and toured around the program booths, where handkerchief dyeing, recycled paper making, water cooler making using PET-bottle, dry battery making using film-box, and other environment-friendly experiments were done. Featuring learning/finding science-in-living, the programs also offered handcraft sessions where the student made microscope using small glass marble, spectrum using beverage can, and bucket using static electricity. Each booth was conducted by a teacher with some assisting volunteers, while coordinating teachers were taking care of the smooth and safe program conduct. It was really inspiring to witness the excitement and enthusiasm in both the children and teachers' eyes.

The program was sponsored by Amenity, a Busan city teachers' organization, who have broad experience in arranging various national events, and for us it was another learning experience. Chemical industry, while making a huge contribution to people and other industries, generates



pollutants of various types, which is a negative side effect. Regrettably, however, the general perception of chemical industry disproportionately negative since only the negative aspects have been emphasized.

Come! Fun World of Chemistry' was a significant occasion which could restore in children's mind a very positive impression of chemistry and the industry. Generally chemical awareness raising programs in Ulsan are conducted in the form of plant visit. Visitors, on board the company- provided bus, are briefly explained about the large plant facilities and about the production process. Then they assemble in the plant auditorium where some video presentation is arranged, after which the visitors leave the plant with the gift the company have prepared. All they experience during this tour is through their eyes and ears, and they do not have to use their other senses. If a science program is offered where attendees can use their five senses, not just seeing and hearing, but also smelling, touching, and feeling, it can rightfully be called a perfect science education. In this aspect, 'Come! Fun World of Chemistry' was unprecedented in the history of chemical program sponsored either by the government or by industry. This program has definitely laid a solid foundation for helping our next generation rethink about the chronic negative perception on the subject of chemistry and about the growing reluctance to choose chemistry as their college major, pursuing other career choices.

Instead of the rote learning in the classroom, students who participated in the program experienced the subject of chemistry with their own hands, eyes, and other senses, which they could enjoy while learning. The conventional classroom science education, in which they are expected to simply recite the periodic law or chemical formula, can easily take the students' interest and enthusiasm away. Chemistry, which had been the favorite subject in the early school years to some students, often ends up being one of those knotty and boring subjects in later stage. This has become a reality both the educators and industry are facing, therefore should be addressed.

I support industry's effort in providing the society, particularly the young population, with such exemplary programs as 'Come! Fun World of Chemistry' on a regular basis. Such programs should open students' mind toward the joy of search for the knowledge, beyond touching off their curiosity and excitement. We can also bring up science talents who should become a valuable asset to the service of the society. I suggest that these programs be expanded into a national level, and also would like to see them happen more, as often as monthly or every other month. Chemical companies might need to have personnel assigned specifically with the works related to these programs, including program promotion/announcement to a broader audience, and on-the-job training programs for teachers. Teachers who have familiarized themselves with the need and significance of chemical industry, through such training opportunity, will pass on the positive industrial perception to their students. In this process, a true win-win relationship can be established between industry and society.



● Kumho P&B Chemicals Inc., plant visit & Safety/fire-fighting education for employee's children

Kumho P&B Chemicals, Inc.'s Yeosu plant (Plant Manager : Sul-Bae Park) invited 120 employee children (elementary school students) to the plant on August 12, 2005. During this visit the children learned about safety, fire extinguisher use, fire truck operation, and were also given hands-on plant tour which the plant arranged to foster children's understanding in the production site and to raise their safety awareness.

Kumho P&B Chemicals Inc. continues its efforts to make safety a corporate culture, by providing its employees with opportunities to nurture family harmony through programs like classes/cultural lectures for spouses, and workshop for husband/wife.

● LG Chem Ltd. signs MOU with KEMCO for joint-response to Convention on climatic change

LG Chem Ltd. (President : Ki-Ho No) and Korea Energy Management Corporation(KEMCO) signed 'Memorandum of Understanding on Joint-response to Convention on climatic change' for the cooperation in the reduction of greenhouse gas on September 27, 2005 at the Grand Intercontinental Hotel.



As a first MOU to be made in Korea between private company and government organization as to Convention on climatic change, the signing was arranged in mutual recognition of the need for closer cooperation.

● Daelim Industrial Co., Ltd.'s Yeosu plant recognized as environment-friendly company

Daelim Industrial Co. Ltd.'s Yeosu plant (President : Joo-Hee Han) was presented with a certificate from the Youngsan River Environment Office on July 10, 2005 in recognition of the environment-friendly plant management. The official recognition holds for 3 years beginning July 4, 2005 until July 3, 2008.

Daelim Industrial Co. Ltd.'s Yeosu plant has since its acquisition of ISO 0001 & 14001 put in major efforts and investments in product development and environmental control, and its entire employees have been involved in the improvement of safety/health management.

● Two member companies changed their names

Among the KRCC member companies, SK Enron changed its name to 'SK E&S' and Shinho Petrochemical Co., Ltd. changed its name to 'SH Chemical Co., Ltd.