

Title: Take An Activist.... And How Do You Deal With Him/Her ?

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Take An Activist Apart and What Do You Have?

And How Do You Deal With Him/Her?

These excerpts are from remarks made by Ronald A. Duchin, senior vice president, Mongoven, Biscoe & Duchin, Inc., a research and analysis firm in Washington, D.C. The remarks were part of a session on "Social Activism in the '90s" at the NCA convention in Dallas.

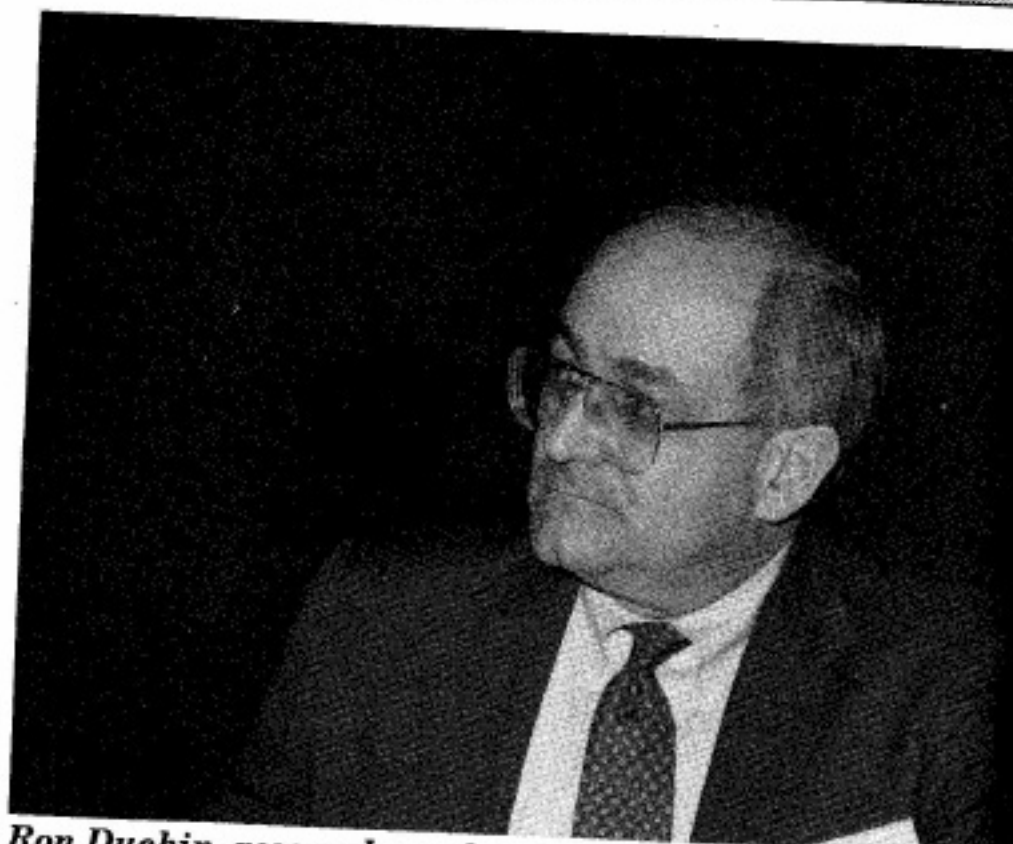
My mission is to present you an overview of the role of special interest groups, such as the environmental movement, consumer affairs groups and the animal rights movement, in shaping public policy regarding the cattle industry.

In addition to studying these groups for corporations and industry, I am also a cattleman. My wife and I run a good-sized Limousin and Charolais cow and calf operation in the Kentucky Bluegrass. When I say "good-sized," I mean relative to Kentucky farms, not relative to the acres and herds that you folks worry about.

To define the people and groups that I will discuss, allow me to tell you that the people we are discussing all fall under the term "activists." In one way or another we all are activists. However, the activists we are concerned about here are the ones who want to change the way your industry does business — either for good or bad reasons: environmentalists, churches, PIRGS [Public Interest Research Groups], campus organizations, civic groups, teachers unions and "Nader-ites."

There are a great many forces and pressures that play against the cattle business; there are probably a lot more than I've mentioned.

To demonstrate further, look at the issue concerning a product called Bovine Somatotropine, commonly known as BST. Most of you know it very well. So do I because we work for Monsanto on the issue.



Ron Duchin, research analyst in Washington, D.C., gave a superb analysis of the "activist situation" for the cattle industry. He is senior vice president at Mongoven, Biscoe & Duchin.

Monsanto is the leading developer of BST.

BST is a synthetic hormone produced by biotechnology. It has been shown to increase milk production in dairy cows by 10 to 25

percent. Yet it is under attack by a plethora of public interest groups including churches, the animal rights people, consumer advocates, small dairy farmers and environmental activists.

Jerry Bohn, left, manager at Pratt Feeders, Pratt Ks. with Steve Pierce, Cedar Bluff Cattle Co., Ellis, Ks.



As we discuss special interest groups I want you to be aware of a way to make understanding of activist objectives and issues a little easier — particularly when you ask yourself, "Why is this or that such a problem to these people?" or "Why are they doing this?"

Keep in mind that there is an overlapping nature of the predominant philosophical underpinnings of people who are the "movers and shakers" in the activist movement.

The Radicals

The following attributes can generally be found in radical organizations and individuals:

- want to change the system
- have underlying socio-economic/political motives
- anti-corporate (see the multinational corporation as inherently evil)
- winning is unimportant on a specific issue
- can be extremist/violent
- involvement in a particular issue can be a diversion from pursuit of their real (unarticulated) goals

The Opportunists

The public policy process breeds opportunists because the process offers visibility, power, followers and, perhaps, even employment. Many activist leaders are professionals; they move from cause to cause and from organization to organization. The quintessential opportunist in public policy of the foundation for economic trends, is Jeremy Rifkin, who has spent his entire adult life fighting corporations, capitalism and the status quo in general. Yet Rifkin is not truly a radical in that he is quick to move to the forefront of a change in direction in public policy if that comes about. He is the main opponent of BST.

The key to dealing with opportunists is to provide them with at least the perception of a partial victory. The true opportunist is not interested in reality and will be happy to have his/her followers move in another direction if that works to his/her benefit. Generally, the favorable shift in the opportunist's position occurs near the end of the public policy process when it be-

comes clear what the public policy is, in fact, going to be. If the opportunist is then provided the chance to be a participant in that final determination of policy, he/she has his/her victory and he/she is satisfied.

Another important aspect of the opportunist is that if they find that their followers have changed their direction, he/she will rush to get back in front of the crowd. A more difficult aspect of the opportunist is that, in order to stay in a leadership position, he/she will sometimes have to take a more radical position than others, vying for leadership in order to maintain control. Thus, the direction of an opportunist is at best unsure but he/she can be relied upon at the conclusion of the process if handled properly.

The following attributes can generally be found in opportunists organizations and individuals:

- exploit issues for their own personal agenda
- only involved in an issue if personal gain available
- can be (but not normally)

(Continued on page 14)

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Take An Activist Apart

(Continued from page 9)

extremist/violent

- altruism extends to seeking no apparent or direct personal benefit
- follows the crowd — from the front
- may become more radical to maintain "leadership"
- will not sacrifice self at any price for victory on the issue

The Idealists

The following attributes can generally be found in idealist organizations and individuals:

- usually are altruistic
- apply an ethical and moral standard
- generally unaware of unforeseen consequences
- normally are emotionally involved
- usually are naive

Idealists want a perfect world and find it easy to brand any product or practice which can be shown to mar that perfection as evil. Because of their intrinsic altruism, however, and because they have nothing perceptible to be gained by holding their position, they are easily believed by both the media and the public and, sometimes, even the politicians.

Pure ecologists and religious individuals and organizations frequently take idealist positions on environmental issues without regard for the ultimate consequences of the application of their espoused public policy.

Again, because of their altruism, the idealists are hard to deal with. As long as their motivation remains pure their credibility for the positions they support will be viable.

Idealists must be cultivated and one should respect their position. It has been arrived at through a sense of justice. They must be educated.

Certain of the idealists, namely those organizations with a major commitment to ethical behavior (e.g., churches), do have a vulnerable point. If they can be shown that their position in opposition to an industry or its products causes harm to others and cannot be ethically

justified, they are forced to change their position.

Once the idealist is made fully aware of the long-term consequences or the wide ranging ramifications of his/her position in terms of other issues of justice and society, she/he can be made into a realist.

Without support of the realists and the idealists the positions of radicals and opportunists are seen to be shallow and self-serving.

Thus, while a realist must be negotiated with, an idealist must be educated. Generally this education process requires great sensitivity and understanding on the part of the educator.

The Realists

The following attributes can generally be found in realist organizations and leaders:

- can look beyond the issue at hand
- understand the consequences
- can live with trade-offs
- willing to work within the system
- not interested in radical change
- pragmatic

The realists should always receive the highest priority in any strategy dealing with a public policy issue.

It is very important to work with and cooperate with the realists. This means meeting with them, sharing information and data with them, listening to their concerns and being open to the point of view that the industry's corporate agreed-upon solution to a problem may not be the only, or even the best, solution.

In most issues, it is the solution agreed upon by the realists which becomes the accepted solution, especially when business participates in the decision making process.

If business opts out of the policy process, the voices of the idealists and the radicals take on more strength.

For example, the insurance industry in California could have lived with realistic reform of the

auto insurance system, but chose instead to spend \$50 million in all-out confrontation. Thus, the radicals and idealists carried the day and the realists who favored reform were forced to support them, because there was nowhere else to go.

A typical example of a realist organization with which this industry should work is the **Izaak Walton League**.

My analysis and experience indicates that realist leaders and groups are the best candidates for constructive dialogue leading to mutually satisfactory solutions. Idealists often can be convinced over time to take a more realistic view. If your industry can successfully bring about these relationships, the credibility of the radicals will be lost and the opportunists can be counted on to share in the final policy resolution.

As for working with public interest groups, I want you to see where they fit in the public policy development process.

I have learned that an industry has to stop any issue at a particular critical juncture — between the point where a radical group begins to push an issue and when the issue becomes accepted by credible groups. After that, over time, an industry has less and less control. Ultimately, a new public policy is adopted.

The Environmental Groups

Public concern about the environment seems as ubiquitous as the environment itself. As a public policy issue, genuine concern for preserving or enhancing our environmental heritage and the safety of our surroundings has no equal in the public consciousness.

Today there are more than 11,000 environmental groups. The vast majority are dedicated to special local purposes but their ability to form alliances and execute networking arrangements for mutual support increases constantly.

The Group Of Ten

Since mid-1981, ten of the largest

(Continued on page 18)

National

Thomas M. Cook has been named vice president of government affairs for the National Cattlemen's Association (NCA). Cook replaces Burton Eller, who has assumed the position of executive vice president of the NCA. Cook joined the American National Cattlemen's Association in 1973. He has served as associate director of government affairs in the Washington office since 1981.

Colorado

The Colorado Cattle Feeders Association has named Mike

Brokaw as the director of animal health and education.

Funeral services were held recently for Jerry Jackson, sales representative for Hoechst-Roussel. Jackson lived in Lakewood, Co.

Texas


Pioneer cattle feeder W. R. (Budd) Thurber passed away recently. Thurber built Pre-Feeders Feedyard (now Seven X Cattle Feeders) in 1968.

Jeff Purvines has been named manager of Hartley Feeders at Hartley, Tx. Purvines was previ-

ously manager of Lone Star Feedyard at Happy, Tx.

Company News

Sam Cuditon is the new assistant manager for information systems at Lexton, Inc. Cuditon replaces Mark Rathjen in that position. He will headquarter out of the Great Plains Chemical office in Garden City, Kan.

Dave Blickenstaff of Pueblo Veterinary Co. has received the highest sales award possible from Syntex Animal Health, Inc. Blickenstaff was appointed to the President's Council for the sixth time. 

Take An Activist Apart

(Continued from page 14)

environmental organizations in the United States have been working together in a loose confederation to coordinate some of their activities for protecting the nation's natural resources. This alliance, called the "Group of Ten," includes major environmental organizations.

Leaders of the Group Of Ten meet approximately once a quarter to coordinate ongoing efforts to protect the environment. The organizations coordinate (in a variety of ways described as "loosely") many activities, ranging from funding of projects and writing news releases to determining which member organizations will take the lead on certain issues. This collaboration allows each organization to focus its strengths on one or two specific issues and avoids wasteful repetition of efforts by the organizations.

If it chooses, the Group Of Ten is able to bring formidable resources into the environmental debate. Each organization is structured differently and has varying degrees

of expertise, whether it be scientific, education, lobbying, legal or coalition building and networking. Several of the organizations including The National Wildlife Federation, NAS, Sierra Club and Izaak Walton League have affiliates in nearly every state.

The close working relationship between the organizations is further enhanced by the fact that many individuals serve as board members of two or more of the organizations. In many cases, these individuals also serve as directors of non-Group of Ten organizations, thus keeping the larger environmental movement informed of new projects being initiated by the largest organizations. In addition, many of the leaders of Group Of Ten organizations are former government officials who maintain strong contacts with federal agencies and staffs charged with protecting the environment.

In late 1988, eight members of the Group Of Ten joined with ten other environmental organizations to create a "blueprint for the environment." The document, which included more than 700 specific

recommendations for federal action to protect the environment, was presented to then President-elect Bush in November, 1988. The document contained input from various task forces made up of members of the Group Of Ten and other organizations. The driving force behind the document's production was the National Wildlife Federation. The participating organizations received generous donations from eight major philanthropic foundations to support work on the project.

These groups have significant budgets. Because of their resources the groups litigate and lobby very effectively in Washington, D.C. and most state capitals.

The Grassroots Organizations

These grassroots environmental organizations are very important for a number of reasons. First of all, they provide the networks whereby the more than 11,000 local environmental organizations keep each other informed, learn tactics and develop resources and training. Perhaps more significantly, how-

(Continued on page 20)