

Strategic Communications

A Renewable Energy Company Faces A Crisis

The Challenge: An explosion occurred at a renewable energy manufacturing plant that led to a worker fatality. The explosion prompted a government review and revived community discontent toward the company. The incident presented three challenges for the company: the government review; community frustration over the company's perceived lack of communications, and the prospect that the plant's operations could be restricted or shut down.

The Solution: The company hired Womble Carlyle to devise a communications strategy that would improve its reputation in the community without jeopardizing the integrity of the government review. Womble Carlyle's plan included:

- **Strategic outreach:** Womble Carlyle arranged for the company to provide local elected officials with their first overview of plant operations. The purpose was to dispel myths about the plant's operations and emphasize the company's commitment to the region. The company later hosted officials for their first tour of the plant to demonstrate how state-of-the-art standards and technologies minimized the impact of the incident. Womble Carlyle's plan also encouraged periodic get-togethers at which company officials and elected leaders would exchange information and maintain relations.
- **Corporate Citizenship:** Womble Carlyle identified philanthropic and other opportunities designed to strengthen ties between the company and the community. Opportunities included a scholarship for local students, annual picnics on company grounds for neighboring residents, greater involvement in civic groups, and aesthetic improvements on company grounds to alleviate concerns of surrounding neighbors.
- **Information Campaign:** To educate residents about the company, its local workforce, and the benefits of its product, our team designed brochures and "Frequently Asked Questions" for wide distribution. The purpose was to put a local face on a company that many in the community knew nothing about. We also armed local elected leaders with information to help them answer questions from their constituents.
- **Media Relations:** Our media advisors coached company representatives on ground rules for interacting with the press and devised a strategy for responding to the release of the government's findings. We also helped the company sharpen its message when appearing before community hearings, members of the press, and other large audiences.


The Result: Within four months, the company secured approval to resume operations at its plant. The company currently enjoys stronger relations with local elected officials and has undertaken key civic and philanthropic efforts to establish a lasting bond with the surrounding community.

Womble Carlyle offers unique value by providing superior legal counsel and innovative media strategies under one roof. Our strategic communications team, with a combined seventy years of communications experience, offers crisis communications, interview and public speaking training, and media relations expertise.

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