

2012 GC3 Roundtable

Implementing Corporate-Wide Chemicals Management Programs:  
Business-NGO Guide to Safer Chemicals

May 10, 2012

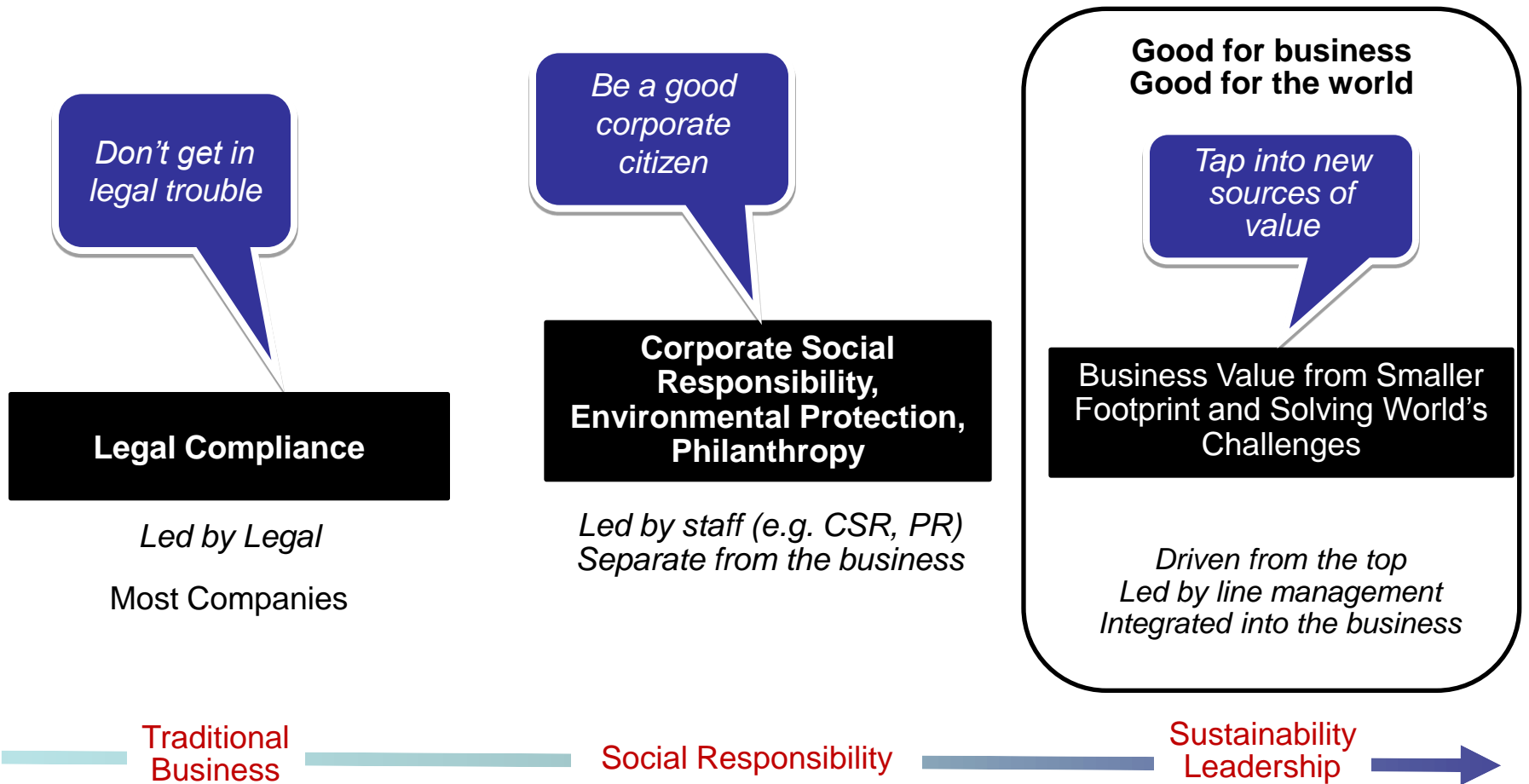
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that was easy:

# Our business customers approach chemicals management and pollution prevention in different ways



# Presentation Outline

- Our Commitments
- Measuring and reporting progress
- Unexpected successes and hurdles
- What if?

# Our Commitments

- Endorsed the BizNGO Principles for Safer Chemicals.
- Announced Staples “Race to the Top” Sustainability Initiative.
- Developed a “Bad Actors” RSL.
- Drafted a Staples “Chemicals Policy”

# Measuring and Reporting Progress

- Voluntary elimination of 2-butoxyethanol from all Staples Brand Cleaning products.
  - Initially, 45% of our cleaning products contained 2-butoxyethanol
  - Today 0% of our cleaning products contain 2-butoxyethanol
- Voluntary elimination of nonyl phenol ethoxylates in all Staples Brand cleaning products.
  - Initially, 60% of our cleaning products contained NPE
  - Today 0% of our cleaning products contain NPE
- Voluntary elimination of PVC in all Staples Brand packaging.
- Collaboration with suppliers to identify and offer BPA Free thermal paper.

# Measuring and Reporting Progress

How are businesses benchmarking and reporting on progress to safer chemicals?

- Eco labeling – Measurable but most do not include enough chemical information.
  - Challenge: De minimis reporting levels and CBI claims limit chemical information.
- Life Cycle Assessments – Measurable but LCAs do not include enough chemical information.
  - Challenge: The most toxic materials can have the most favorable LCA scores.
- Restricted Substances List – Measurable but typically self reported and not comprehensive list.
- Supplier Scorecards and Rewards
- Corporate CSR and Sustainability Reporting

# Unexpected Hurdles

- Lack of awareness or urgency inside our organization.
- MSDS or SDS – Not a trusted or comprehensive source.
- Supplier skepticism and reluctance to share chemical information beyond regulatory requirements.
- Large number of data gaps especially related to human health and environmental impacts.
- Chemical industry lobbying of their customers who are our suppliers.

# Unexpected Successes

- Widespread supplier support for our “Race to the Top” Sustainability Strategy.
- Less resistance than expected in response to our “Bad Actors” RSL.
- Safer alternatives in some cases already exist.
- Maker of the chemical of concern had a safer alternative already available.



What if business customers considered toxins and chemicals of concern in products to be:

- Pollutants
- Contaminants
- Defects

# Disruptive “What If?” Scenarios

What if business customers applied a modern day Hippocratic Protocol?

- Our fundamental product design objective will be **“To do no harm”**
- Our priority is on **pollution prevention** at product design stage
- We will make **hazard elimination** a top priority during product design

# Disruptive “What If?” Scenarios

What if business customers took a precautionary approach and were guided by the following?

When there is credible evidence that a chemical in a product may result in harm to human and/or environmental health, we should strive to eliminate the chemical and replace it with a quality, affordable, safer and more sustainable alternative.

# Disruptive “What If?” Scenarios

What if a chemical company business that claim chemicals of concern in their products as trade secrets and CBI placed at least equal value on their customer's:

- Right-to-Know
- Right-to-Choose

# Disruptive “What If?” Scenarios

What if businesses considered direct and indirect exposure on vulnerable sub-populations such as children when they designed or selected chemicals and products ?

“Children and workers are two groups within the population who are particularly vulnerable to toxic hazards in the environment. ... It is imperative that we develop policies that will protect the health of our children now and in the future. ... Primary prevention of occupational disease requires elimination or reduction of hazardous exposures.”

Landrigan P and Garg A. *Vulnerable Populations*.  
In: McCally M, editor, *Life Support: The Environment and Human Health*, Cambridge, MA:  
The MIT Press, 2002



# The Ultimate Decision Maker

There is only one boss. The customer. And he or she can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending their money somewhere else.

Sam Walton

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**Thank You**



that was easy: