

The New Environment for Environmentalists

By DAVID THOMAS

In the six years since *Chemical Business*' first look at the chemical industry's environmental executives, much has changed. Most notably, an amalgamation of federal laws under which the industry now operates has made waste reduction a financial imperative for chemical companies. To meet the challenge, several top corporations have promoted their head environmental personnel to the vice-presidential level where they can exercise the authority of the executive suite. They now appear to be key players within their companies, fully integrated into the actual business operations and decisions of their corporations.

One of the more outspoken of the CPI, Monsanto Co., St. Louis, is led by Richard Mahoney, considered an environmentally proactive CEO. It may be no coincidence that Nicholas L. Reding, executive vice-president for environment, health and safety, enjoys considerable latitude in shaping the environmental direction of the corporation. Reding readily credits his CEO with

initiating that corporation's aggressive environmental stance. "Up to this point Richard Mahoney has been the driving force, and that's the way it should be. It ought to be the company looking to the CEO and hearing from him."

According to Bill Chapman, assistant general manager of services at Texaco Chemical Co., Houston, "Because of the attention that environmental aspects are

receiving both outside the company and within, if Jim Kmiecik (environmental manager) or one of our coordinators were to be in contact with a plant about a certain matter, he would have direct access to the plant manager. Also, when we speak, we speak with the authority of the president."

At Dow Chemical Co., Midland, David Buzzelli, executive vice-president of the environmental, health and safety department, comments, "I don't think there is any tendency here to distinguish this type of position from a profit-oriented position. I think that one of the key changes we have made is elevating the whole environmental, health and safety arena in the company." He adds that, in general, the future managers of Dow are going to be made up of people who have had an experience in environmental management.

Chapman, as well as several others, note major changes in the integration of the environmental departments into the business operations of the corporations. "If you really want to have commitment to the environment, you just can't have a stand-alone little group directing things."

The responsibilities and power wielded by the environmental directors varies from corporation to corporation, ranging from mere oversight regulatory compliance and legal issues to managing the research, development, and implementation of new environmental strategies. For example, as Dow's environmental executive for worldwide operations, Buzzelli's duties are far-ranging and include communicating the company's environmental goals internally "so that we can get each and every one of our employees acting as an environmentalist" within the corporation; external communication of the company's performance and goals; finding ways to continually upgrade the company's environmental performance, and taking a leadership role in improving the industry's performance in North America and around the world.

Buzzelli finds that one important area of responsibility that has emerged for today's corporate environmentalists is inspiring active employee participation



Monsanto's Reding:
"You have to do it in
an economic fashion."



Dow's Buzzelli:
"Get employees acting
as environmentalists."