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TO: Executive Addressed

FR: James M. Alexander, President, eWatch

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RE: Counteracting Anti-Corporate Activism on the Net, Part II - Be an Activist Yourself

It takes one to defeat one. Companies lose to activists primarily because they are less committed to winning than activists are committed to defeating those they attack.

Know what the activist knows. Understand the pattern of activist attack; go outside the pattern. Keep your cool. Stay focused. Remain relentless, but positive. Assess the actual damage; forecast potential damage. Here is a brief battle strategy to counteract predictable patterns of attack:

Attack (*They will . . .*)

1. Polarize the issue. No matter what, you're 120% in the wrong.
2. Build a base on the web; use E-mail lists; post to bulletin boards to create support for their cause.
3. Trivialize, emotionalize, insult, and humiliate; pick a web address like "companysucks.com."
4. Anger, irritate, debilitate, violate trademarks, and misinterpret every response; force your hand by intentionally provoking a legal response to showcase on their site.
5. Use ultimatums; bombard the company with "last chances" to correct allegations, charges, and "testimony" before "going live" and staging demonstrations.
6. Register their site on search engines - in your corporate section, if possible.
7. Post messages on electronic bulletin boards to promote their cause; promote their site; locate others suffering from the same problems; find disgruntled employees willing to help.

Counterattack (*You will . . .*)

1. Point out the exaggeration; admit errors; outline action steps.
2. Assess the actual damage; estimate potential damage; determine need for preemptive action.
3. Create a neat, clean, corporate-looking response site; contrast your legitimacy with their juvenile, trivial approach.
4. Choose your battles carefully; respond calmly, deliberately, succinctly, competently, incrementally. Stay focused; use appropriate language for the medium and key themes.
5. Respond carefully, positively, candidly, politely. If in the wrong, correct the problem. Point out errors; point out emotionalism; insist on independent, unbiased proof. Be cool.
6. Register your response site in the same manner; when resolved, remove listings.
7. Monitor the Internet; assess actual impact. Discourage loyal employees from responding on your behalf; respond only if necessary. Have erroneous posts removed from search engines.

8. Work the news media; target specific journalists who cover your company or industry. The media never tire of finding ways to attack business.
8. Direct journalists to your response site. Point out the exaggeration; admit errors; outline action steps. Avoid whining.

Internet activism is a permanent fact of business life. Get used to it; get ready for it. Act decisively. Activists rarely win against honorable organizations. There may be momentary damage, embarrassment, and humiliation. Activists win when genuine problems are ignored, issues remain unexplained, or behaviors simply don't pass the smell test. Activist success requires energetic, negative responses from their targets. Without it they have little choice but to move on.

If you would like additional information on other counteractive approaches, please visit our Web site at www.e911.com. For information on monitoring anti-corporate activism online, visit www.ewatch.com.

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