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**TO: Executive Addressed**

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**RE: Eight Axioms of Takeover Survival Communication, Part I**

Managing takeover communication means recognizing the patterns of success, failure, defeat, and victory. Understanding these patterns in advance enables preparation of a plan for management's actions, responses, and expectations before, during, and after takeover situations, no matter what the outcome. To survive, grow with the experience, and remain in management's good graces, take these powerful hints to heart:

1. Neither the media, your opponents, nor the government know enough to discredit you. Defeat and mistakes are almost always the work of co-workers, associates, well-meaning friends, or, most frequently, organizational dysfunction.
2. Keeping the issues and focus tight will position you as an expert communicator, allowing you and the organization to move forward with maximum control and organization. Others in the industry, outsiders, and the media cannot and will not solve your problems (they don't care), nor can you solve theirs. In fact, they enjoy having someone other than themselves in the spotlight. You will solve your own problems with advance planning and the help of advisors.
3. Takeover actions or rumors rarely kill products or companies unless you let them. A company may ultimately not remain independent but may, in fact, be acquired in an organized fashion maximizing the talents of all involved. Tough questions, bad stories, and real damage are caused by egos and negative attitudes fed by mismanaged or unclear communication.
4. The lack of effective proactive approaches and anticipating the issues gives the enemy the leading edge. Too frequently companies are surprised and not prepared to deal with the issues and adversaries involved head-on. Preparation, in advance, thwarts attacks and dissension.
5. Colorful and memorable language creates headlines and inspires the opposition. It is often impossible to live down. Stating the facts clearly, concisely, and being available for explanation diminishes the impact of negative publicity.
6. Twenty-five percent of today's resources and 30 percent of today's energy during takeovers goes toward fixing yesterday's mistakes.
7. Positive, aggressive, assertive communication limits follow-up questions, focuses on the most important aspects of the problem, and moves the entire process forward to resolution despite a negative environment or an antagonistic news media. Actions speak loudly. Negative words and actions are louder, less productive, and will be remembered.
8. Management benefits from swift, well thought out communication of future actions and truths related to the past. Be honest, be up-front, and be available. Listen.

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