

CONSUMER PRODUCTS: INOCULATING AN ACTIVIST BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN MARKETPLACE DEFENSE CASE STUDY

our client

Leading global paper and consumer goods/personal care product company

the issue

A coalition of prominent environmental activist organizations waged a boycott campaign aimed at stopping our client from sourcing certain raw materials in one of its major supply chains.

the challenge

Our client was facing a multipronged attack from organizations known to use extreme tactics to achieve their ends. The environmental activists working against our client had been successful in securing one-sided traditional and online media coverage and had managed to mobilize their extensive networks to garner support for boycott activities.

the opportunity

We adopted the mindset that the coalition of environmental organizations would need a public relations victory while the company needed to protect its bottom line. Ultimately, our client could give its adversaries credit for helping it “see the light,” a mutually beneficial outcome for both parties that would subside the assault on our client.

the plan

We developed a long-term strategy to preserve ongoing business operations for as long as possible, while reducing the reputational damage from the withering campaign against the company. We proposed entering into negotiations with the activist coalition to buy time as our client worked through more tangible, permanent solutions.

We created an internal timeline for evolution in the supply chain that would mollify our adversaries without harming the business, and ultimately steered a settlement with the activist organization toward this timeline.

These factors all played a tremendous role in creating the conditions for an outcome that would prove to be mutually advantageous for our client and the environmental organizations.

the result

In 10 months, we were able to bring an end to the boycott campaign and announced a partnership between our client and the activist organizations in promoting new industry practices for harvesting wood. We secured an agreement from the activists that they would negotiate with our client regarding other business practices in the future rather than launch public boycott campaigns. The partnership agreement garnered positive media coverage and supportive commentary from our client's customer base and ultimately restored the reputation of our client.

Our client was able to return its focus to its business operations and its environmental adversaries moved on after cementing the negotiations.