



New Allies Lead an Effective Corporate Responsibility Strategy Campaign for Safe Cosmetics

Overview

Beldon support helped transform a small advocacy effort based in California into a national corporate responsibility campaign with far-reaching impact. Led by the Breast Cancer Fund, the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics calls attention to the health dangers posed by harmful chemicals in cosmetics and other personal care products. The campaign has attracted powerful spokespeople - including nurses, actresses, teen advocates, beauty queens and breast cancer survivors. And it has extended its reach by joining forces with Beldon's environmental grantees - particularly the multi-state SAFER coalition and the Environmental Working Group – as well as labor, public health, parent's, women's and consumer rights groups.

Impact

The campaign's effective public education and advocacy has influenced both the marketplace and public policies. By 2009, more than 1,000 U.S. companies had signed its Compact for Safe Cosmetics, pledging to reformulate products to meet the higher safety standards set by the European Union and to replace chemicals of concern with safer alternatives. The European experience is particularly instructive. Businesses selling to the EU market have found that they can adhere to safety regulations without compromising their bottom line.

The campaign's efforts have also led to the passage of the California Safe Cosmetics Act of 2005 that now serves as a template for policy change in other states. Its web site (www.SafeCosmetics.org) and the popular *Skin Deep* data base, an interactive personal-care product safety guide developed and run by the Environmental Working Group, are now often-cited sources of information as well as mobilization tools.

Despite persistent opposition from the personal care products industry, the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics is persuading a growing number of companies to consider replacing harmful chemicals with safer alternatives. According to Jeanne Rizzo, executive director of the Breast Cancer Fund, this success reflects Beldon's emphasis on bridging divides.

"Beldon insists on dialogue. We have to sit at a lot of tables to get this work done, and they look for groups that can move across these lines and bring others into the conversation," said Ms. Rizzo. "We will take on companies, but we will also talk to companies."