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TEOLLISUUDEN VOIMA OY - INDUSTRIAL POWER COMPANY LTD
LOCAL INFORMATION ACTIVITY

BY
TAINA ENGROS
INFORMATION MANAGER
I might start by telling something about the circumstances and the environment in which the Industrial Power Company Ltd (TVO) maintains its local information activity.

There are two nuclear power producers in Finland - the state-owned power company Imatran Voima Oy which operates two 440 MW Soviet-made PWR units in southern Finland, east of Helsinki. The other one, the company employing myself, is Teollisuuden Voima Oy - Industrial Power Company Ltd, or TVO, which is owned by Finnish industrial companies. Of TVO's owners, about one half represent private companies, the other half companies owned by the Finnish state or some other public sector. For its owners, TVO produces electricity at cost price. TVO operates two 710 MW ABB ATOM BWR units producing about one fifth of the country's electricity consumption. Operating experiences are extremely good from all Finnish nuclear power plants.

The Olkiluoto plant is located on the south-western coast of Finland, near the town of Rauma. Rauma is one of the oldest towns in Finland, with its own traditional culture and, among others, its own dialect that people from other parts of Finland find hard to understand. The town has some substantial industries although sea-faring used to be the main trade in the old days.

Olkiluoto is situated quite close to the town of Rauma, at a distance of only 13 kilometres as the crow flies. By road, the distance is 25 kilometres. Rauma has about 35,000 inhabitants. The Olkiluoto plant is not, however, with the area of the town, but in the municipality of Eurajoki, a rural community of about 6,000 inhabitants. Between Rauma and Eurajoki lies also the Rural Community of Rauma with its border extending at some points a few hundred meters into the Olkiluoto plant area.
Habitation in the area has been quite minimal. When the power plant units were built in mid-70's, none of the inhabitants were forced to move. For the attitude of the local inhabitants, this was a positive factor.

The plant site is on an island with bridges connecting it to the mainland. Only two families reside on the power plant island.

THE EASY AND DIFFICULT AREAS IN LOCAL INFORMATION ACTIVITY

The Finns' attitude towards nuclear power has changed into a positive direction in recent times. This can probably be noted as an international trend now that the Chernobyl accident is becoming an incident of the past.

Just before this accident the time was considered ripe in Finland for new nuclear power plant decisions. Chernobyl caused the government to freeze these plans. The present government policy is also against new nuclear power plant decisions. However, it can be noted that opposition is not as strong anymore and the Government may already have a different view on this matter.

The Finnish citizens and politicians are facing two questions; first, what is their attitude towards nuclear power as a source of energy, in other words, do they approve of the plants currently in operation. The second question is how they stand on the building of new plants. It is probably another universal phenomenon that the attitudes of people living in the vicinity of nuclear power plants are less critical than the attitudes of those living farther away.

- This does not, by any means, result in local information activity being easier or less important than nationwide information activity. On the contrary, local decision-makers, local media and inhabitants are those who can, and through whom we can, influence also wider circles. The Nuclear Energy Act, which became effective in Finland last year, defines that the final decision on whether nuclear power plants can be built inside a municipality, is made at local level.
As far as TVO is concerned, one factor making local information activity easier is the small size of the locality. In Eurajoki almost every family has a member or a friend who is involved with the power company. This makes people realize that the company's employees are ordinary people and this everyday-touch diminishes the element of drama.

The difficulty we have to face is the people's suspicion of information activity. All information is considered propaganda, regardless of its form, and only negative news are considered information. Also, a large proportion of people are passive. You have to provide them with information directly and not expecting them to ask for it themselves.

For TVO, a particular difficulty arising from the fact that the plants are located in a small municipality, is that they increase the wealth of the municipality in the form of considerable tax income. People living in neighbouring municipalities, on the other hand, may feel that they are left with all the drawbacks with nothing to gain.

CONTACTS WITH LOCAL PRESS

I do not believe I can tell you anything new of how to deal with the press. I am sure that all of you have in some way or another been involved with these contacts.

Let me, however, briefly state our objectives:

- The reporters should learn to know the company employees both as experts in their own field and as persons. For this reason, visits, telephone contacts and social events where we can learn to know each other as persons are a very important form of basic information activity. If a reporter knows you well as a person, or as a friend, he probably will
not write of unpleasant things; at least, not without verifying his facts first. Naturally, this means that those responsible for the information activity and for local contacts have to use their whole personality, also outside office and office hours. Is everybody then willing to this; that depends on the company's personnel policy and the availability of information inside the company. Everybody representing the company to the outside world must have enough knowledge and be certain of what he/she is talking about.

Closely connected to what was said above, is the building up and maintaining of trust. One cannot always tell everything, but one must never lie. We have to attempt at building up a relationship based on mutual confidence to make it possible to discuss also difficult matters. This is a beautiful thought, but in practice it is not always so easy. A good journalist may have to struggle between the demands of his own ethics and his friendships. Therefore, one should always carefully consider whether some fact is worth concealing and what would the negative effects be if things were told as they are. Very often these negative effects are not as important as the loss of confidence. One negative experience requires ten positive ones to achieve balance. Somebody has said that confidence once lost can never be restored.

CONTACTS WITH LOCAL DECISION-MAKERS

Something that applies to both journalists and to decision-makers is that one should know them personally. After shared interests, perhaps outside office hours, and after years of cooperation we may learn to take into consideration also the other party's opinions even if we do not agree with them.

A difficult aspect connected with local decision-makers is the weight of politics and the person's own image. If he is known for an anti-nuclear power image, he has to keep up this role even if he
in personal discussions revealed different kinds of thoughts. Also, a person whose party is against nuclear power, faces quite strong pressure from his own circle if he dares to express opinions in favour of nuclear energy.

In TVO, it has been our policy from the very start to take local inhabitants and, most of all, local decision-makers, into consideration as a particularly important target group. We have tried to ensure that local decision-makers are informed of things before or at least at the same time as the media. Often we also provide them with more detailed information.

In the year 1974 when the construction works were started in the plant area, and even before that, local information activity mainly took the form of arranging large assemblies and discussion forums for all of the inhabitants.

Matters were naturally discussed in small groups and at cabinet level, but there were no regular forms.

After the mid-70's, when the works were fully under way, we made it a habit to invite the municipal councils and boards from Eurajoki, our "own" municipality, from the town of Rauma and the Rural Community of Rauma to an assembly once a year to be told about the progress of the situation.

This is, however, a very strenuous habit. Infrequent assemblies with a large number of participants left gaps into the reporting process. The most important yield of these occasions were the dinners after which, in the late hours, perhaps aided by a few drinks, significant questions were brought up; questions that people had not dared to make earlier in the assembly.

Although these occasions, to some extent, fulfilled their purpose, they did not, however, achieve the goal of local information activity - provide the representative with such a good idea of the situation that they are able to pass the information further.
MUNICIPALITIES' COOPERATION COMMITTEE

In 1978 it was decided to set up a cooperation committee of municipalities around Olkiluoto. Apart from the three earlier mentioned municipalities, five other neighbouring municipalities were invited to join the committee.

The municipalities were asked to self select 2-3 representatives to this cooperation committee, which became known as the KYT-committee (an abbreviation from the committee's Finnish name).

Ever since the committee was set up, it has convened regularly and last year celebrated its tenth anniversary.

In every committee meeting, all plant incidents are discussed in detail. Also reports to and by the authorities, that is the Centre for Radiation and Nuclear Safety in Finland, are presented and commented by TVO professional staff.

Apart from actual production reports, an introductory lecture is given at each meeting on a topic that is current or has been requested by the members of the committee. We have spoken about safety, waste management, plant technology, various smaller projects, the global and national energy situation or any other topic that the members have been interested in. The principle has been that there are no subjects on which we could not talk.

The committee members are selected by the local government for one election period which is four years. During that period they acquire a lot of expertise and naturally this knowledge remains with them even if they are not re-elected.

An important thing we have noted is that people who have very critical opinions to start with often adopt more positive attitudes with time as they learn more. Then their questions and comments begin to be expressions of their role as opponents rather than actual criticism or demand for information.
A committee such as this naturally cannot operate or produce results without constant attention. Our principle has been that the representatives of the various municipalities take turns in acting as chairmen at the meetings. The executor, secretary and organizer, on the other hand, is always the representative of the power company; in other words, myself.

The organizer shall at all times see to it

- that the meetings are held regularly and when special circumstances arise, the meeting is summoned at a short notice

- that contact with also individual committee members is maintained all the time

- that the members consider themselves as important representatives of their municipalities

- that all possible information material is sent to the members

- that the members are treated as local VIP's

- that outside experts or authorities are invited to the meetings every now and then to maintain confidence in the information supplied

- that the members' opinions and initiatives are taken into consideration and they lead to action.

We have found this work to be worth the trouble it causes. The municipal officials know who TVO's contact person is and they know to contact him/her when they want to ask something. If the contact person cannot answer their questions, he/she will forward the questions to TVO where they will be given thorough consideration and answers are provided without a delay.

Then the person who has made the question can be consulted on whether his question is a problem of wider interest and whether
information material should be sent also to other sectors of the municipality, or the matter be dealt with in the power company's own local newsletter, called Olkiluodon Uutiset - Olkiluoto News, which is delivered to every household in the area.

INFORMING OF LOCAL INHABITANTS

Many of the local inhabitants are more interested in matters concerning the plant and the company than people living elsewhere in the country. When they receive more detailed information than what they can read, for example, in daily newspapers, they consider the plant to be their "own". Of course it is easy for the local inhabitants to find out about things also from the plant employees, provided they are active enough to seek such information.

Not everybody, however, is active enough to take part in plant visits or acquire brochures. For these people the above local newsletter was established, already in late 70's. This newsletter is not intended for the plant personnel, they naturally receive their own newsletter, but is a publication delivered to every household in the neighbouring communities. People owning summer cottages near the plants, and other interested parties, are receiving this news-letter, too. We have found this to be a very good means of providing information to people directly; it is also a very cheap form of information activity.

The Finnish professionals' basic sin, maybe found also in other countries among people working with nuclear energy, is that they take matters extremely seriously. Of course the production of electricity is an important and serious matter, but as we all know, serious information too can be conveyed easier if it is lightened with some humour or if a lighter viewpoint is adopted.

TWO PUBLIC FESTIVALS

During the past couple of years TVO has arranged two events where we have mixed "pleasure and business". We have received plenty of favourable feedback from both these events.
I will now tell you briefly of them.

The first one was called "The Eurajoki Light Weeks". In the autumn of 1987 we noted something interesting. TVO's electricity production was about to exceed the production of Finland's largest hydro power station, the Imatra plant, which had been put into operation as early as in 1929. TVO's plant no. 1 started operation in the autumn of 1978. According to the statistics therefore, Eurajoki was to become Finland's most electricity-producing municipality, or Finland's most "electrical" municipality. The idea of a festival was processed further; we wanted to include in it everybody living in the area. The preliminary plans were made by TVO after which also the Mayor of Eurajoki as well as other significant persons were invited to join the organizing committee.

As a result of the planning and organizing work that took all autumn, on December 5th, the eve of Finnish Independence Day, festival lights hung through the entire centre of Eurajoki were lit. There were crowds on the streets, a band playing music and the Managing Director of TVO and the Mayor of Eurajoki thanked each other for the good cooperation. By the main road TVO had put a large sign telling the passers-by: "Eurajoki - Finland's most electrical municipality". It also showed Eurajoki's coat of arms and TVO's emblem. In the evening a cocktail-party was arranged, paying special attention to Eurajoki's decision-makers as well as other local VIP's, such as teachers.

This was by no means the end of the celebration. A competition was arranged for all Eurajoki-inhabitants to guess the number of lamps in the festival lighting. First prize was free electricity for one year. Answers had to be sent in by Christmas.

Several funny stories were told on the grapevine about methods used to count the number of the lamps. One evening two elderly ladies were walking on the streets, one looking up and counting the lamps and the other marking them down on a piece of paper.
Another story told about a boy who recorded the rows of lamps on a video tape and then made money by selling the tape; the lamps could be counted from the video tape.

As these stories were told, TVO's name came up in a positive spirit and not a single negative view was voiced about the whole project.

The other festival was called the "Electric Birthday".

On September 2nd 1981 if was exactly ten years from the day TVO unit I started supplying electricity to the national network. Usually the guest list of these kinds of anniversary parties includes ministers, politicians and other VIP's.

This time however, our starting point was that it was thanks to our personnel that our plants have been working troublefree. The employees did not have to celebrate alone, but everybody could bring with him not only his own family but also one friend family. TVO's employees amount to approximately 500. With all their families and friends, plus also the previously mentioned cooperation committee's members with their families, the total amount of guests at the birthday party was over 3000. The party was held on two days, on Friday and on Saturday, with non-stop programme all the time. The festival site was Rauma sports hall.

During those days, everybody living in Rauma wanted to have a friend working at TVO. Huge bulb-formed balloons flew high over the town. Famous performers entertained the guests, everybody could eat as much as they wanted, also ice-cream, and the party went on till midnight.

The atmosphere cannot be described with words; it rose high up to the ceiling of the sports hall. Although the arrangements for such a party required a lot of work and money, the positive attitudes created by the party were certainly worth them.
What was the reaction of those who do not harbour warm feelings for nuclear energy of for TVO? The only demonstration, and even that one did not get much attention, was the appearance of four people in black mourning clothes near the main entrance, distributing some pamphlets and pretending to celebrate TVO's funeral (as opposed to the birthday). However, they soon considered it best to get out of the way of the happy and festive people, without having to be told to do so. Our video film will hopefully give you an idea of the atmosphere at the party. I heard a little girl had said: "This was a NICE birthday-party, let's come next year, too".