

# 4.15

Business Builder  
Teacher Resource Series

## A public relations problem

Worksheet

Your company sells pre-cooked meals through large supermarket chains. Last month you launched a new line with an expensive advertising campaign on the television. The launch was very successful. Yesterday some newspapers reported new research which shows that eating genetically modified soya beans may increase the risk of cancer in rats. Your new line of food uses genetically modified soya. This morning a consumer group phoned your company asking for an interview and a public statement. Your company will give a press conference tomorrow. You have been called to an urgent meeting to discuss the situation.

- A** Prepare to have a meeting. Choose your roles (you may have to combine roles). Read your own role notes.
- B** Have a meeting using the agenda below.

### Role-notes

<b>President</b>	You will chair the meeting using the agenda below. Try to get agreement on what you need to do. Start by asking everybody in turn to describe the situation from their point of view.
<b>Marketing Director</b>	Should you still promote the new line or should you recall the products (take them off the market)? How can you restore confidence in your products?
<b>Marketing Manager</b>	Yesterday afternoon your phone didn't stop ringing – supermarket managers were calling to know if the food was safe and what action you were taking. Orders for pre-cooked food are 25% down. Other products carrying your brand name are also showing lower sales.
<b>Finance Director</b>	Any solution has to be justified in terms of cost. Recalling the product and launching a new line will be very expensive. A new advertising campaign or new packaging will be expensive.
<b>Product Manager</b>	Many other tests have shown that these genetically modified vegetables are safe. Probably there was a mistake in the experiment. Further tests may not give a clear answer. The problem is that consumer groups like to make trouble.
<b>Public Relations Officer</b>	You will speak at a press conference tomorrow. What will you say? How can you limit the damage to your sales and your company image?

### Agenda

- 1 Chairperson's opening comments
- 2 Immediate action regarding the new line
- 3 Press conference tomorrow: what to say