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## **AHC and Future 500 Launch STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT 2011-2012**

Professional Development in Corporate Strategy, Best Practices, and Top Issues

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 12 /CSRwire/ - Future 500 and AHC Group announced today that they will convene STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT 2011-2012, the first professional development working group dedicated exclusively to Stakeholder Engagement.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT 2011-2012 will draw together senior executives from top consumer, energy, and technology companies in San Francisco this November 10-11, to share best practices, build knowledge and skills, and enable executives to promote common ground with stakeholder advocates across a range of pressing environmental and social issues in the next two years.

"Stakeholder engagement is professional discipline in its own right, that should inform corporate strategy and social responsibility," said [Bill Shireman](#), President of Future 500 and a pioneer in stakeholder engagement. "STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT 2011-2012 will deliver two benefits to executives: first, it will build their skills and advance best practices; second, it will inform and prepare them for engaging on the emerging hot issues in 2011 and 2012."

"This is precisely the peer-to-peer training that I wish I had been able to access ten years ago, before I had to learn it on the job," said [Ken Strassner](#), who as Vice President--Global Environment, Safety, Regulatory and Scientific Affairs with Kimberly-Clark helped forge a landmark agreement with Greenpeace, after years of conflict. Strassner, now a consultant with AHC Group, will co-facilitate the working group.

### **TWO SESSIONS: TOP ISSUES AND SKILL-BUILDING**

The morning session will focus on issues, to give executives deep background on all the major issues and campaigns they will face, and how to constructively cultivate engage activist and mainstream NGOs, academics, SRIs, and their funders, to advance common ground and inform business planning.

"This will not be theory," Shireman said. "We will talk about real issues, campaigns, activists, funders, and a host of others, with stakeholder maps and diagrams that show what has happened, what is ahead, and what to do now. We know first-hand that collaborative engagement fosters open innovation, advances better outcomes for all stakeholders, and differentiates leadership companies."

Featured issues will be selected based on the needs and interests of the participating companies. Those may include energy conflicts (coal plants, oil drilling, gas fracking), environmental conflicts (product fees, water wars, climate battles), human rights issues (labor rights, conflict minerals, palm oil), health issues (obesity taxes), and facility siting. Every case study will offer lessons for each participating company.

The afternoon session will focus on skills development. Professionals will train and engage executives on best practices and common mistakes in stakeholder engagement. Questions to explore will include:

- How do we choose the highest-priority strategic stakeholders to engage?
- How do we cultivate relationships that will prevent and reduce future conflicts?
- What are the "do's and don'ts" of meeting with stakeholders?
- How can we secure stakeholder support when we need it?
- How do we respond to "Name Blame and Shame" campaigns?
- Should we engage "adversarial" stakeholders and how do we reach them?
- How can we persuade stakeholders to focus on the root cause of problems, rather than popular non-solutions?
- How do we internalize stakeholder feedback and manage internal expectations?

## **CORPORATE STRATEGY - THE ENGAGEMENT EDGE**

Between the morning issues session and the afternoon skills session, a networking lunch will enable peers to meet informally and share notes. Then, AHC President [Bruce Piasecki](#) will host a discussion of the importance of stakeholder engagement to overall corporate strategy.

*"Those who rigorously focus on the customer at the expense of stakeholder opinion leaders who influence trends in consumer and media perceptions are behind the curve in this swift and severe world," says Piasecki. "Corporate executive management and board members need to hear this external feedback to better understand and manage business risk and identify new business opportunities before their competitors."*

[Alex McIntosh](#), who recently directed corporate citizenship at Nestlé Waters, will join Piasecki in discussing how stakeholder engagement can inform overall corporate strategy, and uncover emerging business opportunities.

"This is an excellent opportunity to learn from expert panelists and participants, using examples from the real world, on exactly how corporations can utilize stakeholder engagement to inform their strategy," says McIntosh.

For more information on the executive working group, download the PDF Brochure or contact: Maryann McDonnell, 800-655-2020, The Future 500  
Ashley Lucas, 01-518-583-9615, AHC Group

### **About Bill Shireman and The Future 500:**

President and Co-Founder of Future 500, Mr. Shireman is called "a master social and

environmental entrepreneur." Shireman has resolved conflict and forged alliances between companies like Coca-Cola, Mitsubishi, and Nestlé, and groups like Greenpeace, Human Rights Watch, and Sierra Club. He seeks genuine common ground solutions to today's most pressing sustainability challenges.

Founded in December 1995, Future 500 is a 501c3 non-profit organization based in San Francisco with affiliate offices in Tokyo and Beijing that builds *relationships that matter* between the world's best-known companies and stakeholder opinion leaders to advance positive systemic change. [www.future500.org](http://www.future500.org)

**About Bruce Piasecki and AHC Group:**

President of the AHC Group and leading thinker in corporate strategy, Mr. Piasecki has authored seven books and numerous articles that define new directions in capitalism and reshape the purposes of executive strategic management today. The AHC Group, a general management consulting firm headquartered in Saratoga Springs, New York, has specialized in the critical areas of corporate governance consulting, energy and environmental strategy, product innovation, and sustainability strategy. [www.ahcgroup.com](http://www.ahcgroup.com)

**About Ken Strassner:**

A Senior Associate at AHC Group and former Vice President--Global Environment, Safety, Regulatory and Scientific Affairs for Kimberly-Clark Corporation where he managed development of Kimberly-Clark's Corporate and Business Unit sustainability plans and relationships with outside stakeholders interested in the corporation's sustainability performance. An honors graduate (magna cum laude) of Yale College (1968) and of Yale Law School (1974), Mr. Strassner's legal specialties include U.S. and international environmental and energy law, product safety matters, and occupational safety and health requirements. <http://www.ahcgroup.com/Ken-Strassner-c139.html>

**About Alex McIntosh and Ecomundi Ventures:**

Founder and CEO of EcoMundi Ventures and former Director of Corporate Citizenship at Nestlé Waters North America, Mr. McIntosh is a highly respected executive in corporate and NGO sustainability circles, with two decades of leadership in the private, non-profit, and public sectors. Ecomundi Venture's focal areas include water clean tech and large-scale sustainability innovation. At Nestlé Waters, Alex created and led sustainability and corporate citizenship programs through a time of intense environmental and social scrutiny. Alex earned his master's degree from Yale's Environmental School, and his BA from Duke University. He designed and built an early "green home," and now lives with his family in San Francisco. [www.ecomundiventures.com](http://www.ecomundiventures.com)

For more information, please contact:

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