Coming Clean

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By MIKE AUERBACH, Editor-In-Chief, Pharmaceutical Processing

Is it just me, or have we entered a time where corporate scandals and larger than life "falls from grace" are increasing common? Lately, it seems more and more sports figures, politicians, and major companies are getting caught in either illegal or immoral activities or the intentional withholding of important information — only to have their actions and misdeeds eventually revealed by the media, or other sources.

This revelation is usually followed by a very public "mea culpa" with the accused holding a press conference, or appearing before Congress and admitting their mistakes and/or transgressions and promising to make things "right".

I have conveniently broken these down into three categories, with examples:

1. The sports figure accused of steriod use — the subsequent denial of such use — then the admission and apology. Example: Alex Rodriguez

2. The politician accused of extramarital infidelity — the subsequent denial — then the admission and apology. Example: John Edwards

3. The major corporation accused of suppressing important safety information — the subsequent stalling — then the admission and apology. Example: Toyota

Nothing like this would ever happen to a pharmaceutical [1] company now would it?

We are now in the midst of GSK's very public problems relating to Avandia. Basically, the problems revolve around a report that accused the drug company of withholding information about side effects of serious heart problems, including death. At issue now is whether Avandia should be taken off the market.

Should GSK come clean and let the world know what it knew and when it knew it?

Based on similar transgressions — it’s the first step on the road to recovery.

What do you think? Let me know by e-mailing me at mike.auerbach@advantagemedia.com [2].

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