

If ACSH Is a Corporate Shill, We're Really Bad At It



By Alex Berezow — July 27, 2016



[1] *We are terrible corporate shills.* (Credit: Shutterstock)

The most frustrating part of being a scientist or science journalist is trying to convince people who have already made up their minds that they have come to the wrong conclusion. Even when presented with data that definitively demonstrates the error in their logic, most people double down, while very few appear willing to reconsider their beliefs.

I have encountered this seemingly intractable problem so many times, that I have become convinced of the truth of the aphorism by Josh Billings (not Mark Twain) that "it is better to know nothing than to know what ain't so." People who "know nothing" are at least teachable; people who "know what ain't so" often are not.

That is the difficult obstacle science communicators face. Even worse, a substantial proportion of people who "know what ain't so" actively undermine the credibility of science and the pursuit of knowledge by engaging in personal defamation, libel, and slander. Today, the most common tactic is to label anybody with whom one disagrees a "corporate shill" or "front group." The intellectually bankrupt shout, "Follow the money!" when they are incapable of making a cogent scientific counterargument. (It should also be noted that everybody has to get their money from somebody. Does that mean every person on the planet is a shill?)

The American Council on Science and Health has been around since 1978. In the span of nearly 40 years, we have managed to irritate a lot of activists and environmentalists who make a living scaring the public over vaccines, GMOs, nuclear power, chemicals, and anything else they think can get them on TV. Our mission is to oppose such nonsense and support evidence-based science and medicine. Hence, our tagline: *Science. Not Hype.*

Predictably, we have been vilified as a "pro-industry front group" by the usual anti-science suspects: Dr. Oz, Greenpeace, *Mother Jones*, NRDC, U.S. Right to Know, and SourceWatch, among others. The problem with their argument (other than the fact it is *ad hominem*) is that, ***if it really was true that ACSH is a corporate shill, we are really, really bad at it.***

Take a look at some of the things we've said publicly.

"[We don't need vitamins](#) [2]."

"[Kratom: The supplement that will kill Godzilla](#) [3]."

"[The level of greed, corruption and blatant disregard for the safety and well-being of patients warrants a significant overhaul, once more, of how the government deals with compounding pharmacies.](#) [4]"

"[So, remember kids, if you play with fire, sometimes you get burned. And you can do that without paying Tony Robbins \\$3,000](#) [5]."

"['Brain training' games may be just fancy placebos](#) [6]."

"[It's a mystery why everyone doesn't switch to organic farming given the much higher margins available](#) [7]."

Honestly, who says stuff like that? We do. Even though there is an awful lot of money (to the tune of billions of dollars) to be made peddling vitamins, organic food, alternative medicine, brain-training games, motivational speakers, and other nonsense, we reject all of it in favor of evidence-based science and health.

If we were corporate shills, *why would we do that?*

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/07/27/if-acsh-is-a-corporate-shill-were-really-bad-at-it>

Links

[1] <http://www.shutterstock.com/pic-389041189/stock-photo-crying-man-negative-emotion-facial-expression-feeling-modern-office-man-at-working-place.html>

[2] <http://acsh.org/news/2015/09/24/fad-friday-why-we-dont-need-vitamins/>

[3] <http://acsh.org/news/2016/01/13/kratom-the-supplement-that-will-kill-godzilla/>

[4] <http://acsh.org/news/2016/02/17/brett-favres-exponential-contribution-to-compounding-pharmacy-fraud/>

[5] <http://acsh.org/news/2016/06/28/magical-moron-moments-burn-your-feet-with-tony-robbins/>

[6] <http://acsh.org/news/2016/06/20/brain-training-games-may-be-just-fancy-placebos/>

[7] <http://acsh.org/news/2016/04/20/organic-locally-sourced-claims-were-easy-to-fake-because-they-make-no-difference/>