

Doubt is Their Product: How Industry's Assault on Science Threatens Your Health

By David Michaels

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"Doubt is our product," a cigarette executive once observed, "since it is the best means of competing with the 'body of fact' that exists in the minds of the general public. It is also the means of establishing a controversy."
In this eye-opening expose, David Michaels reveals how the tobacco industry's duplicitous tactics spawned a multimillion dollar industry that is dismantling public health safeguards. Product defense consultants, he argues, have increasingly skewed the scientific literature, manufactured and magnified scientific uncertainty, and influenced policy decisions to the advantage of polluters and the manufacturers of dangerous products. To keep the public confused about the hazards posed by global warming, second-hand smoke, asbestos, lead, plastics, and many other toxic materials, industry executives have hired unscrupulous scientists and lobbyists to dispute scientific evidence about health risks. In doing so, they have not only delayed action on specific hazards, but they have constructed barriers to make it harder for lawmakers, government agencies, and courts to respond to future threats. The Orwellian strategy of dismissing research conducted by the scientific community as "junk science" and elevating science conducted by product defense specialists to "sound science" status also creates confusion about the very nature of scientific inquiry and undermines the public's confidence in science's ability to address public health and environmental concerns Such reckless practices have long existed, but Michaels argues that the Bush administration deepened the dysfunction by virtually handing over regulatory agencies to the very corporate powers whose products and behavior they are charged with overseeing.
In *Doubt Is Their Product* Michaels proves, beyond a doubt, that our regulatory system has been broken. He offers concrete, workable suggestions for how it can be restored by taking the politics out of science and ensuring that concern for public safety, rather than private profits, guides our regulatory policy.

Named one of the best Sci-Tech books of 2008 by *Library Journal*!

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Editorial Review

Review

"In *Doubt Is Their Product,* David Michaels gives a lively and convincing history of how clever public relations has blocked one public health protection after another. The techniques first used to reassure us about tobacco were adapted to reassure us about asbestos, lead, vinyl chloride-and risks to nuclear facilities workers, where Dr. Michaels' experience as the relevant Assistant Secretary of Energy gave him an inside view. And if you're worried about climate change, keep worrying, because the same program is underway there."--Donald Kennedy, Editor-in-Chief, *Science*

"We live in an age of unprecedented disinformation, misinformation, and outright lying by those in power. This important book shows who profits by misleading the public-and who ultimately pays with their health."--*Eric Schlosser, author of* Fast Food Nation

"This well-researched book by someone who truly knows the system is a must read for anyone who wants to understand the cozy relationship between industry and regulatory agencies on matters that affect the health and safety of our families and neighbors. The cited examples illustrate how, with the help of irresponsible members of Congress and other public officials, corporate greed can trump any sense of ethics, morality, and human compassion."--*Neal Lane, former Science Advisor to President Bill Clinton and former Director of the National Science Foundation*

"This brave, shocking book exposes the abuse of science by government and industry in ways that endanger the workplace, the home, the water supply, the air quality-in fact, our planet as a whole. David Michaels speaks authoritatively from his firsthand experience as a champion of occupational safety and health. He tells a terrific story."--*Dava Sobel, author of* Longitude and Galileo's Daughter

"*In Doubt Is Their Product,* David Michaels calls out the corporations you'll recognize them that bankroll lobbyists and unethical scientists to attack factual evidence that their products, such as asbestos, lead, and tobacco, are deadly."--*Vanity Fair, Green Issue, May 2008*

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"David Michaels has written a powerful, thorough indictment of the way big business has ignored, suppressed or distorted vital scientific evidence to the detriment of the public's health."--*Nature*

From Newsweek, 5/12/08 _ That science can be bought is hardly news to anyone who knows about tobacco "scientists." But how pervasive, effective and stealthy this science-for-hire is-as masterfully documented by David Michaels of George Washington University in his new book, "Doubt Is Their Product: How Industry's Assault on Science Threatens Your Health"-will shock anyone who still believes that "science" and "integrity" are soulmates. In studies of how toxic chemicals affect human health, Michaels told me, "It's quite easy to take a positive result [showing harmful effects] and turn it falsely negative. This epidemiological alchemy is used widely." -Sharon Begley

From Nature, 6/12/08 _ David Michaels has written a powerful, thorough indictment of the way big business has ignored, suppressed or distorted vital scientific evidence to the detriment of the public's health. Doubt Is Their Product catalogues numerous corporate misdemeanours, especially in the United States, from the criminal neglect of the dangerous nature of asbestos and the lies told by the tobacco industry, to the suppression of adverse findings of deaths caused by the anti-inflammatory drug Vioxx and the increased risk of suicide among teenagers taking selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors for depression. The book concludes with a list of prescriptions for securing better regulation and greater protection for the public, mainly through increased public disclosure of vested interests. -Dick Taverne

"The book is a shocking portrayal of the tactics used by corporate America to delay public health and environmental regulation of their products for the sake of profit...It is a must read for anyone interested in public health and environmental protection."--*Chemical & Engineering News*

"...*Doubt Is Their Product* reminds one of deeper risks that threaten scientific fields and democratic deliberation. ...The scientific community and the public need to be on guard against such abuses; Michaels's history of these events sounds an alert that must not be ignored."--*Durrants*

One of *Library Journal*'s top 10 sci-tech books of 2008!

Received an Honorable Mention in the Society for Environmental Journalism's 2009 Awards for Reporting on the Environment for the category Rachel Carson Environment Book Award.

About the Author

David Michaels is a scientist, former government regulator, and the current appointed head of OSHA. During the Clinton Administration, he served as Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environment, Safety and

Health, responsible for protecting the health and safety of the workers, neighboring communities, and the environment surrounding the nation's nuclear weapons factories. He currently directs the Project on Scientific Knowledge and Public Policy at The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services. In 2006, he received the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Scientific Freedom and Responsibility Award for his work on behalf of nuclear weapons workers and for advocacy for scientific integrity.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anthony Pippin:

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? Yeah, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book titled Doubt is Their Product: How Industry's Assault on Science Threatens Your Health? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have additional opinion?

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Anthony Carter:

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