managers ducking them because they too clearly spell out *their* account-ability?

The Omega Group's David Gregory -- a cultural anthropologist -- feels many **CEOs** would agree with Gerstner. They're "uncomfortable with the personal introspection needed to produce a true vision." More at home with Gerstner's "macho approach: we need to make a profit which we're not doing now." And, **Wall Street** will applaud this mantra.

But **employees** "will hunker down & worry" -- which he sees as a major challenge to pr:

"At some point employees have to buy into a company, a vision, to go the extra mile to make the company competitive. Fear (for jobs) is real, now & immediate but it is not a sustaining motivation."

James Rush of U Western Ontario provides a balance in the Report on Business article. CEOs must be painfully honest, he advises, about the company's aspirations & what employees can realistically expect in their own careers. And CEOs must work relentlessly & visibly toward the same goals throughout the company (which sounds like M&V). And:

"They have to speak with sincerity, but follow that up with concerted action. They communicate, communicate, communicate. Communicate the hell out of it."

Whether it's M&V statements or CEO rhetoric, note that practitioners remain the essential players in using these tools to unite the organization.

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

¶ **Others Using Fax on Demand.** The Big Ten athletic conference has initiated a service similar to Medical University of SC (last week's issue) -- for distributing statistics & news releases. It goes on line next month, reports Walt Sorg of G.W. Pepper Comns (Lansing, Mich). A computer bulletin board has been used for this purpose. Sorg says he'll continue using the computer method. The new system "is for those who don't have access to (or don't like using) a computer or modem."

¶ **New Literature Says MBAs Run The Newsrooms.** Utne Reader (that great source of what's being written for busy folks who can't keep up with their in baskets) reviews no less than 4 current books on the topic. The authors are Jim Squires, ex-Chi Trib; Doug Underwood; Rolling Stone columnist William Greider; WashPost media critic Howard Kurtz. While disagreeing on details, they seem to agree on Kurtz' idea that if reporters "break the shackles of mindless objectivity" (could that be a depiction also of MBAs?) media can improve. Books tell why MBAs got to be media bosses, how their impact is helping neither journalism nor media companies. (Copy of article & intro to this "public affairs reader's digest" from prr)

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pr reporter

CORPORATE IDENTITY CAN BE UNITING FACTOR IN TIMES OF CHANGE

If corporate identity is constant, then all organizational communications can be amplified thru this continuity -- a symbol of stability even in times of the intense change now characterizing most organizations. To achieve this, USAA (San Antonio) found it **needed to update its standards manual.**

Project itself illustrates the continuing centrality of corporate identity to an organization. How it was managed shows the ancillary benefits of giving attention to it in times of change.

> The current standards manual dated back to '87. Many changes (organizationally & graphically) had occurred since. USAA's resulting corporate identity program addressed 1) a changing customer base, 2) advancing technology & 3) employee resistance.

PROBLEMS CAUSED BY CHANGE

1) **Changing customers**. USAA is a member-owned financial services company (with many divisions) for military officers & their families. For 70 yrs it served a close-knit military membership. In '91, when this project began, the military was shrinking, forcing USAA to target its secondary audience -- military officers' dependents. "Members of this group may never have served in the armed forces, heard of USAA nor had affinity for USAA," Cheryl Crane, who headed the project, told prr.

2) **Employees changing**. Over 9,000 & were adding weekly. "Like myself, many hadn't heard of USAA prior to their hiring. They came with no understanding of our military members' unique lifestyle, nor history of USAA."

3) **Advances in technology**. Desktop publishing had swept across USAA enabling employees to be more creative. But also brought "distortion of our logo, literature formats & other key identity elements."

OPPORTUNITIES FOUND BY RESEARCH

1) Gathered corporate identity materials from other major companies. Discovered **everyone has a standards manual**. "For many companies, it *is* the corporate identity program."

2) Queried USAA's marketing & communications specialists in all divisions to see what they wanted in the document. "Feedback showed they needed not just a standards manual, but **a resource document that stayed current** with periodic updates & revisions." With that in hand, they could guard against erosion of identity.

3) Research also showed that Crane's dep't, Corporate Marketing Services (CMS), needed to **improve its internal service image**. Realizing the potential for resistance, she attempted (as a secondary objective) to use the identity project to improve working relationships.

IMPLEMENTATION   1) **Participative decisions**. Primary concern was to update identity standards & create helpful resources "thru a truly companywide, interactive process." Guidelines went thru multiple drafts. Crane sought feedback from every marketing, communication, production & key support area. "Over 9 months I solicited contributions at the specialist, director, vp & senior officer levels." For relationship-building, Crane wrote personal thank-you notes to everyone who contributed.

2) **Title of book is critical**, was decided early in the process: "Essential Elements -- A Guide to Corporate Identification." "We didn't call this a *manual* because of negative connotations that word would have for employees." Instead, title infers "that it explains key points & minimum requirements in communicating our corporate identity.

"It also hints that it isn't just a book of rules & regulations. A 'guide' offers guidance & is a place to find direction, a resource, just what this book is supposed to be. Beyond all that, 'Essential Elements' sounds artistic & less limiting than a manual. We thought it would be more readily accepted by the many creative people who need to use the book."

3) **Introducing the Guide**. Book was announced on USAA's internal video news show & in 2 employee newsletter articles. Training & development offered two sessions that focused on different points of emphasis -- one for technical people in the production area, one for marketing/corporate people concerned with the bigger picture issues. "After distribution, I briefed all USAA marketing directors, our Marketing Operations Council. These communications allowed me to explain and sell new & somewhat controversial points in the publication" -- and continue strengthening relationships.

EVALUATION   Goals were identified early in the project. One month after distribution of the book, a survey compared projected goals with initial results. Survey produced a 43% response & these findings:

Goal: 50% at least glanced thru or read some of the book; **82% did.**

Goal: 50% use the book in their jobs; in this short period **48% had.**

Goal: 50% of training session attendees say sessions were helpful or very helpful; **71% rated them acceptable to very helpful.**

Survey also noted **improved relationships with other divisions**. Of 174 responding to a "service quality" question, 61.5% had requested service. Of those, 58% rated their service experience acceptable to very good. Beyond quantifiable results, survey elicited a variety of constructive criticism, much of which was incorporated into Guide. Periodic updates & revisions are keeping the book current, useful & top-of-mind -- so USAA speaks with One Clear Voice.

CASE STUDIES BECOMING MAJOR PRACTITIONER TOOL

Effective counselors have learned **the 3 most persuasive devices with clients** are 1) research, 2) being able to put situations into a well-founded theoretical framework, 3) relevant case studies. But the latter have been hard to use since so few were readily available.

Two new books & the new edition of a 3rd are changing that.

- **Cases in Public Relations Management** by longtime practitioner turned teacher Frank Wylie & early textbook author-teacher Ray Simon, is due in Sept. (NTC Business Books, Lincolnwood, Ill; 708/679-5500)

- **PR News Casebook: 1000 Public Relations Case Studies** gathers 50 years of the weekly feature from the newsletter. 9 subject sections, 1796 pages. (Gale Research, Detroit; $95. 800/877-4253)

- Allen Center's original pr casebook, **Public Relations Practices: Managerial Case Studies & Problems**, now edited by Pat Jackson, will soon be out in a 5th edition. (Prentice Hall, 800/374-1200)

THERE CAN BE A DOWNSIDE   Too many execs won't do anything until they're convinced others have done it before -- successfully. Tho such risk aversion is attacked by the "new business culture" programs, from Quality to Restructuring, using cases injudiciously can be a step back toward it. Just because it worked -- or failed -- somewhere else does *not* mandate the same result here. What case studies do well, fortunately, is to highlight modifications needed to serve differing circumstances.

Too many cases are presented in a vacuum & too neatly -- as if nothing else were going on in the universe. They list all the wonderful activities undertaken & how well they worked with never a word about problems encountered, failures en route & weaknesses discovered.

Nevertheless, with now 4 volumes of collected cases (the other is Jerry Hendrix' **Public Relations Cases**, Wadsworth '92) -- plus the library of Silver Anvil entries at PRSA, Gold Quill entries at IABC & other award contest collections -- **perhaps 2500-3000 case studies are available.**

MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS: NO LONGER IMPORTANT?

IBM CEO Lou Gerstner's well publicized July statement -- "The last thing IBM needs right now is a vision" -- is joined by this cover copy on The Globe & Mail Report on Business' 10th anniversary issue:

Why dynamic bosses don't pin their turnaround hopes on hollow mission statements

But are M&V statements suddenly not helpful? Are unifiers of organizations, clarifiers of expectations internally & externally, & motivators of One Clear Voice communication no longer needed? Or are faltering senior