

Recent and anticipated developments have begun to exert noticeable pressure on the dearly held values of this \$2 billion newspaper/media company. The organization is diversifying and pursuing a strategy of growth through acquisition. Throughout the industry there is increasing consolidation and growing sensitivity to the influence of Wall Street. In this atmosphere, the editorial excellence that has produced numerous Pulitzer prizes is still highly desirable but no longer sufficient. Profitability commands more attention than ever.

One response to these demands on the organization is recognition of the need to accelerate the development of high potential managers—those who will lead the organization in the increasingly complex future. University programs have traditionally been used to further individual development among this group, and with great success. The broadening of horizons offered by the content and people in the Harvard and Stanford programs, for example, is held in high regard.

By their nature, however, university programs do not deal with company specific issues. And at this point in time, the human resource professionals are beginning to identify the need for *organizational* as well as *individual* development—a way for the company as a whole to grapple with the changes by which it is surrounded.

The challenge to meet both needs results in a decision to combine the broadening benefits of university programs with the specificity possible in a custom-built corporate program. The first step in the design of the program is identification of an overall theme or focus. The strong traditions of the company and the profession of journalism have always provided the values to guide organizational actions. Now these values are a source of potential conflict, both within the company and between the company and the society of which it is a part. This growing tension is at the heart of future challenges facing the organization.

The dual goals of organizational and individual development are reflected in program design.



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Participants have ample opportunity to process program content from the perspectives of both the individual professional and the overall organization. Two questions are asked about each topic covered in the program: What are the implications for the organization, and what role do values play?

At the same time, the intent to broaden participants' horizons is apparent in the lack of prescriptions or recipes for success. The program raises as many questions as it answers, challenging participants to test and refine their own perspectives.

When the University Is Not Enough

An innovative, custom-built program can become one of a corporation's distinctive competitive advantages.

The attention of all executives is focused on the same issues at the same time, creating momentum that energizes and mobilizes the organization. Custom-built internal programs ensure that *specific* company needs are addressed. Refined planning and strategy efforts are inevitable outcomes of the close fit with current business issues.

The Journey

This program is a literal as well as a figurative journey. Each segment is held in a different geographic location, in sites chosen for their contribution to the development of broadened perspective.

Week One: Values

Two-day Outward Bound Program focusing on leadership development
Changing Values in the External Environment: How cultural values have evolved since World War II
Values: A model for resolving value conflicts; application of the model to organizational issues
The Constant Revolution in Information Technology: Relationships between changes in information technology, competitive realities and values
The Changing Industry: Broad trends and anticipated changes; implications for organizational values
The Competition: Risks and opportunities related to current and emerging competition

Week Two: The Changing Environment

Held at a major government research center. Exploration of the facilities and interaction with center officials facilitates looking at the world through the eyes of another organization. The Global and Technological Environments: What trends are emerging; what are the implications for the organization? The Processes of Industry and Organization Change: Case studies, theories and models that address these topics from a conceptual viewpoint, followed by identification of critical organizational issues

Latter portions of the five-week program address the strategic deployment of functional resources (marketing and finance), and include a final session in which participants work on live company issues with current senior executives.

One hundred and twenty high potential managers and executives attend the program in classes of 30. Each class remains intact as it completes the program over a 10-month period.

The organization's Director of Training had been challenged to make the program "better than anything currently available from even the finest educational institution." The combination of individual and organizational development retains the broadening benefits of university programs while focusing the executives on key emerging business issues.

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