

## CHAPTER 9

## The Art of Selling Change

Over and above all their other challenges—the striving for innovative process designs, reinventing all aspects of a business, achieving breakthrough benefits on an accelerated schedule—a reengineering team faces one overwhelming obstacle: They are trying to sell something to a group of people who don't want to buy. The commodity they are selling is change, and the reluctant buyers are the people in the company.

As we've already said, nobody likes change—it's frightening, unsettling, messy, and uncomfortable. The bigger the change, the less people like it—and change doesn't come much bigger than reengineering. No wonder people's first reaction is, "No thanks, I'll pass." But if people don't buy into the change—if they don't accept it and begin working in the ways that the new process requires—then the reengineering effort will be nothing more than a paper exercise. While reengineering is one part engineering—the reconfiguration of an entire business system—it is also one part sales—the unabashed promotion and merchandising of a new way of working. And, at its heart, sales is communication: sending the message to people so that they respond positively. Just as reengineers must "get out of the box" when designing processes, they must also be extraordinarily innovative when communicating, creatively crafting a message and adroitly utilizing media so that people both understand and embrace reengineering.

In this venture, reengineers must confront and surmount a specific set of communications challenges.

### Impediments to Communications

- Disbelief
- False familiarity
- Fear of layoffs
- The rumor mill
- Sloppy execution: incomprehensibility, abstraction, complexity, and clichés

First, in most organizations, people put little stock in anything senior management says, and for good reason. Too many senior managers have a history of issuing extravagant pronouncements that bear no relation to what people experience on a day-to-day basis. One company we know, despite quarter after quarter of operating losses, kept assuring employees that "all is well, we're just witnessing a brief dip in the market." The employees knew better. They heard complaints from customers, they saw competitors' products outperforming their own, and they knew that their costs were way too high. But all they heard from senior management was denial and alibis. Of course this organization was riddled with cynicism and mistrust. You can't blame the employees for wondering, "If management is not telling us the truth about our position in the market, what else are they lying about?"

Unfortunately, situations like this are the norm rather than the exception. Consequently, management communications are usually taken with a large grain of salt, if at all. The blame lies squarely with senior managers who treat

their employees as slow children who can't be trusted with bad news, confusing news, or adult news. And so information is diluted, filtered, and distorted until its meaning and value are lost.

Hypocrisy may have even more pernicious effects than sugarcoating reality. In one large telecommunications company, senior managers were talking up empowerment while behaving autocratically. They were all in favor of autonomy until someone disagreed with them.

The CEO in particular was notorious for cutting dissenting managers off at their knees. And in a difficult year he wouldn't give up his two executive jets. His words were suspect because they were not mirrored in his actions. When he began warning the company about a vulnerable market segment, everyone put down his statements as more hysterical manipulation. They were wrong; the company was in trouble, and it took two years to recover from the steep earnings dive triggered by the market "surprise" of which the CEO had warned. A history of less than absolutely truthful communication had left the organization with a case of terminal skepticism. In a climate like this, reengineering communications will be received as just more "lies and propaganda."

The second impediment to reengineering communications is "false familiarity"—the sense among employees that "we've been through this before." Over the years, successive waves of consultants have come pouring in over the battlements, waving the flags of Customer Satisfaction, Empowerment, Time-Based Competition, Theory Z, Economic Value Added, and Diversity, to name but a few. This nonstop parade of change programs has made skeptics of many employees, and justifiably so, because most of these programs were launched with great fanfare and then sank like stones without leaving even a ripple of real sustained change. Every organization has a history of such

botched or insincere change programs. When employees first hear about reengineering, they have sound cause to view it as no more than the latest fad. Their rational response is to lay low until it passes.

The third problem facing reengineering communications is that, no matter what senior managers say, what employees will hear is, "I'm going to be fired." Day after day, articles in both the business press and the general media recount how one company or another is laying off 2,000 or 10,000 or 20,000 employees. Insecurity has become today's reality, and anything that sounds even vaguely threatening will be immediately interpreted in the worst possible light. No matter how carefully crafted the reengineering message, it will inevitably ratchet up an organization's level of anxiety.

Reengineering communications must therefore address the issue of layoffs head-on. Ignoring it will only cause people to assume the worst. If there are to be no layoffs, then say so loudly and clearly and often. If there is to be a reduction in staff, then get ahead of the anxiety curve with an early announcement; information is always better than uncertainty. Some executives fear that if they disclose layoffs, employees will respond badly. There is an almost touching degree of naïveté in this point of view. The reality of what reengineering will bring pales against what people's imaginations will invent. Moreover, taking the unprecedented step of telling the truth and treating employees like adults will earn management an unprecedented degree of respect and credibility. What should you do if you're not sure whether or not there will be a reduction in head count? Admit it. Craig Weatherup, president of Pepsi-Cola, N.A., stated at the onset of the company's reengineering effort that he didn't know if jobs would be lost, but guaranteed that if any were, the employees affected would be treated fairly and warned well in advance.

The fourth impediment to effective reengineering commu-

nications is the fact that the rumor mill, not official channels, is the real source of most information in any organization. What people say to each other in the cafeteria or on the elevator counts much more than any column in a newsletter. The grapevine usually carries a message quite different from the official line, and the grapevine is *always* operating.

The attempt to keep secrets always fails. If the White House can't prevent leaks, how can your organization? The minute an important decision is made, the news goes out on the jungle drums. Any attempt to keep it a secret will be self-defeating. Everyone will find out anyway, and the attempt to keep it secret will only increase the level of organizational mistrust. A noted communications specialist we know has said, "If you try to keep secrets, the only things people will know is what you don't want them to know."

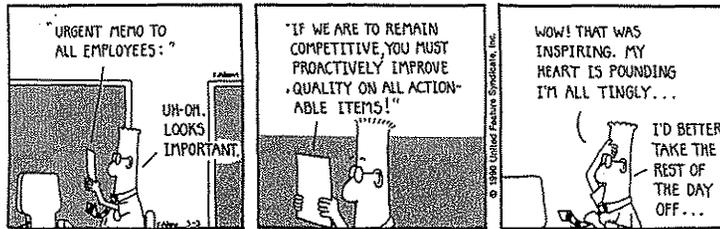
The fifth obstacle to effective communications is poor execution, or falling into the following common traps:

Incomprehensibility: Too often, managers use a private, jargon-laden language rather than plain English. We recently heard a senior executive address a large group of shop floor manufacturing employees. His opening remarks included the following gem: "Our Q3 earnings are down and we have taken a big hit on our RONA target. Moreover, the recent FASB ruling has had a negative impact on our WIP inventory valuation, and the derivative loss we suffered has hammered our P/E ratio." This executive spent so much of his time talking with shareholders and investors that he forgot that their perspectives and concerns have little in common with those of employees. The big words, little acronyms, and mysterious references in this opening were bound to turn the group off—and they did. To succeed, you must speak your listeners' lingo. Otherwise, you might as well be speaking to them in Turkish.

Abstraction: All too often managers talk about ideas rather than things, concepts rather than experience. A conceptual statement like "We seek excellence" is flat and generic. "We've got to get our invoice accuracy to 99.99 percent" is far more tangible and specific. People understand the world through stories and examples. Alan Kay, the noted computer scientist, has said, "If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a metaphor is worth a thousand pictures." Effective communicators are teachers and storytellers; they use vivid images and specific anecdotes to illustrate their points. Most people are more comfortable moving from the specific to the general. So, first grab them with memorable events and powerful images. You must win people's interest before you can win their hearts and minds.

Complexity: Some managers, in their zeal for open communications, provide their audiences with too much detail. One leader we know loved to talk for hours about a new compensation system, reveling in every detail of the new, variable, nine-level, overlapping-band, multicomponent system. Needless to say, none of his listeners could grasp everything he was saying. More seriously, they weren't able to see the forest for the trees. The complexity and detail of the message obscured its meaning. Effective communications are simple.

Clichés: Trite and overused phrases like "best supplier to our customers" or "world-class performance" have no meaning. They are simply ritual incantations managers use either because they're not sure of what they really want to say or because they're unwilling to make the effort to find a unique and memorable way to say it. There's a simple rule of thumb. If you can envision another manager at another company giving your talk, then don't give it: You're not imparting any real information. You're just clogging the



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communication channel with sludge, making it harder for people to hear anything later on.

The sixth and final impediment to successful reengineering communications is that most companies suffer from too *much* communications. Official memos arrive by the pound and they go straight into the circular file. To be heard, reengineering communications must rise above the clutter, they must stand out, they must not be boring, they must grab and hold the audience's attention. This is not as daunting a challenge as it may sound; the opportunity for improvement is vast, given that the communications of most companies make the phone book seem fascinating by comparison.

## \* THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF REENGINEERING COMMUNICATIONS ]

These obstacles to effective communications are serious. To overcome them, reengineers can learn from the practices of consumer goods companies, America's consummate marketers. As we have explored best practices in reengineering communications, we have encountered a recurring set of principles and techniques, which can all be expressed in terms of

consumer goods marketing. So, forthwith, are the ten keys to successful communications.

1: *Segment Your Audiences:* Marketers divide large diverse markets into smaller and more homogeneous segments; similarly, reengineers must segment an organization into specific constituency groups, each of which reacts to reengineering in a different and unique way. For example, a senior manager whose job is likely to disappear will approach reengineering differently from a sales rep who should make more money from happier customers. We have found that organizations may have as many as fifty of these segments, such as the executive team; the marketing department; the top 600 managers; the people in a factory that will change its manufacturing process; all first-line supervisors; and so on. All reengineering messages must be tailored to the specific characteristics and requirements of each constituency. This means different timing, different media, and different emphases. Telling managers that their departments are about to disappear, and possibly their jobs as well, requires a more personal and sensitive approach than is necessary when, say, informing salespeople that the number-one source of customer complaints is about to become history.

\* A reengineering communications plan must address the following questions for each of these segments:

- Who is in this segment?
- How will they be affected by reengineering?
- What reaction will they have to it?
- What behavior do we need of them?
- What messages do they need to hear for that behavior to be stimulated?
- When do they need to hear these messages?
- What medium should we use for each message?
- Who should communicate the messages to them?

This approach is analogous to the way leading consumer products companies segment their customers and target their communications. In reengineering communications, just as in selling soap, micromarketing is the name of the game.

2: *Use Multiple Channels of Communication:* Effective advertisers use a mix of print, TV, radio, and other channels to reach consumers. Reengineers must do the same. It's not enough to place an article in the company magazine or to have an executive give a speech. Different media reach different people and affect them in different ways. Reengineers must use as many mechanisms as possible: presentations, articles, videos, design simulations, and so forth. There are many ways to tell the reengineering story, each most suitable for a different facet of it. Moreover, the reengineering journey can be a long one, and any particular medium can get boring after a while. In short, variety counts, and so does originality. Some organizations use an audiotape that people can listen to in their cars. Others have used comic strips, newsletters, team meetings, workshops, simulations—you name it.

Communication can take nonverbal forms as well. A bold, vivid, powerful logo can serve as a constant reminder of reengineering. Pepsi, for example, called its program 10X (tenfold improvement in performance). The logo has the same colors and typeface as the Pepsi-Cola logo. It's placed on everything at Pepsi that doesn't move. Hallmark created little globes to demonstrate the navigation of its reengineering program, called The Journey. Another company produced hundreds of hats emblazoned with its reengineering motto, "Innovation Masters." T-shirts, sweatshirts, coffee mugs, mouse pads, pens, and paper pads can all feature your reengineering logo or slogan to help reinforce the message. It may be cheap and vulgar, but that doesn't mean it won't work.

3: *Use Multiple Voices:* We have all seen how beer companies use a range of different sports personalities to promote their product. The idea is that not everyone will connect with a particular individual or identify with a given perspective. The same is true in reengineering. It's not a good idea for all communications to emanate from the CEO or from the reengineering czar. Other voices must also carry the message. It can be senior managers talking to their units, or members of reengineering teams visiting their peers and keeping them up-to-date on recent activities, or a plant manager telling his people what reengineering will mean to their site. This is more than just having a series of different mouthpieces for the same message. Each individual will describe reengineering from a different point of view, enriching *what* is said as well as broadening *how* it is said.

4: *Communicate Clearly:* Sizzle helps to sell, but it's not enough. The content of the message must be clear, specific, and comprehensible. Traditional marketing has "four Ps" (product, price, promotion, position); so does reengineering: purpose, process, progress, and problems. These four elements should form the core of the reengineering message. By *purpose* we mean the *why* of reengineering, the reason for embarking on it. As we've said, this must be communicated in terms accessible and meaningful to the different constituency audiences. For some companies, the "why" is simple: If we don't do this, we'll be broke in a year. But many companies today reengineer to avoid problems rather than to react to them, and they face a special communications problem. Employees will look about, see a prosperous company with a record of success, and ask, "Why bother?" Leaders of reengineering must find compelling ways to convey the necessity of change despite apparent success. One company, number one in its industry, commissioned a video

in the format of a news broadcast. Set in the near future, the video “documented” the decline and ultimate bankruptcy of the company because of changing technology, resurgent competitors, and its own process inadequacies.

Similarly, GTE has created a compelling video entitled *What Do They Want?* It consists of a series of vignettes, giving the perspectives of four key stakeholder groups—customers, employees, communities, and investors. Actors playing customers are seen commenting on what it is like to deal with inattentive salespeople, an older couple talks about their investment in GTE and their need for dividends, an employee inquires if GTE is the largest user of three-ring binders in the world—as the camera pans back to show him up to his neck in binders. This video has punch. Not just a collection of “talking heads,” it shows real human beings in a way that makes viewers feel for them. Shown all across the company, it has effectively communicated GTE’s complex set of reasons for needing to change. It also includes an explication of the nature of reengineering, what it is and how it addresses the company’s predicament—and, as we have repeatedly stressed, couched not in abstract academic terms but in words that speak to everyone.

By *process* we mean an explication of how the organization will go about reengineering, so that the project plan becomes open to all. While the entire organization doesn’t need to know every step in the reengineering methodology, it is important to share the outline of the approach so that everyone has a context for all the ensuing events.

The *progress* of the reengineering effort must also be communicated. Information should be flowing as the teams develop their designs and implementation schedules. Keeping the organization up-to-date on the work of the reengineering teams is vital for maintaining momentum.

Finally, and most unusually, it’s also important to communicate reengineering *problems*. This is very countercultural

for most organizations, whose communications are relentlessly optimistic and upbeat. Very rarely do companies acknowledge glitches, snafus, and errors. But when they do, they create a bond of trust between speaker and listener—the admission of fallibility purchases great credibility. Companies should admit failures, stress the lessons learned, and move on. If you admit your mistakes, your people will be far more inclined to believe you the next time you claim a success.

5) *Communicate, Communicate, Communicate:* We’ve all witnessed the power of market saturation. Who can forget Mr. Whipple or Ronald McDonald? Their images have been burned into our memories by the sheer force of relentless exposure. Repetition works in reengineering as well. It really, really works. (Get it?) Many managers seem to operate on the assumption that once they’ve said something, everybody has gotten the point. The key to effective communication is reinforcement in many ways, through many channels, and by many people. At Hallmark, for example, in the first year of reengineering alone, over a thousand talks were given across the organization so that people would know that this was no passing fancy. The sheer volume of repetition signaled the seriousness of the intent. Numbers like this are the rule rather than the exception in successful reengineering programs. Every leader we know has said that he or she seriously underestimated the magnitude of the communication effort required. One told us that in the first fourteen months of a reengineering effort, he held 120 small-group meetings with over 600 people, each lasting three to four hours. The time required for any given communication to penetrate and sink in can be formulated in various ways. One is the rule of seven times seven: The same thing must be communicated seven times in seven different ways before anybody will believe it. Another is the rule of the fifties: The

first fifty times you say something, people don't hear it; the second fifty times, they don't understand it; and the third fifty times, they don't believe it. Repetition matters, repetition works.

6: *Honesty Is the Only Policy:* Cynics might say that here is where the parallel between marketing and reengineering ends. However, smart marketers don't promise what they can't deliver because disillusioned customers won't come back. Similarly, lies about reengineering are not only unethical—they are foolish and counterproductive. As we have already said, reengineering can create a new paradigm for internal communications by being resolutely honest. If a mistake is made, admit it. If something is unknown, acknowledge it. If something is painful, face it. The truth is almost always less terrible than the fears that people build up; the truth buys credibility; and the mere fact of speaking the truth is another demonstration that something profoundly different is under way.

7: *Use Emotions, Not Just Logic:* An analytical sales approach is only one way to convince buyers to acquire your product. Successful marketing plays on all the emotional strings—fear, greed, joy, hope, to name but the most obvious. Reengineering communications must also transcend a dry reporting of the facts to make an emotional connection with employees. A delivery style that works best in many organizations is what we call borderline evangelism. The reengineering leader must communicate passion. Like a preacher, he or she must be full of holy fire. People respond to burning and sincere enthusiasm—it's catching. But there should also be variety in the array of emotions driving the reengineering effort. Playfulness can be as productive as passion, especially if playfulness runs counter to the organization's traditional style.

8: *Communicate to Heal:* Here we do diverge from traditional marketing. Reengineering affects real people with lives and causes real pain. We have an obligation to use our communications not just to further the reengineering effort but also to help to minimize the stress and trauma that it causes. This may entail messages of hope, consolation, encouragement, or appreciation. When we tell people that we understand and share their fears and their pain, that their difficulties are in the service of a larger cause, that they are recognized and valued—then we do help to heal them (and incidentally, deflect their negative feelings away from resistance).

9: *Communicate Tangibly:* Words are a start, but they are rarely enough. Just as consumer product companies provide free samples, reengineering teams must find experiential ways to convey important issues. At Texas Instruments, the reengineering team employs a communications device called the "Gameboard." Essentially a foldable strip of paper representing all the cross-functional activities associated with order fulfillment, Gameboard helps people feel the length and complexity of the process, makes them experience it through customers' eyes, and helps them realize how much change will be required. Each fold represents a significant change in the work required to meet the order fulfillment goals. Similarly, Hitachi Data Systems, a California-based division of the Japanese giant Hitachi, made the experience of reengineering a tangible one for its people. A month before the official launch of its reengineering program, Hitachi began issuing communications built around an old Elvis Presley song. On four successive Mondays it sent the following packages, consisting of a flyer and accompanying specialty items, to the 500 invitees to the reengineering kickoff meeting.

Week 1. "Tear it up." The flyer was printed on Tyvek, special paper that can't be torn. Message: Things are

not what they seem. Go ahead and try to tear it up, but you'll fail if you don't find a new way of doing it.

Week 2. "Shake it up." This time, the flyer was accompanied by a hand warmer that remained inert until it was shaken up. Message: You can't be passive. You have to take some action to make reengineering happen.

Week 3. "Break it up." The flyer was accompanied by a plastic egg filled with Silly Putty. Silly Putty will not break until it is refrigerated. Message: Be resourceful.

Week 4. "We're going to have a ball." The flyer was accompanied by a tension-relieving soft rubber ball. Message: *We are* going to have a ball.

The "gimmicks" turned what would have been dry messages into memorable ones.

10: *Listen, Listen, Listen:* Communication is not just talking; it must be two-way and involve keen, attentive listening. Marketers always listen to their customers, and reengineers need to as well. There are two reasons for this. The first is to have a feedback mechanism on the effectiveness of your communications program. How else will you know if your messages are getting through, if people understand reengineering, and if they are ready to accept it? The second is to offer people an opportunity to voice—even to vent—their feelings. People who feel they've been heard, who feel that they have a voice, who see themselves as participants rather than as victims, are much more likely to feel positive about reengineering and act accordingly.

There are numerous ways to make reengineering communications a dialogue rather than a monologue: focus groups, suggestion forms, questionnaires, surveys, interviews, "open mike" meetings, and so forth. The critical need is to use them widely and frequently, wisely and well.

These ten principles capture what we believe to be con-

#### The Ten Principles of Reengineering Communications

1. Segment the audience
2. Use multiple channels
3. Use multiple voices
4. Be clear
5. Communicate, communicate, communicate
6. Honesty is the only policy
7. Use emotions, not just logic
8. Heal, console, encourage
9. Make the message tangible
10. Listen, listen, listen

temporary best practice in reengineering communications and must form the basis of any effective communication program. Each company is of course unique and will, through trial and error, create its own unique variation of these principles.

#### A SAMPLE REENGINEERING COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

Let's take a close look at how one company put these communication principles to work. The leaders of this large electronics firm, facing defense cutbacks and other broad industry changes, had determined that they needed to reengineer three of their major processes. They appointed a czar and a start-up team to assist in the launch of their program, and immediately set to work on communications.

Even before the design teams got to work, employees began to hear that reengineering was imminent. There were judicious hints at management meetings and mysterious advertisements in the company newspaper saying, "Reengineering is coming"

and “Reengineering—watch this space for the definition.”

In parallel with these teasers, preliminary one-on-one conversations were held by the CEO with key stakeholders and critical functional leaders. The CEO informed these important constituencies that a major change program was about to be launched.

Even at this early date, it is evident that this organization is serious about communication. Catching people’s attention is a good first step toward winning their hearts and minds. Conversing with key senior managers early also allows for personal concerns to be addressed and delicate questions to be posed.

Then the program was officially announced: 300 senior managers from across the company were invited to a local hotel for a half-day meeting. The invitations were personalized for each guest and signed by the CEO. At this kickoff, the CEO and several other senior executives spoke with passion and conviction of the importance of reengineering, communicating their personal enthusiasm for change.

Many companies announce the launch of reengineering by issuing a dry memo that reads, “We’re about to launch a very important new program. We really think this is critical stuff.” But as Marshall McLuhan taught us, “The medium is the message.” If you announce a program in a boring and traditional way, people will assume that it’s a boring and traditional program. The initial advantage will be lost. Skepticism and inertia must be overcome right at the start if they are to be overcome at all. At this kickoff session, it was clear to all attending that the senior people were in alignment and had put themselves on the line. Their collective presence signaled a serious and unified intent from the top. The message was, “This is for real, and it’s not going away.” If passionate commitment and clarity of vision are communicated at the

kickoff, it is a sure bet that they’ll be passed on to many others in the company the very next day. Word always gets around. In this case, leadership was managing that word.

Next, the executive team scheduled meetings with each department, to which everyone was invited. The executive team presented their reengineering plans: Here is what we’re going to do; here are the processes we’ve selected; here is what is going to happen over the next three months; here is what we expect to happen over the next two years; and here is what we need from you. These meetings were conducted in an informal, interactive style, so that those attending felt comfortable asking questions. Precise information and timetables were communicated, but with the explicit qualification that, since this was a new experience for the company, there would inevitably be slipups. Each meeting closed with the executives’ request that the department manager discuss the reengineering project with any employees who had been unable to attend the meeting.

The executive team has segmented the organization and is talking with each of the segments. They are giving them real information, not fluff, thereby demonstrating they are both knowledgeable and irrevocably committed. Notice that even at this early stage the leadership is both talking and listening. These meetings have also been designed to trigger cascading communications downward through the organization. Cascading not only ensures the dissemination of the vision but also that it will be communicated to the right people by the right people.

Two months later, the reengineers began showing a twenty-minute video to everyone in the organization. By this point, the reengineering ranks had swelled to three process redesign teams, one coordination team, and a steering committee. All

these groups collaborated with the company's communications group to produce this video in a very short time. In it, the CEO presented the reengineering Case for Action, spelling out how the competitive situation had changed, how the industry had changed, and why the company couldn't stay where it was. He concluded his remarks with this statement: "This is why we're reengineering. It's not a folly. It's not a whim. It is vital to our future success." Pictures of competitors' products then flashed across the screen followed by clips of dissatisfied customers. Each redesign team explained why their process needed to be reengineered and what its improvement would mean to the company. The CEO closed the video by saying, "We're starting this program now because we must and frankly we're not sure how it's going to end. I don't know if you will have jobs when we're done, so I can't promise that. But there are some things I can promise you. If your job is eliminated, we'll do everything we can to find you a similar position. If we can't do that, we'll do our best to train you for a new job. And if we can't do that, we'll treat you fairly and give you a generous outplacement package. You have my word on this."

This video had a powerful effect on the organization. The company had never made a video for such broad use before. Nor was the CEO accustomed to such high-profile activities; most employees had never seen his face before.

Of critical importance was how the video handled the issue of job loss. Rather than letting the rumor mill define the terms of the debate, management made a preemptive strike. By addressing this head-on, management deflected a speeding bullet.

The best treatment for uncertainty and fear is information and truth. Organizations reengineer for sound competitive and economic reasons—to survive, to cut costs, to improve customer satisfaction, to create the conditions for growth. In many companies, however, most employees

have a very limited understanding of their company's overall business condition. If you doubt this, try going to a place in your company where the real work is done: a factory, a customer service center, a research lab, a warehouse. Ask the frontline employees, "Who are our most serious competitors? Our most critical suppliers? Our largest customers? What will determine our success in the future?" If your company is like most, your employees won't have the answers. They are focused on their individual tasks. They've never had the big picture explained to them. This company's video helped to explain the competitive context while linking reengineering to concrete current problems and to the requirements for a successful future. Management realized that all employees needed to understand the following chain of logic: (1) The problems that we face in the marketplace, such as high costs and long cycle times, are really process problems; (2) To succeed both individually and collectively, we will have to change how our processes operate; (3) Therefore, we are going to reengineer our processes. This kind of message can sink in deep and change people's perspectives at a fundamental level. By making people understand why reengineering is necessary, the company elevated it above the level of a passing fad.

Over the next six months, the reengineering team inundated the organization with a steady stream of diverse communications. Speeches were given, articles were published, results were shared. Following the launch of reengineering, senior management eliminated many of the other business change programs that had accumulated over the years. The empowerment program, the vacuous Vision 2000 initiative, and numerous others of the same ilk quickly disappeared. This had several salutary effects. From a practical perspective, shutting down these other efforts freed up some of the resources needed for reengineering. But it also sent two powerful messages: First, that the days of faddish, superficial programs are over;

and second, that reengineering is our only hope to prepare for the future.

Many companies have dozens of unrelated change programs operating at any time, each with its own advocates, constituents, and ideologies. These all compete for time and attention, and usually have little real impact. It is necessary to pierce through this clutter, to make people see and believe that reengineering is not like all these other programs. The real goal is to position reengineering as the driver of all the changes that these disconnected programs were originally intended to make. Customer service, empowerment, innovation—all the contemporary catchwords—are in fact just facets of the reengineering enterprise. It is through effective reengineering that these goals can be realized.

The company's early and ongoing attention to communications paved the way to successful reengineering. By the time the reengineering teams had completed their designs, all the senior managers were aligned around a common vision of the future. When making the transition into implementation, the czar had a relatively easy time acquiring the additional 150 people needed for the various implementation teams. The intensity of executive commitment coupled with the broad dissemination and acceptance of the Case for Action had turned a potential crisis into a non-event. When the time came to test the design in pilot sites, the reengineers did not have to twist arms to find suitable locations. There were plenty of volunteers. And as the new processes were rolled out across the organization, there was little surprise and almost no opposition. The inevitability of reengineering had been communicated so long and so often that it had become a foregone conclusion. This company's communications program was not the only reason it succeeded; but it sure didn't hurt.