REINVENTING THE CORPORATION

I. Today's Business Environment
   A. Money is information in motion and knowing about electronics is more important than knowing about money.
   B. We are now in a shake out period in which thousands of corporations will go under. Today's computer industry resembles the early days of the automobile industry - 2300 corporations finally consolidated into 3.
   C. We are now in an entrepreneurial economy. More new businesses are being created than ever before. We must continue to create an environment that fosters entrepreneurs.
   D. Some new model corporations:
      1. Hewlett-Packard
      2. SAS (total reformation of the hierarchial structure - customer driven. "Do 1000 things 1% better, rather than one thing 1000% better.")
      3. W. L. Gore & Associates (hires people because of their personal worth, rather than for a specific job.)
      4. New Hope Communications (promotes personal growth of its employees. "We only do business with people who are pleasant.")

II. 14 Ideas for Reinventing the Corporation (pre-baked ideas)
   1. Human resources, not technology, are the competitive edge. Demographics show that people are becoming scarce. Companies will need to restructure themselves to attract good people by developing jobs and environments that promote growth of the whole person.
   2. As we begin to have more people retire from than enter the job market, we will move toward a full employment economy with intense competition for good personnel.
   3. Computers are replacing middle managers. We no longer need people to simply keep track of things.
   4. Managers who do remain are becoming facilitators.
   5. We are moving from an age of specialization to generalization.
   6. We are moving from companies with permanent labor pools, to companies that hire contract labor when and where needed.
   7. We are coming into a period in which we must create an environment that allows for a multiplicity of work styles - e.g. flex time.
   8. Management must change from a hierarchical to a networking structure.
   9. With the large number of women coming into business this must be the decade of comparable work.
   10. One form of corporation is going to be the reconstitution of entrepreneurs into loose confederations.
   11. Quality is paramount.
   12. Corporations must invest heavily in employees' educational and health needs.
   13. "Intuition" (hunch) is gaining a new respect in business circles. We can no longer go just by the "numbers."
   14. These new priorities have to do with being SMART, not just NICE.

III. Important Megatrends in Business
   A. We must become a truly global economy.
   B. Self-reliance in the new watchword. Personal responsibility to success.
   C. We must have a balance of high tech and high touch.
      (Under the pressure of the new technology the arts are exploding, but mainly in local communities and on a local level.)

IV. Important Growth Areas in the U.S.
   A. Economic growth areas
      1. computer and associated services
      2. health care, nutrition, and fitness
      3. leisure travel and entertainment
      4. retailing -food,restaurants,lawyering,accounting,financial planning
      5. technicians
      6. training
   B. Geographic growth areas
      1. southwest United States
      2. Florida

Most important - We need a strategic vision of where we are going!

Humans Should Also Network

In a new book to be published in 1985, John Naisbitt, the author of Megatrends describes changes affecting the corporation in America. His theme, that the hierarchal structures of our corporate institutions are giving way to networking structures, is stronger than ever. This trend, along with another of his observations regarding the inevitability of a shrinking work force within this decade and the subsequent "seller's" market of talent, will impact adversely on our educational institutions.

Many chroniclers of our changing society have noted the strong grass roots innovations that are reshaping societal institutions. Some futurists are predicting that institutions that don't recognize the efficacy of networking and the concomitant commitment of workers to their tasks that networking encourages will have problems in this new society. In fact, Naisbitt, postulates that institutions must provide opportunities for employees to feel an "ownership" in their work or these institutions will not be able to hire personnel in the coming "sellers" market. One corporation that he describes turned its bleak financial picture around by turning its corporate structure upside down. The top end executives became the facilitators for the low end, the people who dealt with the public. The dramatic reversal that ensued in this corporation could be replicated within our educational institutions.

The question is mechanism. Networking theorists indicate that in a network each person feels an important contribution, so that at a point in time the energy and effort of the tasks at hand revolve around that individual.

The individual is always important on a continuing basis and on occasion is the center of activity. Each person thus feels an "ownership" of the activity and a personal commitment to the task.

It is a rare hierarchal system that produces these feelings in employees. There is a growing consensus that the administrative staff of a school district, like cooperation executives, should become facilitators for the educational delivery system; but, in fact, the individuals who hold these posts have generally viewed themselves as the omniscient, perhaps benevolent, dispensers of educational pabulum. More often then not these individuals impede the delivery system, lower moral, stifle creativity and are only the facilitators of ennui, paperwork, and promote misguided concepts of equity. Of course, there are those exceptional administrators who can encourage the individual to feel important in a hierarchal system. These are the insightful leaders who should be asked to restructure the school system to reflect the changes reshaping our society.

The computer laboratory can be the embryo of change in our educational delivery system. In these laboratories the students and teachers are partners in the learning. It is very rare to find a successful computer teacher that does not admit to learning from his students, networking with them in such a way that each of these individuals feels important and committed. Similarly, the computer laboratory can be the vehicle to breakdown the "wall" that separates the disciplines within a school. This artificial barrier disappears when the faculties cooperate on educational units, learn from each other, share the software and hardware, plan budgets and work in the laboratory together.

Nothing so destroys the networking embryo as the dictates from on high that "each school will" and "each

2

school must". These hierarchal dicta destroy initiative, creativity, ownership and productivity. Such pontifications are remnants from the past, modeled on the industrial age that is no longer relevant in the new age of information. This old model represents an alarming culture gap and is becoming an increasingly unproductive method of managing the educational delivery system. Now is the time to creatively redesign and retool the education enterprise; to invert the structure and reexamine, heretofore, accepted tasks. Staffs should network in intra-school and inter-school arrangements. Teachers and lower level administrators should be encouraged to develop personal commitments to what they teach and oversee. The dispassionate fiats of the "old" model administrators should be of historical interest only; education must proceed as a cooperative venture between students, teachers and facilitators — formerly administrators. Differences have made this country great and differences in how and to some extent what is taught should not be destroyed in obeisance to the deities of misguided equity, the machinations of judges or the hue and cry of skill drills. In fact, many creative educators are indicating that the current pendulum swing to raising scores on standardized tests is destroying exciting teaching. The innovative teacher is being punished because of the poor teacher. It would be better to get rid of the poor teacher and give the good teacher time to teach why and when along with the how. The how is taking up a disproportionate share of a student's time because it is the easiest concept to measure. We are misleading the public when we extol the wonders of raising the scores on standardized tests at the expense of thinking. Modern technological advances require us to stress when and why we do things. The how is quite often done for us.

Teaching unions are going to have to change. Staffs of schools should be able to choose their colleagues and not be

forced to accept new faculty members whose major qualification is age. If no one wants a contract teacher then he should be made a facilitator that does not require pupil contact. If he cannot serve in this capacity he should be let go. Facilitators are needed to advise and implement budgets, enforce discipline, handle paperwork, community relations etc. These jobs should be equal in importance to that of the teacher not the reward for superior teaching or astute political acumen. In fact, non-teaching professionals might better serve as facilitators in many areas of the educational enterprise. Businesses would not think of promoting a worker, without accounting experience, to manage megabuck budgets; nor should a successful teaching career be the prerequisite for management of any area in education. Competent teachers should be able to find their financial rewards in teaching.

In the anticipated "sellers" market an increased salary will still be insufficient to attract high quality staff. The milieu of the educational work place will have to mirror the changes taking place in successful corporations. The value of the human being must be extolled, and each must be given the nourishment to develop a commitment to his or her part of the pedagogic process. If Naisbitt is correct and societal institutions are only going to survive if they change their attitudes towards the value of the human being, then the educational system will have to do more than offer larger salaries.

The computer laboratory at George Washington High has developed through the networking described above. Its acclaimed successes are directly due to the far sighted vision of certain administrators within the Denver Public Schools who allowed us to be creative, innovative and productive. In general, the industrial age model of education has apriori assumptions that are antithetical to

4

the above freedoms. Consequently, until our current, anachronistic model is changed the nurturing of a networking environment is impossible. Entrepreneurial enterprises in our society are gradually embracing Naisbitt's new model and so must society's entrenched educational institutions. One admonition, a swing too far in this new direction would be just as injurious to education as is the current emphasis on skill alone.

Irwin J. Hoffman Ph.D.
Chairman Computer Science
George Washington High School
Denver, Colorado 80224