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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by William Edwin Seaver IV entitled "The Role of Internal Communication in an Organizational Change Process: A Case Study." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Science, with a major in Communication.

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We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

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THE ROLE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE PROCESS: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In this case study, interviews and participant observation explored the role of internal communication in an organizational change process. The case for study was the Church Resources Division of LifeWay Christian Resources, a religious publishing company based in Nashville, Tennessee. LifeWay's use of communication in the change process was compared to five themes for transitional organization communication found in academic business and communication books and journals. The five themes are the top executive as lead communicator, two-way communication, using middle managers, interpersonal communication, and a shared vision. Two major discoveries emerged that were outside the five themes. The first was that the top leaders in the LifeWay Church Resources Division were genuinely concerned about communicating to their employees with truth and accuracy. With this idea established at the beginning of the change process, the communication throughout the change effort was consistent from all division leaders. The second discovery was the use of a communication team to maintain communication throughout the change process. The communication team had both a proactive and reactive relationship to the division leadership and also implemented four of the five themes found in the literature.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

"The brutal fact is that about 70% of all change initiatives fail."
Michael Beer and Nitin Nohria, "Cracking the Code of Change"
Harvard Business Review, May/June 2000

There are many reasons why most organizational change efforts fail. The failure may fall to poor leadership or a defiant employee base. In some cases the change process does not succeed because the organization is not willing to commit to necessary components of change to the fullest extent. For others, communication is underused, misused or not used at all.

Organizations are probably never stretched and strained to the same extent at any other time as they are during a period of change. Change reaches down into the depths of the organization and obligates all employees to begin (no matter how gradual) doing things differently than they were previously done. This can mean requiring an experienced organization veteran to change what he/she has done so carefully for many years or even require new skills for old employees. The fact of the matter is that most people do not like change of any kind, especially when it comes to their jobs.

Communication is not simply important during an organizational change, it is vital. Change is a process that is created, produced, and maintained by and within communication (Ford & Ford 1995, 542). The fears, questions, and concerns caused by organizational change can be curbed, or at least minimized through strong internal

communication. Employees are an organization's biggest clients of all because they are the people who make the organization what it is. Internal communication is highly important for internal communication during a change process and is *the* vital aspect toward getting an organization to the point of intended change.

Organizational change requires that the target publics be identified—in this case internally. A plan should be formulated and the methods to both give and receive information should be established. A mission, strategies, and measurable goals must be communicated to the organization's members so that they will know where the organization is going and how the desired end will be achieved.

Purpose of the Study

This paper looks at the role of internal communication in an organizational change process based on a case study of a change effort by the Church Resources Division of LifeWay Christian Resources of Nashville, Tennessee. The research was tied to the premise, based on a review of the literature, that there are five reoccurring themes for communication effectiveness that make the change effort more efficient and successful. These five topics were synthesized from the literature dealing with communication and organizational change. The significance of this study has far-reaching implications since internal communication used in a change process is the major vehicle through which organizations can cope with, control and manage change (Foltz 1973, 121).

LifeWay History

LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention is the world's largest producer and distributor of religious materials. Until 1998, LifeWay was known as the Baptist Sunday School Board. There were several reasons for changing the name, but "a primary motive for doing this was to emphasize the fact that this agency was more than just a Sunday School Board." (Sutton 2000, 308). LifeWay has its own publishing company, Broadman & Holman, which produces books, Bibles and hymnals. There is also a national chain of LifeWay Christian stores, two conference centers, numerous magazines, discipleship material and Sunday school curriculum.

The Church Resources Division is the largest group within LifeWay both in the number of employees and in revenue. There are more than 700 employees in this division alone and it generates $160 million in revenue a year. The Sunday school department makes up the largest segment of the division, which also produces discipleship materials for in-depth study, magazines, church music, events, church architecture, youth camps, Christian education and pastoral care.

Ten weeks of participation and observation went into the research of this case study as the LifeWay Church Resources Division underwent the first stages of its change process. Follow-up continued as the change process proceeded. Although this research does not follow the LifeWay Church Resources Division change process to the end due to time constraints, the findings and discussion encapsulate the role of communication in the Church Resources Division change process and give a full and complete representation of the methods and strategy used.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Literature to Provide Framework

A substantial body of literature exists that explores the use of communication during organizational change. One focus of this literature involves communication in an organization from management's perspective. Other studies deal with communication channels or communicating externally in an organizational change process. Few publications specifically outlined useful internal communication methods and tactics for an organizational change process. Although each mentioned one or two communication methods, there seemed to be no comprehensive gathering of the broad themes. These tactics seemed to overlap between some authors, but the overlapping tactics varied between articles. However, five broad themes for internal organizational change communication were identified in the literature. The five broad themes are: the top executive as the lead communicator, the use of middle management, effectively using interpersonal communication, the importance of two-way communication and a focus on the organization's vision.

It would be virtually impossible to discuss any single theme with the thought that it is somehow independent of the others. Each theme is important both by itself and in relation to the other themes and some periphery issues that will be addressed at the end of the section. Additionally, it is important to note that not all of these themes were used by any single organization or study yet effective internal communication and measurable

results were reported in numerous cases by the organizations that used several of the themes outlined below.

Shared Vision

According to Belasen (2000), Sam Walton created an organization based on his values and his vision. Wal-Mart employees did not inherently understand or internalize Walton's values, so he began talking with employees, or associates as he called them, listening to their ideas as well as the customer's ideas, and showing a personal interest in the associates' personal needs and professional goals. Through all of this he set out to teach the company what he knew, where they were going and the vision that was going to take them there. Through communicating his vision to employees at all levels they began to understand the nature of their company and started carrying Walton's values.

Building a shared vision is the capacity to develop and hold a shared picture of the future an organization wants to create (Dervitsiotis 1998, 115). An organization's vision sets specific goals in broad ranges and attempts to chart the course for the future. However in many organizations this vision is nothing more than a statement on a wall or in a book somewhere that is pulled out once a year during staff evaluations. Sam Walton made the vision an active part of his company and shared it with his employees.

The need for focusing on a vision during a change process is significant for several of reasons. The vision tells where the company needs to go and can very quickly show employees in nonspecific terms where the organization began to stray. The vision

also unifies an organization and shows purpose, direction and a desired goal. It can also open the door for candor and trust within the organization (Cushman & King 1995, 52).

Kathryn Troy's (1995) extensive study of communication's role in change management in 130 U.S. and European companies shows that a focus on corporate vision and mission was second in importance only to the organization's financial performance (6). Besides the bottom line, the vision is highly valued in the success of a smooth transition and expansion of the changing organization.

There is no general consensus as to which method works best. The organization's culture and leadership style has as much to do with it as anything. Nevertheless, the doors open for success when the leadership can bind the employees together around a common identity and sense of destiny (Dervitsiotis 1998, 115).

Two-Way Communication

In an old model of organizational communication, information would flow only one direction: from the top down. In two-way communication, information not only goes both ways, but it seems to level the playing field and blur the lines between positions. Employees receive attention and have opportunities to give feedback in two-way communication organizations. That is to say that what employees have to say about the organization is not only requested, but valued by the top executives. The example of Sam Walton showed a leader that spent time listening to employees as much as telling them about the vision of Wal-Mart. This dialogue between leadership and employees

differs from discussion in that it is the free flow of ideas that enables a group to think together (Dervitsiotis 1998, 120)

The high-tech computer networking company, Cisco, is about as strong as they come in Silicon Valley. Through more than 60 acquisitions since 1995, they have adapted and thrived in this fast-moving environment. It credits this ability to change efficiently to its strong internal communication network which gives employees access to all of Cisco's information all the time and keeps the leadership close to the employees (Stein 2000, 183).

Using two-way communication sets a tone within an organization of openness and trust. "When thinking about two-way communication it is important to consider not only what top management is communicating to employees but also what employees are communicating to top management" (Richardson & Denton 1996, 207). For some organizations, using two-way communication may be a change initiative all by itself. Communication between the levels of the organization can be used in the planning and implementation periods of the change process for just such an organization (Pitman 1994, 40). By focusing on two-way communication, these organizations may begin to communicate better than ever and it should be considered a smart investment for the future of the organization long after the change process is over (Adubato 2000).

Interpersonal Communication

It is important to separate interpersonal communication from the two-way communication as discussed above. It cannot be assumed that all two-way

communication is interpersonal, or that all interpersonal communication is two-way, although the most effective use of change communication between a top manager and his/her employees would include both simultaneously. Virtually any channel that allows feedback can use two-way communication, but interpersonal communication is face-to-face and personal. It is the emotional, "touchy-feeley" side to two-way communication.

The channel used to convey the message is a determining factor for interpersonal communication. As management moves away from impersonal notices and bulletins, to personal letters and memos, up through interactive media such as telephones and email and finally to face-to-face communications, there is a shift from leaner to richer media, though face-to-face is the richest of all (Richardson & Denton 1996, 207). By using interpersonal communication effectively, the top executives can cast out fear through the power of the position, yet also show that they too are going through change along with everybody else in the organization. A feeling of "we're all in this together" can foster unity within the organization to rally the troops behind the change effort.

Note however that interpersonal communication requires caring and feeling, which is something that can be hidden with other forms of communication, but is much more difficult in a face-to-face setting. With as much non-verbal communication as verbal occurring during interpersonal communication, the emotional concerns may be more important than the content of the process. The symbolic value of showing a genuine respect and caring for employee concerns and a willingness to share what is known with employees may far outweigh the fact that little substantive, factual information is really available (Richardson & Denton 1996, 206).

Interpersonal communication is an important tool to the success of an organizational change process in that it can handle areas of high risk better than colder mediums (Lewis 1999, 48). Since this type of communication relies on high contact and high feedback, the likelihood of miscommunication is lessened. Some managers strongly endorse face-to-face communication for major changes and use less personal tactics for in calmer issues (Lewis 1999, 48).

Use of Middle Management

Imagine this scenario: Margaret, the supervisor, is counting stock, approving a customer's personal check, or making sure the "specials" show the new advertised price. A clerk stops her, "Say, Margaret, what's this I hear about..." (Larkin & Larkin 1994, 86)

This is the moment of truth. Will Margaret as a middle manager be able to answer the questions of the frontline employee? Has management above Margaret conveyed to her what the new change policy is and how it will effect the organization? Is Margaret informed about the change and does she feel a part of the new direction of the organization, or is she likely to respond: "It's about time for another change around here. Just hang on and we'll make it through this one too." (Larkin & Larkin 1994, 86)

A study of organizational change by Lewis (1999) found that middle managers appear to be underused in many internal communication strategies. She discovered that there is little documentation on this subject, although workers are more likely to go to their direct supervisor for information and advice about upcoming changes. Workers are

also more likely to have similar attitudes and behaviors of their supervisors than they would of the top executive. Middle managers can be a key to successful internal communications during a change process because they have direct contact with the broad base of employees on a daily basis. They have the potential to put a personal face on higher management directives, and give feedback from the employees to the top management as well. Using middle management effectively will ease the tension of change and speed up employee acceptance of change.

A 1994 survey of 705 employees in 70 companies by the Alexander Consulting Group found that two-thirds of the employees said they often don't believe what management says. The fact that the majority of employees are at best suspicious of their organization's management is even more of a reason to work to get middle managers communicating with the employees in a change process. If used properly, they can open up the lines of communication between the lowest line of employees and the top management. They can communicate the coming changes and give feedback from the front lines. Middle managers may indeed be the most overlooked people in a change process but they might be the very ones who can save the day.

Top Executive as Lead Communicator

In the early 1990s, Archie Norman became the CEO of ASDA, a grocery store chain in the United Kingdom that was on the verge of bankruptcy. As in most cases of this nature, Norman laid off workers, made dramatic financial cuts and sold off losing businesses—acts that usually spawn distrust among employees and distance executives

from their people. Yet during Norman's time as CEO, ASDA became famous for its atmosphere of trust and openness (Beer & Nohria 2000, 138-139). Norman revealed the key to this paradoxical success in his first address to the company:

> "Our number one objective is to secure value for our shareholders and secure the trading future of the business. I am not coming in with any magical solutions. I intend to spend the next few weeks listening and forming ideas for our precise direction...We need a culture built around common ideas and goals that include listening, learning, speed of response, from the stores upwards. [But] there will be management reorganization. My objective is to establish a clear focus on the stores, shorten lines of communication, and build a new team." (Beer & Nohria 2000, 139)

Archie Norman is an excellent example of an executive manager who embraces communication as an important part of the change process. He makes no apologies for the change that must come, yet his use of internal communication as a vital resource in accomplishing the change is key to the success at ASDA. By 1999 ASDA was worth eight times the value from the beginning of Norman's tenure, and had cornered the market against competitors (Beer & Nohria 2000, 141).

Young and Post (1993) feel strongly about the importance of a CEO's role in communicating organizational change. They say "that the CEO must be philosophically committed to the notion that communicating with employees is essential to the achievement of corporate goals." They take the role of the CEO even further by

proposing that top management must be willing to deliver key messages themselves and not delegate that task to others (Lewis 1999, 48)

Peter Richardson and D. Keith Denton (1996) reiterate the importance of the top executives' roles as lead communicators. "...Communicating corporate change is not the job of just the Executive Directors of Corporate Communication; the biggest responsibility rests with senior executives". That is to say that people basically follow their boss' lead. Despite any hesitations to get on board with the change by the organization's general population, there must be 100% involvement by top management. If senior management is not committed, and if that commitment is not obvious, then change will not occur". By being the lead communicator in an organization, the CEO and his/her top executives can set the for the entire change process.

Once the leader(s) have decided to be the lead communicators within the organization, they can handle small fires of fear and even active resistance. While these problems can be averted by brute force, effective communication is a better strategy to reducing fear (Dervitsiotis 1998, 112). Although a seemingly passive effort, the flow of communication can quietly stamp out the troubling fires before they burn they efforts of the changing organization only to leave the whole process up in smoke.

Other Themes and Trends for Change

A few issues were not as relevant to internal communication in a change process as the five themes, but they are no doubt important to the study of organizational change and are therefore worth mentioning. Organizational culture was highlighted often, but in

a broader context than the internal communication function within the organization. The need to focus on customers was discussed at length in several of the articles and certainly seems to be a trend in changing organizations, yet it was externally driven and therefore not relevant to the topic. Environmental scanning was noted in quite a few articles and books and although extremely important to a changing organization, it is externally focused with internal outcomes, and again not a main player in internal communication. The last area receiving some attention was the role that employee benefit plans play in a changing organization. Employees not only want to make sure their old benefits will exist in the new organization and new benefits are a great way to get employees on board with a change. This issue although important is more a single issue within a change and not a method for enhancing the communication process within the changing organization.

Using the Five Themes

The five themes discussed in this chapter are used for comparison to the data in the findings of this research project. These comparisons, however, are only a part of the final analysis of the data. The five themes gave some parameters on key issues to consider in using communication in an organizational change, but in addition to being cognizant of the themes while examining the data, other findings emerged as well. In other words, the data were analyzed with the five themes in mind, but without the need to organize the findings within the confines of one of the established five themes. By comparing the data to the five themes and also allowing the data to show something outside of the five themes, the research is able to present an accurate analysis of the data.

CHAPTER III

Case Background

Change within the Church Resources Division

The change process within the Church Resources Division of LifeWay Christian Resources documented in this case study was officially announced to the employees by division president, Dr. Gene Mims, on March 8, 2000. This announcement followed several months of private discussion about the division's direction by Mims and his senior staff. The Church Resources Division senior staff led by Mims recognized that growth was going flat and that the future of the division is to know and understand the customer's (churches) needs much better.

This change process was in some respects a continuation of a change that started in 1991. LifeWay (then the Sunday School Board) had not increased revenue in the five years prior to this change, so with new leadership in place, one of the strategies was to develop products that were of the quality and caliber that churches wanted. Since most of the LifeWay products come from the Church Resources division, it fell to Mims as the newly named division president to start the organization moving down the road to recovery. In the years following, LifeWay began to make quality products that had appeal not only to the Baptist churches, but also to many other Christian denominations. As a result, the road was being paved for the next phase of change in which quality products would be the backbone of meeting the needs of the churches.

The Need for Change

Dr. Mims had in mind several changes for the division, all of which were a means to the same end. He recognized the need for the change from a product driven division to a customer focused division because "products alone would no longer supply the demand of the churches." By becoming a "customer intimate" organization, LifeWay would be able to assess the various levels of need churches may have. Another area was to focus on the Vision, Value and Operating Principles statement that was created for the broader organization a few years prior to the Church Resources Division change effort.

Mims also wanted LifeWay to become a growth company in a flat industry. The religious publishing industry has shown a trend line only at the rate of inflation and he wants LifeWay to grow at a double-digit rate for three years following the completion of the change. He also saw the need to shift from an integrated organization to a functional organization. Mims explained this best himself: "Integrated structure has allowed 'silos' of work to exist without any customer focus. The functional organization requires a relationship to other components in the division. The new organization, since customer facing, has created functional areas that now coexist in desperate partnerships. Nobody can do their work apart from other areas."

To become the customer focused organization desired, LifeWay sought to understand the customer's needs at three levels: articulated, unarticulated and inarticulated needs. The articulated needs are those that are known to both the church and LifeWay. These needs can be met easily since both sides are aware of the need. Unarticulated needs are discovered over time and can easily be met when recognized.

Inarticulated needs are those that LifeWay may recognize before the customer does. This is the highest level of customer intimacy because LifeWay must be so close and know the customers so well that they are able to help the churches meet needs before the churches themselves recognize that need.

This organizational shift toward a customer intimate organization coincided with the determination to make the established LifeWay Vision, Values and Operating Principles the "constitution" of behavior for the Church Resources Division. The vision document was not only a guiding light for the change process, but a catalyst for the change process itself. The vision statement reads: "As God works through us...We will help people and churches know Jesus Christ and seek His Kingdom by providing biblical solutions that spiritually transform individuals and cultures."

The six core values in the Vision booklet are the Bible, employees, customers, character, leadership and stewardship. Each core value has five or six operating principles that explain how that particular value is put into practice.

Communicating Change

The LifeWay Church Resources Division change process used communication at all levels. Whether it was President Mims addressing the division in an assembly or low level employees talking with senior leadership over coffee and cookies, communication was used frequently and in many forms.

The division leadership set in place two coinciding and often overlapping strategies for communication throughout the change process. The first was to use a

communication team led by a member of the senior leadership with a representative cross-section of employees working on the team. The second component was to place senior leadership directly before the employees as communicators. For this second part an outside consultant was used to aid the leadership in this process. The consultant, Michael Kitson of Hanafin and Kitson Associates, helped in the change process at the Sunday School Board in 1991 and was familiar with the organization and its mission. Although Kitson was not brought into LifeWay exclusively for the purposes of communication, he worked with both the communication team and the division leadership on communication methods strategy.

Communication Team

The communication team was chaired by Gary Hauk, one of the members of the division senior leadership and ten employees from all areas of the division made up the rest of the team. The employees on the team were recommended and selected by middle managers from the many departments within the division. Kitson also worked with the team in helping guide the communication process.

The communication team charter states:

The communication team will:

- *Reinforce LifeWay's vision, values, and operating principles through verbal and nonverbal communication throughout all phases of the change process.*
- *Facilitate leadership efforts to inform, educate, challenge, and learn from all employees during this change process. The team will recommend appropriate initiatives, encourage feedback, and evaluate employee responses.*

The communication team set out from the beginning to be a liaison between the employees and the senior leadership. It served this purpose through several means of letting the leadership know employee recommendations and letting the employees know the leadership's ideas. To a great extent the communication team was placed in a position to be the voice of the leadership at the lunch table and the ear of the employees at the leadership table.

The communication team worked to both listen to the employees personally and put the senior leadership in a position to hear the employees directly. The team reported what the people had to say through conventional methods like surveys and focus groups (which they later referred to as listening sessions). They also used a variety of means to communicate with employees in special meetings (Round Robins), learning teams (Discovery Team), training/seminar sessions ("Who Moved My Cheese?"), meetings led by current managers (meetings in a box), weekly messages from Dr. Mims about the process (Updates), division meetings (year-end report) and special events for specific departments. They also developed a newer idea geared toward targeting key influential employees, or thought leaders ,within the organization.

The conventional methods were implemented quickly. When Mims held the assembly to announce the change, the communication team soon followed up with what would become the first of many employee focus groups through the change process. In this particular session they wanted to know if the employees heard the same message that Mims intended to communicate. From this feedback, the communication team was able to recommend areas for more clarification to the senior leadership team.

Although using thought leaders had been discussed since early in the change process, this strategy was not fully implemented until many months into the change process. The basic idea was to get the opinion leaders within the division on board with the change process. The motivation for using thought leaders was that although these individuals may not possess authority by virtue of their position, their status is one of great influence in the given circle of employees and they are therefore unofficially recognized as thought leaders. Through the course of the change process, the members of the communication team became the thought leaders since they were selected originally as representatives of the entire organization.

The communication team also worked with the middle managers through written correspondence and by coordinating monthly dialogue sessions with Dr. Mims. Hauk would send a memo to the leaders to clarify or give additional information when there was a sense that communication was lacking in a given area. This memo was used on an "as needed" basis and was used for the purpose of keeping communication from middle managers consistent and accurate.

The communication team's last responsibility was to implement transition communication strategies as the new organization is formed and employees begin to move to new areas or positions. However, due to the timing of both LifeWay's change process and the completion date of this paper, only the team's plans for accomplishing this transition communication can be discussed.

The communication team has targeted two audiences with transition communication: the employees and leadership (particularly middle management). Since

the team is not responsible for the actual logistics of the transition to the new organization, they are working more with the "softer side" of change, that is, helping people deal with the change process. According to communication team leader Hauk, they are focusing on the people going through the change as well as the nuts and bolts of the change itself.

One way the communication team is trying to help the employees is by creating "workout sessions" for individuals to dialogue and discuss issues related to the new organization and how the new organization should work. These sessions are intended to clarify roles, discuss how groups work together and create opportunities for decision planning. The consultant, Mike Kitson, is scheduled to facilitate these sessions while Dr. Mims observes to get a feel for how employees see the new organization coming together.

The leadership component to the transition communication strategy is to help all of the divisions leaders, and middle managers in particular, to be sensitive to the people's needs. At some point in the change process there will be employees who know where they will land in the new organization and other who will not know. The communication team wants to make sure the leaders are prepared to meet these potential needs so apprehension will be at a minimum. They hope to accomplish this through sessions of close interaction between managers and employees as well as give numerous opportunities for dialogue between the two.

The communication team plans to continue this work up through the full implementation of the new organization by setting aside time for people who are moving

to get together with the employees they have been with previously. As the implementation of the new organization draws closer, the responsibilities of this function will be transferred to a new area within the division.

Communication from the Leadership

As stated previously, the efforts for communication from the leadership to employees was often recommended or facilitated by the communication team. Nevertheless, the Church Resources division leadership used several techniques to communicate with the employees. The leadership used division wide assemblies, weekly written updates and discussion time with employees called Round Robins. The leadership also spent time communicating solely with middle managers through steady written and spoken communication.

The division leadership communicated with the employees at many different levels and through different means. The first way used was a mandatory assembly involving the entire division. Dr. Mims first announced the change process through this method. To some employees within the Church Resources division, this was nothing new. In their eyes, this reorganization effort would cause a few changes and then life would get back to normal. The leadership knew this mentality existed and sought to show that there really were differences in this change process. To do this, the leadership agreed that they should tell the employees what was going on through each step of the process rather than making several decisions and announcing them. For LifeWay, this was a different way of communicating.

One method of disclosure came in the form of weekly written updates which included the discussions from the weekly leadership meetings and also results from surveys and focus groups. These updates were sent to the employees through email and were signed by Dr. Mims. The communication team was heavily involved in these updates and the communication team leader often wrote them.

Although the previous two tactics have shown ways Dr. Mims communicated to the employees, the other division leaders were also given the opportunity to communicate with employees. With the encouragement of the communication team, these leaders of other change process teams participated in a "round robin" session in which division employees could meet with them and talk about the coming changes. As employees would rotate from one session to another, each team leader was able to share what they were doing in their particular aspect of the change process. For instance Director of Operations, John Kramp, was also the team leader for the "customer team" which was trying to identify who the customers were and how best to reach them. In his particular round robin session, employees were able to hear about the research he and his team were doing as well as their findings to that point. The employees were then able to ask questions and make suggestions, thus involving them in the process and letting them learn about the change as it was happening rather than after everything had been decided.

Middle managers

Middle managers had a different relationship with the senior leadership team and were communicated to differently as a result. Middle managers knew more details about the change process than were given to the employees, but not as much as the senior

leadership. They had more contact with the senior leadership and were used quickly in the change process to help communicate to their groups.

A month after the initial announcement, the senior and middle managers went on a retreat to discuss the coming changes and also to plan a strategy to return to LifeWay with a consistent message. When the middle managers got back to LifeWay they held sessions with sub-groups to talk about the change and get feedback about the process. It was a type of information session/focus group because the managers tried to explain further the need for change, but also dialogued with the employees about possible problems or misconceptions.

Aside from taking the middle managers on a retreat to talk about the change and how it would be communicated within the division, the senior leadership and communication team set up other methods to keep middle managers aware and up to date. First, they got the middle managers involved in the change process itself by placing them on the various teams for change. Through this, the middle managers were an active part of the change and were able to talk with more knowledge and conviction about the change process since they were personally part of the effort.

The middle managers also had monthly dialogues with Mims in which they would discuss the coming steps within the change process. This was to give them further access to the division president and keep them aligned with the change goals.

CHAPTER IV

Method

Yin (1994) says case studies are the preferred method of research for "why" and "how" questions, when the investigator has little control over the events, or when the research highlight a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context. He adds, "the case study as a research strategy comprises an all encompassing method—with logic of design incorporating specific approaches to data collection and to data analysis. In this case, the case study is not either a data collection tactic or merely a design feature alone but a comprehensive research strategy."

The case study research method was used to find out whether the internal communication methods of organizational change in the Church Resources Division of LifeWay Christian Resources matched up to five themes found in academic business, management and communication literature. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), case studies are historically grounded in a firm naturalistic inquiry and are "the primary vehicle" for its work. In essence, the naturalist view is one that seeks to find something that has not yet been discovered through traditional and/or quantitative scientific research. In regard to case studies, most come from an emic perspective, which is rooted in a naturalistic inquiry about a subject allowing "research design to emerge (flow, cascade, unfold) rather than construct it perordinately (a priori)." (Lincoln & Guba 1985, 41).

The methodology used in this study is different from the bulk of case study research method. The basis for this case study comes from a positivist view, which means there is a foundational body of knowledge and further study simply builds upon that original base. Research from this perspective is then in the form of an etic inquiry, which is to say that all research will be formed around a foundational idea rather than allowing the research to develop into an idea of its own. In this particular case study, the five themes for communication in an organizational change process served as a guide to which the LifeWay organizational change process can be compared.

Researcher's Relationship to LifeWay

One must also understand the relationship between the researcher and LifeWay to fully grasp the methodology used. The researcher initially worked with the LifeWay Church Resources Division as a paid intern. The researcher was given access to many high level meetings about the change effort within the division to observe and learn about the inner workings of the change process. The researcher also worked with various members of the division leadership to develop some aspects of the communication process used in the early stages of the change effort.

During the two and a half months in this position, the researcher was not actively working with this specific research project in mind, but was conscience of using the experiences and understanding of organizational change gained from the internship for future research. It was during this time with the Church Resources Division that the researcher was a participant observer as described later in this chapter. The interviews as

discussed below were conducted several months after the researcher concluded the internship duties.

Interviews

The first method of gathering information from LifeWay consisted of long interviews. As Yin (1994) noted: "One of the most important sources of case study information is the interview." The interviews were conducted with six individuals within the Church Resources division. Four of the six people were members of the senior leadership. One person was in transition from a senior leadership position to a junior leadership position. The last individual was a consultant from an outside firm who specializes in organizational change. Aside from the interview sessions with each of these individuals, most of them were given follow-up questions for further elaboration as the need arose. Five of the six interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The sixth interview was not recorded but was transcribed verbatim at the time of the interview. Three of the transcripts are located in the appendix.

The four people interviewed in the senior leadership team included the division president and three group leaders of the four-group division. The fourth member of the senior leadership was not selected for an interview because he was new to the senior leadership team as a result of the divisional change and did not have the same historical perspective of communication's role through the change process.

The remaining LifeWay employee interviewed was selected for several reasons. First, he was the leader for the communication team of the change process. Second, as a

former member of the senior leadership team, he could speak to the nature that communication had changed within the division leadership with first-hand knowledge but with an outside perspective at the time of the interview.

The consultant was interviewed because he worked very closely with both the senior leadership team and the communication team. He offered a unique perspective because he was able to draw on experience from other organizations he has worked with during his years of consulting work. He was also valuable because he worked with this same division in the early 1990s during a smaller change process. He presented a historical framework as a knowledgeable outsider.

Analysis of the Interview Data

Transcripts of the interviews were analyzed through a series of three coding steps: open, axial and selective coding. The first step, open coding, is an interpretive process by which data are broken down analytically (Corbin & Strauss 1990, 12). Corbin and Strauss adhere to this method for "breaking through standard ways of thinking about or interpreting phenomena reflected in the data." In this case, each interview transcript was read for information about how the members of the Church Resources Division leadership see the role of communication in their own organizational change process. The comments relevant to the subject given in the interviews were connected to similar comments from the other interviews through a series of indicator marks that linked them into categories. Corbin and Strauss (1990), say this type of coding "enables investigators to break through subjectivity and bias."

When this first series of coding concluded, the data were compared to each other through axial coding. It was at this stage that the similar comments were evaluated further for meaning and connection to other comments within the data set. The categories determined during the open coding process were brought together for broader commonalties and were joined under a larger theme.

The final stage was selective coding which simply ties the various pieces of information together. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), selective coding "is the process by which all categories are unified around a 'core' category, and categories that need further explication are filled-in with descriptive detail." During the selective coding process weaknesses were identified in some of the original categories and changes were made to streamline the broader categories into more developed and comprehensive units. The categories were evaluated and found to fall under a broad, abstract theme.

Member check

Member check is used in qualitative research to show that the research is valid. It does this by asking certain members involved with the study to review the material for accuracy. "The purpose of this comprehensive check is not only to test for factual and interpretive accuracy but also to provide evidence of credibility—trustworthiness criterion analogous to internal validity in conventional studies." (Lincoln and Guba 1995, 373-374).

In this case study two of the six people interviewed were chosen to review the material for factual accuracy and correct interpretation on the part of the researcher. The

first person chosen was the leader of the communication team. This leader was very involved from the beginning with the communication aspect of the organizational change and was an obvious choice for reviewing the material since he had the most insight into the exact communication tactics and outcomes used in the change process.

The other person chosen was the outside consultant. This consultant provided a unique view since he was very involved in the process yet was an outsider as well. He was chosen because he was quite knowledgeable about the methods of communication used to communicate during the change. However, he was more valuable checking the researcher's interpretations of how the communication used in the change process works to accomplish the goals since it is his job to know how each communication tactic fits together in the greater communication strategy.

Participant Observation

In addition to the use of interviews for the case study, the researcher was able to be an active participant observer of the LifeWay change process. According to Jorgensen (1989), participant observation "requires that the researcher become directly involved as a participant in the peoples' daily lives." Through the course of almost 70 days of direct and consistent contact with the top leadership and the communication team, the researcher was able to learn about the division's methods for communicating the change first hand. Through this I saw several of the processes and ideas develop from infancy to full implementation.

Jorgensen (1989) describes participant observation as a method of gathering data to describe "what goes on, who or what is involved, when and where things happen, how they occur, and why—at least from the standpoint of participants—things happen as they do in particular situations." In a participant observation the researcher is, to varying extents, an active member of the group being studied. Yin (1994) recognized that participant observation gives the "ability to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone 'inside' the case study rather than external to it." Yin added: "Many have argued that such a perspective is invaluable in producing an 'accurate' portrayal of a case study phenomenon."

Additionally, the researcher was considered "one of them" through the interactions and discourse on a daily basis. This researcher was able to attend the communication team meetings and most high level senior leadership team meetings dealing with the change. Even upon returning after several months after the 70-day tenure, one communication team member stopped me in the hall to say, "don't I know you from your work with the communication team?" The close contact and daily presence allowed the employees and leadership to not simply view the researcher as an observer listening to the discussions, but also as a member of the group who was along for the ride on the roller coaster of change.

Triangulation

Triangulation as defined by Yin (1994) is a rationale for using multiple sources of evidence for supporting research. Lincoln and Guba (1990) expand upon Yin's definition

to say that, "steps should be taken to validate each [bit of information] against at least one other source (for example, a second interview) and/or a second method (for example, an observation in addition to an interview). No single item of information (unless coming from an elite and unimpeachable source) should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated."

In the research for this case study, both interviews and participant observation were used together to discover themes and draw conclusions. By using both interviews and participant observation to gather the data for this research, the findings are strengthened by the use of more than one technique. Eisenhardt (1989) reiterates: "The triangulation made possible by multiple data collection methods provides stronger substantiation of constructs and hypotheses."

An additional method used to validate the research was to make use of the outside consultant being used by the Church Resources division leadership. Through talking with the consultant, more information was given as to the process and strategy behind the communication being used in the change process. The consultant was also able to compare the communication used at LifeWay to communication by every other organization with which he has worked. As a result, his opinion of the communication uses and effectiveness bears much weight in that he brings the perspective of an outsider with inside knowledge and interaction.

CHAPTER V

Findings

Interviews were conducted with the LifeWay Church Resources Division president, three members of the senior leadership team, one former member of the senior leadership team who was also the communication team leader, and the outside consultant. The interviews gave a vast amount of information about the role and implementation methods of communication in the organizational change process. Two major themes emerged through the analysis of the data. The major finding was that the division leadership team established a strategy around a central theme for a consistent message throughout every step of the change process. The second theme that emerged from the data was the discovery of a strain on the leaders as they balance communication between the old organization and the new organization. That is to say that during a change process there is undoubtedly a time of overlap between what was and what is to be. The task of continuing the communication process in the midst of the overlap proved to be a difficult task for the division leadership.

Through the analysis of the data, there was one core theme to which everything related. This overarching theme, simply put, is that the division leaders were genuinely concerned about communicating an accurate and honest message to the employees. Almost all of the comments concerning the role of communication in their organizational change process taken from the transcripts can be tied back to this theme.

Consistent Message

From the very beginning, there was one statement closely held by the leadership team and division president about how communication would be used during the change process: "We will say only what we know for sure." This statement provided the framework from which all communication came. Its purpose was not to hold back information from the employees, but to tell them the truth about the coming changes. The leadership felt they could only be truthful with employees when they were certain about a given aspect of the change process. By following this one rule, they were consistent in the communication methods.

The idea to openly communicate as much information with the organization as is known at the time originated with the division president. He placed himself in the role of lead communicator in two ways. The first was that he was the face, voice and name of change within the division. With that, he became the primary communicator to the employees. The following comments illustrate this point:

- None of us [leadership] can communicate like he can. That's one of his primary jobs is communication. He has to communicate to our organization. He also has to communicate to the rest of the corporation and he also has to communicate to our customers and to our network and fraternal partners, so his job is communication.
- Organizationally he has to be seen as a lead communicator. That's why we send out all the communication from him rather than from one of us [leadership team].

Secondly, the division president was a lead communicator through his work with the senior leadership in that he was the lead communication strategist. In this role he was the lead communicator behind the scenes to make sure the message was consistent with

his leadership team and down through the division. This role was illustrated in the following comment:

- He has been the one that's really anchored us [leadership team] on that, [communication strategy] in the process of just saying, you know, his big statement is that we're always going to tell the truth, you know we're not going to hesitate and tell the truth and do the right thing.

Division Senior Leadership

The leadership team had an understanding from the beginning as to what and when information would be communicated. As a result, the leadership felt this would keep them all on the same page and they could give information as openly and honestly as possible. One division leader put it this way:

- My role is to, I think, basically support the process once the decision is made by the Executive Management Group. Then when I go away from the team, as a member, I have a responsibility—in my day-to-day interaction with my direct reports, in my communication, in my large meetings with my various departments—to make sure they understand and get the concept, so I'm mainly just a messenger or a communicator of the message to make sure it's consistent. I really tie my communication around what we've decided in the group and I don't veer off of it much at all.

The desire for a consistent message was evident with each leadership team member. They seemed to recognize that the message would take on many forms and go through many channels in the change process but the strategy behind the communication was

always the same, which kept the individual messages consistent. The following comments illustrate this point:

- Much of what we've been intentional about has been formalized communications, interaction, the dialogue session and the weekly email update, and that's probably another good thing today that we recognize that you need to use different mediums, different channels even, for communicating this to those different people.
- Communication is one of the subjects that always comes up because you don't just stop. You know we can't say, 'Ok, we've gotten to this point so now we're ok.' No, it's actually accelerated. Sometimes a training event, sometimes it's in an email, sometimes it's in a department meeting, sometimes it's in a larger group meeting.

Balancing Communication in the Old and New Organization

At some point in time during a change process there exists just as much of the coming organization as there does the pre-existing one. Since the new organization is the future of the company, there is an obvious tendency to work for getting it ready to become fully implemented. In this time, however, the business of the organization is still operating under the old rules until a given point of time. This overlap between the old and new organization presents a unique environment for communication.

In the case of LifeWay's change process, many of the change leaders were also leaders within the old organization. They all had plenty of work and responsibility long before a change effort came along. With the announcement and beginning of the change process their workload doubled and the time to give to both responsibilities was basically cut in half due to the demands of the other. They discovered communicating to the

employees in this environment was a difficult task as well. The following comment expresses this feeling:

- I just have to be careful to keep my own integrity and commitments we've made about the process, but I try not to say more than what I know and what we've agreed to as a leadership team to say, but the frustration is I know that people really want to know a lot more. I'm very much aware that what I'm saying to them is unsatisfying.

As a result of the change effort, the communication style in general is going to change in the Church Resources Division. The leadership decided to get away from the hierarchical style of communication that has historically been the norm for the division, and wants the communication to be more high contact, face-to-face and interpersonal, much more like the very nature of the change to the whole division. The shift in the communication styles and the difficulties therein were illustrated in these comments:

- We do have a tendency, particularly with a number of folks who are wearing two or three hats right now just to say so busy that we don't take time to do a lot of the informal things.
- I think most of our communication does still seem one way. We'll provide a forum for us to have face-to-face but we're not giving an open dialogue. It's almost too planned.

The consultant to the Church Resources Division reiterated this difficulty:

- Leaders too often assume that if they send a message cascading down the organization that it's going to get to everyone. Their own biases and orientations

sometimes short circuit the importance and ways communication needs to come down from the executive group.

Observation and Consultant Evaluation

The participant observation and the evaluation given in the consultant interview reaffirm the findings above. Through the observation, the role of the leadership working to be consistent in their message is verified by the daily interaction with the senior leadership over a 10-week period as well as attendance to meetings in which the role of communication with the Church Resources Division was discussed.

The consultant verified the strain on the leaders as they try to balance their roles in the old and new organization. Further, he felt strongly about the lack of interpersonal communication from the senior leadership team. He continually pushed the leaders to open their schedules to spend time among the employees under their supervision. He not only encouraged dialogue between the leaders and employees, but also saw it as a necessary tool to the success of the communication function of the change process.

Concern for Truth and Accuracy

Both the consistent communication finding and the balance of the old and new organization finding would have never happened if the Church Resources Division senior leadership cared nothing for truth and accuracy in their communication. The very fact that the leaders felt a strain between the two organizations shows that they are aware of their responsibilities to the people who fall rely on them on each side. The leadership's

desire for communication consistency was a top priority from the beginning and was placed on the forefront of communication strategy by the division president.

The leadership team members struggled with interpersonal communication, and they recognized this as an area of weakness. For all of the effort put toward consistent communication and balancing their roles as communicators within the old and new organization, there was an equally proportional lack of effort in areas of interpersonal communication. The leaders were continually encouraged to make room in their schedules for opportunities to walk through the departments and talk with employees, but this happened rarely. The senior leadership effectively communicated to the employees when the opportunities were created for discussion and dialogue, but these planned events were the only evidence that interpersonal communication between the members of the senior leadership team and the employee base was getting accomplished. This was unnatural for most of the team members (as will be discussed in the next chapter), but is still an important part to the communication of the change process.

CHAPTER VI

Discussion

There were three areas of discovery that emerged from the research to examine the role of internal communication in the LifeWay Church Resources Division change process. The first area was the collaboration and application of five themes that were found in a review of the literature. These themes served as a working body of knowledge and were a fixed standard to which the LifeWay communication strategy and activities could be compared. The second area was the finding that leaders within the LifeWay Church Resources Division desired to be as open and honest with their employees as possible. As a result, the leaders were consistent in their message to the employees through the course of the change process, yet because of their commitment to consistent communication, the leaders had to balance their communication methods and messages between the old and new organizations. The last discovery was the effective use of the communication team for implementing the communication strategy through the organization. The communication team embodied and implemented many of the five themes was the workhorse of the communication process which proved to be a key component to the success of the change.

The Five Themes

The LifeWay Church Resources Division used all five themes—leader as the top communicator, two-way communication, interpersonal communication, using middle management, and a shared vision—to varying levels of degree within their change process. They were extremely strong with the leader as the top communicator as well as the focus on a vision. They used middle management in many areas of their communication process and continually sought feedback from the employees through the course of the change to ensure two-way communication. Interpersonal communication, when used, was very effective, however there was not as much emphasis given to this area of communication, particularly when it was up to the senior leadership, without the aide of a forum or some other planned event for the purpose of talking with employees.

Top Executive as Lead Communicator

The theme that stands out the most in the LifeWay change is the leader as the top communicator. The division president was, without a doubt, leading the division in what would be communicated and when it would be done. He was the champion for the case for change to the employees at every level. He was the motivator for his senior leadership team and made the focus on a common vision a primary tenet for changing. He always pointed himself, the leadership, and the employee base to that vision. This finding supports the importance of the top executive as the lead communicator that was found in the literature.

Shared Vision

The leadership team, following the president's lead, was vital to making the vision known and implementing it within their own groups. The division leaders were the chairmen for the many change teams, so it was their responsibility to explain how the common vision would effect everyone within the new organization. These leaders had to carry with them the responsibility of being the first people to exemplify the new focus on vision during the change process and were responsible for pointing their teams to the vision for every step of the change. This focus on the vision and its effect on organizational change matches the findings in the literature.

Use of Middle Management

Middle managers were used effectively for communication purposes for this change process as well. The senior leadership knew very early in the change process that it would be important to get the forty middle managers together and on the same page because they have such high contact with the employee base. These middle managers proved to be key resources for feedback from the employees as well as agents for inserting truth about the change process to employees in meetings and conversations as is consistent with the findings on using middle managers in the literature review.

Two-Way Communication

The division leadership sought feedback in many forms. They held focus groups, did several surveys and set up special informational sessions for people to ask questions

directly to the division leadership. Their need for two-way communication was based on a desire to know the temperature among the employees and work to communicate more effectively in areas needing attention. The change leaders recognized the important role this feedback would play in the overall effectiveness of the change process which supports the need for two-way communication that was found in the literature.

Interpersonal Communication

The use of interpersonal communication was the weakest area for the leadership team and division president. As a leadership team and to some extent the middle managers, interpersonal communication was very high. However, the use of interpersonal communication with the employee base was lacking or not given the same amount of attention as other aspects of change.

Even though the leaders participated in small group meetings with the employees to explain various aspects of change, there was a sense that these meetings were not as important to the overall success of change as other tasks within the process. Many times, the communication team or consultant was necessary to help the leadership team members understand the vital role that fact-to-face communication plays within a change process. Throughout the course of the change process, there was a constant tug-of-war between the people who saw a need for this type of communication and those who did not. For the most part, those who did not see interpersonal communication with the same degree of necessity were in the roles of the highest leadership. In fact, most of the

leadership team members would admit that this was the area most lacking in their communication implementation.

The majority of the leaders have a natural barrier to overcome in the area of interpersonal communication in that all but one is an introvert, according to personality tests administered by the consultant. Interpersonal communication is an important tactic for getting employees on board with a change process and there was resistance within the leadership team. One person interviewed went as far as saying that the face-to-face communication with employees is "terrible" and is something the leadership team members "just don't do." Nevertheless, these findings support the need for interpersonal communication in a change process as is consistent with the literature.

Leadership's Desire for Openness and Honesty

An important finding of the study that was not identified in the literature review was the leadership team's genuine desire to be open and honest with employees throughout the change. The role of communication in the organizational change process of the LifeWay Church Resources Division varied in tactic but was consistent in strategy. Whether the division president was meeting with a small group of employees or the communication team was planning a division-wide forum, the leadership team had one goal for communication: to tell everything they know for sure as soon as possible.

This statement encapsulated the idea that the employees are valuable to the organization and that they should be handled with care. The leadership thought the employees could best deal with the difficult changes if they were carried through the

change process with the leaders rather than finding everything out long after the decisions were made. The way the leaders went about doing this was to simply be open and honest with the employees about the changing organization. Whether the leaders were talking with their direct subordinates or a larger group from the division, they were conscious of the common message they were to communicate. Since the leaders were determined to share everything they knew for sure, they were free to answer as many questions as possible. The leaders did not have to avoid certain questions because they were not allowed to comment on the matter, but if a question was raised that they were unable to answer it was not because they were withholding information, but because they simply did not know the answer themselves. By staying unified to a set message through the various levels of the change process, the leaders were free to tell everything they knew and could be sure that they were stating the same information that any other leader would give. It was from this united mantra that the communication flowed. The result was consistent communication from the leadership throughout the organizational change process.

The leaders discovered a surprise in the midst of this attempt to be open and honest to the employees. Through the course of the change process the new organization began to develop further which meant new people and positions were announced one level at a time from the top down, but the people would not assume the new positions until the conclusion of the change process several months later. The leaders realized, however, that they were torn between communicating to people who were already included in the new organization and those whose time had not yet come to be in the

loop. A natural barrier formed here as the people who "made the cut" were able to know more about the change process simply because their particular aspect had been developed and others had not. The leaders were still keeping with their commitment to tell as much as they knew when they knew it, but they also had to balance the dual role of being a leader in two organizations simultaneously. The leaders had to negotiate between communicating to people who were going to be included in the new organization and those who were not yet, and possibly never would be, included in the new organization.

Effective Use of the Communication Team

In as much as the division president was important to the overall success of the organizational change process the communication team held a similar position through the task of communicating to every level in the Church Resources Division throughout the many phases of change. If the division president was the heartbeat of the communication strategy, then the communication team was the body by performing the planning, organizing and writing components needed to make the communication work.

The communication team played a dual and perhaps dubious role of proactivity and reactivity. While they would assume the reactive role as the medium for the employees to communicate to the leadership or from the leadership to the employees, they were also an independent, proactive, group that took a step back and assessed the larger scope of the communication function in the change process. The communication team, as the sole group that personally engaged both the leadership and employees on a

regular basis, could also inject their own strategy as to what should be done to improve the communication.

An example of the communication team's proactive role occurred when the division president met personally with the communication team early in the change process to explain at length some of the coming changes along with a more detailed explanation of the overall intent, strategy and reason for change. Through the course of the meeting, the president described in depth aspects of the big picture that were unclear to many people on the communication team. After the session with the president, the communication team recognized the need for him to duplicate his informal, yet very informative, meeting with the rest of the division employees. The team knew the good it had done for them and knew it would help the case for change across the division due to a general feeling within the organization that the coming change was good but unclear both in process and need.

From this meeting with the president, the communication team members planned meetings with the employees in small groups to share the same information with the rest of the organization as he did with the communication team. A few weeks later, these meetings came to fruition as the division president held six informal and optional sessions over three days for employees to not only hear more about where the change was going, but to give the opportunity for feedback and questions directly to the president himself. As a result, employees responded in an overwhelmingly positive manner in feedback given to the communication team. The employees indicated it was unusual for the division president to block out three days of his schedule to simply spend time with

the employees. This signified a change within the organization itself, both in how the organization would change from a vertical (or integrated organization as described by the president) to one that flattened the division and made the leadership seem within reach. Other employees stated that for the first time they felt like they were beginning to see the need and reason for change that the president had long since recognized.

This was one of several times the communication team was used in a proactive role. They recognized a gap between the employees and the leadership and sought the means to bring the two closer together. They knew that an interpersonal encounter with the division president would help the case for change and would be benefit the greater success of the change effort.

Through the entire communication process, the communication team was a group that stretched the thinking and sometimes comfort level of the senior leadership. They often sought to enhance two-way communication by taking the message of the employees to the leadership as well as the message from the leadership to the employees. In many ways the communication team embodied and implemented four of the five themes. As a result, the interpersonal, shared vision, two-way communication, and use of middle management themes were applied practices for use in the LifeWay change process. The illustration above shows how the communication team recognized and accomplished the need for interpersonal and two-way communication in one area of the change process. The communication team was responsible for many initiatives that fit within the parameters of the themes. Whether administering a survey about the vision or scripting

talking points for middle managers, the communication team was vial to the change process.

LifeWay's Use of Other Practices Found in the Literature

Of the four other themes mentioned at the end of chapter two—organizational culture, customer focus, environmental scanning, and employee benefit plans—the LifeWay Church Resources Division heavily incorporated two of the themes in the change process. The shift toward a customer focused organization and an emphasis on the organizational culture were both key components to the change strategy in the division.

The division leadership felt so strongly about shifting from a product-driven organization to one that is customer driven that they brought in the consulting firm, Peppers & Rodgers, to help with the process of turning this aspect of the organization around. The focus on culture was emphasized even further. A group of middle and upper managers were placed into a culture team which was used to study the division's current culture and make recommendations about what should be changed. This team played an important role in continually pointing the division leaders toward the vision. As a result the communication along with every other aspect of the change process was matched against the LifeWay vision. Their use of the vision is one of the five themes and is yet example of how all of the practices discussed are connected.

Recommendations

The importance of a change and how it is implemented in an organization can literally determine the future of a company. The idea of communicating change within an organization is a simple concept: get all employees on board with change in as little time as possible so the organization can be more successful than ever and dominate the competition. Although the concept may be simple, the practice and implementation is difficult. "The brutal fact is that about 70% of all change initiatives fail" (Beer & Nohria 2000, 133). Whether these change attempts fail due to a lack of communication, poor leadership, deliberate defiance, or any number of other things does not matter. Since only 30% of change initiatives will succeed shows that this is not a matter to be taken lightly. Communication done often and with means for feedback will help the case for change.

The Impact of a Leader

If there was one common thread throughout this study, it is the importance of a strong leader in the change process. Aside from the communication aspect of change, the leader will no doubt have a profound impact on the direction, depth and desired outcome of the change effort. The LifeWay Church Resources Division has a strong leader. He was the cornerstone of the entire change effort for the division. He was not just the initiator of change but the perpetuator of the change process as well. This is not to say that the roles of the other key leaders within the division were diminished by any means. In fact it seems to be quite the opposite. The division leaders followed the example set

by the division president but were given the freedom to work within the parameters established by the president from the outset of the change process.

This study shows that the change within the LifeWay Church Resources Division would have never happened without the president's recognition of the needed change. He shared his thoughts on the need for change with the division leaders and when the time to set the wheels of change in motion arrived, he shared the need to change with the employees. These were the first acts of communication in their change process.

In LifeWay's change and in any other change effort the leader must make communication a priority. Supporting communication in word but not in deed could have a detrimental effect on the entire change process. The LifeWay Church Resources Division thought communication was so important that they pulled one of their top leaders and several other people from within the division to work on the communication team for well over a year. The division president was involved with the communication team through their team leader and was actively involved in every other process of change. He did this without micromanaging, but by gently guiding the organization along the intended path through the division leadership. The president showed four characteristics that were important in leading his division to successful change. Based on the study, these items were key for LifeWay and will be useful to other change leaders:

- He was the lead communicator from the outset
- He was an active participant in the change process
- He adhered to the principles espoused in the change process
- He was a visionary and shared that vision with the employees

Openness and Honesty

It should be a goal of any organizational leader to be honest to his/her employees. An organization in which honesty is hard to come by is going to have more difficulties than just trying to complete a change process. The LifeWay Church Resources Division exemplifies a group of leaders who seek to be truthful to the employees. These leaders realize that having employee trust is a valuable commodity that lasts long after the change process is over.

The benefits that come from an honest approach to communication may differ between organizations. In LifeWay's case, the leadership team's determination to tell everything they knew as soon as they knew it for sure led to consistent communication. By setting a standard for truth early on, the LifeWay leaders had no other option than to feed a steady flow of information to the employees. The division leaders could have decided they were going to make announcements every few months to let the employees know the status of the change process. Instead they opted for a system that would allow the employees to see the process unfold as the leaders themselves were learning about all of the things the new organization would entail.

Use of a Communication Team

One of the best things LifeWay did was put a group of people in charge of the communication. The leaders did this by appointing a communication team that was responsible for constantly taking the temperature of the organization to know whether the communication was effective and whether it was needed. This team was also able to take

a step away from the process to evaluate what was working and what was not. Likewise, the communication team had the best idea of what the employees were thinking and what issues needed to be addressed. With these perspectives they could bring issues to the attention of the leaders to allow for further clarification or some other action that would alleviate the potential problem.

A communication team would be an asset to any organizational change process. The LifeWay communication team embodied four of the five themes discussed in this research. The only theme the communication team could not implement was the leader as the top communicator since the team is a group of employees working together to simultaneously learn and teach the division about upcoming changes. More than likely a communication team would need adjustment for a better fit if used in another organization. However, the productivity of such a team would increase the success of a change effort, especially if the team is rooted in ideas akin to the themes of two-way communication, focusing on a shared vision, using middle management effectively, and interpersonal communication. The communication team was a valuable part of the apparent success of the change process for LifeWay Church Resources and shows the importance of distinguishing a group solely for the purpose of concentrating on the communication side of a change process.

Future Research

Of the many areas in which further study would help us understand the role of internal communication within an organizational change process, a few topics seem to

beg for attention. An in-depth study of the role of middle managers as an integral part of the change process and as key communicators would be extremely helpful in knowing the full impact of their influence. Also interesting would be how long-established companies are changing in the information age and whether there is a conflict between the old and new methods of communication could reinforce the need for two-way communication and a leader with interpersonal skills. The last possibility for future research would be a study on whether two-way communication is always effective in organizational change would be valuable. There may be examples where leadership has lost direction by going too far to accommodate feedback.

Limitations

To some researchers qualitative studies, and more specifically case studies, are not strong research methods. Unlike the quantitative research counterpart, there are not hard figures from surveys or other data collection methods. Whether the complaint is that this form of research is too soft or unstructured remains a limitation to the acceptance of the results from these studies.

Participant observation, for all of it uses and insight, can also cause and natural bias toward the case(s) being studied. Since participant observation requires the researcher to be actively involved with the case the objectivity may be threatened. This form of observation requires the researcher to know the study participants at a professional and possibly personal level. With these relationships, the researcher runs the risk of limiting areas of questioning, data analysis, and the findings.

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APPENDIX

Transcript from Michael Kitson Interview

Seaver: You have a lot of expertise in the change so I wanted to get some of that. As far as what you see is important in communicating change, just in general, what is important?

Kitson: I'm thinking of large-scale change like what we're doing here. It is not a negotiable matter, it's essential that communication strategy be part of both the front end planning of an organizational change effort, and that it carries right on through implementation and post implementation and resettling on the organization. So, it is so critical that it has to serve as its own work stream and goes right through a whole plan. Not only that, it has to be, it requires an order of change like we're doing here at LifeWay, it requires an individual, usually an executive or high-level person to be focused on that and assemble the right mix of players that have sufficient authority to lead and act and to think holistically about what kind of communications are needed to support the change. So that's very vital and that role, the communication leader role, needs to be involved directly all the key aspects or elements or components of change. So what I mean by that is on the front end of the change process it's usually where strategic thinking is going on about where we're headed, what we want to accomplish and all of that work that produces a set of strategic and chain of command organization's design principles and criteria, that serve the next level of design. All that planning work requires that somebody be in the room to understand the perspective that's being developed and so they can make proper translation to organization about what we're really saying. The problems I've seen with change efforts is they establish a role for communications that's outside the room. And then the hand off comes and says here's the things we've discussed I want you to see that it gets communicated. And inevitably the person or group that's running communication strategy is now out of the loop and no longer has the context, and therefore know what are both the messages and the kinds of tools that are required to support in the change effort, so it's critical. So too, in the other phases, in the design phase, that the change effort such as reorganizing the division here, the communication person has to be an equal partner at the table because that individual is going to be interfacing with all of the design teams or activities that go on, fitted with what went on before strategically so they can make the links from conceptualization to the design and then carries on its implementation. But if you don't have, don't carry that communication memory through all phases then you're going to be in trouble along the way, communications breakdown ---

Seaver: You know I think that's something LifeWay needs in general because the communications person doesn't sit at the table.

Kitson: That's right. It's evident

Seaver: Diane and I were just talking about that just yesterday. Linda's getting information third hand maybe.

Kitson: That's right. And she's lucky if she can get, I guess just by living here so long can make sense of some of the messages she should be communicating, but if it's second-hand and not on mark. The other thing about that role throughout strategic partners through the change process, is that the communication role cannot be a surrogate for the messages coming from the leadership itself. That's a problem for change efforts. They hand off to Gary Hauk to communicate to the organization at large what corporate thinks best. It has to come from his office. Scripting and the writing and all that can be done, but the organization needs see the business leader as the communicator. It's very, very important. It enables those people to put importance and validity to the message if it's coming from the leader which they could otherwise discount or not consider coming from staff.

Seaver: So obviously you're saying communication is vital in a change process. If you were to rank importance in the change process things that are important to have is it one of the top ones?

Kitson: Yes. I would think

Seaver: The top one or just one of the top ones?

Kitson: It's in the top three. I mean it is so essential that any successful change effort has got that embedded strategically and efforts that fail have done a lousy job of communicating and that's one of the main reasons why it hasn't helped.

Seaver: You kind of talked about, it's your number two [on the question list] is what are the components for change? You talked, I think you hit on maybe on a macro level some components just now are there some micro level components?

Kitson: As far as what needs to be communicated?

Seaver: What needs to be communicated and maybe how it's done.

Kitson: There are several things. One component is the content of the message, the strategy, the intentions for the organizational change effort, the details about what we're doing—that is important and it has to be communicated. In addition to that the audiences and the methodology we need to communicate is another element or level that we have to differentiate for instances and what they need to know and at what time because, and then tailor the communication messages and the way to communicate to people. So at the leadership level, and that could mean the executives, beyond the executive team related to the primary leadership body of the organization, they need to be informed of the full context, the full messages that need to be communicated and the way they need to have

that communicated to them is through multiple methods. It has to be through direct engagement in the work itself, hopefully they're in the room participating in the work in developing the change strategy, that's one way to get it. They get it through the articulated written message and word that comes out about what this is all about. Of course, they get that. And the methods in which they need to receive that are multiple, direct dialogue is the most critical and the leadership of the organization has dialogue, not just information transfer and so because a lot is lost if people don't—aren't able to reflect, ask questions, get consensus or common point of view about the message and unity of what we're understanding and can only have it through dialogue and then have with them the same written words so we're sure we're communicating the same things to the people. So that's. Then there has to be an open pipeline that enables leaders to be able to interact with each other, call attention to things that need to be communicated or need to be captured for further discussion with that. And use various kinds of technology such as used here like Lotus Notes and others vehicles to keep that communication going. Regular face-to-face meetings, formal meetings, forums of various kinds throughout the change effort focused on leadership is essential as is communication. For example the Monday executive meetings here with the senior staff or with the full leadership group, retreats that they held, let them step back and so they can all have the same level of understanding, so any number of forums can be constructed. When you get to other audiences on down through the organization the nature of what needs to be communicated and how it needs to be communicated needs to change and be tailored to the audiences, so at the lowest level the last people that are impacted by change in the organization do need regular written email and other vehicle updates. Some of that is secondary to other things which is high contact, face-to-face engagement of the masses periodically to keep them understanding of the message that's being transmitted and giving them a forum to inquire, vent, raise questions that impact their own lives and lives of others, so those kinds of forums that are high touch engagements are very, very critical and constructive to the change process. Then when you move up in between, a modification of tailoring the role...it's kind of a gray area, but I would consider in this change effort part of the communications or component has to do with—we'll call it: education, learning, training. Communications plays a critical role in educating people about where we're headed in the change process, what's happening in it, how it works and what's going to happen later. It plays a critical role in training people just by using the various types of tools and technology and methodology beneficial in actually getting people interacting with each other and communicating with each other, so if we say we want to have a forum of dialogue, well what's the methodology around dialogue that gives us an opportunity than to do more than just give people information and let them walk away, but how really talk about it with some sense and people walk away from ---- training is served by communication. That's a very vital role.

A third part, another aspect of maybe a subset of education and training, is that any change effort has to pay attention to the human system in enabling people to cope with uncertainty and change and their own anxieties and helping them get through that. So there is a role communications place in helping people either with the event of training or other forms, to understand what change is all about and how it affects them individually,

what are the predictable kinds of things you're going through and allow people to express that and put it—hold it some place, so that they know that this is to be expected. And so if that's missing—missing a stream of work that isn't paying attention to helping people cope with changes and go through the change effort, we're going to be in trouble down the road. Communications plays a vital role in intervening.

Seaver: By travel down the road...what is that?

Kitson: That people will leave and get too frustrated or anxiety provoked, some of our better people may leave when we want them around. Others may through their anxiety and resistance, cause a resistance cause all kinds of disturbing behavior out there in the organization –whether it's blaming management or whatever as often happens, those are the primary things and then most importantly I think the individual themselves just become less fit, less healthy more vulnerable to not being treated well. People have gone through change processes and have been—not as sort of casualties—but as a victim of the change process and it's carried on in their life through the organization, they hold the negative feeling and how they were treated later on pops up down the road.

Seaver: OK, I think that third question has to do with the key communicators? And the change process, and already obviously you said that they has to be top executives, aside from the top executives are there other key communicators.

Kitson: It's absolutely essential that the senior leadership body as part of the communicator, they represent the top executive leader who can't possibly be out in the organization so it's essential that they have the same orientation, mindset, message and agreements about how they communicate. For instance here constantly in this organization, it's not so much understanding and agreement of the message, but what we've agreed to about how we're going to get the message out. Leaders too often assume that if they send the message cascading down through their organization it going to get to everybody or they assume that other people lower down in the organization don't need to know this or that so their own biases and orientation sometimes short-circuits the importance and the ways in which communication needs to come down from the executive level. Not only that, the leadership style and orientation of the senior group can help or get in the way of actually communicating. In Myers Briggs terminology all but one of this senior team are introverts, including Gene, it's an unnatural act for them to get out and have face-to-face communication. They are far more comfortable, getting the word out, but if they don't have logic in their mind they say "what would I tell these people" so that leadership orientation in terms of Myers-Briggs makeup for example, tells me as a change agent a lot about what I'm going to have to do make sure communication takes place and it therefore means that all "I's" on this team achieve—the executive needs to insist that the senior team has the schedule we're going to follow and here's the different things we're all going to do and you better get back to me. Make sure that they're done. To this day none of these leaders have been out in the organization communicating to all the levels down face-to-face I mean maybe one or two have, but

they don't do it. Every single week that I'm with them, and the communication team with Gary Hauk reemphasizes the importance of getting out.
Now another level of key communicators in the change process are called the architects, the planners and the implementers of the change process. Usually change efforts are constructed in such a way to have various kinds of teams, those teams that have to play a critical communication role and if they have the communication role embodied in the team itself such as the core implementation team we're working with right now, then they can be assured of getting out in the right way, up and down the organization once they know they have to communicate, so they're a vital primary communicator body. And then the third part and the weakest link in the change process are the leaders and managers down in the organization that aren't directly involved in planning and implementation of the change effort, but they're the ones that are going to be impacted by it and need to make sure their own people are informed. So that third level is often the level group that's left out and the least in the loop of the process and who have the greatest anxiety and need the most help because they're dealing with the front line people --- with the questions about where it's going and all they can say is I don't know any more than you do. And that's your message.

Seaver: Well let's bring it in a little bit more to what's going on here. My numbers are different than yours but question who has been key communicators in LifeWay's change? Go ahead, give me the obvious ones.

Kitson: Clearly what we call now LifeWay Church Resources Division Staff, Gene and four people. They are primary communicators. In addition to that the, at this point in the change effort, or back up, early in the change effort -----the design team that's building the architecture --- and now the core implementation team, those groups are the ones that are additional key communicators and certainly frame the messages and state of where we are with the work and scripting and identify the important ways we need to communicate so that somebody will go do it. Usually the messages still come out of the office of the executive team. Always have to be positioned as the focal points communication and another component here is Gary Hauk. A diagonal slice communication team that has been in existence through the whole process. So Gary and Gary's team plays a vital role of being able to anticipate, think, develop in ways needed to communicate to the organization, so we're doing everything possible to communicate well. The construct, by the way, of diagonal slice team that's very important that the assumption here is if you just convene a bunch of high level managers they will not even know what's important and what ways do people lower in the organization need communication so by having a diagonal slice you have a better chance of getting a clear view of where the organization needs to be. Also if you have the right diagonal slice of people those individuals will have their finger on pulse of rumor control. They'll know what's happening, they can anticipate issues burning in the organization and bring it up at the table. And what they can do is ---they know where the rumor mill networks are and can insert real truth into those --- and rather than letting those rumor mills run amuck and

give out wrong information and obstructing the process. The communication team is a very important construct in a change effort who you put on that and what access they have to be able to influence the leadership is very important too, so Gene insists that Gary who is not on the team now be present many times in the work they are doing and always talk about what we should be doing next in communications?

Seaver: Sure, that actually is a question that I was going to ask you, that's not on your list but I was going to say now that Gary is removed and is not in the four, he's not in the whatever the number is now.

Kitson: Six

Seaver: He's even out of that now, but still he's the head of the communication team, so he's not sitting at the table any more. So is that going to help? Is that going to hurt?

Kitson: It is going to hurt. So it's actually something we need to correct that there's no reason why he shouldn't be in the room in that role and in the capacity of the communication team person, so this Monday when we have our leadership team meeting of that very group he's been a part of, he's going to be there. Actually we had to pull him back in and differentiate the role he's playing as lead communication person from whatever organizational he'll be. So that needs to be changed.

Seaver: OK, so basically there'll be a separation between this previous role organizationally

Kitson: Which had nothing to do with...

Seaver: But by default that was in a sense how he got the communication team ----- just by virtue of his position

Kitson: Yeah ----

Seaver: So now I mean if you do that now it wouldn't have fallen there.

Kitson: Would not have.

Seaver: So that?

Kitson: That's true, now something else about this communication team, oh yeah, a vital role this communication team plays is I call it a sensing mechanism. They've got their antennae out in the organization and through focus groups, communication assessment surveys, any other appropriate vehicles where we constantly need them to do is to monitor the temperature of the organization and bring forward what are the kind of things that we need to pay attention to in the future. So they've got a charter don't already have

it is get that charter for the communication team. And the body of work that they are doing and the history of things, you'll be able to see what they're actually into.

Seaver: Now this is also to, this is jumping back I mean you were here for two-and-a-half to three years the first time, how is this change after a continuation of that one? How is it different? How's the communication being used differently or is it being used differently?

Kitson: Actually those things might help you a little bit—this is in some ways a continuation, fulfilling or completing what was started in 1991/1993, which is to say well that what was being birthed in 91/93 was the concept of business units differentiating that some kinds of business within at that time the Baptist Sunday School Board, giving them more autonomy and accountability to do their part where prior to that they were just one of many divisions in an integrated unit. And this time it's crystallizing that as an SBU strategic business unit more completely and that's happening both here and in the bookstores and influence the Broadman/Holman business. But for this division it is now the opportunity now exists say to decide how do we want to be organized in such a way that we function as a integrated business unit. So that's what all this has been about, but it's also been service. What was also developed in '91-93 is one of the shift to a customer focus from an internal product-driven --- and been developing along the way, but it's now that they're making a concrete shift, breaking up the old product organization and constructing a customer focus as part of this business, with solutions on the other side to address those issues. So those couple of ways are very much a completing strategically what was started then. What is an ongoing piece set of work from then that continues while I was gone, and is still going is changing this culture from the highly bureaucratic, stodgy, distrustful organization that espouse the whole set of values and operating principles that LifeWay constitution was and so what's happening with the movement since '91 in a direction more consistent with division values and operating principles, but it's now that Gene and this division to work is putting—directly aligning this organization with those principles. One of them being customer intimacy and a line of the whole range of things, but he is now making good on walking the alignment of what we espouse and how we behave but it's still loaded with all kind of stuff that will take another decade to get where we need to be.

Seaver: Now as far as how communication has played out?

Kitson: Played out? There again they are vital. At one level this fencing role that they play of keeping their finger on the pulse of the organization, points of view that people have out there, pulling this back we get a reading of the people see that change that is taking place is more in line with where we want to go ---not just a different version of the way it was. And so it's particularly problematic during a changeover to get accurate readings here because most people through a change effort are on the victim's side. Can only see the negative side of what's happening. Everything seems blown open and our leaders seem inconsistent in how they communicate so you always get that noise in there,

but communication's role does play a vital part in being able to monitor where we are, relative progress, direction and culture that we want to fill here. So that it's very instrumental and causing leadership here to focus on very specific issues about this culture that needs to be addressed one way or another. Being able to monitor where we are, relative progress, direction and sort of culture we want to build here, serve that up to the organization, so very instrumental and causing the leadership here to focus on very specific issues about this culture that should be addressed one way or another. In addition to that they are the emissary for spreading the word about the vision, values and operating principles so you see communications plays a vital part in setting up forums for dialogue along with what we had at one time which was a culture team—to create the forums for dialogue, keep everybody eyeing the ball about vision, values, and operating principles and to ingrain that mindset into our organization and so they play a reactive role by initiating, and really helping, in the organization to support where we need to go. Very, very helpful.

Seaver: What do you think are some barriers that are facing leadership? Obviously you've already talked about their natural inclinations or personalities I think you would say the barrier to communicating.

Kitson: Yeah, another is old assumptions about communication, about how we communicate. This is a traditional hierarchy organization so the mindset is my job is to leave here pass information down through people, and answer questions you have, and that information transfer kind of a goal or mindset or inclination is only a fraction of what's needed here by way of communication skill and orientation of leaders. See the two-way communication—the importance around here is not two-way communication but we understand that would be me to you or you back to me, it's multi directional communication and interactive, not just two ways implies interactive, but this place does not understand dialogue, it understands sharing information, --- know how the leaders here don't really know how to sustain dialogue and achieve common ground and then go forward together. They can do it better among themselves but when they then try to they don't even think of it as down in the organization what they do is they think up, because their eyes, they're introverted, they don't have it's not in their bones to be able to sit and have dialogue with people and the philosophy of this organization is hierarchical, it's authority-based. Authority and I would say old negative orientation. Not biblical authority as servant leader, but it's played out here as "I'm the boss and I'll let you know what you need to know and why would I even meet with people out there and sit around with you."

Seaver: Well my follow-up question was going to be how well do they communicate to the employee base?

Kitson: The leadership here? I can answer it only two ways. One is from the written message and updating people, keeping them informed through email and the written word and open door to ask questions and get those answered they're doing as good a job as any

company I've seen that's applying a change—however, on the more vital high touch face-to-face interaction and dialogue, down deep in the organization, there is zero. It's terrible. With the exception of one or two people they just don't do it. They resist it and it's the weakest link.

Seaver: When you say dialogue are you talking about talking about the Titans game over the weekend and then transitioning that into well this is kind of what's going on. Is that what you mean by dialogue? Is it just sitting around shooting the bull?

Kitson: No, it's a the best way to describe it is that in order for me to have deep understanding and get on the same wave length and have an appreciation for what this is all about and for me to reach agreement myself, I need more than you sitting across from me telling me what's happening, what's going on, do I have any questions. I can give you my questions and you can answer me, but what I need is an interaction with you to take the written word or the messages and help develop a need for the same depth for understanding you have about this to help me change my orientation. Working then to a customer intimate, customer focus organization and away from a product ----send the message down. Folks say, "I don't see that, I don't believe that." Then Gene says, "I've told him every freaking week for 20 months this is where we're headed." I tell Gene the issue is people need to be able to sit across from you and the other leaders and be listened to, to help them reach that depth of understanding, help them shift their thinking about things and more importantly, reach their own personal agreement so they can enroll. Now I got it, I'm on board with you. And there's actually a process called dialogue. It's out in the organization development field and the process goes a little like take any topic we want, the rules of the game around that topic is once the topic comes to the table, a normal discussion or interaction is let's start tearing down the topic, break it down, let's find the cracks. Dialogue says take the topic and everybody build their understanding of it so it informs others and enriches the full understanding of the topic before we jump in and try to question it or tear it apart.

Seaver: But you still notice resistance here?

Kitson: Yes.

Seaver: Are those natural or are they doing it on purpose?

Kitson: It's a combination. They're doing it on the natural barriers are so much else going on right now, they've all got four jobs running and we've got a time line that's just going down, it's literally no room to fit other things in.

Seaver: So if someone needs to be booted, then this is it because it is not natural?

Kitson: Yeah, that one is going to go. And now the schedule is so tight it's hard to take other stuff out, which is on critical task and they go "I can't get out there, there's no

time." And I say I'm sorry that's not an excuse. And the other side is, they say, I don't like doing it, it's not in me to be out there. Someone has to take me, put me on the elevator and go with me and sit me down and then whisper in my ear, "how am I supposed to do this?" Gene's amazing, he's actually a . . .

Seaver: But he does that very well when he's comfortable.

Kitson: Yes that's what is a paradox about it and therefore the other leaders are like him, is when Gene is forced into having to go somewhere in a forum where he doesn't have the passion or really see the relevance of why I'm doing it, he doesn't get up for it personally, and he screws up. In fact he ends up saying things he wished he never would have said, because he's just want to get through with it. On the other hand when it's something he has passion about and knows it's very important and has digested it so well among between himself that he doesn't need notes or anybody to be there to coach him on it, he's out there and wow, you get a charismatic individual that people will follow anywhere. So that's the Gene everybody wants to see. Knowing that it's there and they want that Gene. Then they reach the time that Gene doesn't want to be there and he's off-key and "yesterday he was here and now he's brushed us aside." And that's the kind of puzzling thing about Gene. I keep telling Gene, Gene you're just natural, you are so good, you have no understanding about how your very presence and very few words how they carry so he and the other leaders don't really have the appreciation of the how powerful their presence and how and what they say how powerful that is in the organization. People remember it for weeks, word travels through the system, we get such mileage out of being there.
Now the final thing about Gene and the others, their problem is, they say, "Well I don't know what I'm going to say that I haven't already said. So I'm wasting my time and their time, I'm going to look silly standing up and people are saying, why did he call us in?" So if they don't have something concrete, they don't want to go out and talk. And no matter, all the times I've talked to Gene, it's not what you have to say out there so much Gene, is people need to experience you out among them. I don't care if you just ask them what the weather's like, but inquire how are you doing and out of that interaction is going to naturally come what you and they need to talk about.

Seaver: See I was going to say, when you said that, it's not "I've said this, I'm not going to say anything I haven't said before." I guess that's when my comeback would be well what are you going to hear that you haven't heard before?

Kitson: That's it. Yes.

Seaver: That's really kind of where it is.

Kitson: That's it.

Seaver: Do you think the senior leadership team has changed its style? I guess you would say they really haven't. Maybe they're...are they just better written, but...

Kitson: I think they've changed significantly. For one their awareness is tremendously advanced as a result of everything we've done so far in the communication stage. What wasn't on the radar screen, now is of critical importance in communication. They're always asking now the questions about what are we going to say? What are we going to communicate? So that's very well developed I think. They are learning the difficult task of getting out there and communicating with their people at various points and we need more of it and they're doing more of it more at the management level than we are down in the masses, and so they are developing I think a greater ability to talk without portfolio, without having to have all the answers and content, but to really connect with people and understand what they need to do is just being out there to listen, show empathy and to be able to respond you know ad hoc to anything that comes by and not worry about having all the answers, but I do believe that they're really developing in those ways. And the other thing is they are, most of them, are assuming enormous power in bringing various groupings of people together for a variety of purposes, whether it's the BNA the Nashville project of 1 to 1, where they were all surprised when bringing 50 people from all over the organization coming together and realizing that these folks get on board very quickly, they're committed as all get out to what we want to do and they absorb and take in stuff or where they'll go to another forum and be blown away by how people are willing to dialogue, communicate back --- and the messages that the leaders are delivering are hitting home. So they're seeing that their non-traditional methodologies ways of communicating but they're learning now useful to them down the road. The more network type, focus group types, informal forums and all of that is exactly what we need to be doing, and less of this hierarchical. So those ways they really are moving.

Seaver: When before it wasn't even a blip on the radar screen, they now see and recognize as far as communication, it's a priority now that, if not even fully understanding it they have seen that it is important.

Kitson: Yeah and they've expanded from a uni-dimensional understanding to a far greater range of what that is all about and what they need to be doing.

Seaver: Well I've got two other questions, one of them is going to be very quick. What basically, what are some of the most important things LifeWay has done right? Communication wise?

Kitson: Communication wise?

Seaver: Yeah, what have they done right and I think we've talked quite a bit about some things that maybe haven't gone right or haven't been done right, but if there's something else that we haven't covered yet.

Kitson: I'll just restate that they've absolutely done right is at the very beginning of the process they set up a communication focus and strategy, that they are so thankful that they considered it. It has been the underpinnings of this thing during the whole project. Second is that they have done a remarkable job at keeping employees at large informed of every phase and evolution of this whole design effort, so much so, that many employees are absolutely astounded that they're willing to communicate things that are still in process and haven't fully developed. Level by level they're telling people what jobs are beginning. That's unheard of around here, so they've done an excellent job at keeping people informed about that. They've also done a very, very good job at keeping their hand on the pulse of the organization. How people are experiencing the change and what things we need to do, where, and when in order to address issues that people have and the communication team has been vital. So all that is going very, very well and again the people that really need a lot of attention are more the high touch, face-to-face contact with leaders, leadership visibility out in the area.

Seaver: Well then my last question is do they seem to be on track with meeting their goals?

Kitson: Absolutely. I think they're, were under fire because we're going through the belly of the snake right now where everything is so intense and compacted that at times they wonder can we even do this or whether we can do it in the time frame. That's the natural I think expected occurrence. So we're on track and this is going according to plan and we just need to shore up some aspects of this process.

Seaver: All right. That's it.

Kitson: That's it?

Seaver: Yep. Thank you.

[end of interview]

Interview date: February 22, 2001

Transcript from Gary Hauk Interview

Seaver: Let's talk, let's just take it, obviously you've got a different role. I've talked with Kramp and Blount and Miller, just to see what...how they view their own role in communicating and you obviously being the communication team leader is quite a bit different because you're on the front edge of the communication, so and I know a lot of the things you guys have done as far as like the Round Robins and that sort of stuff during the summer. Has there been some stuff that you guys have done since then?

Hauk: Oh golly you know it's falling into categories, not

Seaver: Well if you have that on paper then . . .

Hauk: Well let me kind of give you highlights, we've done. We've tried to keep the regular, routine message from Gene that keeps on message.

Seaver: Yeah, the update.

Hauk: And right where the thread has been, this is about the churches, this is about them and so that's always the message we try to put in whatever you do. Also in that we've tried to communicate as much of everything we can as soon as we can, but electronic to all employees and of course you know the security issues we got into not doing it externally and so forth. OK then we said there's a smaller audience of key leaders, the current department directors, about 40, and we've used two vehicles primarily with them. A monthly dialogue with Gene, and the last one we did began to introduce one of the new players, but it tends to be a little more interactive with your top leadership and it kind of puts the thread of information into your leaders so you're really trying to get people knowing what's going on and we've also done what I call nuts and bolts, kind of become my newsletter and it's not regular, it's just anytime I sense that we need to let them kind of know what's going on---in fact I'm sending one out today.

Seaver: That's just the communication team.

Hauk: Yeah, just coming from the communication team, but the audience is the current top 40 leaders, division leaders. We got teams and staffs and different words you got to watch how you're using those now. Current is the key word in that. You've got dialogue and you've got nuts and bolts communication. We proposed and this probably gets at one of the tensions that we—when you were here we were bumping into, communication will, you know, one of the strategies we've used is let's keep on our radar screen the issues that people are asking and wanting to know about. And let's also keep our list early on is potential action. Early on the communication team one of its tensions was that we would see things on the horizon, propose a strategy and then proceed and get ahead of the process and early on we were saying let's do a survey, not now we don't have to do a

survey, others said we'll do it later. Back in the fall we were saying people want to know what this MAP deal is, what is IDIC? And ended up being a discovery process, but then the leaders were like man we don't know enough yet, we can't teach that. We sent them all over the place. Along the way we were saying OK, customer intimacy is the flag word. OK, should we be doing more to try and interpret and explain what that is? So we were, all along we've kind of been in that awkward position of suggesting what might be, but really not with the accountability of delivering it and so you get perceived as driving the process versus really serving it. And so that's always been kind of a tight rope you walk, you know. Another issue or tension that comes into play there is there is a sense in which communication is helping the soft side of the organization, the people side, the caring side, that takes, you know the servant, how do you help your leaders and there are a lot of perceptions driven – a lot of perceptions. OK you put three MBAs in the top four positions, is that what you're going to in the business, money is all that counts? And you know, so you try to do some things that try to help also position as human beings. For example, one of the—we did one little meeting where Rhodes was there in an informal setting, and he said a few things about his kids. And all of a sudden after the meeting we got kind of feedback like huh, it was so neat to hear him talk about family, talk about heart, because he's perceived in the organization as all dollars and numbers, that's all he cares about—and so we've done some things that try to begin...and we need to do more along those lines.

Seaver: Did you guys plan that or did it just happen?

Hauk: We created an environment for it to happen.

Seaver: OK, the communication team said that?

Hauk: For example, well I don't know if you know about this or not. We did a thing, the Org. Options team—there was a perception that this team was key to this success and probably felt the greatest pressure you know and they were the ones always getting people in the organization going remember me when your kingdom comes, you know all that stuff that comes on in an elevator talk like, and I mean they feel a burden, you can see it in their face, their expression, so we created what we call Secret Saints and actually no one in the organization knew about that, but we created about 10 or 12 people and their job was to pray for regularly, to—we found a way to get a key to the—they took candy and laid it in the room every day before the meetings or water guns, anything to bring relief and they were really kind of behind the scenes as support for this team and you know it became kind of a joke, you know, what's going to be today? You know and we did a kind of a thank you note where the team after it dissolved could say thank you to the Secret Saints. Of course Francis wasn't going to, you know, people come to his room under lock and key he's not going to not know about that, and Christy and Tracy I think managed that and they would just say well these are just Secret Saints and they don't want to mess up anything. And then all we did was sit around and kind of recognition time to recognize the saints and tell stories of either them trying to get in and getting

caught, you work on the small stuff and that's a small illustration, but so there's some activity where you're trying to do, trying to help that culture in that regard. Right now we're really working more because our real role of report is now directed to the core implementation team. So that we shifted communication now if it's related to one of the teams, like job design. Are you familiar with the teams we've got created now? OK, the job design team if something needs to be communicated their job is to communicate it. If it's overarching communication it's our job. So we said the communication team serves, number one, if we can staff things for a team, you know like if the job design says here's a message we want to get out can you staff it for us? Write it, create it, do an event, or whatever. We said we'd be willing to do that. So we've taken a role of either work for that team or evaluate what they're planning to do in terms of what we know so they don't get blindsided with issues and terms that happen. Or if they want us to, write you know either do it, help them do it, evaluate what they do or stay out of the way. And we play all sorts of those roles. For example when the staffing process team got going, kind of before its first meeting, I talked to Jay several times and your awkwardness is you want to not be perceived that you not going to do their job. But wq staffed about a four-page document on becoming what we knew about what was going on, ideas, suggestions, and it was really staff work prior to the work, for example we'd been using the term open staffing and what we bumped into was it was a lousy term to use. It creates too much baggage, we suggested using restaffing as a terminology, well it's not our decision to do that term or not to do it, that's not our job, but we put it on the radar screen. We suggested to the job design team and the staffing team that somewhere in there you're going to have 700 jobs and people aren't going to know what the jobs are and how do I express interest in them? So how do you let the jobs be known? We suggested a job expo. A lot of work and a lot of energy. Now, the staffing team said no we're not going to do that. So, our job was to suggest the idea, but I mean it wasn't our job to do it if the people in charge of it weren't going to do it, so it's a little bit of that. We can push the line of suggestion to the activity.

Seaver: Do you feel like you guys were king of pulling some of the stuff along? You guys were kind of the outside group that kind of was just a catalyst?

Hauk: In one sense but if you ask those group leaders it would either be perceived as oh that was a helpful tool to get us started, or oh they got in the way. You know you have a variety of opinions of how that would be perceived, depending on what particular action or early on what was Gene's speech when I said we kind of pass the baton to something? I don't remember the issue, and he was saying "Pass the baton? You didn't even have the baton!" It was back in the summer sometime when we were suggesting something and in effect we passed the baton to the team, but it wasn't perceived as our thing to have and so you get caught into this disjoint. So our role has shifted to kind of service the team, support the team, challenge the team, but also to think overarching messages. Now a lot of our work right now has shifted more to OK how do we help the people in the next few months? And the learning opportunities for example I'll show you a document, one of the things we suggested is a workout session that we start with one level, the four top

leaders and then the next six and what's not happening is you've got the four meeting every Monday and they're talking, engaging, but êverybody has a different perspective on how this organization is supposed to work. Say if it's Mike's area goes and talks to a customer, a church and they bump into a solution step, OK how does that information get to knowledge and then get over to somewhere in a product we're going to produce? So how is it going to interconnect? And everybody's got a different opinion on that, well you almost need to dialogue, so we proposed a workout session we call it where 10 players come together, Kitson facilitates it, Gene's an observer and it's the 10 talking, so Gene learns from it, then he has to direct it and facilitate it. And then what you're also doing is, hopefully, modeling when you get this first level of leadership to do the same thing because you need more conversation on how is this going to work and what's it going to do? And you got a job design team whose writing a notebook of what all the jobs are, and you know in once sense we're a notebook company, we know how to write it and that's what we're doing with this, but how do you get it to be more living? How do you get it to be more alive?
OK that's one piece of that and then we said OK between now and June 15, you're going to have real crazy stuff going on. There's this first level and Jay's team has already announced how that is going to happen, and it's basically the first level of leadership, the positions are created and this is still in process though, original decision don't even communicate what positions are. Sitting at the table and saying why not tell people what the positions are? Or they might change. Well they might, I'm going to give you an illustration of that. Mine changed. So there's problems, I understand it, but OK number two anybody's illegible for those positions—current department director, current section manager or any of the 10 leaders can recommend but it isn't down in the organization anybody can ask. Now on the side you could go to the one who said remember me when your kingdom comes, so you've got an indirect route that will happen, but you ought to control that one. How did I get off on this from a communication strategy? Oh then you're defining the process in communication, but really Jay's team is charged with that. So we gave them feedback on how what we thought it would work and the indirect feedback that we got was that was really a helpful tool. Now did it end up where they landed? No. It didn't need to. It was staffed for them. And it helped them to think through and get started on the process and you know what I see in the work is pretty good.

Seaver: So in a way, too, you guys are not only being the communicators for the entire process but you're also specifically helping out...

Hauk: Trying to, you know, sometimes for example the job design team basically says thank you very much we've got this job we don't need you. And occasionally we bump back to say hey now like yesterday, I basically said well why don't you let the position be known? It would help the architecture of the organization get further known. Why wait and announce the people in the positions after they're in? Which is what was originally planned. You know at first it's the shell shock, well no, and then they begin to think about it and Kitson's of course is sitting there going yeah because you, because it's the

positions but you want them to understand how these things work a little more. You know whether it will come out or not that's still up for discussion, but it's an illustration for an example.

Seaver: OK

Hauk: Let me see. Oh we are taking our work from this point forward and saying OK how do we help our employees on a broad base basis between now and June 15 deal wit change? We've got these levels going. We're going to have, we've already had the major communication from Jay on how the first level is going, and of course there's more questions because it doesn't tell you how they apply. That's going to come later. You're doing that for a couple of reasons, you don't want to lay out the second process and the third because it's too much process. People go like what? I don't understand. And also if you learn something from the first step process, you may want to change it for the second to get better, and you don't want to disjoint, but that's creating more like just tell me what do I do?

Seaver: Getting it all out there?

Hauk: Yeah, because it's too much, it's too much message. So you know you're going to have this, you see it coming, you're going to have this time when people are expressing interest on any floor you're going to have some people who have been offered a job and some who haven't. You're going to have this yes, I know and like the other players going, "would anybody call me?" Paralyzed and paranoid, so we're sensing that our best service right now is to help get information about the process out and encourage the teams who are stewards of it whether they want to or not. And then try to do some independent actions that help the soft side. For example we're planning what we're calling Listening Ear Lunches and it's basically going to be somebody from HR probably myself, who knows a little more the process, in the cafeteria, they bring their brown bag lunch, they come in and we'll probably set up tear sheets and ask things like, "Where do you think most people are feeling in the organization? What would help them get the answers they need? What questions do you have we can talk about?" So it's really kind of a soft side either by process or information or just more pastoral care and praying for somebody, providing opportunities for listening. We're going, we've already started this, but we're trying to get the attention of the top leadership teams. I did a survey last week I went to four of the ten players and said I think the temperature is OK. And to the person every one of them said oh I think it's OK, it's fine, in my group especially. It may be somewhere else, but we're doing fine. OK. Kitson came in Monday of last week and I asked him the same question. What do you think the temperature is? He said the temperature is pretty through the roof, you feel it everywhere you go. People are anxious. People want to know what's going on. People don't get it. You know they're really worried. We've got this disjoint. It didn't take long to see it. And I think what's happening is our top leadership is so loaded with the task that they're not very visible right now. And so we're trying to use some techniques now to kind of get a heavy 2 by 4

and say guys on your calendars, 15 minutes every two or three days, walk some floor where you work and walk in and say hello, you know. We've said you can't we're going to send that message to the top 40 also. If they can't go talk to the future areas where they're going to be because that will send a screwy message. It's hard for John Kramp to go in because he's not over that because he walks on the floor you know, an office he doesn't walk into somebody goes then why was he here? He didn't come see me. So I have to do that in DFG trying to do and we've created kind of a list of things and trying to get out on the radar screen, but it's going to be hard to get their attention on that one. It's just the load. And it's things like guys just yesterday, it was kind of ----you got to get out there and be visible, you know. You got to eat a meal every once in a while in the cafeteria, you know, you got to just be with people more. You got to be out there reassuring, talking, excited, we've got to create some forums for that, but primarily it's a soft, put it on your schedule, take the culture, we created, tons of ideas of things you can do, go do them. And it's kind of reminder so dealing with change right now --- communication is trying to make sure the teams communicate enough and try to do some overarching things. We proposed since last November, some version of where you get the four leaders talking about what the areas are, so you get some awareness beginning to learn. We called it the return of the Round Robin and it will be up to the four leaders each talking about their area and how they think it will work. The problem is finding the time, we've had to cancel it three times now and we felt like it needed to be done before people had jobs in mind, so they could hear the architecture before they got in their jobs. You can do it again later and it will have a different meaning. And we may roll out the workout sessions at our next level. You get the fist level. Kitson says we can even do a workout session with all 700 employees, the way to do that have to check with...[break in recording] So you got soft stuff, you got the Listening Ear. We felt like there are pockets of groups that need specialization. For example, we sense that the support staff is really anxious. Now no leader sees that as a real issue, just because they think support staff, my gosh we need support staff, there's no way talking about no having a job. Why are they worried? But the support staff themselves you know some of them may be single parent moms, and they're like will I have a job? You know you got some pretty high anxiety. So we're going to do some things there. Right now we call it support staff saints I think it is. We're going to do it with their managers and we're going to Karen Sanders for this and she's going to have a break for current managers of support staff and give them suggestions on, it's coming out of what she's doing. She has asked each one of her support staff members and key supervisors to take a sheet of paper and just write down their skills, what they do, what they're good at. Where do they need to improve. She is doing this thing and then she's talking to them, trying to build their confidence and help them to see more gifts so that as they're interviewed, she's helping them practice, because a lot of times support staff may not feel as much confidence, especially if they're nervous about having a job.

Seaver: Specify support staff.

Hauk: Take a secretarial. Bethany upstairs would be support staff. But there's a fine line like an AA is more of a leader of that, but it's really below that. We've understood that Customer Service has some issues so we've got a guy kind of saying OK from a Customer Service pocket here's a hundred employees roughly, are there some unique things we need to do. They run into a problem when we have a meeting or something it's hard for them to come because you've got to man those phones. So you've got some uniqueness that you've got to do some special things. We're creating, well I'll come back to that later. A lot of things related to support time. Then we're thinking OK after people know what their jobs are, there's going to be a group of people who don't fit. OK, we're not, we've not taken on the strategy yet that it's our role as communication team to communicate with those folks. We really think that's more of a manager's role. We may have to come back and visit that at some point, but we really think that's more of an HR function and not our assignment, so we didn't pick that piece up. But we do think we do have a role with some people that are in new jobs—how do you get them to get ready for transition? For example, our group office will break apart. OK we've got files of contracts and agreements and all sorts of things that doesn't---how do you disseminate that? You know how do you transition? How do you help if *HomeLife* editor if he's going to become the *Church Administration* editor? How do you transition? How do you pass the work, you know. So there's lots of communication issues around those things. Now we're calling it "T" time, transition time, and there's going to be some communication that probably goes to leadership kind of a T Time communication piece. It may or may not be all employees. And then there are transition you know you probably want to give suggestions individual units of groups, things they do to say goodbye, such like Brad's area that's got event and training it's going to be split apart. In that sense, so I mean they came up with their own idea of they're putting each others' names in a hat, drawing names and they're going to throw a party and come as another person in that section. That didn't appeal to me at all, but it connects with them and so how do you help groups have enough ideas and how do you helpfully celebrate what events? You know you're saying goodbye stuff, transition time. And then the actual move will happen and then what we're calling is kind of saying Hello or Startup time. What are the actions that you help new units of people come together and how do you help a new leader to do things like Myers-Briggs? Or to begin to get a hundred-day plan on what their action plan is. How do you take, you know they got to understand each other. You know what I mean? And what are the things we can do to help that? Oh back on this transition time, there's a thing we call the Hunk of Junk day and it's basically OK what is the allowed, not allowed, encouraged one or two days where people come in blue jeans and tennis shoes and their job basically was to clean up their stuff? Get ready to move. And maybe have a picnic down in one of the big areas where Gene and John and the leaders are playing the guitar and singing. And everybody's there, kind of OK take a break in the middle of the day and have a picnic together and it's ways of saying goodbye and keeping the leaders visible. You'll get this, a lot of this is in writing.

Seaver: What kind of a reaction are you getting from the leadership on this?

Hauk: Well right now, there's two things going on. One is all those actions are things they don't have to do. So you're not trying to get on their calendar. And you got enough of Kitson, me, and Wilson and probably some other guys saying we're missing people piece. We're the same culture as usual, we're announcing and evicting. We're not involving. Some things have to go by date and all the actions, but it doesn't involve everybody in the organization so it's kind of things right now we've broken our work into sub teams, OK these four people are going to take transition time, these four are going to take change time and part of dealing with change time is to help identify the existing HR seminars that might be appropriate to help people for the next month, and just promote it. You're not doing more work, you just, we know that these seminars may help folks here in the next six months, here they are. They're already promoted anyway, but you're trying use some stuff that's existing or you got somebody saying, "Linda is there anything we can put in *Lifelines,"* realizing that only goes to, what it goes to the whole corporation so you can't make it too pointed for a division, because it will send a funny message all across the corporation. That's kind of where we're going, The last piece is the Say Hello piece which is you've got to do information referral directory so you know when somebody calls who do you give them? That kind of stuff.

Seaver: Do you have all this stuff laid out?

Hauk: Now we're looking at some things—these haven't hit the radar screen, kind of fun, and it may service, if we can't pull it off, it may help Selma's team because part of the role in the next probably for not another month or two is to position Selma in organizational performance as the keeper of the culture. We want to begin to do things that just naturally builds her role in the organization as someone who's bringing about learning organization, who's bringing about education and the people issue is surfacing. I don't know enough about all those issues yet, but one of our service roles is to transition her into a leader role so that when our job, if it will ever go away, will transition into the organization that has a stewardship as we go forward. One subset, I don't know if it will pull off or not, but one of our guys on the team came up with this, it's a character-generated character we can put in the computer so many different and eventually it will make a ---- for you. And I don't know if you've seen that or not, but turn it over and you'll get it, it's like scene 1 ---in office, this is all cartoon, where Misguided is furiously pecking away at her keyboard mumbling to herself, the camera closes in on her with what she says, "Oh there you are, I'm glad you're here." Picks up her coffee, "I'm just finishing up typing a memo to the boys in ISD just thanking them for the wonderful little features they put on my computer. It's so convenient." She takes a sip from her LifeWay coffee mug and then punches a button on the computer that allows the CD ROM holder to come out and she puts her coffee on top of the holder. You know it's a spoof. You know usually when we try to do a cartoon it's more of a video-driven. Anyway. And you get it, but then it goes to Gene in this case, live and then he puts a piece of information on whether this is the right tool and she really reflects misguided information and he reflects truth. You're kind of setting it up. I don't, right now we took the tack of

let's don't take on this until we get people in slots, because you can use humor in ways that work against you.

Seaver: So will this be shown in Assembly?

Hauk: No, what we're trying to do now is video training, it becomes the new update for the future. So you got you know and you might create four or five cartoons and eventually we're going to demonstrate for Selma and then think about OK do we when do we roll this out, if we roll it out.

Seaver: Oh I see, so it's on your email.

Hauk: It's a live person. Now getting him to get on camera in the time it takes to do that, well you know like on the update, it's real hard just to have enough time to sit down and read this and make sure it's OK, add a paragraph, or write one or you know, doing the camera piece you won't get that -----and then there's some technical things, do we have enough ----extend it, what do you do with people that are on the Hydra System, so here's some technical issues that may or may not work and this isn't a do or die more of a --- ultimately you could really send communication and really make Gene as the leader position in a much healthier way of personality and life and heart and passion.

Seaver: Well, and again too you guys are kind of pushing the envelope as far what's been done which is kind of where you guys have fallen in place.

Hauk: And that's where if you show that too early to leadership, you mess up because they draw their barriers and their resistance and right now we haven't shared that idea yet.

Seaver: We found that out the hard way several times I recall.

Hauk: And sometimes we felt there are some cases where we could put it in the radar screen for the leaders and a month or two later we really planted the seed, and it got watered and it got done. And even though I'm not sure that was values in that role, at the time I think it had a service role, culture probably where it put some issues on the table that you look at it in hindsight and you go "I don't know that it's connected" but in reality when you think OK what happens from the culture standpoint? Well it probably created an organizational role up a Gene's level just looking at culture and so you know but some of the actions may not have had an immediate effect, but depends on what your definition of effect was. Is it long-term changes of role in the culture or did it did an immediate radical change come?

Seaver: Let me ask you, you talked a little bit about Gene's role. One of the five tenets is the top leadership as the head communicators and that could mean the top executives, but also the top executive himself, how has he done that or has he?

Hauk: I think as it's been noticeably different that he's working at it. Now his natural tendency and I think he would say this too, his natural tendency doesn't value this. As a natural tendency, but he's learning the importance of it and beginning to model it. And my hunch is Kitson has been good for him there, and you know you've had people in the organization notice the difference when he speaks. More heart, more passion, getting better at using phrases that don't have hooks on them. You know what I mean? And it's actually, he's at his best in informal dialogue, off-the-cuff relaxed environment, not a scripted format, PowerPoint and, well we had that conversation early on where we were trying to think how do we set up staff meeting kinds of things. And he's carried that through. Now we're entering the time where you build in equity with your communication, but you're also now at the time where you're drawing off of that equity.

Seaver: Sure

Hauk: And how much you have is yet to be told. You know the decision with me and this is hard to talk about because it's me, but that didn't give us equity. You know in the sense the leader---you try to position that from a all along we said we were going to learn things and we'll change and we've learned that we don't need this position and we're not going to have it, so you're really trying to say your message is appropriately trust the process which is OK trust the process, you just shot one of your leaders. You see what I mean? So it has an undertow to it. Now that only gets improved if you draw from the equity I guess is what I'm saying. Indication is that all of a sudden you've left people with an imagery of my stars you're going to decide a position and maybe you're going to kill a position and then all of the other positions are already full, too bad. You know so you've got some messages there that we probably drew from this the equity account in that kind of a message, but you can recover from that. You know you'll have a counter reaction, people that are in DFG for example you know early on probably said well great Gary's landed, but he's not with me. Some will say hallelujah he's not with me, so you've got both sides of that. And so there would be more like the first impression would be oh my star, poor Gary and golly I was getting all kinds of sympathy kind of stuff, you know in that regard, but the undertow which could be a new equity builder is when Gary lands and all of a sudden going it's the magazine department, OK Selma's gone, is he going to be back with us? Yea, you know, undated. You know kind of like OK this may be a good thing. In so long as that's still unfolding and that's not intended to be personal, just trying to give an example.

Seaver: Well I was going to ask you what the how communication may differ as far as when the top executives are talking about the change and dealing with the change and how that changes as it goes down through the rest of the organization?

Hauk: OK, structurally from a communications perspective, it's got more difficult to know what's going on for two, three reasons. One is up until January or whenever we made this new leadership—the communication team leader, Gary was in the room, so I

knew what was going on and I could write about it. Now I'm getting it second-hand or third-hand and trying to make it up. See what I mean? And so getting accurate information and reflected is harder. Now on a positive note you've got the counter part that I'm on the Implementation Team and therefore, I hear it second-hand. Oh I know what the other piece was. The other piece is that there are so many more actions going on right now that you can't keep up with them if you tried. And I'm not sure if it's a goal. You know what I mean. Like for example the job design team is writing the charter, doing the positions, going back and forth to the division staff, the four, and then you've got the job process team, they're going and not always are the dates intersecting and connecting, you're going to roll it forward, you're going to have your process team with all these dates and processes and procedures and how you get information out is much more difficult, just because there's more of it, not because I'm ----but it does speak to the need for a communication person to be aware although you're kind of making it up. And that's where you run the risk of dragging behind just because you know what you were bumping into was kind of cutting the edge with what may need to be said and getting away. What you may have, too early to tell, is lack of information dragging behind and then your communications dragging behind because you're not you know, maybe the opposite effect of where we've been. It's a little early

Seaver: Sure. What are some factors that have made communicating the change difficult? Has some stuff come up that's made it difficult to communicate? Or are there some factors there?

Hauk: Well one I just mentioned, some of it is a natural bent toward business mentality makes it harder to communicate softer messages. And there is probably a third issue would be leaders that have succeeded at the level of the top leadership got there because they could see issues and problems, recommend solutions and deliver them. Action. Get results. That's overstated, but you get where I'm going. And therefore, they get real uncomfortable communicating what's not a finished product. So oftentimes their perception is I don't know enough about IDIC to communicate. I don't know enough about MAP, therefore, let's not communicate it. I don't know enough about what the positions are because they might change so that any, you've got these barriers to communication that really comes out of a positive skill set of a leader, but a fear of not being exposed is the wrong word, but a fear of not knowing enough directions to give the right information and fearing that they may mess up and that's probably our culture though, that's our culture issue. Rather than being able to come up and say this is the best we know right now in finding ways to share it and involving people, so that will probably be the third one. The fourth one is we still have such a silo culture that we tend to think communication flows through a line organization and then the line organization may get different messages because of unique cultures in different areas. If that makes sense and therefore, hard to break down and create overarching communications, it doesn't get misinterpreted in lots of different directions and ways. Probably need to use more listening strategies right now though, you know listening sessions we were doing some of that earlier. The way we've been doing that the last two or three months is using

the communications team itself and either asking them to talk to people and come back with feedback or represent themselves because they knew the organization and getting back. We probably need to circle back by again and the problem is right now OK to know what the issues are and it doesn't take long in identifying if you think about it. People want to know if they're going to have a job, what it is who, they're going to work with and last where is their office going to be. And then what happens if I don't land? You know big questions that are right in your face right now. Anyway.

Seaver: I guess my last question really and then I want to take a look at some of the stuff you have, is what seems to have worked well and what seems to have not worked out too well?

Hauk: The positive I would say is regular, keep it coming, keep it on the horizon, keep it, you know the regularity and there's some like this week there's a whale of a lot of stuff going on and there's a tendency to say man there's nothing to communicate. Do you communicate or do you not? Well, early on we didn't, our philosophy had been keep it coming right now especially it's like you need to hold hands a little more even though there's not much to share. So the regularity has probably been a plus of strength in that regard as I would see it. Probably overall some variety of methodology into it, although we've probably been a little too electronic,

Seaver: How so?

Hauk: Send an email every week and you know we need to create a face-to-face dialogue conversation, you know what I mean? But we've also we've tried to avoid as much as possible these mass meetings. You know we've done one or two, but because we don't have an environment that creates that, so you know some of the future techniques will help that a little bit, but one of the weaknesses is probably been a little too electronic and not enough face-to-face. I think the message has been a strength that most people came here or are here because of a real big commitment for the local church and that bannering that for the message is still strong and that can backlash on you, because all of a sudden it can be well what's the difference in the churches. We went to all this stuff and you know you've got a backlash on the horizon on that one, but you know the banner to absolutely be about kingdom work is put in the heart blood of people. Now the real test comes would I be willing to leave here if it would help more? You know what would it mean to me and my family? And then as people that stay how we do that becomes important—we probably have a I call it the doctor syndrome in that a doctor tends to have a stereotype of bedside manners and if you analyze that, one of the reasons is they can't deal with the patient because emotionally they may do something that causes that person to die or they feel like so their tendency is to stay distant and aloof, never ask the patient how you're feeling, what are you doing. It's not spending more time with the patient, it's the time you spend with them asking them and modeling the right questions and doing that in a way so that if you're a manager or a leader and you have to basically dismiss somebody, OK, do you take on the doctor mentality or do you take on a caring, loving and

sometimes you can't. Sometimes a person needs somebody to be mad at and we're still looking at that one in the face, but how we do that will impact the culture for the next five years or ten. So you've got some real issues of the job staffing process and their assignment to work on that issue, how you deal with the people that are on the edge. It's for the people themselves, but it's also the people that are here that are going to give you momentum for the future. Because last time we probably messed up some of that and sent too many devaluing messages, they're out the door, goodbye, we don't need them anyway and some of those are messages that really are helping us to cope that what we've done to somebody's life and family. In reality is it's probably the right decision, but can we do it in such a way that really the best you can in the situation, to help the people you've got to value their contributions, build from the past, so they more quickly can move to the future. I'm not sure that's all.

Seaver: That's fine. Can I take a look at the papers you mentioned?

[end of interview]

Interview date: February 21, 2001

Transcript from Michael Miller Interview

Seaver: All right, let me ask you first. How do you see your role as a communicator in this change process?

Miller: My role is to I think to basically support the process, once the decision is made by the Executive Management Group team or whatever, then when I go away from that team as a member, I have a responsibility in my day-to-day interaction with my direct reports, in my communication, in my large meetings with my various departments to make sure that they understand and you know, get the concept, so I'm mainly just a messenger or a communicator of the message. Make sure it's consistent. I say the same thing that we agreed to.

Seaver: Yeah, how do you go about doing that?

Miller: Well we do it in when we were working through that part of it, we would do it in our monthly department, monthly group meeting where I would basically give time and then we just let them talk and ask general questions and you know we've told them what we could say, what we didn't know and we were very open about it, but we let them just dialogue. We also sent out, we had each of the department directors spend some time doing the same thing in their organizations, once I gave it to them and then worked it down even to section level, so primarily that was the way and then any one-to-one meetings – one-on-one. If they came by I offered to you know, I offered to come to their group or their department if they needed me to and then I also just met with them as they came by. Informally.

Seaver: OK.

Miller: But primarily just to be a conduit to make sure that I'm being consistent in the communication of what we've decided as a group.

Seaver: OK, so you really feel like the group is going to decide this, and then you take what's being done here—do you tell it exactly as it is? Or do you . . .

Miller: Well that was the advantage, yeah, I think the closer we are to a script in the earliest time, the better because then language is calm and you don't start having everybody put their own spin on it. I think that's the danger, so in our change process that was really good from the beginning we used a we tried to develop that process to do communication as a you know say these things, talk about this, hear the key words we use, the key message, and then everybody's on, you know almost like talking points, but you've got to have them. Because too many people, the bigger the organization the more danger there is that everyone puts their own spin on it, then you have competing

messages, and you don't want that, especially when you're making a radical organizational change.

Seaver: Now how is that playing out now because this is, people are familiar, people know what's going on—how's that playing out now?

Miller: Good. We still do a monthly email through Gene, which comes out from our president, which is very important, and we as the Executive Team we approve it every week. We talk about communications in every meeting. Every one of our main meetings we have a segment of time we talk about what do we communicate next? What do we say? What do we need to be together on? We share you know both informally and formally how we work on that with people, so it's a priority in our meetings. Communication is one of the subjects that always comes up because you don't just stop you know we can't say OK we've got to this point so now we're OK, no, it's actually accelerated you know. Sometimes it's in a training event, sometimes it's in an email, sometimes it's in a department meeting, sometimes it's in a larger group setting. You got to use all those multiples to do it and then the informal one-on-one meeting. You still got to be accessible because a lot of my people come by and ask me stuff privately that they don't do in a group.

Seaver: So you do get a lot of informal stuff?

Miller: Yeah. They come by just to talk about it and you know what about this, what about me, are you sure this is, is that really the right signal? They want to be assured that the signal, that the communication is not just a spin, but that it's legit. So I'm a legitimizer of the message. I'm a legitimizer of the communication and you know that means that I've got to believe it. If I don't believe it I can destroy the process.

Seaver: Sure. How do you use or do you make any attempt to use the managers below you as communicators? And do you receive information from them also?

Miller: Yeah. It's kind of a two-way thing, when we meet for our monthly meetings, I ask them to tell me you know what are we hearing? What are you guys sensing from the people? How are they reading the message? It's more, we don't have a report, we don't ask them for it, but we jot those down and then I take those back to our group meetings. I also get that from them on my, I do individual updates with them on their department's work, so that's actually in two meetings. In my monthly update and also in my monthly group meeting.

Seaver: So this is something conscious?

Miller: We do it intentional. It's intentional because right now, in fact it's usually first on our agenda before we even talk about finance or anything else. What's happening? How's everybody feeling? What's the temperature? Are they, do they understand the

message? Do we have a disconnect? Are we getting it or not getting it? And so we really work at it.
Seaver: Now you're obviously kind of right now you're having to wear two hats. You have the old organization hat and the new organization hat. How are you separating the two and does that communicate one way, I know, do you communicate maybe more openly with the old stuff and maybe a little bit more reserved with the new?

Miller: Not as reserved, more the communication about the new is held primarily to what we put out in Gene's memo. We that's what we talk about. The other, yeah, may be a little bit more open because it's about the old organization, where we're going, what's happened, what's the problem? It is a little bit freer, but we, I really tie my communication around what we've decided in the group and I don't veer off of it much at all. For instance right now we're just saying to people we don't have a fully developed organizational chart, which we don't. we haven't even done the next level of jobs and we're still designing them, but we can't tell you about the jobs and positions, because we don't know. We don't know anything, so pretty closed on the new. You got to be more cautious.

Seaver: OK. How do you guys decide as top management and also you personally how do you decide what's going to be said and what's not going to be said and when it's good to say it or when you're allowed to?

Miller: Well I think we just, we use our time line, we use the, we had an agreed-to process a time line of when things would roll out and we've really tried to match our communication to the first give general overview of here's where it's going. Then you know second level is we only talk about where we're up to. We don't you know we've told them our rule was you know we'll tell them as much as we can tell them. We'll be totally honest about it as we can and open, but we won't tell them more than we know just to try to relieve fear and so we've been pretty honest and had a lot of integrity about it, but we've used our time line, we've pretty well built our communication off of the time line, wherever we are in that, that's how much we communicate and we open it up as we go, because part of it we're making up as we go along anyway. We wouldn't know enough to communicate.

Seaver: Sure. So you personally also are doing the same thing?

Miller: Exactly, follow the time line. Yeah. Same thing.

Seaver: Do you think you communicate differently now to the folks in either, whether communicating up or I guess at the top exec level do you communicate the same way with those guys as you always have?

Miller: Yeah. Because we all know each other.

Seaver: Is it different though with people below you?

Miller: It was always different from group down to department, I mean there's always a little bit of difference.

Seaver: But when you throw the change into that mix does that shake that up any or is it still strained? Or was it strained?

Miller: For my group we have pretty good relations, I mean I think that's going to depend on the leaders, you know their style. I'm much more informal. I don't wait for just official meetings to talk about things, well I do a lot of talking to my guys off line, off, in one-on-one, so really I get more of my work done informally than I do formally, you know. So my communication style is much more informal and one-to-one. I don't do, I tend to go by the script in the group and I'll be much more spontaneous and open in the one-to-one because that's just my style so informal. Now I don't go beyond the boundaries, but I'm able to customize it to whoever the person is. So I think that every leader has their own communication style and they got to know how they do it best you know. And you know you learn that in church work and so I've just kind of brought that to this world. Some things you can say, you've got to say to the party line, in the group, big group, but then when you talk to people privately you can be a little bit more informal, open your door, make sure they can come by, you work on it.

Seaver: How do you see Gene's role in the communication process? Do you think he's...?

Miller: He sets the whole pace. He is the trumpeter, he blows the trumpet and if he blows an uncertain sound everybody figures it out, so his message has to be clear, clean, has to be on message, on vision. When I mean on message I mean it matches the vision, it matches the goal, matches what we're trying to achieve. He has to stay on that. He's like the trumpeter, he blows the trumpet. He sounds the you know he's sounding the alarm or whatever it is. He is crucial. None of us can communicate that like he can. That's one of his primary jobs is communication. That is his job. He has to communicate to our organization, he also has to communicate to the rest of the corporation and he also has to communicate to our customers and to our network and you know these fraternal partners, so his job is communication. That's what he has to do.

Seaver: Do you feel like you guys as the top exec crew when you're just meeting with you guys, do you feel like there's pretty good two way or is there kind of he's telling you how it is?

Miller: Well he's changed his style. The new organization we actually work together as a team now and in the old, probably in the old process Gene would have been more telling, now he's more it's more of a team approach, where we actually have dialogue, it's dialogue and then we come out with a decision. In fact, many times we craft it for

him as a team and give it to him so that's our goal, we're really working on a new style. But it is more of a different style now. He, Gene, it's more consensus, he works with us as consensus and then we help script and lay out what he's going to say, we're more advisors, that's why we're called the leadership staff, and so we work with him in that kind of a role.

Seaver: OK, do you think the rest of the division sees him as a top communicator?

Miller: Probably not now, it depends. I mean on what subject. If it's about music, no. If it's about a product

Seaver: About change in general.

Miller: But in change, absolutely. Yeah.

Seaver: So it doesn't seem to, everybody would say he is the initiator and he is the one that is giving the word on where we're going, he's letting us know what's going on.

Miller: That's right. He blows the trumpet.

Seaver: All right, well what do you think has worked well? And what maybe hasn't worked well?

Miller: Well I think we've taken our time, I think we've been very deliberate, we've been very honest, which you know has been frustrating to our people because many of them have said you know can't you tell us more and we've told them exactly what we could tell them. We've done it honestly, we've got honest communications, we've given them, we've communicated in a variety of ways, we've done forums, we've done emails, we've done we do it in our departments, do it in our groups, we've done it at multi levels. It's been multi level, it's been multi dimensional in the message we've used and it's been built on the vision and we haven't taken, you know it's for the churches and for the future. We've never come off of that since the day we started doing it, so I think we've done pretty well, I really do. I think our people. Now their anxiety is up because now jobs are all there is some natural anxiety coming up, but it's not because they haven't had communication it's just because they're starting to experience the process.

Seaver: Do you think that anxiety is a barrier to communication or have there been some barrier to communication?

Miller: I don't think you could stop, I don't think you could relieve this anxiety they feel with any amount of communication. I think it's just human nature. Who am I going to work for? Why is all this changing? You know, I don't like this, I'm uncomfortable with it, you know part of that is, barriers to communication? Yeah. You know old cultural ways where people resist, they don't believe it, you know, they don't believe the leaders,

they don't believe what we're trying to say. Barriers would be if leadership team did not cooperate. See the leadership team has been totally cooperative. Everybody is lined up on these messages, so you know we've had conformity. The leaders have had to conform to do it, now what would be a barrier? If you had a leader who was sabotaging it and he was working the system in the opposite way, but we really had, our guys really came together on this and we just committed to it, so you know some barriers that are you know that would be I don't think there's been, I don't think anybody's blocked this from doing if that's what you mean by that.

Seaver: No, just I mean sometimes it can be intentional, sometimes it could just be a natural barrier.

Miller: Yeah, it may be they don't – the signals. But we've tried to use multiple ways to teach it and to explain it so that it wouldn't be coming in just one way.

Seaver: Is there anything that hasn't work out communication wise that maybe you guys wanted how you wanted it to? That maybe just didn't work out as well as you thought maybe?

Miller: You know we've had a hard time communicating the staffing process, but it's just real complicated. It's hard to communicate, I mean we probably could have done a better job getting the people ready for this part more than we have, you know maybe we—we communicated well with the networks, that wasn't a problem, outside these other partnerships, I don't think that much Bill, I really don't. I give us pretty high marks on it, but I don't know a lot about communication, I wouldn't know how to grade it, I mean from the response of our people and from the overall response I think we get a pretty good solid, at least a C+ or B-, but you know people tend to rate their leadership, they're a little bit cynical about that anyway, but I would give us at least a B-. In the B range. I think we've done well. I think we just started off with communication as a part of our model, you know the key was that model we built, you know that had the culture piece and communications tied in and we had the process and we built a good model and we stayed with our process model. We have never deterred from it and communication has been the core of that.

Seaver: OK.

Miller: I think it's really helped us. Is that enough?

[end of interview]

Interview date: February 21, 2001

VITA

William Edwin Seaver IV (Bill) was born in Danville, Virginia on September 29,1976. He attended primary school in Ohio, North Carolina, Illinois and Tennessee before his family settled in Bristol, Virginia, where he attended the Bristol City Public School System and graduated from Virginia High School in June, 1995. He entered Carson-Newman College in August of 1995 where in May, 1999, he received the Bachelor of Arts in both History and Political Science with a minor in Communication. He entered the Master's program in the College of Communication at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville in August of 1999. While finishing his Master's in Public Relations, he worked for the University of Tennessee Housing Department as the Publications Graduate Assistant. In May of 2001 he received his Master's of Science in Communication.