

## Case 1

## Goodwill Corporation Ltd

The president of Goodwill Corporation Ltd., Mr Abhishek Mukherji, wanted to facilitate upward communication. He believed an open-door policy was a good option. He announced that his own door was open to all employees and encouraged senior managers to do the same. He felt this would give him a way to get early warning signals that would not be filtered or redirected through the formal chain of command. Mukherji found that many employees who used the open-door policy had been with the company for years and were comfortable talking to the president. Sometimes messages came through about inadequate policies and procedures. Mukherji would raise these issues and explain any changes at the next senior managers' meeting. The most difficult complaints to handle were those from people who were not getting along with their bosses.

One employee, Anand, complained bitterly that his manager had over committed on behalf of the department and put everyone under tremendous pressure. Anand argued that long hours and low

morale were major problems. However, he would not allow Mukherji to either bring the manager into the discussion or seek out other employees to confirm the complaint. Although Mukherji suspected that Anand might be right, he could not let the matter lie and said, 'Have you considered leaving the company?' This made Anand realize that a meeting with his immediate boss was unavoidable.

Before the three-party meeting, Mukherji contacted Anand's manager and explained what was going on. He insisted that the manager come to the meeting willing to listen and without hostility towards Anand. During the meeting, Anand's manager listened attentively and displayed no ill will. He learned the problem from Anand's perspective and realized he was over his head in his new job. After the meeting, the manager said he was relieved. He had been promoted into the job from a technical position just a few months earlier and had no management or planning experience. He welcomed Mukherji's offer to help him do a better job of planning.

1. What techniques increased Mukherji's communication effectiveness?
2. Do you think that an open-door policy was the right way to improve upward communication?

3. What other techniques would you suggest?
3. What problems do you think an open-door policy creates? Do you think many employees are reluctant to use it? Give reasons for your answer.

## Case 2

## Image and Rumours at Procter &amp; Gamble

Since the late 1970s, Procter & Gamble has been plagued by rumours connecting the company with Satanism and devil worship. The rumours have

come in two cycles: from late 1981 to the end of the summer of 1982 and from fall 1984 into early 1985. Procter & Gamble primarily manufactures



and haptics, as used in business settings and paste them on a chart paper. Label each, mentioning the message being sent through such cues.

- Carefully observe the non-verbal behaviour of a person you work with. What messages do you

get from your observation? Think about an alternative interpretation for each non-verbal cue you have received. Discuss which of your interpretations is more accurate. What are the factors you need to decode the non-verbal cues?

## Case Study

### Charisma Corporation

Charisma Corporation (CC) has recently embarked on a new kind of training. The corporation is teaching many of its employees—especially those in marketing and sales—to make decisions on the basis of non-verbal communication cues. For Malini Varma, vice president of CC, focusing on non-verbal communications has become an important part of her inter-personal dealings. Several years ago, Varma became interested in how body movements and mannerisms truly reflect what an individual is saying. Continually reading in this area of study, Varma has been able to make decisions about potential employees and potential customers by ‘reading’ them. For example, Varma believes that body language can give a person a competitive advantage. It can make the difference when closing the sale, or in CC’s case, hiring new employees. For example, during interviews, Malini pays constant attention to the job candidate’s eye movements and mannerisms. She believes that she can correctly predict if the candidate will be an aggressive salesperson while simultaneously being personable and friendly. How does she do this?

She does this by looking at their eyes and the way they present themselves. In one case, a hiring decision came down to two people. The first candidate was animated and made constant eye contact. The second candidate never looked Malini in the eye, leaned back in his/her chair, and crossed both his/her legs and arms. The first candidate demonstrated the communication skills that Varma found aligned with successful performance in her organization. Malini Varma is convinced that non-verbal communications can play a significant role in helping her organization achieve its annual sales goals. Personally, she has found that it has helped her ‘quality’ customers. For instance, even though a potential customer says, ‘Yes’, with his/her arms and legs crossed emphatically, it means state, ‘No!’ Understanding this, Varma is in a better position to probe further into the possible objections the customer has. She has found that, in many cases, she is able to steer the conversation in a direction that ultimately leads to successfully closing a sale. And that is a major competitive advantage.

- Describe the communications process that Malini Varma uses in her dealings with candidates and employees.
- What problems might Varma encounter by her heavy reliance on non-verbal communications?
- What communication guidance would you give to Varma and individuals like her who place an inordinately high value on body language? Explain your position.

## Case 2

### Career Counseling

Participate in a small group (2–3 students) discussion that will take place in the presence of an observer, who will give his/her concluding remarks.

This is a counseling scenario where you will be asked to answer several questions, as a group, based on the information provided and your group discussion. By working with a group, you will have an

opportunity to compare notes and to see how others might approach a given counseling situation.

#### The Case

You have agreed to do career counselling for a 46-year old woman. She is married, and her two children have finished college. She got her college degree in elementary education 25 years ago, taught classes



1 through 3 for two years, then became a housewife when her first child was born. She has always enjoyed art (especially painting and acting), but is not sufficiently talented, and she believes herself to be an artist. Her husband, a secondary school principal, is supportive of her returning to the work-force, but does not want her working at the local fast food chain. They live in a small town, but are within an hour's drive of a large metropolitan area. During your first meeting, you learn that she has held some part-time secretarial/clerical

jobs over the years, but her drinking problem gotten her dismissed twice, most recently months ago. She is now recovering, and attends a support group two nights per week. She is amenable to retraining, and would like to have an income of Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 per month. Now, working in your small group, discuss the case and the challenges facing the counselor with the client. By the time you are done, you should be able to produce a group answer to the following questions:

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1. What is your first impression of this situation?
  2. What more would you want to know and how would you find out more?
  3. How would you proceed with this case?
  4. What do you envision her tasks to be if she obtains and holds a full-time job?
  5. What advice and counsel could you give her now?
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## Projects

Visit a business house, and try to meet some of the people in key positions in the human resource department and study their communication styles and patterns with their counterparts in the other functional areas of the company.

1. Assume that you are the project manager of a company involved in civil construction. What kind of mechanisms would you use to be updated about the status of the project? Develop a cost effective feedback tool.
2. Identify a company, which you believe is spending heavily on advertising. Try to study their advertising strategies with respect to a particular television advertisement, in context of target audience identification, message delivery styles, choice of endorsers, etc.
3. Look out for recruitment advertisements appearing in newspapers. Identify an advertisement which you think is very specific, and another which is not. Discuss your choice. Why do you think the company opted for that particular kind of advertisement?

## Case 1

### The Pentagon

In the wake of continued accounting scandals, insider trading deals, CEOs at the trough, and other unpleasant business revelations, how do we begin to change the atmosphere of mistrust and dishonesty that permeates America's perception of corporations? One answer may lie embedded in the US military's latest experiment with the media. During the Iraqi conflict, the Pentagon embarked on a press programme that will no doubt go down in history as one of the greatest military public relations coups of all time—the embed programme. After a quarter century of mutual animosity between the press and the Pentagon, generated largely by the Vietnam War, it was a radical and unconventional idea. You can bet virtually every member of the Pentagon brass initially opposed this idea hands down, for the same reasons most corporate executives would. However, under the insistence and guidance of Pentagon spokesperson, Torie Clarke, and others, journalists were embraced by the US military and actually encouraged to do their jobs. 'Many in the media worked hard with us on the principles and guidelines by which the program was run', says

Clarke. 'It was very much a collaborative effort with them, and we were all very transparent about intent, concerns, and problems in advance of the war starting'.

Virtually every member of the Pentagon brass now concedes it was the best idea ever devised for turning around press preconceptions and negative coverage. The old way of doing business with the press is no longer the best way. It is essential in our media-saturated culture to have a solid relationship with the press before you need it. Welcoming journalists into your corporation is the best way to make them sympathetic to your situation. The more journalists get to know you, your company and your employees, the more they come to appreciate what your company is about and what you are trying to accomplish. This is not about friendship and camaraderie. It is about honest discourse and mutual understanding. The general consensus is that the embed program produced exactly what the military had hoped for—lots of positive, complimentary, and supportive stories as both sides got used to the idea of mutual access after so many years of suspicion and cynicism.



Mark Strassman, a CBS News correspondent just returned from the war, stated, 'It was a leap of faith. There was a lot of demystification to this process. Here you had two institutions who didn't like or trust each other and they had to learn to work and live together. My view of the US military was so much higher than before this program. Odds are if I were immersed in a some corporate culture the same way, I would have the chance of being similarly impressed.'

Forging a closer relationship with the press is not without some risk. You will have to be prepared to weather the occasional unflattering report, as was the case with the military. But it is better to shine the light on yourself. Small mistakes are often overlooked or excused by reporters if they are allowed 'inside'. Those same mistakes are often exaggerated if reporters are kept out. The vast majority of journalists are not after you or your company. But when you avoid, ignore, ridicule, fear, or otherwise limit press access to your company and your business dealings, you are inviting the very scrutiny you are trying to avoid. American Airlines CEO Don Carty's choice to avoid bad publicity by keeping quiet on his

company's questionable pension plan almost sent AA into bankruptcy, and it ultimately cost Carty his job. The bottom line is if you have nothing to hide, then do not hide it. Cultivate a strong and healthy relationship with the press. As Strassman points out, 'More mistakes in reporting are made through ignorance, than intent.' If you have something to hide, the story will inevitably get out. If you have a relationship with the press, you may not be able to control it, but you can shape it. Clarke agrees there are lessons for corporate America in the Pentagon's success. Her advice to CEOs: 'Make communications an integral part of your entire business plan.' For that to succeed, Clarke notes, 'Leadership needs to be involved from start to finish'. There will be much discussion and review of the Pentagon's embed program in the months to come, but this is a certainty: it will change, for at least a generation, the context of editorial discussions about the US military. Every single editorial meeting will now include journalists who will defend the military instead of just those who criticize it. Is not that change of perception alone, worth embedding a reporter or two in your company?

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1. Discuss the underlying theme of the above situation/case and make your own assessment of US military's communication strategies based on the case.
  2. Why do you think organizations, like the Pentagon that are normally very secretive in their style of working, are suddenly talking about transparency and trust?
  3. What do you think Clarke means by the statement, 'Leadership needs to be involved from start to finish'.
  4. Do you think that the Pentagon's strategy of being media friendly will work? Discuss.
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## Case 2

### The Client

Merrill Lynch is one of the world's leading financial management and advisory companies, with offices

in 36 countries and total client assets of approximately \$1.3 trillion. Through Merrill Lynch's



## Case Study

### Launching the New Wipro Identity

The entire process of re-launching essentially carved out a unique brand personality for Wipro. The Wipro 'promise of applying thought' and the four values that govern Wipro, carve out a unique personality for the brand.

Wipro is a trustworthy, humane, and successful corporation focused on consumer needs, offering a variety of products, solutions, and services that fulfill those needs, keeping in mind the socio-economic realities of the country. Wipro is also a competent, honest, and significant business partner and employer, that places a premium on long-term, mutually beneficial relationships, and offers strong growth opportunities with an inspiring work and business atmosphere.

#### Internal Communication

A mammoth task by itself, as the organization was 8,000 people strong, spread across various locations. Till this time only the top management, consisting of about 15 people, knew the details. Hence, 60 senior managers of Wipro were briefed in February 1998. In April 1998, the communication began reaching out to all locations starting with Amalner in Maharashtra (where Wipro had started operations). A majority of the people liked the change. As Azim Premji put it, 'You can either like the identity or dislike the identity but you cannot ignore it. We have done a lot of research and due diligence on the change. We are confident that it will do well. Now only the market and time will tell us whether we made the right decision'.

An identity manual was created to communicate the new identity and values within the organization. Guidelines for product packaging, stationary, visiting cards, car stickers, and signage internally and externally were developed. Advertising guidelines followed later. This helped create a

whole new look and feel for the organization. The suppliers and internal people were trained on the usage of the identity manual. Signage, visiting cards, and stationary wore the new vibrant look.

#### Advertising

This provided a huge challenge. The issues were—What to communicate? Who was the target audience? Will it increase sales? How will it be measured? Does an individual division/product get adequate representation? After a lot of iteration, it was decided that the values would be communicated. Advertising was to be judged by how well the values moved in the eyes of the customers (and not how sales have improved). An 'as is' research was conducted in December 1997 to establish the baseline. The focus was on the male segment residing in the top eight metropolitan cities that formed the bulk of Wipro's customers.

The advertising showcased how Wipro was human—in terms of understanding the needs of the customer and how it had created innovative products or services to satisfy their needs. Integrity and value for money was to be established as a result of the experience an individual had with the organization and its members. Six advertisements were created showcasing 'applying thought' in software, hardware, and the consumer and lighting business. The line 'We've been thinking of you' was consistent in all the advertisements. The ticker tape mentioned the diversity and the size of Wipro, which was not well known to all.

#### The Result

The result is for all to see. Wipro dramatically became a known corporation. Try as one might, it would be wrong to usurp all the credit to the identity or the advertising. The huge success was



a result of a great orchestration of the launch. The identity was very visible as outdoors gave it a larger than life image, the corporate communication put Wipro on the cover of leading magazines, stationery was changed, product packaging was changed, and then advertising hit dailies and press slightly later. But, perhaps, the greatest impetus came because of external change. The software industry was recognized as a future industry and started getting noticed and written about, leading to huge increases in Wipro Stock prices. Azim Premji was judged the richest Indian in April 1998. With this and with the knowledge economy

getting more recognition, the fact that one does not have to come from traditional business families to become the richest Indian became obvious.

It is said that luck favours the brave. This environmental factor brought Wipro the luck. The new identity got a perfect launch platform. The brand has been measured on how it has performed on the values through qualitative and quantitative research with customers. Wipro is now strongly associated in the customer's mind as a warm, caring, and trustworthy organization. Source: <http://www.wiprocorporate.com/brand/brandHome.asp-category=51.htm>

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1. What was the challenge that came up before Wipro?
  2. Discuss the strategies that Wipro adopted to establish its new brand identity.
  3. With special focus on advertising strategy, explain how Wipro used its advertising campaign effectively to meet the new challenge.
  4. How was Wipro assured of the success of its advertisement campaign?
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