

THE USE OF IMAGE CHANGE IN INDUSTRY - BRAZIL

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Nan wrote extensively about the Mills Group results in *Participation Works: Business cases from around the world*, "Chapter 10: Crisis: An Ally of Participation", James P. Troxel, General Editor (1993). The following is a draft outline of a future paper.

I. MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

A. ECONOMIC HISTORY OF BRAZIL.

Brazil has been on a roller coaster of prosperity and recession the time the first colonists arrived. Immigration was economic rather than political as it was in the southern hemisphere. The drive for game has not generally been matched with an ideological vision.

B. VISIBLE CONTRADICTIONS.

Because the class system was imported from Portugal and continues as a practical reality in Brazil, there is a strong paternalism on one hand along with machismo and victimization on the other. Three hundred years of absolute rule of the "colonels" has left common people believing they have little option but to wait obediently for solutions from above. There is generally a low self-esteem what shows up both individually and socially.

C. DISCOVERY OF MISSION.

ICA came to Brazil in 1979 to establish a rural development project. To support this work, we began a consultancy service, using the planning methods of ICA and LENS International. Working with companies revealed a need in the cities equal to that in the rural areas to change the mindset from one of fatalism to possibility and from low self-esteem to profound self-esteem.

D. VARIOUS APPROACHES.

We began with participative planning methods and went on to develop long-term relationships when we found this was necessary to reinforce image change. We created events that spun stories of success and gave participants the chance to experience new roles. We introduced a celebrative style of valuing individuals through dealing with them in depth and recognizing their contributions and achievements both formally and informally.

II. CASE STUDIES

A. THE ROLE OF PARTICIPATION

A LENS with Mills Group in 1986 was the first time that planning was done by more than the president and vice president. Since that event, all planning has been done by representative groups. Shorter Strategic Planning Seminars were awakening events in such companies as Intercontinental Insurance, Laboratorio B.Braun and ESSO led to other programs.

B. LONGTERM PROJECTS

One such program was the Management Team Training for the Educational Task Force at intercontinental. When the American manager was recalled to the United States, he was replaced by a team of three Brazilians, who had experience in different areas, but had never thought of sharing responsibility for the whole. The residue of the demonstration of teamwork work still lingers in the company two years after it was sold to a Brazilian firm that appeared to negate all the values that were being held.

The Mentor program at B Braun was a project in the learning organization, training directors and top management how to engage in dialogue that changed their own and their employees' image of themselves and of the company. Mills 2000 was designed to give a sense of ownership to all the employees. And a three-year program with Solutec has transformed the ambience into a human work environment. In these cases, we discovered the importance of a persistent presence over a period of time.

C. SHORT-TERM EVENTS

To deal with specific motivational and spirit needs head on, we developed Dark Night seminars on such subjects as humiliation when a scandal occurred within the company; Long March seminars when the directors expressed weariness and impatience with the prolonged campaigns required by the political and economic situation. "Windows" was designed to bring consciousness to delivery boys, salesmen and receptionists about the importance of their company role as the first to encounter potential new clients. Various other career related workshops were held to assist individuals to grasp the wonder of their own lives and the possibility they contain (for example Mills Group "Orbits of Engagement"). In all this we were out to touch the deeps of the lives we encountered.

D. FACILITATOR TRAINING

For executives, one of the most effective tools was that of training in facilitation. This encouraged executives to learn to listen to others, to play an upfront role without domineering, to expand their care to companies other than their own, and to trust the structure and the team they were working with.

E. USING CRISIS AS OPPORTUNITY

Looking for options in each situation was another way lives and structures were changed.

III. VERIFIABLE RESULTS

A. CHANGE IN LIFE STYLES

- Office boy Joseph Alito, now clerk, preaches that excellence and quality depend on every detail of every task.
- System analyst, Lourdes, became part of the Educational Task and soared to manager when she discovered she already knew more than she imagined.
- Treasurer Celio's posture is a clue to the new sense of presence he has. Since he learned to speak out in meetings and have his opinions heard, he stands erect and moves with decision instead of being the bent over figure he used to be.

B. CHANGE IN WORKING MODES

- Coffee hours start Monday mornings and Victory happy hours on Fridays framed Intercontinental's drive to create a team. Games and gimmicks intermix in the group at a missional level.
- Management teams: Mills, Intercontinental.
- Learning labs: special events for "Dessert" after lunch in the Mills cafeteria twice monthly.
- Information exchange of Intercontinental through articles.
- Taking down dividing walls, literally and imaginally.
- Emphasis on service, quality.

C. EMERGING LEADERSHIP

- Building for the future.
- Miracles in the flesh: Fernandes, Nadira, Dulce, Cida
- Roundtable leadership
- Factory story

IV. IF WE DID IT AGAIN

A. LOCK IN ON INFLUENCE

Company presidents and heads of Human Relations Departments are key to getting any change to happen. Importance of involvement and example.

B. COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Involve everyone in planning, training or contexting events to enable individual image change supported by team structures. Keep the messages of value and possibility coming from every direction (not easy in the midst of firings but out-counseling helps!).

C. INTRODUCE A VARIETY OF SKILLS

Introduce learning skills, team experience, constant honoring of people and culture without trying to sell it. Later you won't have to sell it, and at the beginning it is unsalable. Limits as possibility and each one's free decision is the message.

D. DESIGN EVERY PROGRAM

Maintain basic structures, involving local leaders in redesigning to include both felt and perceived need. Choose miracles to mythologize.

E. CELEBRATE VICTORIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Cartoons in the internal newspaper; speed in completing financial reports, etc.

F. CHANGE LIVES, NOT PROFITS

They are interlinked. People who live out of depth resources can weather recessions and other crises

G. PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF