

Executive **EDGE**

SHARING THE POWER

The very definition of corporate leadership for the twenty-first century is being challenged by a radical new approach, alternately termed post-heroic leadership, servant leadership, or virtual leadership. Spurred by a rapidly changing environment, these leaders are altering the nature of power and how it is used.

The two fundamental tasks facing post-heroic leaders are, first, to identify and convey exactly what the organization is trying to accomplish and, second, to create an environment that allows employees to figure out what needs to be done and then to do it well.

At the Levi Strauss plant in Murphy, NC,

plant Manager Tommye Jo Daves describes it this way: "You can't lead a team just by barking orders, and you have to have a vision in your head of what you're trying to do." After changes led by Daves and her line supervisors, the plant now works under a gain-sharing system with team management in which all workers are cross-trained for 36 tasks. These changes have led to decreases in flawed jeans, the time between order and shipment, and the time it takes to process a pair of jeans.

"We share as much information as we possibly can throughout the company," explains Robert Haas, Levi's chief executive officer. "You cannot

ask people to exercise broader judgment if their world is bounded by very narrow vision."

Servant leaders do not expect to solve all the problems themselves. They delegate true responsibility for both day-to-day processes and sweeping changes. "You give up a lot of ability to make firm, hard decisions, and you take a chance that employees may lead you someplace you don't want to go," warns Dennis Longstreet, president of Ortho Biotech. "But then you learn that most of them want the same things you want. Everyone wants to succeed."

Post-heroic leaders require many of the same qualities as traditional leaders: intelligence, commitment, energy, integrity. But they also expect those



David Tillinghast

attributes of others in the organization. As stated by the late Bill Gore, who founded W. L. Gore & Associates on the theory of empowerment, "Lead-

ership is defined by what you do, not who you are."

From John Huey, "The New Post-Heroic Leadership," Fortune, February 21, 1994, pp. 42-50.

JUST THE FAX

Now that practically every business—and quite a few homes—have fax machines, fax technologies are taking off. Innovative applications such as fax-on-demand are saving money and time while personalizing marketing communications between customer and company.

Through fax-on-demand, organizations can automate the distribution of routine information, lowering costs and freeing support staff to deal with more complex requests or perform other tasks. Day or night, clients can call in and push numbers on their touch-tone phone as directed by a recorded voice. In response, the system automatically faxes them a wide range of information, from product literature and brochures to

feature articles and press releases. In addition, since callers choose the information they want, fax-on-demand systems allow companies to gather specific data for market research.

To see if your organization could benefit by using fax-on-demand, ask yourself the following questions:

- What do customers or the press call the company for most frequently?
- What reports, brochures, or service information would your constituents be interested in?
- Has your company received any press coverage you would like callers to know about?
- Are there any forms that customers or

employees need that could be offered via fax?

- Are there special resource lists that customers would value?

Another advantage to fax technology is the ability to collect data by fax, using software such as Teleform by Windows. Kaiser Permanente's Northern California region has used the technology to grade screening tests for applicants at all its facilities. Southern Pacific Railroad Corporation, on the other hand, uses fax technology to collect basic information from vendors, process it automatically, and send out purchase orders.

From Sarah Stambler, "A Matter of Fax," CIO, January 15, 1994, pp. 78, 82, 84.