CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

Changes in the way we approach **our Human Resources**, including those I have outlined, will be critical to our future. BUT, they **cannot be implemented in isolation from other aspects of how we conduct our business.** The following sections touch on related issues: our relationship with information technology, our management culture, our approach to learning, the way we deploy resources abroad, and the ergonomics of the workplace.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: TOOL OR MASTER?

We must make a commitment to better flows of information between DFAIT and others. We must also establish a more positive approach to information technology within the Department. Doing so is essential to making the culture of the institution more compatible with that of the Nexus generation, which takes free flows of information for granted.

The first thing we must do is to **complete the process of integrating information technology into our working culture.**

We have invested heavily in IT. SIGNET, IMS, WIN and other systems have, at great cost, allowed new ways of managing certain functions. Apart from SIGNET, which everyone uses for e-mail and web-access, most of our **IT systems are either under-exploited, because most of us do not know their full functionality, or are for use of traditional specialized groups only.**

To be fully in tune with the next generation of workers who expect technology to be provided in their working as well as personal lives, and to get returns on our capital, we must move beyond this point. **We should make a corporate commitment to ensuring that all employees use all (relevant) IT resources. Our ideal should be the "AUTONOMOUS EMPLOYEE", a worker who can use IT to perform all functions relevant to both their line responsibilities and their own personal administration. An important consequence of such a change will be that a much larger proportion of our human resources can be devoted to line, rather than support functions.**

To start in this direction, we need to commit to three things:

First, **we must insist on the continuous training of our present workforce, to allow it to exploit the full functionality of IT we now have, and to be receptive to advances that will inevitably come in the market.** Our IT training effort at present seems to me inadequate in this sense, both because of the way it is structured (come if you want, to structured courses) and because we have not articulated and insisted on the priority of training. In the face of constant competing pressures, and, frankly, the lack of example set by senior management, we do not train nearly enough to allow us to capture the benefits of the investment we have made in IT. We don't use it well enough, we don't think enough about how to use it better. IT still belongs to the technologists whom we have not yet integrated sufficiently into our line operations. We must educate ourselves to take possession or we run a real risk of intergenerational conflict between older (and more senior) staff and the generation under 30.

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