

The Heart of Reuters (B)

Lasting Effects?

The heritage of journalism permeates the company. This means we do everything real time. We deliver the news in real time. We react to crises in real time. The company's history helps...being 150 years old...there is a pillar that runs through it...we are going to be here forever...puts a 'deal with it' in our response. This company is a rock that will always be here.

The organizational response of Reuters to the events of September 11 demonstrated the strength inherent in the culture and social architecture of the company. The Reuters people were committed to people, and in a crisis situation they improvised ways to deliver whatever their colleagues and clients required. The organization, at times hierarchic and bureaucratic, became fluid and organic. Reuters showed its pragmatic flexibility, and it showed its heart.

It was obviously not business as usual as Reuters rose to the challenge. In the days and weeks that followed September 11, the organization changed. It remained to be seen how lasting those changes would be.

Some of the changes people mentioned:

It changed the quality of connections between people. One employee reported, “[I] learned to deal with people at another level—to be more trustworthy.” People learned to trust management more, and that it was a two-way street. During a tough time of layoffs, this might help the process. They also learned to trust one another: “When you feel closer to the people you work with, you can work more effectively together. I am now working on a different level with my co-workers.” From another: “We came together in a way—community may not be a strong enough term—it became very alive.”

Employees believed the experience changed relationships between units globally. “In Europe, we got news from people every day, saying, ‘We are thinking about you, and hope everyone you love is ok’. There was this sense of community spirit and caring...It astonished all of us to learn how much people cared from all over the world.”



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