

RESPONSE TO EVENTS ON 9/11

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The events of September 11 affected us directly, and also profoundly influenced our post-9/11 educational and research activities. Our Management of Technology [MOT] and Telecommunications and Information Management [TIM] Executive Master's Programs, as well as our Institute for Technology and Enterprise [ITE], (which is the learning and research hub of Polytechnic's Department of Management), are located at 55 Broad Street in Manhattan-only six blocks away from the World Trade Center site.

Operationally, we immediately had to confront several pressing challenges. We could not physically get to 55 Broad for a week after the event. We also lost Internet connectivity for over three weeks, and therefore had to create an alternate virtual network on-the-fly in order to reach our students. Concluding that we could not conduct "business as usual", we moved classes for our continuing participants to an alternate location in midtown Manhattan. For the entering class of participants, we delayed starting classes until the end of September when we could return to 55 Broad Street.

In terms of 9/11's impact on our curriculum and educational efforts, our Capstone Course, which had focused on emerging innovation and information management issues facing the post-March 2000 world, quickly morphed into a course which focused on the challenges facing corporations in the post-September-11 environment. On our first weekend, adapting quickly, we explored this issue by developing a special session to address these challenges. Thus, we divided up the class into small groups each representing an important industrial player which had been seriously affected by the 9/11 events. These companies included Deloitte and Touche, Merrill Lynch, Dow Jones, Morgan Stanley, and Verizon as well as a fictitious "New York City Planning Commission for the Future" and our own Executive Master's Programs at Polytechnic. This Capstone experience enabled both participants and faculty to put aside, at least for the moment, the enormous human tragedy that had occurred, and begin a dialogue about the implications of 9/11 events on several key NYC sectors (e.g., financial services, media, and professional services, etc). Indeed, for the duration of the semester, the Capstone Course focused on 9/11's impact on technology management.

As a partial outgrowth of the Capstone Course, ITE hosted a Special Round Table that focused on the key factors required for leading and shaping the "post-September-11 Corporation". In order to provide substantive material which could be used at the Round Table as a basis for discussion, members of ITE wrote case studies on Cisco, CNN, and Deutsche Bank as well as a White Paper. Round Table attendees concentrated on a number of fundamental questions in the post-September-11 world including whether there was a changed corporate structure; whether the nature of leadership, decision making, and corporate culture was different; the role technology might play in transforming firms to meet the emerging opportunities and threats; and the essential factors that corporate leaders of firms must now consider to remain competitive. After a plenary session which featured speakers from Cisco, Morgan Stanley, *Upside*

Magazine, the New York Mercantile Exchange, Deloitte and Touche, and Deutsche Bank, attendees participated in breakout “action learning” sessions, each of which focused on a key sector affected by 9/11. Finally, attendees reconvened to summarize what they had learned over the course of the evening.

Our initial conclusions from this ITE Round Table were that many corporations, especially in NYC, would indeed have to rethink how to conduct business in the post-September-11 environment. In essence, one important insight was that “smart firms” in the post-9/11 world face the seemingly contradictory challenges of becoming more efficient and focusing on key markets while also somehow remaining flexible, innovative, and opportunistic. Moreover, there seems to be a demand for increased control as well as decentralization and dispersion. The post-9/11 managerial challenge is to remain effective and to create value in such a complex business setting.