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THE PERCEPTIONS OF VIDEO DEPARTMENT
MANAGERS IN CORPORATE AND
EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTION FACILITIES: A CASE STUDY

by
Eric L. Gasteiger

An Abstract

of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Science
in the School of Communications at
Ithaca College

September 1992

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Steve Seidman

Abstract

A general premise about the health of corporate internal video departments was developed by the researcher. The belief was that internal video departments were not satisfying the needs of their corporate clients. The evidence came from conversations with corporate clients that were unhappy with the level of service available to them in-house. Reasons given during these conversations for this dissatisfaction with in-house facilities were the absence of proper production equipment and expertise.

This study was designed to explore the dynamics involved in the production of in-house corporate videotapes. Questions concerning the production needs of internal clients and the capabilities of the corporate video department were investigated by use of the observation and interview approach found in case study research. Nine corporate/educational video department managers were interviewed to determine their impressions and departmental capabilities for serving the internal client.

The results indicated that there was a mix of services blending outside vendors with the internal video departments. In spite of corporate politics, internal video facilities appeared to be healthy and busy. The department managers stated that they do meet the clients needs, often by hiring outside services to supplement a missing technology or expertise.

It was interesting that video department managers differentiated between “home-office” corporate video departments and divisional video departments. This author recommends that further research is needed to determine if this distinction is significant, and if so, how it influences the internal client during the production of corporate video communications.

THE PERCEPTIONS OF VIDEO DEPARTMENT
MANAGERS IN CORPORATE AND
EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTION FACILITIES: A CASE STUDY

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of the School of Communications
Ithaca College

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
Eric L. Gasteiger
September 1992

Ithaca College
School of Communications
Ithaca, New York

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER OF SCIENCE THESIS

This is to certify that the Thesis of

Eric L. Gasteiger

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in the School of
Communications at Ithaca College

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Dean of
Graduate Studies:

Date:

1
January 29, 1993

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Eleven years ago upon graduation from undergraduate school with a degree in film and television production, my father asked one of my professors, "Now that he has it, what is he going to do with it?" Upon completion of this body of work, I am sure he'll ask the same type of question...so this is for my father.

I also need to acknowledge my mother for her encouragement to stick with it, and my wife for her belief in me - without either, this work would still not be completed.

Official and personal "thank yous" go to Diane Gayeski for starting me on this journey and Steve Seidman for helping me finish. Also I want to acknowledge the helpful contributions of Les Moller who rounded out my graduate committee. Very special thanks are due the video equipment vendors - Bill Powers from Video Sound and Will Rieckenberg, formerly of Univisions. The information and advice provided by these two individuals was invaluable. "Thank yous" also to all the individual corporate and educational video departments that took part in this study.

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E.L.G.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In corporate (including educational) video production there exist two easily identified producers of videotaped materials. Located within a corporation may be a video department; this department is responsible for the creation and production of video programs utilized by different departments or clients throughout the corporation. External to these organizations exists a network of independent video producers, freelancers, production houses, and consultants that vie for the corporation's video production business. These two entities, the internal video department and the external independents, often work in tandem to develop videotaped programming. Generally, the external independent is hired by the corporate video department to assist in the development and production of video programming.

Occasional problems develop when video departments find themselves competing for, or excluded from, the development and production of videos. This occurs when independent producers are hired by individuals within the corporations who have decided to seek outside services rather than to utilize the internal facility.

Through descriptive research, using the case study observation and interview approach, this researcher explored the experiences and

production capabilities of nine internal corporate/educational video production departments in upstate New York. The researcher expected to gain a broader understanding of how corporate video departments operated and survived, what services they offered, how external video production resources were utilized, and what effect external services had on the in-house facility.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the video department managers' perceptions of the corporate video business. This research was a case study of the corporate video department's capabilities with an emphasis on the managers' awareness of the environment in which they work, and on their practices in seeking outside services for help.

Research Goals

By analyzing the data collected during the study, this researcher sought to give a useful profile of several corporate video departments in upstate New York. Insight was gained about the corporate video production service level, equipment expenditures and needs, competition for internal business, background on the departments and the managers, and how external factors may have influenced these departments.

Descriptive research allows a researcher to “assess and describe certain characteristics of a particular situation at one or more points in time” (Hayman, 1968, p. 57). The data collected during descriptive research are of a qualitative nature; they describe the elements or ingredients of which the object of study is composed. These characteristics, or findings from this case study were evaluated while accounting for variations and personal biases found within the research. They were then compared and contrasted to what has been reported in the literature. The limitations of descriptive research in general, and of this study in particular, were presented. The findings were summarized and discussed. Finally, recommendations for further research based on the discussion were presented.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A review of the literature was conducted to explore empirical research that provided insight into the workings of the corporate video department. Also explored were books and articles containing individual opinions and expressions of personal experiences regarding the corporate video industry. These are valuable as they provide a guidepost for the trends and issues of the industry.

This review encompassed a broad range of fields and disciplines: communications, training, instructional technology, the television industry, business, hotel management, education, and human resource development. Included in this review was the literature on descriptive research, the study of which provided factors this researcher utilized during the course of this case study.

L. H. Berry (1984) combed the current literature on media research in business and industry and found very few references to empirical research. Present day publications describe projects of an applied nature in more of a "how to do it" format. He noted that the lack of empirical research may be related to the notion that "industrial involvement is oriented toward hardware and production" (p. 25).

The Video Department

Today, the use of video communications has proliferated throughout the corporate world. Among the more widely used applications for this communication technology are employee orientation and awareness programs, sales and marketing support, classroom and field training, and corporate news or video magazines that help define the corporate culture (Werther, 1988). Other uses for corporate video include: product demonstrations, management communications and development, community relations, point-of-sales support, and communications concerning safety and health (Brush & Brush, 1988).

One of the reasons video technology may be so widely utilized, and therefore accepted, is the view that many of the messages that have been communicated in more traditional formats are clearer and more memorable when in video (Mclaughlin, 1988). Another benefit in the use of video technology is its inherent ability to deliver a message consistently and unvaried to many people. The ease of videotape duplication and the ability to view a tape at one's convenience helps make video technology a powerful communication tool.

If fact, these benefits, including the belief that video somehow enhances the communication process, has translated into a billion dollar a year industry. Pondok (1988) found that 80% of all organizations in the United States with 50 or more employees used video for communication.

According to an annual survey in 1991 by the editors of Training magazine, 90% of all responding corporations used video communications. Bove (1986) reported that approximately 2.3 billion dollars were spent by corporations on video production. He expected that by 1990 the expenditure would exceed 7 billion dollars. McLaughlin (1988) believed that the new developments in video technology had changed the way business used video. He pointed out that in Boston alone, the corporate use of video had spawned a 50 million dollar a year industry.

In an attempt to contain video production costs and more closely control the production process, many corporations have developed in-house video departments. Marlow (1981) determined a 1:2 ratio in cost savings when working in-house. He further concluded from his own experience that by having the people and equipment in-house to manage production, a 25% to 50% savings may be realized as compared to hiring complete outside production services.

Brush and Brush (1986) described some benefits a corporation may realize by operating an in-house video production facility. These benefits included faster turnaround of video projects, protection of corporate secrets or confidentiality, and the added convenience of having services nearby. However the Brushes questioned any cost/control issues, stating that video producers should have control of projects no matter where they work, and that cost can be measured in many different ways.

The Brushes' position about how cost is measured brought an interesting slant to one of the issues concerning the benefits of internal video production facilities. Production equipment and materials cost the same to a corporate video facility as they do to the outside production house. Consequently, how does a corporate video department realize any significant savings over outside services?

Marlow (1981) believed that the proper hiring and utilization of production staff is where the cost benefit is realized in corporate video production. Citing a video department manager's experiences, Kreuzer (1987) found that by keeping the production staff busy, personnel costs are generally lower than when hiring outsiders on a per diem basis. Chip Dreamer, manager of Idaho Video, stressed, "Anyone who thinks they can get the same number of programs for the same money done outside as they can from a well managed inside facility is wrong. The same programs I produce for a \$300,000 operating budget in a corporation would run about \$750,000 done completely outside. Going outside for the same work will be more expensive" (Carlberg, 1988, p. 29).

How the video department is managed by the corporation is an important issue discussed in the literature. In these recessionary times "few corporations can afford to buy all the equipment necessary to do everything in the production process" (Carlberg, 1988, p. 29). Werther (1988) explained how a video department might handle a client's project, "Like the varied models used among corporate legal departments, some

video departments oversee the work of outside firms, serving primarily as managers of external specialists: others handle the bulk of the work, farming out peak demands to vendors or the unusual to specialists; but few try to be totally self-contained” (p.5). Kreuzer (1987) provided a slightly different view, “Most corporate facilities bill themselves as turnkey operations where a client can buy anything from communications consulting and scripting, through production, post-production and distribution” (p. 35).

Regardless of how a video project is handled by the video department, many individuals with various skills can be called upon to complete a production team. Marlow (1981) referred to the different people that make up a production team as “software”, “hardware”, and “administrative” personnel (p. 58). Software personnel, according to Marlow, are those persons responsible for the design and writing of scripts, directors and producers, videographers, set designers and lighting directors, off-line editors and production assistants; in general, software personnel are the creative force behind a video production. Hardware personnel are the engineers and technicians that maintain the video production equipment. The administrative personnel are responsible for the business of video production: the managers, secretarial and accounting staff.

Hardware and software personnel offering services for video production are not restricted to in-house facilities; very often due to the size of these facilities, corporations must supplement their production staff with outside resources.

Although there is no ideal number of video production positions that a corporate video department should maintain. Brush and Brush (1988) reported that the average number of employees commonly found in these departments was less than four. They added that “There is so much talent available through freelancers and video production services that it no longer is a wise investment to carry the heavy burden of staff specialists (p. 26).

Due to the ongoing recession, external video production services are even rethinking their staffing requirements. Jay Ankeney (1992) in TV Technology wrote, “More and more, production companies are divesting themselves of staff personnel and capital-intensive permanent equipment purchases...”. He explained that video production companies are now becoming staffed solely by a sales/management team: “It’s the trend of the '90s, where cutting overhead means boosting the bottom line” (p. 16).

In his textbook Managing the Corporate Media Center, Marlow (1981) recommended using outside services to supplement the in-house capabilities of the production staff. He stated that outside resources are indispensable because they provide many options unavailable in-house.

This position is shared by Carlberg (1991). He asserted that internal facilities cannot afford to specialize because specialization is inefficient; it reduces flexibility, and costs more. Therefore, internal video departments are limited by their simpler capabilities.

Ingrisano (1985) expressed the limitations of an in-house facility in this way: "If you have in-house facilities, you are both cursed and blessed. The curse is that you have no choice in facilities: good, bad or so-so, you must go with what you have" (p. 43). Achieving a working balance between the internal facility and outside resources should be a video department managers priority. Marlow (1981) wrote:

The trick of using outside resources effectively is matching the right kind of external resource at the right time for the right project at the right price, together with internal resources.

He continued,

The combination of the two resources - internal and external - should at one and the same time provide the organization with cost-effective media production services (p. 124).

In 1981, Vaughan surveyed 113 companies in order to study the levels of activity in development, production, and utilization of audiovisual materials. Vaughan found that "seventy-one percent of the

companies obtained the greater portion of their audiovisual materials from in-house divisions or departments; only twenty-nine percent contract out most of this work" (p. 24).

Since the early 1970's, Brush and Brush have tracked a steady increase of out-of-house production resources that are utilized by corporations. They reported in 1973 that 93% of the respondents produced all or most of their video programs in-house. According to their 1986 report, only 31% of their respondents stated they made no use of outside resources (Brush & Brush, 1986).

The types of production equipment available from in-house facilities may be related to why outside resources were being utilized. If the video technology was not available in-house, outside resources had to be found. In his survey of corporate audiovisual facilities, Vaughan (1981) determined that,

Where video is used, the VHS format (1/2" cassette) is preferred almost two to one over the beta format. Most original production is done on traditional 2" quad (where equipment already exists), 1" helical or 3/4" cassette, with duplication down-dubbed to 1/2" cassette for distribution and utilization (p. 26).

Although the video equipment used in 1981, determined by Vaughan's study, is now outdated (2" quad is considered antiquated and obsolete), these were relevant findings as they pointed to the kinds of production equipment that may have been lacking in-house. Any outside vendor of production resources would have had to possess this kind of equipment in order to offer services for hire.

Brush and Brush (1986) reported that 87% of the surveyed corporate video departments owned ENG cameras. In addition, they found that 44% of the respondents said they also owned studio cameras. ENG or electronic-news-gathering cameras are lightweight and therefore highly mobile, allowing the operator to freely move from location to location. A studio camera is generally larger and bulkier than an ENG camera, and it requires heavier support which restricts its mobility.

For video post-production, the Brushes reported that 89% of the corporate facilities that responded said they had some post equipment in-house. Sixty-five percent reported they owned off-line units, while 70% claimed they owned on-line editing technology. For distribution of video programs, it was found that 70% owned duplicating equipment (Brush & Brush, 1986).

A relatively new technology is that of computer animation and computer graphics for video. It was found in 1988 that 29% of the video departments had computer graphic technology in-house, while 90% of

those surveyed made use of this technology. Computer animation was not surveyed (Brush & Brush, 1988).

Because a particular video technology frequently has a useful life of only a few years due to technological advances, information on the kinds of equipment an internal production facility owns is most useful. Matching the production demands with the capabilities of staff and equipment are imperative when hiring outside resources.

In the Brushes' update of 1988, they ranked the video production services that their respondents sought outside of the internal video department. Leading the list was post-production services (72.1% used outside sources). This was followed by videotape duplication (70.9%), pre-production (66.3%), shooting (60.5%), and finally off-line editing (23.4%). They also reported that of the video departments they surveyed "two-thirds of the respondents said their use of such services (outside) has increased over the last two years, while only seven percent experienced a decrease" (p. 13).

In agreement with the Brushes, Gayeski later (1989) observed that there had "been a sharp decline in in-house production and a corresponding rise in the use of out-of-house vendors and consultants" (p. 1). Gayeski presented several factors that she found were related to this shift from internal production to external resources. These included: cost

savings by using freelancers, the rapid change of media techniques and technologies, and the impossibility of in-house departments to afford new technologies and the technicians with the skills needed to run them.

There were many articles that touted the benefits of outside services, while others bemoaned them. Carlberg (1988) wrote that it was difficult to summarize the good and the bad points of staying in-house or using out-of-house services.

This is where I've seen so much controversy about inside versus outside services. One camp says the lack of in-house salaries, benefits, overhead and hardware makes outside services the only choice. The other camp says an in-house video service is more accessible, negates the use of expensive contract service and doesn't put you at the mercy of other people's schedules (Carlberg, 1988, pp. 29-30).

Marlow (1981) presented another tactic by recommending a media department should utilize outside resources as often as possible. He gave several reasons this could prove to be advantageous:

When the organization has no in-house creative or technical media production talent. When the volume of work is not sufficiently high to warrant the hiring of in-house creative or technical media production talent. When the in-house staff is

not as up-to-date or professional. When the volume of work is so high the in-house staff cannot handle that work, when in-house scheduling conflicts necessitate the use of freelancers (p. 126).

Because no definitive references were found to empirical research that verified the benefits organizations gained by using outside resources in video production, this researcher looked into studies from other disciplines. In the field of parks and recreation, it has been found that by contracting-out for services, a reduction in costs while improving the level and/or quality of service could be realized (Rusten, 1985; Cryder, 1985). It was also noted that contracting-out can resolve managerial and related problems without “adversely affecting costs and service levels and quality” (Rusten, 1985, p. 32).

Cryder (1985), documented savings by contracting out the care and maintenance of facilities. He pointed to many areas of possible financial savings: the personnel staffing becoming the responsibility of the contractor, thereby freeing the facility from the obligations of payroll and benefit packages; the purchase and inventory of supplies and equipment; and repair and replacement of equipment. It is just as reasonable to assume the same benefits can be realized when hiring outside production services in the video industry.

In agreement with Cryder's experiences, Werther (1988) discussed the advantages of corporate video departments contracting out. "Advantages include no ongoing overhead and personnel costs...vendors may bring unique sub-specialties or equipment that would be too costly to include in a corporate budget." (p. 5). He then discussed the combining of the outside vendor with internal facilities, "The supplemental use of vendors allows the in-house operation to be staffed for the normal flow of work, with the vendors absorbing special projects or helping with peak demands" (p. 5).

Carlberg (1988) observed a perceptual difficulty that video managers need to consider before hiring outside services. Often outside services are viewed as a threat by production staff. He felt this notion should be put to rest at the onset; outside services should not be viewed as competition for the staff's jobs. He stated that "The outside service is hired to help you, not intimidate you" (p. 29). Also outside sources are not necessarily "experts" since their levels of professionalism and experience vary; therefore they should be carefully selected and screened (Marlow, 1981).

There are four categories or descriptions of outside services. These include the consultants, production facilities, production houses, and the all encompassing freelancers (Marlow, 1981). These distinctions are all interchangeable, depending on the depth of services that a particular production demands. In retrospect, corporate video departments most

likely make use of external production facilities, freelancers, and production houses more often than consultants. The term consultant can be used for a variety of professional relationships. "Principally, it is a two-way process of seeking, giving, and receiving help," according to Bell and Nadler (1979, p. 1). In practice, consultants tend to restrict their services to upper management concerns (Bell & Nadler, 1979).

Where the video department is located in the corporate structure can greatly influence the effectiveness and impact of video communications. The incorrect placement of the video department may also limit whom within the corporation this production facility serves. Marlow (1981) asserted that the media department should be located where it can provide effective and efficient production services to the entire organization.

For example, if a video group operates under the aegis of a training department...it is likely that video will be perceived only as a training tool. Similarly, if the video operation is situated in an employee communications department, the likelihood is that video is perceived primarily as an employee communications tool....

Therefore, it makes sense for the media center to be positioned in the organizational structure in such a way that it will not only be

perceived as an organization-wide resource, but will also be accessible to everyone in the organization (Marlow, 1981, p. 46).

Brush and Brush (1988) disclosed in the update of their industrial report (The Fourth Brush Report: Update '88) that they did not specifically determine which corporate department, if any, oversaw the administrative responsibilities of the video department. However, they did find a shift from 1986 when 45% of those video departments surveyed reported to the communications department. In 1988, there was a 16% gain for communication departments in the control of administrative responsibilities of video departments. In contrast to Marlow, the Brushes believed, due to the benefit of being closer to where most communications originate, that it is reasonable to place the video facility under the communication department's control.

One of the more pressing issues discussed in the literature on corporate video departments is cost recovery. Due to the recession, downsizing, corporate takeovers, and mergers, corporate spending is being closely watched. The impact of these forces translates to more internal cost recovery practices by service oriented organizations found in corporations.

Brush and Brush (1988) outlined four possible corporate cost recovery strategies that may be imposed on video departments. These include: (1) full charge-back where a client pays for all production costs

and materials. This results in the shifting of corporate dollars from one ledger to another. (2) Becoming a profit center, which serves not only in-house but possibly out-of-house clients. The product of these departments is no longer only service; they are in business to produce and sell videotapes. (3) Total divestment which involves the disbanding of the production facilities. (4) Cutbacks in staff; requiring the video department to do more with less.

It is obvious that when the bottom line in business is profit, the survival of the video department will be tied to many economic factors.

Descriptive Research

A literature review was also conducted on descriptive research with the expectation of finding advantages and disadvantages in the use of the case study approach. It was also hoped that the literature would contain guidelines the researcher should follow while conducting descriptive research.

As in many forms of research, descriptive research begins with a formation of theory - an inquisition and exploration of the unknown. Theory building originates with the securing of information that is related to the area of interest. Hayman (1968) outlined this process as the use of direct observation in a real life or experimental setting. The process begins with a researcher defining the area of interest. Then through reading of related materials the researcher is lead to the derivation of assumptions or postulates. Hayman defined postulates as “the statement of the principle assumed, in the lack of direct evidence, to underlie some type or instance of behavior” (p. 11).

Research is cyclical in form. It starts with a question which leads to the formation of theory. Through inductive reasoning this theory is modified. New predictions are made, and then tested, leading once again to the modification of theory. In this way researchers begin to gain an understanding of the subject of their inquiries (Hayman, 1968).

Descriptive studies “typically employ either survey or observational research methods. Their purpose is to collect information that is used to describe the characteristics of persons or an educational process or an institution” (Borg & Gall, 1979, p. 38).

Adams and Schvaneveldt (1985), defined descriptive research as an accurate portrayal or profile of persons, events, or objects. The processes of descriptive research involve “more than merely gathering data and analysis. They involve interpretations, contrast, classification and integration of findings” (p. 107).

Good (1972), as cited by Adams and Schvaneveldt (1985), helped to clarify the purposes of descriptive research. He stated that:

this type of research seeks to acquire evidence concerning a situation or population, it identifies norms or baseline information which can be used for comparative purposes, and finally, it serves to determine how and if one is to move to another type of research (p. 107).

Unlike other forms of scientific research, the purpose of descriptive research is not to predict, but to describe.

There are many forms of descriptive research: content analysis, historical, and survey, to mention a few used in the social sciences as

research tools. Among the various forms of research are a variety of ways to obtain data, and many different methods of data collection exist within these research designs. One kind of descriptive research is the case study. Yin (1984) defined a case study as:

an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (p. 23).

Giving a humanistic twist to this definition, Hillway (1969) defined the process of case study research and what might be expected from the results:

The case study method entails the intensive study of a single individual, several individuals, or a group at one particular point of time or over a period of time. It uncovers in detail what is true about an individual or group that may bear upon some phase of human behavior. Like those achieved in the typical survey - its results or conclusions are not so much prescriptive as descriptive (p. 45).

The case study approach is not without its limitations or its detractors:

Investigators who do case studies are regarded as having deviated from their academic disciplines; their investigations, as having insufficient precision (that is, quantification), objectivity, and rigor.

In spite of this stereotype, case studies continue to be used extensively in social science research.... Moreover, case studies occur with some frequency even in evaluation research, supposedly the province of other methods, such as quasi-experiments. All of this suggests a striking paradox: if the case study method has serious weaknesses, why do investigators continue to use it? (Yin, 1984, p. 10).

A major characteristic of a case study is it allows the investigation of fewer subjects with many variables, in greater depth (Ratcliff, 1989). Because of this attribute, case studies tend to focus on a single or limited number of individuals. One of the criticisms of case research is the ease at which researchers can generalize findings to whole or larger populations. To reduce this danger, the objective is for the researcher to remain selective during data collection and analysis, focusing on some events and facts while only briefly mentioning others (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1985).

Another weakness in case research is bias. Bias can effect any form of research simply because the investigator is interested in obtaining evidence to support his or her particular view rather than discover the truth. A case researcher should be protected from this form of bias; as by definition, the researcher is not out to prove what is there, but rather to see what is there. Still, researcher bias must be guarded against.

Other forms of bias exist that can negatively influence a study. These involve the participant or sample, and the data collection methodology. In an attempt to guard against sampling bias, randomization is typically used during the selection process. However, as Borg and Gall (1979) pointed out random sampling is rarely achieved. Fortunately, randomization of samples is not a requirement of the case study. "Samples may be scientific or unscientific, random or haphazard, based on probability or non probability techniques" (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1985, p. 180).

Yin (1984), recommended that during a case study two forms of data collection be used. He believed that corroboration of the data, by utilizing separate collection techniques, helps to prevent participant and researcher bias.

There are four kinds of data collection techniques available to the case study researcher: (1) simple observation, (2) survey, (3) analysis, and (4) interview (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1985). Each of these techniques

have various styles. As an example, Dian Fossey and her study of mountain gorillas is an example of the simple observation technique used in field research. This is where the researcher is located in an “intimate relationship with his subjects” (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1985, p. 235). If before going into the field, Fossey had decided to study only one trait of the gorilla’s behavior, she would have used the nonstructured field observation methodology.

The survey has two techniques used commonly during data collection. These are the cross-sectional survey, which focuses on the make-up of the sample at one point in time, and the longitudinal approach, which studies sample over a period of time (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1985).

Analysis most often takes the form of content-analysis studies and will not be discussed in this presentation.

The interview can take several forms when used for data collection in case research. “Most commonly, case study interviews are of an open-ended nature, in which an investigator can ask key respondents for the facts of a matter as well as for the respondents’ opinions about events” (Yin, 1984, p. 83). A second type of interview is the focused interview,

...in which a respondent is interviewed for a short period of time - an hour, for example. In such cases, the interviews may still

remain open-ended and assume a conversational manner, but the interviewer is more likely to be following a certain set of questions (Yin, 1984, p. 83).

Once the field work of a case study is complete, the collected data must be gathered together and subjected to analysis. Yin (1984) stressed that “the ultimate goal (of the researcher) is to treat the evidence fairly, to produce compelling analytic conclusions, and to rule out alternative interpretations” (p. 100).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

As presented in the introduction, this case study utilized the observation and interview approach to data collection. Yin (1984) suggested that more viable findings result when two data gathering techniques are used. This dual approach provides for the verification and corroboration of data collected by the researcher. By making a field visit, this investigator created the opportunity for direct observation of the subject and his or her work environment as well as obtaining his or her response to specific questions (see Appendix A).

Adams and Schvaneveldt (1985) noted that observation is used to watch, listen, and read the people and situations involved in the study. By briefly noting characteristics of the case study site, the personality and manner of the participant, and visually inspecting the location, the researcher can mentally gauge the validity of the data that are collected by other techniques.

One weakness of observational data collection is the experience of the researcher. This researcher bias must be guarded against. By recording only what is seen and heard during the field visit, researcher bias can be reduced. Interpretation of what was observed should not be a factor until the analysis of data (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1985).

Yin (1984) asserted that, “The demands of a case study on a person’s intellect, ego, and emotions are far greater than those of any other research strategy. This is because the data collection procedures are not routinized” (p. 56). He also outlined the skills he felt were necessary for good case research. These involve the ability of the researcher to ask good questions, to be a good listener, and to be adaptive and flexible. The researcher should have a firm grasp of the issues being studied and be unbiased by preconceived notions.

Schatzman and Strauss (1973) as cited by Adams and Schvaneveldt (1985), stated that during field research the researcher,

Concerns himself less with whether his techniques are ‘scientific’ than with what specific operations might yield the most meaningful information. He already assumes his own honesty, rationality, and scientific attitudes; therefore, he is not ready to concede in advance the superiority of certain types of ‘instrumentation’ over his own abilities to see and to make sense of what he sees (p. 121).

The use of the interview for data collection was the “specific operation” selected by the researcher to aid in this case study’s exploration of the video departments.

Adams and Schvaneveldt (1985) noted there are at least seven major advantages to using the interview as a research method: (1) Increased cooperation leads to more accurate responses, (2) instant feedback for the respondent as well as the interviewer, (3) quality of data is likely to be greater due to the personal nature of the method, (4) observation of the respondents concerning body language, mood (may serve as a cue for the interviewer to refocus or clarify a question), (5) face to face contact controls the motivation to participate, (6) people enjoy talking, (7) sensitive and emotional topics can be explored once trust is established.

Maureen Kelly in a paper presented at the meeting of the American Vocational Association (1985) found “the ‘street knowledge’ of the professional researcher turned out to be a considerable advantage...with such background, the interviewer can openly adapt to the respondent” (p. 3).

Rutherford (1978) established that the personal interview provides in advance the opportunity for the researcher to control the types of information collected. He also maintained that the interview is a very personal research technique, implying that research is usually impersonal.

Borg and Gall (1979) discussed the disadvantage of the interview process:

The very adaptability gained by the interpersonal situation leads to subjectivity and possible bias. The interactions between the respondent to please the interviewer, a vague antagonism that sometimes arises between interviewer and respondent, or the tendency of the interviewer to seek out answers that support his preconceived notions...(all may lead to biasing the data) (p. 113).

Other disadvantages to using personal interviewing as a research tool tend to involve the interviewer rather than the process. Some of the major pitfalls are: gaining the trust of the subject (Freeman, 1976), first impressions of the interviewer by the subject (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1985), interviewer anticipation of a response, inexperience in the interviewer, and probing too far — due to the open endedness of the interview process (Kelly, 1985).

These disadvantages can be controlled to some extent by the researcher. By remaining focused and following a set of guide questions, the interviewer can control the direction and type of information presented by the subject. Hayman (1968) revealed, “The main problems with the interview are time, cost, difficulty in analyzing responses, and subjectivity.” He continued, “Much of the depth information obtained can

not be easily translated into quantitative form and tends to be highly subjective” (p. 67).

Too much information may not seem like a disadvantage at the time of the interview, but while compiling the data, the process of separating the useful information from the nonessential data could be a detriment to the research (Freeman, 1976).

The literature provided some guidelines as to the structuring of interview questions and the types of interviews available to the researcher. This case research made use of the focused interview structure described by Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, in 1956, cited by Adams and Schvaneveldt (1985). In a focused interview, the researcher comes to the interview with goals in mind, they are informed and knowledgeable about the interview focus. “This enables the interviewer to guide, direct, and interpret the process... to focus research attention on the background and experience of the respondent as related to the purpose of the study” (Adams and Schvaneveldt, 1985, p. 216).

Yin (1984) asserted that the interview questions should only be a reminder to the investigator regarding the information that needs to be collected. Other useful guidelines in the literature came as tips or advice on how to structure and conduct the interview. Kelly (1985) and Adams and Schvaneveldt (1985) each provided pointers and possible pit-falls to

consider while preparing and conducting a research interview. Some of the key points were: plan the interview to meet specific objectives, use open-ended questions to encourage free response, organize questions in a conversational structure, and be aware of the time spent with the subject of the interview.

Because the telephone could be used as a medium of data collection, a literature review was conducted to see if this methodology had any advantage over the face-to-face interview. The indications were that there was no significant difference between the use of the telephone and the face-to-face interview in the quality of data obtained (Aneshensel, Frerichsl, Clark, & Yokopenic, 1982; Klecka & Tuchfarber, 1978).

The question must be asked why bother with on-site interviews? Why not just use the telephone? Borg and Gall (1979) noted that “the obvious disadvantages of the telephone interview are that relatively few questions can be asked, questions are not usually answered in depth, certain groups of respondents can not be reached easily by phone” (p. 285).

There is another difference between the two processes. As outlined by Yin (1984), on-site visits permit observational data collection. Observation can enhance the researchers experiences. It is part of the educational process, and involves personal growth. “It afforded me simultaneous contact with the process and products of the professional.... I became acquainted with a wide range of professional activity.” (Kelly, 1985, p. 4).

Identification of Sample

Potential subjects from corporations likely to employ video production specialists were identified through personal interviews with video equipment salesmen doing business in upstate New York. Video equipment salesmen were found to be one of the best sources of information on “who is doing what” in video production. They are in business to sell the various components needed for video production, and should have a feeling for the “pulse of this industry”.

Two video equipment supply companies were asked if they would be willing to become involved with this study. Each showed great interest and were most helpful to the researcher. Whether this interest was due to previously established relationships this researcher had with these companies, or the findings of this study would interest them, is unknown. A personal interview was conducted with the top salesman from each company and they kindly identified corporations and businesses in the upstate area that operated in-house video production facilities.

This research made use of purposeful sampling, defined as “a procedure for building a sample based on cases...judged as being appropriate or very informative for the purpose of the research” (Adams and Schvaneveldt, 1985, p. 180).

During the interviews with the video equipment salesmen, 14 video department managers from varied corporations and educational facilities located in upstate New York were identified. These video production facilities were selected by the equipment vendors for a variety of reasons. Considerable effort was made to select subjects who had firsthand knowledge and experience in the design, production and use of video technology. The varied industries were selected in an attempt to provide a representative cross-sectional sample of the various levels of video production capabilities found in corporations and business in upstate New York. Educational video facilities were included because it was felt that these facilities operated in the same manner as a corporate facility. It was further argued that educational institutions are in business, not manufacturing products, but educating students. It was evident that educational institutions are a major component of the industrial make-up found in this region of New York State. These salesmen also attempted to identify individuals who they believed would be cooperative in this research. The individuals identified were always the video manager rather than persons who worked below this level.

One of the incentives for participation in this study that was offered to the video managers was a report of the findings. The evaluation and consequent presentation of the findings could enable an interested party to make informed decisions as to their video department's use and direction. Examples include: equipment purchases, personnel hiring, production and post-production needs.

There is a natural tendency of potential subjects to not participate in any study because of the fear that confidentiality will not be protected. It was, and is, the intent of this researcher to protect the identity of the participating persons and corporations. Identities will not be revealed in any summation or presentation of the findings, nor will the responses be shared with other individuals participating in this study until after the data has been compiled.

This practice of protecting confidentiality is in accordance with the Executive Office of the President (1967), Each subject be given the opportunity to actively decide if he chooses to participate or not participate in any given study, both in terms of compiled files of information for a data center or behaviorally in an experimental task; and if he gives explicit consent, to be assured that all communication is treated as 'privileged' and 'confidential' (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1985, p. 29).

It is understood that outside vendors of services could play a major role in the corporation's actions; however, it is assumed the vendors do not determine when and why they are used. Therefore this study explored the vendor/corporate relationship from the corporation's point of view.

The Questionnaire and Gathering of Data

A questionnaire to structure the face-to-face interviews was developed. This guide, consisting of 20 questions, enabled the investigator to explore systematically the use of the corporate video department for videotape development and production. These questions are presented in Appendix A.

An initial telephone call from the lists provided by the video equipment vendors was made to contact potential corporate participants. The video department managers were introduced to the idea of this research and the amount of time the face-to-face interview would entail. When an individual was identified as an appropriate subject, an appointment for the interview was arranged. The amount of time requested for an interview was 45 minutes. This was considered enough time to complete the interview and not interfere extensively with the video manager's schedule.

Subjects were once again informed that their replies were confidential, and that their names or the corporations' names would not be included in the reporting of this study. A further promise of presenting the participant with a copy of the final data analysis was also made.

On the day of the scheduled interview, the researcher drove to the video department site and met with the manager. The interview

consisted of some basic introductory information and questions.

Introductory exchanges, although not structured were used for getting acquainted. Following the advice of both Kelly (1985) and Adams and Schvaneveldt (1985), warming up a respondent helps set the mood and tone of the interview process. This exchange also allowed the researcher to make use of observational data collection, noting the personality and manner of the manager, and the environment in which he or she worked.

After the initial information was presented, and any concerns of the respondent addressed, the focused interview was conducted. The focused interview permitted the use of both specific questions exploring one subject area, and open-ended questions allowing the respondent to combine many different thoughts during responses. This data collection methodology allowed flexibility and depth in data gathering, and ensured that the interviewer addressed the dynamics of the video production department during videotape development. Non-scripted follow-up questions were used for clarification and in-depth probing of responses.

Both handwritten notes and audiocassettes were used to record observational and interview data. The use of the audiocassette recorder eased the burden on the researcher to record accurately what was actually said. However, during the data analysis, these audiotape recordings were transcribed. To obtain useful data from the audiocassette transcriptions, the information was reduced and paraphrased.

Data Analysis

Schatzman and Strauss (1973), as cited by Adams and Schvaneveldt (1985), stated that “the most fundamental operation in the analysis of qualitative data is that of discovering significant classes of things, persons and events and the properties which characterize them” (p.124).

The data compiled from the interviews of this study were collected within the individual question. The responses were then grouped by subject matter and analyzed. The observational data were compared to this compilation of oral information in an attempt to provide validity to the statements given by respondents. In this study there was no attempt to determine a deviation from a norm or ideal. What may be considered the “ideal” video department in one form of industry might not meet the expectations from clients in another.

Instead, the data were compiled, compared, and contrasted for possible similarity, discrepancies, trends and tendencies. Percentages were used for the presentation of facts and figures, and background information was included in the presentation of the data analysis.

Yin (1984), provided two tests that can be applied to qualitative data such as the type collected during this case study. These are external

validity, and the reliability test. External validity concerns the generalization of the findings beyond the immediate case. It implies that through analytical generalization the results may be applied to similar individuals in the population. The reliability test involves the ability of a case study to be repeated on the same case, and by following the same procedures, another investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusions (accounting for differences in time).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In the course of this study, 14 corporations and businesses in the upstate area of New York State were identified that produce and use videotapes. These organizations were selected on the recommendation of two separate vendors of video production equipment and technology. The organizations identified matched the selection criteria outlined in the chapter on methodology.

Both equipment vendors recommended the Binghamton area of upstate New York as having the greatest diversity of industry. Video production facilities were identified in the following types of organizations: aerospace, computer technology, heavy equipment manufacturing, public utilities, and educational institutions. This represented a broad sweep of the types of industry found in upstate New York. All of these video production facilities were found in divisions or satellites of a parent corporation or university.

Of the 14 organizations recommended for study, nine of these agreed to participate, resulting in a 64% participation rate.

Two of the selected 14 video departments could not be included in the study due to their unresponsiveness to efforts to contact them. Numerous

telephone calls were placed directly to these video departments (telephone number provided by the equipment vendors) but these calls went unanswered. The central switchboard at one location suggested the video manager was on vacation; the other switchboard routed the calls through with no answer. Of the three remaining non-participants, one of the selected corporation's training and video department manager scheduled a meeting, then failed, due to sickness, to keep the appointment. An attempt to reschedule was then "inconvenient." The final two showed interest in the study, but stated that it was the busiest time of year and therefore declined.

The number of employees found in the video departments ran from an astonishing zero to a high of twelve. The video department that had zero employees consisted only of equipment, the corporation subcontracted with a freelance video company to manage this department. The majority of video departments were run by one individual. All the video department managers could be classified as video generalists, having experience in all phases of preproduction, production, and post-production.

The background of these managers was just as varied as the industries, with the majority (3), having some form of commercial television experience. Two of the managers came from training backgrounds, one by way of an internal promotion from the company's manufacturing floor, another manager came from sales experience, and one had an educational background. The most interesting situation involved the ninth manager. He was not an employee of the corporation. This corporation's video department

actually had no employees; instead, this manager was retained as a managing consultant where approximately 80% of his work week was spent operating the corporate video department. The other 20% was time he was allowed to use the production facilities for his own business.

Response Analysis

The following presentation is the analysis of the responses given by the video managers during the interviews. The questions will be presented, then the related data will be discussed.

Question one: “What kinds of projects are produced by your video department?”

From the responses to this question, seven different major categories for videotaped projects originating in the corporate video department were identified. These seven categories consisted of video used for: training, corporate communications, sales and product support, archival, design review, community relations, and video conferencing.

Training

All participating corporations stated they used video for the training of personnel, and although there was a difference in the sophistication of their training videos, all utilized video during training in much the same way. The

training videos were used to present new procedures to employees, demonstrate correct equipment use, and present company policies and safety guidelines. Not one video manager mentioned the use of video for training of upper corporate or department managers.

The educational institutions made extensive use of training video. In fact, these video facilities managers indicated the majority of their business was training related. This training involved the dissemination of information and enhancement of the educational process. Video case studies were often prepared for presentation in the classroom, bringing to the student an opportunity to observe new situations and ideas.

Corporate Communications

Corporate communications was defined by the video managers as the use of videotape technology to disseminate a message or information from management to the work force. The video departments provided materials for the companies' video news, delivered messages on video from management, and provided new employee orientation programs. One video manager said he liked to think video communications "helped define the corporate culture."

The educational facilities never used video for communications with the employees, relying instead on the departmental memo. On occasion video was used to carry fund raising messages from the Dean to the alumni.

Sales and Product Support

The development of sales/product demonstration tapes led in this category. However, the video managers did differentiate between product demonstration tapes and promotional/marketing tapes. Promotional/marketing tapes (roughly defined as a long advertisement) were used sparingly. Instead the product demonstration tapes were given to a customer by the salesmen. This allowed the customer to evaluate the product without the marketing hype. This use of videotape as a sales tool was found to be standard practice in the corporations.

One of the educational facilities used video to demonstrate new diagnostic techniques to other researchers in the field. Although more instructive in nature, this was judged by the researcher to be akin to the corporate use of the product demonstration tape.

Three video departments were also involved in product support, a video-guide to their corporation's manufactured product. These tapes provided verification to a customer that the purchased machinery or product performed at the agreed upon design specifications.

Archival

Two of the corporate video departments and both the educational facilities mentioned they were often called upon to videotape meetings, visitor

presentations, and special events. The final use of this video material would be determined at a future time.

Design Review

One of the most unique uses of video was that of design review. The corporate video department would shoot meetings, plans, and manufacturing prototypes for new products. These tapes were then sent to the original design team for review. Only two corporations mentioned this as one of the uses for video in their organization.

Video Conferencing

Video conferencing was available at three organizations, and was used mostly by upper management. The overall involvement with video conferencing was relatively small, as the video conferencing rooms were controlled by a department other than the video production facility.

Community Relations

Only one corporation mentioned community relations as a use for video. This organization had an extensive communications department that set all communication policies concerning the corporation. This communications department, although separate from the video department, oversaw all video productions. One of the communications department areas

of concern was the local community in which the corporation was located. Falling under this heading of community relations were videotape program development for adult education classes, community fund raisers, and corporate relations with the community.

One educational department stated that they developed video programs for their annual open-house. These tapes were used in support of public displays that explained a process or presented information.

Question 2: "Have you found video to be useful, and would you recommend or discourage its use?"

This question concerned the success or failures in the use of video that the managers have experienced.

Ninety percent of the respondents found video to be a useful tool in most situations, and recommended its use. Twenty-seven percent of video department managers found they could not keep up with the demand for services and were thinking of expanding their departments in the next three years. One very discouraged video manager stated that upper management no longer supported his department, and added that the only recent success he had with video was from off-the-shelf after-market tapes.

The only use for video that was discouraged was for employee communications. One manager stated that the employees looked at the

“expensive video equipment” and presumed the corporation was spending money on video communications but not on securing jobs or providing wage increases. This affected employee morale adversely, it was stated.

Question 3: “What kinds of services, including preproduction, are available in your video department?”

Although all departments considered themselves full production houses, only 55% had enough video equipment to be able to take a video project from conception and development through post-production.

All departments offered preplanning and scripting consultation. Thirty-three percent used consumer equipment for production, while the remaining 67% used broadcast or industrial equipment. For editing, 69% had A-B roll capabilities and 22% had to hire outside services to edit their programs. Eighty-eight percent of all video departments had duplication capabilities.

Thirty-three percent of the video production facilities had advanced “special effects”, the other 67% would like to add some form of digital video manipulation in the future.

Two departments offered services not commonly found in production houses. One was capable of converting video signals, changing NTSC (the U.S. videostandard) to PAL, SECAM, or others found throughout the world.

They were also able to convert computer signals to usable NTSC video. The other department offered an authoring system for the creation of interactive multi-media, a growing form of computer-based training.

Three sites had video conferencing capabilities, two used satellite linkup, and one made use of compressed video by telephone. None of the video department managers actually managed the video conferencing system.

Question 4: “Would you consider your department an audio/visual center that checks equipment in and out, a production company, a post-production facility, or a combination of more than one?”

This question helped to establish the overall function of the video department. Variations in the service levels offered by the video departments were identified. These ranged from a loan department for equipment and information, with occasional video productions, to a fully staffed and equipped video production service that was also responsible for stand-up training.

Four of the surveyed video departments loaned audio/visual equipment to other departments within their corporation. Eight of the nine offered basic video production capabilities resulting in a no-frills (straight cuts, minimal graphics) video product. Three out of these eight could offer more sophisticated levels of service. These included: digital video effects, computer animation, and high level graphics.

The ninth organization's video production service consisted of a VHS camcorder and playback monitor with VCR. Although this department's experiences with video production was limited, they have had great success with contracting out productions and by making their own VHS "plant (home) movies".

Question 5: "What video format and types of equipment does the video department use for its productions?"

It was found that six of the nine facilities shot using 3/4" equipment. Of the three remaining facilities, two used BETACAMS and one a S-VHS camera.

Five of the six video departments that acquired their production footage on 3/4" tape, kept it in that format for final editing. The remaining 3/4" user transferred the footage to 1/2" VHS for posting.

The facility that originated productions on S-VHS (an educational one) did all its editing in the same format. This facility was the only organization to use "desktop" editing. Desktop editing is the use of a desktop computer to control the aspects of video post-production.

Only one video department, the communication technology developer, could post their programs in-house on BETACAM. This department also

could edit in MII, Beta-SP, S-VHS, 3/4"-SP, and 8mm, thus providing the most complete services of all the video departments surveyed.

Two corporations could not post video on site. The first, an aerospace company, had BETACAM production equipment and VHS off-line capabilities. The other corporation, a manufacturing equipment company, was able to offer only camcorder production, and had to hire all its video production needs.

One of the educational departments shot with 3/4" equipment and dubbed to 1/2" VHS for post-production. Although VHS videotape may not provide the highest quality product, this department was as well equipped as some of the corporate sites.

All video departments used 1/2" VHS for distribution of videotaped projects.

Question 6: "Which services are most used in your video department?"

It was expected this question would bring responses from the participants that detailed production processes such as shooting or editing of videotape. Instead, it was found that four out of the nine departments were called upon most for program development and consultation on proposed video projects.

One corporation's video production services had recently been closed by management. The new focus of this department was stand-up training; its production equipment now sits idle. The reasons given from management for this shift in emphasis are curious. Upper management told this particular video manager "video was too much fun." The line employees only saw the "fun" production crews had during the video production. The management saw "fun" in the special effects used in post-production. Also, the perceived cost of making training videos for the numbers of employees served was considered by upper management to be too great. A similar statement concerning cost per employee was made at a different corporation when they used video for communication with employees (see question #2).

It was found that the educational facilities were more production oriented. More time was spent videotaping lectures and special events for archival purposes, or preparing classroom demonstrations, than helping clients develop projects for videotape production.

Question 7: "Are equipment demands or production needs for video projects fully met by your department?"

Eight of the nine organizations believed they were lacking equipment which would enable them to meet all production needs. The communication technology company had no external needs, except to replace equipment that was in the shop for repair.

Fifty-six percent felt they must go outside for "finishing touches" on every project. The services sought on the outside included: digital video effects, computer animation and full audio-sweetening. However, of the nine facilities, three make a conscious effort to stay in-house the majority of the time, going outside for editing services only on high-end programing.

This distinction of high-end programing (those video projects that have increased interest from upper management) resulted in 78% of the video departments seeking outside services. For example, instead of using their own 3/4" tape and equipment for video production, they hired BETA-SP from outside facilities. If given the option and the budget, these same facilities would like to upgrade their internal equipment to BETA-SP as a format for production and post-production.

For post-production, 56% of the facilities were interested in upgrading their editing equipment to include some form of digital video effects.

Four of the nine video departments felt a need to hire additional staff, but at the current level of management support not one department had plans of increasing staff.

The video department managers that participated in this study tended to have a well grounded view of the position they occupy in the corporate structure. They all seemed to realize that the corporation was not in business to make videotaped programs. One person said, "I can do what I

have to do to make a nice looking program. And really, if I was in charge of the purse strings, I would say that's enough. But I am not, I am in charge of using the equipment and I would like to have more." This comment seemed to reflect the thinking from all facilities. The only exception to this line of thought came from the corporation that develops communication technology. This facility seemed to have no need for additional equipment or funding.

Question 8: "What kinds of equipment or expertise is lacking from your department that you find necessary for the completion of video projects?"

Each video manager felt he or she had good working knowledge and the skills needed for video production. They believed their abilities could match or exceed the demands of any program developed in their facilities.

Four of the corporations and both the educational departments felt the need for an outside consultant who is not oriented towards production. These video managers were interested in a consultant who would provide technical information on new equipment (not sales pitches). This would help keep the video managers up-to-date on the trends and developments in technology.

Another function the corporate managers desired in a consultant revolved around corporate management. Several corporate managers asserted they did not have the time to spend educating the upper management on the usage of video, its benefits and costs. Nor did they have the time to train upper management as to the video department's

capabilities. According to one manager, “because of the fast track, senior management can change quickly; the educating of new management takes too much of our production time. If we are pursuing management, we are unable to serve our clients.”

Question 9: “When a video project is developed for production, who acts as project leader or producer, the media department or the individual that originated the project?”

This question helped establish what department maintained creative control over a video project. All corporate and educational video departments retained most of the control over a project. The video manager served as coordinator or project manager.

There was a difference in how the educational institutions interacted with their clients. In the corporate facilities it was found that the video department would develop scripts based upon a client’s request and consultation about the content. In the educational facilities, clients would generally develop scripts independent of the video departments and then contract the facilities for production services. On occasion the clients did work in tandem with the educational facilities to develop video projects.

As previously noted, the communication technology company’s video department reported to their communications department. This department set the ground rules by approving the message and controlling its “look and

feel.” The communication department also assembled the design team for any video project. The video manager was included on all video project design teams: he offered expertise on the presentational and stylistic elements of video, as well as advice on production details.

Only one corporation (a heavy equipment manufacturer) stated that the video department originated ideas and projects for development. The other eight appeared to wait for productions to come to them. None of the facilities indicated any extended periods of down-time. They all stated that they were running at the limits of their capabilities. In fact, two departments were so busy they had to send some projects outside in order to keep up with the demand for services. When this happened, the managers maintained creative control by working with the outside production companies as project managers.

Question 10: “When is the video department involved in a video project: during pre-production or strictly for production?”

It was difficult for the managers to differentiate between pre-production and production. The reason given was that numerous projects do not call for pre-planning. A general practice of these departments were to record the events first, then explore ideas for uses of these recorded material. This kind of production was found most often in the educational facilities, and it accounted for about three-quarters of their work. Most often

educational clients later utilized these previously recorded events in classroom lectures and edited programs.

Managers of the corporate video departments said that unplanned production happened often, but they failed to indicate the frequency of occurrence. As with the educational departments' unplanned video recordings, the corporate facilities also made use of such materials in a variety of productions.

Seven of the nine video departments were always involved from the beginning in the developmental stage of a project. Occasionally the remaining two video departments were given productions for completion that were developed without their involvement.

Question 11: "Do video projects ever bypass the video department and get developed or produced by outside vendors?"

All nine managers stated they controlled the access to outside services. If any one client needed video services and did not want to use the inside capabilities, they still had to pass through the video department. This was not an official policy; it was simply that the video facilities managers knew from whom and where quality outside services could be obtained. These video managers believed that information about independent production companies was not commonly known. Also, the video managers believed they were the best source to determine the suitability of one outside vendor over another.

Four out of nine managers said internal video projects on occasion are developed and produced external to their video departments. This passing of project development responsibilities to external resources by an internal client occurred with the blessing, and under the direction of the video department manager.

Question 12: “Are you aware of the reasons video projects may get sent outside for development and production?”

One manager stated “it” happens due to the lack of internal resources. This was interesting because this particular manager headed the best equipped and staffed facility found in this study. He went on to explain that because of demand on his department, some projects went outside when his production group could not meet the projects’ deadlines.

One of the educational facility managers knew of some video projects that entirely avoided her services. She was completely aware as to why this occurred, stating that the major contributing factor was the department’s lack of equipment. “Because of our level of service (1/2” VHS),” she stated, “people will seek outside services whenever quality is an issue.” She added that most of these potential clients have had previous outside experiences, and had already consulted with her to find “the path” to the outside production companies. She concluded, “Most departments are aware of their own limitations, and in any business there will be clients that just don’t like doing business with you.”

One of the video managers in a small corporation said it bothered him to see in-house productions get developed by external sources. He stated that potential clients only go out when he was not available due to a backlog of productions, and added that these clients had expressed to him that they had obtained mixed results with outside services, and would have preferred to stay in-house.

Question 13: “Is there a particular type of project that the video department is incapable of handling?”

The production experience the individual video managers possessed allowed them to oversee all the possible ranges of production demands. Aside from equipment limitations, they believed they had the skills and knowledge within their departments to meet the demands of any project. This was not to say they were capable of handling every conceivable kind of video production, but they felt that, within their corporate environment and well within the demands and expectations of their clients, the projects were being completed successfully.

These responses may have reflected the “ego” of the managers. However the observational data allowed the researcher to conclude that they were correct in their self evaluations.

Question 14: “What outside services do you seek?”

The outside service used most often was “high-end” editing: sixty seven percent sought external editors and equipment a majority of the time and 33% went outside for editing every time they had a project that required post-production.

Most video departments (89%) hired outside services when the production demands called for more than one camera.

Only two of the organizations hired outside script-writers. The majority stated that an insider was closer to the problem and had a better understanding of the everyday workings of the industry. Very often the video manager wrote the scripts and used the client as the content expert. As discussed earlier, the educational facilities’ clients wrote their own scripts, letting the production department polish and complete them.

All facilities hired external talent for narration, each one stated that finding an internal person that could give professional quality to a reading of a script was next to impossible.

Question 15: “Do these outside services complement or replace aspects of the video department?”

The compiled data provided an interesting blend of responses. All nine managers have made use of outside services. No manager estimated the number of times per year outside services were sought, although one manager estimated he used outside post-production equipment on ninety percent of his productions.

Two corporations produced few video programs. One of these (the public utility company) has a completely equipped production/post-production facility and has been told by management not to produce videotaped training programs. The other (a parts manufacture) has produced only three internal productions, has little to no equipment and would like to “promote the hell out of videotraining.”

The aerospace company hired freelancers every time a project was developed. In fact, the video department manager was hired on a retainer to manage the facilities. The other organizations hired external services when their equipment was under repair or when they needed a faster turn around of a completed production.

A general perception of outside services by the video department managers is that they are expensive. One manager stated there is a political advantage in using an outside consultant. “They are not tied to the bosses’ political battles, and can make suggestions internal people wouldn’t want to take the heat from.” Other advantages identified include: “outside helps keep

us fresh and creative”, “they have a broader range of experience”, and “the interaction with our staff helps to raise our level of skills.”

It was also found that outside services were utilized more often for sophisticated programs. For most productions the video departments made do with what they had. As one manager stated “use what we have, as the cost of business is being watched.”

Question 16: “Does the client’s desire for a more sophisticated look to the video production influence the decision to go outside for services?”

Once again, the individual managers pointed to the level of sophistication available for in-house post-production. The lack of high-end editing was the main reason given for seeking outside resources. When a video production demanded more than one camera, all facilities contracted outside services.

As shown in question seven, three facilities made a concerted effort to stay in-house for all but the most demanding productions. Two other production facilities stated that they found ways of completing most video projects in-house, but found their lack of high-end equipment a disadvantage and hoped to add equipment in the future. Of the remaining four organizations, one no longer produced inside programming, one hired external services for all productions except “camcorder work”, and the last two had limited post-production capabilities.

These last two (an educational facility and an aerospace company) would like to expand their capabilities but are concerned about the costs involved in adding equipment and staff. The aerospace company's video manager stated "the cost of using an on-line system, if brought in-house, goes up. Cost must be balanced against the use of external services, where we have no salary expense, no benefit packages, no staffing needs, and no equipment maintenance."

Question 17: "What are your capabilities or limitations in regards to video production (example: are you strong in production and weak in post)?"

In analyzing this data, a different emphasis or priority was discovered. The general trend among the video managers was not to emphasize the technical aspect of video production, rather it was to talk about intangible aspects such as "people skills." Five of the nine managers mentioned their departments' strongest assets were adaptability and the ability to solve problems.

The confidence the video managers had in their technical skills were varied. Two managers felt they were best at post-production. One manager felt his camera skills were not very good, "I don't always get the footage I always would like during production, so I have to save it when editing."

It was interesting to note that although most managers thought their adaptability and problem solving skills were their strongest asset, only one

felt confident in her abilities during the developmental stage of a project. This lack of confidence is curious because four managers had stated earlier that they spent more time consulting than they did on any other aspect of production.

Question 18: “Are the perceived professional capabilities by clients of the video department an influence in the decision to obtain video services from an outside vendor?”

This question opened discussion concerning the perception video department managers have of the services they provide to their clients. As indicated earlier, all video departments exercised some form of control over a potential client and the use of outside services. Although no percentages could be ascertained, in most cases the video department manager was the individual who hired the outside vendor. The client was not involved in this aspect of production.

As already reported, the public utility company’s management made a decision to stop video production. This was not due to the capabilities of the video department, or the quality of the video product, but the “fun” factor previously mentioned. As an explanation for the shutting down of this facility, this manager suggested the fun factor may be related to the “inherent conservatism” of a public utility company and its upper management’s belief that the public does not support the use of new technologies because these technologies appear expensive and flashy.

The aerospace company's video manager (an independent contractor) that hired freelance labor noted a disadvantage when using freelance production personnel. He stated the capabilities of production personnel and their availability have a direct influence on the quality of the project. This particular company had been gearing up to increase its video department's efficiency when upper management cut all the personnel in the department. In an attempt to amortize the investment already made in equipment, upper management hired an outside contractor to oversee this facility's equipment. Current management support for this situation was extremely high. The corporation benefited by having inside production facilities while "keeping the official head count down."

All remaining video departments stated they had adequate support from their respective management and they were not aware of complaints from clients.

Question 19: "Does the service provided by the video department live up to expectations? This pertains to projects coming in on time, and on budget; and meeting or exceeding the expectations of the client."

It was evident that before this question was discussed all the facility managers had found ways of satisfying clients' needs. Each manager had related accounts of praise received from clients, and reported that their facility could not always keep up with the demand for service.

Offered as an explanation for the nature of the customer praise was the way the clients were charged for production. It was interesting that a budget was apparently more important to a client than the content and success or failure of the videotape.

Question 20: “Does the video department have to turn a profit; is it a charge back system; how does this work?”

This question revealed the only major difference in the operation of the corporate video departments and the educational facilities. All seven corporate video facilities were fully supported by management. Their operational budgets were considered “the cost of doing business.” All corporate clients that made use of the video department’s services were charged only for the hours the video production personnel spent during the completion of a project. The equipment charges including amortization, maintenance, replacement costs, and the department’s operational expenses, were absorbed by the corporate division responsible for the operation of the video department.

The difference between these corporate video centers and the educational facilities was that the educational facilities operated as profit centers. These institutions did not consider videotaped programs a necessity of education. The financial support from their colleges, about ten percent of their operating budget (for equipment and building space), must be

supplemented by some form of recovery. Therefore a client was billed upon completion of a project for equipment use, materials, and personnel hours.

Summarizing the findings from the interview data revealed that video managers often combined production services from their departments with external services in order to obtain a quality video product. This research showed 55% of the organizations that participated could stay in-house for all their clients' video production needs. Of the nine video managers only three were satisfied with the level of production sophistication that was available in their facilities.

Observational Data Summary

The field visits allowed the researcher to directly observe the managers' video production facilities. These observations provided verification that the capabilities and limitations that the department managers spoke of were indeed factual. It was interesting to note that all facilities seemed to have sufficient space in which to operate. These production facilities were not located in an out-of-the-way corner of the building and were easily accessible to the potential clients. In general, it was apparent that there were tapes in abundance, including raw stock, stock reels, and finished products. Desks were cluttered and editing facilities were well organized, often within the same room. The overall impression gained was that the departments were vital, active production units.

The video managers were personable and projected a “can-do” attitude. Their responses during the interview were well thought out, and it was evident that they understood their departments’ standings in their organizations. One manager appeared tired and stated he felt close to “burn out”; he attributed this to the number of projects he currently had under production.

Although the types of production equipment were found to be varied from organization to organization, visual inspection of these facilities by the researcher confirmed that the level of in-house production sophistication was restricted by the video equipment available in-house.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

During this case study the dual approach of observation and interview for data collection outlined by Yin (1984) proved indispensable to the researcher, and was an essential aspect of this research. This technique of using two approaches for data collection provided the researcher the opportunity to examine in the field the validity, truthfulness, and completeness of the participants responses. It was seen during the field visits that the managers represented the equipment limitations and capabilities of their departments in a truthful manner.

Tours of the video production facilities often extended the researcher's visit well beyond the requested forty-five minutes. The researcher believes the extension of the visits contributed to the quality of the data. During this time it became clear that the video managers had a lot of pride in their facilities. They spoke about how they had built their respective departments and addressed the challenges of specifying equipment to fit their operating budgets. They talked about the lack of production equipment as a challenge to their abilities, and seemed excited that they provided services that others in their organizations considered valuable.

Only one manager had a negative attitude, but he attributed this to upper management's lack of support for video communications because of the

prevalent view that video was too much “fun”. He expressed that he was quite proud of his productions and his facilities (although this facility was now idle), and hoped that with a change in upper management he could resurrect the video department.

This investigator suspects that management’s claiming video production is too much “fun” and an extravagant waste of money is a smoke screen. The suspicion is that in today’s economy this particular management chose to play it safe by eliminating their video activity, and the decision to close the department was actually an economic one relating to public image. This supposition is supported by the video manager, who stated that public utilities’ management tends to be inherently conservative. He believed that management felt the public does not support expensive and flashy technologies, thus the discontinuation of video production and the return to traditional stand-up training. An alternate possibility is that the manager failed to sell the benefits of video communication to upper management.

A second case of economic constraints is that of the aerospace company. It benefited by not maintaining any production or managerial staff in-house (see question 18).

Since Brush and Brush reported that more and more organizations were going out-of-house in 1988, apparently to obtain greater sophistication of post-production services, it is interesting that, now in 1992, pressures within companies in upstate New York have brought about an increase of in-

house production. This result is interpreted as the impact on these video departments of a slowed economy.

One would expect that during a recession corporate spending, in general, would be down. There was additional evidence that the economy had affected several other video departments than the one discussed above. Most of the managers wanted to upgrade their equipment and expand their staff, but because the cost of business was being closely watched, they felt the possibility of expansion was very unlikely. However, with the exception of one, none of these facilities had faced cutbacks, and a few indicated that business had increased.

This increase in business is curious. It is only questioned because of the inability of these departments to add equipment and staff. One possibility for this increase is that by using in-house facilities the client is getting a more cost-effective video program. This would please upper management because during the recession they closely monitor their corporate spending. Still these department were found to go out-of-house regularly, mostly to make use of high-level post-production facilities.

This investigation did not reveal either a reduction or increase of out-of-house productions. Since no change in this regard was cited by the managers, although faced by increased in-house activity, this author assumed use of out-of-house services remained the same. Consistent with

this view of economic restraints was the video manager who was so busy that he turned clients away and did not refer them to outside services.

It was interesting to find that many facilities were producing very simplistic video programs without special effects and high-end graphics. Sophisticated editing and digital effects were not readily available in most facilities. However, the managers did not admit that their programs suffered from this lack of sophistication. In fact, one manager said she felt that digital video effects interfered with the intended message and she was not interested in adding that kind of equipment. She hoped instead when funding became available to upgrade her camera.

It was unfortunate that economic restrictions were impacting these video departments. Many video managers expressed the desire and need to upgrade from 3/4 inch technology to Betacam or other high-end formats (see question 5). They would also like to bring in-house the sophisticated technologies that allow for digital effects, graphics and animation during post-production. Although they will adapt to the current reduction in available funds, their opportunity to replace or update older production technology will be markedly delayed. This delay of improving the in-house production technology could possibly put off indefinitely the movement of post-production high-end technologies such as graphics and digital effects into these facilities. Most likely the desires of managers will never be fulfilled, and computer graphics, digital effects, or some other special effect, will remain outside of corporate/educational video facilities. The one hope

may be that the cost of these technologies lies in the often precipitous fall in cost that results from further advancements in video and computer technology.

Despite evident economic restraints, there was an expressed desire for a consultant who could help advise video department managers on the wise choice of methods and equipment (see question 8). The problem is that equipment vendors sell for profit and therefore are not unbiased in their technical advice. In addition, a given vendor represents a limited range of products and manufacturers. A consultant should be free of these two restraints. Such a consultant could better present needs and solutions to upper management in cooperation with the video manager. The need for such a consultant is amplified by the frequent change in upper management. This question of consulting at this level should be further explored as a possible business opportunity available in upstate New York.

In the literature review, the Brushes' (1988) breakdown of cost recovery was presented. In summary, they cited four strategies: profit center, full charge-back, divestment of equipment, and scale down. They concluded, it was "The end of the free ride." However, with the exception of the two educational facilities, which were profit centers, the corporations operated their video departments on a limited charge-back system. Clients did enjoy the subsidy of equipment, space, and materials and were charged only for personnel time.

During the data collection a semantic distinction arose that may effect the interpretation of this case study. The distinction, of which the investigator was unaware at the onset of this study, was the differences between a corporation and a corporate division. The video managers revealed that they worked only for a local division of a corporation. The home office located elsewhere in the U.S. often contained the official video production services. Since their role was not investigated, it is recommended that this distinction be explored. Does it effect corporate video communications?

Several limitations apply to this study. It is limited to a small region in upstate New York, as has been stated often. The size of the sample may have limited the generalizations, but as revealed in the literature, case research often involves small samples. As Borg and Gall (1979) acknowledged, "a study that probes deeply into the characteristics of a small sample often provides more knowledge than a study that attacks the same problem by collecting only shallow information on a large sample" (p. 197). Furthermore, as Yin (1984) stated about case research, generalizations, if carefully applied, help define characteristics found in similar cases. Minimally, this case study of nine video departments can be a starting point for more refined research.

Primarily, this report presented the perceptions of the managers. Although much was learned from them, it is evident that to obtain an unbiased picture of the dynamics surrounding corporate/education video production, many other studies would have to be undertaken.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

1. The Case study method using interview and observational data collection techniques was applied in the investigation of seven corporate and two educational video facilities and their managers in upstate New York. This approach was found to be relatively effective, since it allowed the researcher to observe the level of activity, adequacy of space and types of production equipment, thus validating much of what was verbally communicated during the interview process.

2. Video managers seemed to operate their facilities with pride and, with the exception of one, have facilities that are currently running at or near capacity.

3. Video managers were involved in all stages of production, and meet the needs of clients by a combination of in-house and out-of-house services, the latter being used for sophisticated effects in videotaped programs or when in-house facilities are overscheduled.

4. It is interpreted that the recession has had a positive effect on in-house production by increasing demand for services.

5. At the same time, the recession restricted managers from expanding staff and replacing old equipment.

6. Managers would like to upgrade their 3/4" and VHS production equipment to BETA-SP or a digital format. Current economic restraints and the pace at which technologies change make this impractical.

7. The need for a consultant was indicated by managers who appeared to want unbiased guidance on current and future technologies, and desired assistance in interaction with upper management.

8. A major value of this case study was the experiences the researcher gained by visiting and interacting with the various video departments. As stated by Yin (1984), the case study technique requires special skills including questioning, listening, flexibility and adaptability. His approach was invaluable in providing a positive and unique educational experience for the investigator.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

The following are the questions used as a guide to the face-to-face interviews:

- (1). What kinds of projects are produced by your video department?
- (2). Have you found video to be useful, and would you recommend or discourage its use?
- (3). What kinds of services including preproduction, are available in your video department?
- (4). Would you consider your department an audio/visual center that checks equipment in and out, a production company, a post-production facility, or a combination of more than one?
- (5). What video format and types of equipment does the video department use for its productions?
- (6). Which services are most used in your video department?

(7). Are equipment demands or production needs for video projects fully met by your department?

(8). What kinds of equipment or expertise is lacking from your department that you find necessary for the completion of video projects?

(9). When a video project is developed for production, who acts as project leader or producer, the media department or the individual that originated the project?

(10). When is the video department involved in a video project: during preproduction or strictly for production?

(11). Do video projects ever bypass the video department and get developed or produced by outside vendors?

(12). Are you aware of the reasons video projects may get sent outside for development and production?

(13). Is there a particular type of project that the video department is incapable of handling?

(14). What outside services do you seek?

(15). Do these outside services complement or replace aspects of the video department?

(16). Does the client's desire for a more sophisticated look to video production influence the decision to go outside for services?

(17). What are your capabilities or limitations in regards to video production (example: are you strong in production and weak in post)?

(18). Are the perceived professional capabilities by corporate clients of the video department an influence in the decision to obtain video services from an outside vendor?

(19). Does the service provided by the video department live up to the expectations? This pertains to coming in on time and on budget; and meeting or exceeding the expectations of the clients.

(20). Does the video department have to turn a profit; is it a charge-back system; how does this work?