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Running Head: MIND SHIFT: TOTAL INSTITUTION TO WHITE COLLAR

Mind Shift: From a Total Institution to the White Collar World

Carol J. Seiler

Augsburg College

Dedications

I am grateful for friends and associates who have come into my life and added great richness to it; this paper is dedicated to just a few of them. Those mentioned had direct impact on the writing of this document or contributed through their support and encouragement.

Jean Houlding, President of Stillwater Systems, Inc., has dedicated herself to the organization for over 12 years. She provides the inmate employees with training, guidance, mentoring—and most importantly, hope that they can have a better life for themselves and their families. Mere thanks are inadequate as recognition for Jean's contributions to the organization and do not express the gratitude that I feel for her help in completing both Plan B papers.

Dr. Bev Nilsson, Chair, Nursing Department, Augsburg College, agreed to be my adviser several years ago. She has been unyielding in her support and reassurance through the projects and papers that were started over the years, and for various reasons, never came to fruition. How do you thank someone who maintains their faith in you even as you repeatedly stumble and fall? Throughout the years, the demands on Bev's time have increased dramatically, and yet, she has always made time to meet and discuss my latest efforts and offer a large measure of encouragement.

Terri O'Dowd is a dear friend, and my reader for this paper. We have been on a sometimes challenging, but always rewarding journey through life together. Over the years, we have grown in all arenas of our lives, and I hope we always will be on like paths. I am so grateful for her friendship.

And last, but certainly not least, thanks to my friend, Bill Sorem, who helps me view life through a different lens. He is sensitive to the injustices in the world and believes in those who are committed to making this planet a better place for all its inhabitants. He taught me to appreciate the stars and planets in the night sky, the exhilaration of riding a bicycle on a sunny summer day, the gifts that come to us through family and friends, and the beauty and enjoyment that are ours in being with children—of all ages. Bill shares his passion for justice, expands my worldview, opens my heart, and brings enormous joy into my life.

Abstract

This paper examines the obstacles that released inmates face in gaining employment and being successfully employed, how these obstacles might be overcome, studies and recommendations in the area of correctional education, and the role education and prison employment play in reducing recidivism. It further relates these topics to the leadership and training and employment focus of Stillwater Systems, Inc. (SSI), a non-profit, self-sustaining, company that operates inside the confines of the Lino Lakes Correctional Facility, Lino Lakes, Minnesota.

Effective and visionary leadership in this complex and unique business setting is crucial to the survival of Stillwater Systems. The style and theory of leadership practiced by those individuals with primary leadership in the company were analyzed in this study. They include the SSI Board of Directors members, the inmate workers, the SSI executive director, the CEO of Stillwater Systems Partners (a SSI marketing and project management partner), and the author, in her role as chair of the executive director search committee.

The author concluded that one-size leadership does not fit all. The Board of Directors contributes to the organization through a servant leadership model. The current SSI president practices situational leadership in meeting the demands of her varied constituents. A new executive director is being hired for SSI, and he/she is expected to also build effective relationships through situational leadership. The author called upon collaborative leadership to chair the Board committee engaged in sourcing and selecting a new executive director for the organization. The Stillwater Systems Partners' CEO is a

transformational leader who is moving the new organization from a nonprofit entity to a for-profit organization that will contract with SSI for programming services and products. She faces the challenge of helping the released inmates transition from a total institution where any demonstration of leadership is discouraged to the for-profit world where it is expected.

Two conclusions emerged from this analysis: 1) that the inmate workers do not have access to adequate critical thinking or problem-solving skills training. Upon release, they will enter the white-collar work world which represents a complete paradigm shift from that of the total institution, and 2) many of the inmate workers lack the skills necessary to identify the norms, values, and other nuances of organizational culture that they will encounter either as employees or as consultants—skills that will be important for their success outside the institution.

Management of the company is currently undergoing a major restructuring to provide for growth of the inmate employee population. The leadership practiced by the Board must evolve to a higher level of servant and collaborative leadership in order to accomplish that growth and continue to fulfill SSI's mission. One recommendation is that organization leaders work together to identify and introduce critical thinking and problem solving skills training along with life or social skills training as a required element of the curriculum. A second recommendation involves sharing best practices and development of a working relationship with a nonprofit organization that trains and mentors youthful offenders at the Hennepin County Home School located in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

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Mind Shift: From A Total Institution to the White Collar World

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the obstacles that inmates face in gaining and being successful in employment, how those obstacles might be overcome, studies and recommendations in the area of correctional education, and the role education and prison employment play in reducing recidivism. It relates these topics to the training and employment focus of Stillwater Systems, Inc. (SSI), a non-profit company that operates from inside the Lino Lakes Correctional Facility, Lino Lakes, Minnesota, and it considers the role leadership plays in effecting change within this organization.

Stillwater Systems, Inc. came into being over 20 years ago. Growth of this self-sustaining organization stalled, in part, because it lacked the human resources necessary to aggressively market its services and products outside the institution. The company's current president will leave SSI to form a separate for-profit entity that will market SSI's products and provide customers with services that cannot be offered from inside a penal institution (such as Internet interface and web site development). This new company will maintain contact with the customer base and subcontract services from SSI. They will also consider released SSI inmate workers for employment. SSI will hire an executive director to replace the outgoing president.

Leadership at Stillwater Systems, Inc. comes from a variety of sources. The Board of Directors, along with the president, sets policy and direction for the organization. The current president manages the company, leads product development, markets the products and services, recruits, develops, trains, and coaches the inmate

workers, handles public and media relations, and will work with the new executive director to ensure a successful transition. The new executive director will be expected to provide leadership to a restructured organization with an increased focus on employee training and development along with funding development. Opportunities to influence organizational direction and build bridges with the Department of Corrections abound for all concerned.

In the process of exploring this topic, the author met the executive director of Osiris, a non-profit organization that mentors youth at the Hennepin County Home School as well as at-risk juveniles in the community. Osiris also provides computer and work skills training to the youth involved in the program. Based on a cursory review of the organization and its work, it appears that Osiris and Stillwater Systems might benefit by collaborating and sharing best practices.

When the released SSI inmates are hired as computer programmers and systems analysts, they may be expected to serve in project or people leadership roles for the companies that employ them. For those inmates who have little (or no) employment experience outside the prison environment, this may prove to be an unsettling expectation. Inmates often experience release anxiety, suffer from low self-confidence and self-esteem, have not experienced success in many areas of their lives, and have become prisonized (adopting the norms of the institution as his or her socially constructed reality). The expectation that the released inmate will serve as a leader, be assertive, take risks, and be visible may be frightening and fuel doubts about his or her ability to survive outside the institution.

Researchers have found that beliefs about capabilities partly govern the level of a person's performance. ... People fail to perform optimally because they doubt their ability to put those skills to use in a particular situation. ... Beliefs about one's capabilities influence personal motivation. They determine how much effort a person is likely to exert and how long the individual will persevere when the task gets difficult (Kouzes & Posner, 1993, p. 75).

It will be up to all those involved with Stillwater Systems, Inc. to provide the inmates with tools—and instructions for using them—to make sound decisions and face the challenges and stresses they will encounter when they return to society. The inmates need to experience success at the company, understand and be comfortable with employer's expectations, and cultivate decision-making and critical thinking skills to enhance the likelihood of success outside the institution. SSI's leadership can help the inmate workers prepare for release and employment in a white collar environment by serving as role models and mentors. In addition, the leaders mere presence and attention affirms that the inmates have worth as human beings—something not commonly found in the correctional setting.

BACKGROUND

Federal and State Penal Institutions

North America has the highest per capita rate of incarceration in the world with 400 prisoners per 100,000 (Davidson, 1995). In the 23 years between 1970 and 1993, there was a 260 percent rise in the fraction of the United States population in prison (Needels, 1996). A snapshot view at any time portrays the same picture—the prison population has grown steadily over the years and it appears will continue to grow.

On July 1, 1998, over 5,500 adults were incarcerated in State of Minnesota prisons. The Lino Lakes Correctional Facility houses about 1,000 inmates with a per diem cost for containment of \$86.89 (State of Minnesota Criminal Justice Center Data Internet site). Appendix A includes additional information on correctional facility populations, educational levels of inmates, admissions, releases, and the Minnesota Department of Corrections budget.

The cost of incarceration—in real dollars, loss of human potential, and loss of human resources—exact an enormous toll on society and continues to escalate each year. Existing prisons are at capacity with additional institutions under construction. By 2000, a new prison in Rush City, Minnesota will be ready for occupancy. Construction of the new facility will cost taxpayers \$89 million to imprison 950 adult male inmates (State of Minnesota Department of Corrections briefing sheet, 1999). Along with significant numbers of first-time offenders, released inmates recidivate at alarming rates.

We face the issue of building more and larger prisons or finding ways to decrease the number of those being incarcerated or recidivating. This paper addresses the preparation of inmates for a career in information technology through training and employment at Stillwater Systems, Inc. and analyzes the role that leadership plays in this organization. The Stillwater Systems goal is to provide the wherewithal for the men to support themselves and their families through legitimate work rather than returning through the revolving door of the penal system.

Stillwater Systems, Inc.

Attempts are being made to stem the flow of inmates returning to penal institutions. Over 24 years ago, a State of Minnesota Corrections Department employee

believed that trained and employed prisoners exhibit less deviant behavior while institutionalized and are better prepared for release into society. He invited a handful of Twin City companies to conceptualize and form a self-funded, viable business within which the prisoners learn and work. Much of the company's early business came from contracts with the founding companies.

In the beginning, the company operated from the Stillwater Correctional Facility, Stillwater, Minnesota, which is how it came to be named Stillwater Systems, Inc. (SSI). The company currently conducts its business from an inmate cottage at the medium security Lino Lakes Correctional Facility. SSI rents space from the Department of Corrections for a nominal annual fee; this is the only subsidy the company receives from the State of Minnesota. The inmate workers are convicted adult male felons living in the cottage in which the company is located. In other words, the company and its inmate employees live and work in a highly restrictive, yet unpredictable, total institution.

The company's initial service was data entry (keypunching). Today, the inmate workers learn a variety of computer programming languages and provide information systems services to a growing list of clients in both the for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

Many of the inmates were employed in unskilled, minimum wage positions prior to incarceration (i.e. newspaper routes, fast food restaurants, etc.). A few had been trained in a trade such as truck driving or hair cutting. Approximately 25-30% of the inmates have some work experience prior to joining Stillwater Systems. The president recruits inmates from Minnesota correctional facilities to work at the company; they complete a formal application process including a screening interview and aptitude and

skills testing. A transfer request must be prepared and processed through the Department of Corrections for those inmates incarcerated at institutions other than Lino Lakes.

The company has two missions. Its societal mission (to prepare inmates to be productive and responsible society members through training and employing them as computer programmers and systems analysts) serves as the foundation for the company's existence. The business mission supports the societal mission (to provide computer programming products and services that are competitively priced, high-quality information services) by making SSI a viable information technology firm.

In addition to the inmate employees and a few released inmate workers employed in an office outside the prison, three other employees (none of whom is an inmate or released inmate) manage operations and posture the company for future business. They are the president, a part-time financial officer, and an office manager. The president oversees the outside office, manages SSI operations inside the prison, is responsible for new business development, recruits, trains, and develops inmate employees, and fosters effective working relationships with the Department of Corrections staff. Because the company is self-sustaining, the revenue stream dictates the number of inmates that may be employed. The company currently generates revenue to support approximately 20 inmate employees. The Lino Lakes warden and SSI Board of Directors would like to increase the number of employees to 75 (the population of one inmate cottage).

The current company president proposed restructuring SSI to allow for more devoted attention to marketing and enhanced services to customers. The office inside the prison will remain a nonprofit company with the mission of training inmates and providing programming services and products. The marketing organization will be a

separate for-profit entity and will market programming services, provide on-site support to clients, and subcontract with Stillwater Systems for work that can be accomplished from within the penal institution. For purposes of identification, the marketing company will be referred to as Stillwater Systems Partners (SSP). As business conditions permit, SSP will employ qualified, released SSI inmate employees.

This paper focuses on the challenge of preparing inmates for release and the expectation that they possess critical thinking and problem-solving skills and can serve as leaders in a white collar, professional information technology environment when they rejoin society. It also addresses the leadership roles played by the Stillwater Systems Board of Directors, the SSP Chief Executive Officer (and outgoing SSI president), the SSI executive director, and the author.

This topic was selected because of the author's familiarity with the organization by serving as a member of the Board of Directors and in a leadership role in the recruitment and selection process for the executive director position. In addition, the restructuring of SSI offers an opportunity to influence changes within the training curriculum and encourages more direct involvement by the Board of Directors.

ISSUE

The mission of the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) is: "to develop and provide effective correctional services that contribute to a safer Minnesota" (Department of Corrections Internet site). The prison system focuses on security, not on providing educational opportunities for convicted felons. The DOC's total budget and the amount earmarked for training reflects that emphasis. In 1998, the education budget was \$379,000 out of a total budget of \$179,375,000 (.21%). The education budget

remained the same in dollars in 1999 (\$379,000) while the total Department of Corrections budget increased to \$189,027,000 (.20%). There is limited training money to meet the need at State prisons. The deficit must be made up in other ways. "More states are turning to non-correctional agencies—including private not-for-profit and for-profit groups—to deliver educational programming, both in prison and in the community after inmates are released" (Morison, 1992, p. 11).

There are three immediate issues facing SSI leadership: (a) growing the business and reaching out to a greater number of Minnesota inmates to fulfill its societal mission, (b) hiring an executive director, and (c) preparing the inmate workers for a world of work they have little or no experience in. The formation of SSP addresses the need for aggressive marketing and enhanced customer support of SSI products and services, and an ad hoc Board of Directors committee leads the executive director search and selection process. The issue of preparing the inmate workers for release into the white-collar world increases in significance as the business realizes financial growth and supports additional inmate employee staff.

The inmate workers gain exposure to the world of work through their employment at SSI. The work removes them from the traditional prison environment for several hours each week and allows them to develop technical skills and working relationships. Most of the workers will be eligible for release at some time and many will want to use their technical skills in information technology careers. They will confront unfamiliar cultures, norms, values, and rules in their work places. In today's business environment, employers expect their workers to be assertive, take initiative, serve as leaders, take risks, suggest or introduce process improvements, be problem-solvers and critical thinkers, and

operate with little or no direct supervision—behaviors and attitudes that may produce disciplinary action or conflict in a corrections environment.

Social and life skills will be required to navigate the waters of the white collar world—skills that are vastly different than those required for survival in a total institution. As indicated in the Relevant Literature section of this document, Elizabeth Fabiano’s studies (1991) suggest that without cognitive development, the inmates may “misread social expectations and misinterpret the actions and intentions of others” (p. 102). This is one of the challenges that SSI faces. How can the company assist inmate workers in making the mind shift from survival behind prison walls with explicit rules to the world of often unstated expectations, intentions of others, rules and norms of white collar work?

APPROACH

An extensive search of primary and secondary sources was conducted to gain an understanding of the: (a) implications of prolonged life in a total institution, (b) function and possibilities of correctional education, (c) magnitude of incarceration in State of Minnesota prisons, (d) extent and causes of recidivism, and (e) transition issues facing released inmates. The author of this paper serves on the Stillwater Systems, Inc. Board of Directors and has studied the current Stillwater Systems president’s leadership style and role in the organization.

Interviews were conducted (in person and by phone) with the SSI president and the Lino Lakes Correctional Facility Training Director to identify training opportunities available to SSI inmate workers. The executive director of Osiris, a non-profit organization that works with juveniles in residence at the Hennepin County Home School

was also interviewed. Osiris trains youth in computer and work skills and has an extensive mentoring program for at-risk youth in the community at large. The meeting was held for the dual purpose of gathering information for this paper as well as investigating the potential for a partnership between Osiris and SSI.

A lengthy interview with the current SSI president was conducted in October of 1996 to identify the constituencies she serves and the leadership style she employs. The author has observed the SSI Board of Directors members' leadership over the past four years while completing projects for the organization and by becoming a Board member in 1997.

The search and selection process for a new SSI executive director began in March, 1999. The author, as leader of the selection team, has included reflections on her experience with the search process in this document. Serving in a leadership capacity gave the author a unique opportunity to observe the leadership styles of Board members outside their normal roles as well as to step back and examine her own style, strengths, and development areas.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

A review of literature produced extensive information on subjects germane to understanding the prison environment, or total institution, as well as the role of correctional education and its potential for providing inmates with social, life, and coping skills. All of the studies cited involve adult male offenders. Therefore, all gender references are male unless direct quotations refer to females. A number of studies conducted in the Canadian corrections environment are cited and viewed as relevant

because of its similarity to the United States penal system. The importance of roles, role expectations, socialization, prisonization, and the effects of stigmatization are also considered.

Total Institutions

Once upon a time a sociologist wrote of a strange community in which men were temporarily banished because evil spirits possessed them. Although high priests were sent to visit the banished men, their efforts to drive out the evil spirits proved in vain. The banished men resisted the efforts of the high priests and withdrew from them, speaking a strange language and living by rules foreign to the high priests. Under these conditions, the evil spirits in many of the men, instead of withering away, increased and multiplied. Thus, when the men were finally allowed to return to the land from which they came, the people found them possessed by spirits more numerous and more evil than before, and they caused the men to be banished again and again (Clemmer, 1958, p. 1).

The unnamed sociologist described what we now call incarceration, or banishment to a total institution. Erving Goffman defines a total institution as “a place of residence and work where a large number of like situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life” (1961, p. xiii). Goffman describes life in a total institution:

There is a breakdown of barriers separating these spheres of life. All aspects of life are conducted in the same place; all aspects of the member's daily activity takes place in a group in which all members are treated the same; all phases of the

day are tightly scheduled and imposed by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution (1961, p. 6).

Privacy and quiet are nonexistent, life is highly regimented and organized for the benefit of the institution's efficient operation rather than for its inhabitants (Goffman, 1961). Goffman depicts this structure as a curtailment of self brought on immediately by the impenetrable barrier placed between the inmate and the world he has been taken from (1961). The self suffers further curtailment by the loss of the most basic of freedoms such as the use of the telephone, smoking, mailing correspondence, and using the toilet. The need to ask permission to do these things "puts the individual in a submissive or suppliant role unnatural for an adult" (Goffman, 1961, p. 41).

After a period of time, the inmate disassociates himself from the society and culture he left outside the prison gates and disculturation results (Goffman, 1961). When that occurs, life within the prison walls becomes the norm. The inmate becomes estranged from the behaviors that were expected in the larger society, and he no longer relates to life outside the institution (Goffman, 1961).

The recruit comes into the establishment with a conception of himself made possible by certain stable social arrangements in his home world. Upon entrance, he is immediately stripped of the support provided by these arrangements. In the accurate language of some of our oldest total institutions, he begins a series of abasements, degradations, humiliations, and profanation of self. His self is systematically, if often unintentionally, mortified. He begins some radical shifts in his moral career, a career

composed of the progressive changes that occur in the beliefs that he has concerning himself and significant others (Goffman, 1961, p. 14).

Institutionalization robs the inmate of control over his life. It places him in a child-like state of dependence on others to meet his basic needs, makes decisions for him, and curtails his freedom of movement.

Culture

Every work place or institution has a culture all its own. "Culture is socially constructed reality; it is what people learn from each other about their world" (Charon, 1986, p. 198). Culture becomes unconscious for its members through a learned set of assumptions based on the group's shared history (Schein, 1992). The culture is taken for granted; the group's members take action without thought to the reason that they are doing so. Artifacts (dress code, behaviors in interactions with others), values, and common underlying assumptions make up the group's shared perspective (Schein, 1992). Individuals learn a different role in every organization in which they function. They identify the organization's, or institution's, unwritten or unarticulated rules, norms, and values and act appropriately depending on a given situation.

Prisonization

The term prisonization was introduced by Donald Clemmer to indicate acceptance and socialization into the world of imprisonment (Slosar, 1978). The longer the inmate remains incarcerated, the more likely it is that he will adopt the norms and roles of the institution in which he resides.

Roles

The Stanford Prison Experiment, developed and facilitated by Philip Zimbardo in an isolated setting in California in 1972, demonstrates the power of role definition. A group of mature, emotionally stable, intelligent, college students from middle class homes were assigned the role of either prison guard or prisoner. Within a few days, they began to identify with their roles. The guards became brutal; the prisoners wanted to be released. After six days, the experiment had to be stopped abruptly because the participants had lost touch with reality; they had become their make-believe roles. There were dramatic changes in every aspect of their behavior, thinking, and feeling (Charon, 1986). The Stanford Prison Experiment illustrates the extent to which the situations we are placed in and the roles we play influence our behavior (Babbie, 1988).

“Being in a total institution 24 hours a day changes the inmate’s understanding of his role in life. The inmate’s position inside the institution differs a great deal from that in the outside world” (Charon, 1986, p. 289). Role expectations drive an individual’s expectations of himself, which in turn drives his behavior. “Here is the power of social structure, position, and role” (Charon, 1986, p. 175). “Part of our socialization, part of learning within any social organization, is learning our place or position and the related positions of others” (Charon, 1986, p. 169).

Norms/Frames

Formal and informal norms exist in work and social settings. The formal norms are understood by most people and extend beyond status; they are laws. The informal norms are pervasive and serve to govern as well. They dictate the language we use, the clothing we wear, the food we eat, and our appearance in general (Babbie, 1988). Public

behaviors, rules, social norms, or manners are often difficult to identify but highly vulnerable to violation.

Frames serve to define the social order by telling us what is going on, when to do what, and to whom (Goleman, 1985, p. 209). They differ from culture to culture, which provides challenges in contacts between individuals from different cultures (Goleman, 1985, p. 209). “What we think of as good manners are frames for smooth relations in public. When people interact who do not share the same schemas for how to act properly in a situation, the result is embarrassment, social friction or outright anxiety” (Goleman, 1985, p. 212).

Reference Group

When an individual enters a new group, they become his reference group. The group influences the way he behaves; they guide his behavior (Babbie, 1988). “Charles Horton Cooley spoke of our looking glass self suggesting we see who we are in the reflection provided by those around us” (Babbie, 1988, p. 39). Our reference group exerts a great deal of influence on how we see ourselves and the statuses we occupy.

Statuses

We all occupy statuses in our social or reference groups. We identify people by their status positions and tend to apply labels in the form of nouns (such as wife, boss, criminal) which after a period of time become the individual’s identity (Charon, 1986). “Identity is socially bestowed, socially sustained, and socially transformed” (Berger, 1963 in Charon, 1986, p. 177). According to labeling theory, people accept the statuses that others within their social structure assign to them (Babbie, 1988). Re-entry into the larger society can be frightening to one who has been incarcerated for a period of

time and has come to accept his prisoner status or criminal label. Identification with the criminal status may also be a contributing factor in recidivism.

Release Anxiety

Prisoners may experience anxiety as their sentence concludes and they face release into society. The releasee and his friends may question his ability to survive outside the prison environment (Goffman, 1961).

Release anxiety is disculturation, the loss or failure to acquire some of the habits currently required in the wider society. Another is stigmatization.

When the individual has taken on a low proactive status by becoming an inmate, he finds a cool reception in the wider world and is likely to experience this at a moment hard even for those without his stigma (Goffman, 1961, p. 73).

Stigmatization

Stigma casts the individual out of social acceptance (Goffman, 1963). “We believe the person with a stigma is not quite human. We exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his life chances. We construct a stigma-theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger he represents, sometimes rationalizing an animosity based on other differences” (Goffman, 1963, p. 5). The stigmatized person never knows what others think of him. He may be self-conscious about the impression he is making, worry about acceptance, and be concerned about that which he either accomplishes or fails to accomplish in his everyday life (Goffman, 1963).

Members of society categorize persons based on appearance, the role he plays, the claim he makes as to the kind of person he is, and his history (Goffman, 1963). When an individual makes an explicit or implicit claim of being a certain kind of person, others value him in the way that they believe “his kind” are to be treated (Goffman, 1959). “Those who have dealings with him fail to accord him the respect and regard which the uncontaminated aspects of his social identity have led them to anticipate extending and have led him to anticipate receiving” (Goffman, 1963, p. 3).

When the individual’s position in society changes, he will not receive an instruction manual directing him how to behave in his new role. Those around him assume that he knows how to conduct himself in this new setting (Goffman, 1959). Unfortunately, not all released prisoners possess the skills necessary to adapt to a significantly different role.

Recidivism

In the United States, more than 400,000 inmates a year are released into our communities. A study of federal prisoners released in 1987 indicates that they recidivate at the highest rate during the first year of release—11.3 percent during the first six months of release and 20.3 percent within the first year (Harer, 1995). Within three years of release, 40.8 percent of the released convicts in this same group had either been rearrested or had their parole revoked (Harer, 1995). Lack of job training and work opportunities while institutionalized as well as not having employment at the time of release play significant roles in recidivism (Turner & Petersilia, 1996).

Those inmates who had commitments of employment prior to release experienced lower rates of recidivism than those who did not; the difference was 27.6 percent for

those who had secured employment versus 53.9 percent for those who had not (Harer, 1995). “The more educational programs successfully completed for each six months confined, the lower the recidivism rate” (Harer, 1995, p. 99). “Education in prison should be about education in its broadest terms and hopefully, if addressed properly, it will assist the student to lead a meaningful and useful life, either in prison or on release, and be of wider benefit to the community in which he or she lives” (Vaughan-Jones, 1997, p. 37).

Correctional Education

Correctional educational programs were introduced in the 1800s with a focus on religious instruction. Some 50 years later, they were viewed with a rehabilitative eye and emphasized academic and vocational education. In 1928, James V. Bennett, long-time Director of Federal Prisons, addressed the purpose of work and educational programs for prisoners:

It is hoped that progressive training will make the transition from the ordinarily complete subjugation of the incarcerated man's ego to unrestricted independence less shocking, encourage the self-reliance of the federal offender, and inculcate in him a sense of responsibility and respect for the rights of others. It is an attempt to get away from the wholesale regimenting of the prisoner, mitigate the harshness of prison discipline, and preclude brutalizing the men (Harer, 1995, p. 111).

It was not until the 1960s that post-secondary educational programs became part of the correctional education process (Linden & Perry, 1983). In 1973, J. D. Weir spoke about the history of educational programs in the Canadian federal correctional system:

Academic programs were no longer to be regarded as educational retreats—as compensation for the missed opportunities of childhood and youth. Education was recognized as one of the major disciplines used in the total correctional process. The real concern was to provide programs of adult education that would contribute to the maturation of those inmates exposed to it, provide programs of vocational training designed to teach the occupational skills required to compete in the competitive 20th century labor market, and while so doing hopefully bring about changes in behavior and attitudes to the extent that substantial numbers of inmates who enter our institutions each year would avoid wasting the remainder of their lives in the shadow world of the criminal (Linden & Perry, 1982, p. 45).

Today's view of correctional education emphasizes the need for an integrated, holistic approach that addresses the cognitive, affective, social, and moral development of the individual along with traditional vocational content (Wright, 1997).

Robert Ross, University of Ottawa, and Elizabeth Fabiano, Correctional Service of Canada, conducted research on social cognition and development theory in the Canadian prison system for several years. Fabiano (1991) concluded that offenders lack critical reasoning skills and self-control; they are action-oriented, impulsive, and fail to consider the consequences of their actions. In addition, they blame others or place accountability on circumstances that are beyond their control. She recommends the use of rational self-analysis, self-control training, means-ends reasoning, critical thinking,

interpersonal problem-solving, and social perspective training techniques to address these cognitive deficiencies.

Ross compares the elements of successful correctional education programs that help in preventing recidivism with substance abuse programs that keep the abuser from relapsing. Specifically, he cited Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and its twelve-step program. Ross suggested that the inmate's cognitive problem compares with what AA facilitators refer to as "stinking thinking" (Dilulio, 1991).

Evidence also indicated that many offenders have not progressed beyond an egocentric state of cognitive development; they are unable (or fail) to distinguish between their own emotional states and thoughts and views and those of other people. Lacking this ability, they misread social expectations and misinterpret the actions and intentions of others. They also lack the ability to form acceptable relationships with people (including employers and spouses). This prevents them from developing appropriate means of dealing with interpersonal problems (Fabiano, 1991, p. 102).

Critical thinking, conflict resolution, and empathy are all important for the development of the inmate in preparation for release. S. E. Samenow, in the Journal of Correctional Education, supports the findings and recommendations made by Fabiano and Ross. He suggests that "without critical thinking skills, we will have a criminal with job skills rather than a criminal without job skills" (Wright, 1997, p. 13). He will not have the critical thinking skills needed to see alternative solutions to the problems he faces on the outside.

The effects of institutionalization and disculturation can be countered in part by removing the prisoner from the usual institutional atmosphere and placing him in an environment—still within the prison—that provides an opportunity for success. Being in an educational or work setting for a period of time each day insulates him from “the antisocial prison subculture” (Antonowicz & Ross, 1994, p. 101). It also facilitates the resocializing of the prisoner to recognize and accept prosocial norms thereby inhibiting the influence of prisonization.

An indirect benefit of correctional education involves increasing the inmate’s self-esteem and/or a self-realization of potential that has not been apparent to him before. “Education provides incarcerated individuals with their first taste of success. It is a great lesson and a powerful experience” (Davis, 1995, p. 15). When released, the inmate may achieve an increased measure of social acceptance due to the knowledge he has gained, the interpersonal communication skills, and improved understanding and practice of etiquette.

Upon release, the inmate often returns to the same setting that he lived in prior to incarceration and requires different skills, attitudes, and values in order to survive within this environment and not revert to the behaviors that resulted in his imprisonment (Fabiano, 1991). “Offenders must be taught how to think before one can expect to change what they think” (Antonowicz & Ross, 1994).

Social Education

Some correctional education programs offer social or life skills training which falls under the broad umbrella of social education. “Social skills are those kinds of behaviors which are basic to effective face-to-face communication between individuals.

Life skills are those more complex kind of behaviors that are essential to survival in society and to solving problems such as finding a job or managing money” (McGuire & Priestley, 1981, p. 7).

Social education, as we define it, is an organized effort to furnish factual information to the individual in those areas of social and emotional interaction in which his past faulty attitudes have caused him difficulty and to suggest methods by which he can effect a more satisfying and socially acceptable way of living (Baker, 1973, p. 241).

There are three primary classes of social and life skills: (a) self-knowledge or self-awareness (including one’s limits); (b) interpersonal skills including communication, self-assertiveness, listening, resisting social pressures; and (c) problem-solving skills such as being able to find necessary information, make decisions, planning or goal setting, and identifying alternative courses of action and deciding between them for the appropriate outcome. It also includes feedback, or “environmental responses to what one is, says or does” (McGuire & Priestley, 1981). “The overall aim in life and social skills training is to enable individuals to increase the range and quality of things they can do in order to get more out of life” (McGuire & Priestley, 1981, pp. 33-34).

Marshall, Turner, and Barbaree (1989) conducted a study of life skills training programs that involved 120 male inmates from three regional Ontario medium-security institutions (Joyceville, Collins Bay, and Warkworth). Of the 120 inmates, 68 completed the training programs and participated in evaluations (both pre- and post-training). “Twenty-two men volunteered to be assessed twice at temporal intervals corresponding

approximately to the pre- and post-treatment assessments of treated inmates” (pp. 42-43).

They concluded that

the life skills training provided for penitentiary inmates which we evaluated was effective in producing the changes which are claimed to result from such training and which are thought to be functionally related to subsequent reduced recidivism. The most dramatic effects of training were on the behavioral features of interactive social functioning. Training increased empathy and decreased psychopathy, with the latter changes being most evident in the high participants. Life skills training effectively changed features of penitentiary inmates which are considered important in reducing the likelihood of future recidivism (pp. 57-58).

Leadership

Leadership comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. It can take the form of credible or exemplary leadership, transformational, collaborative, or servant to name a few. Regardless of the theory, followers expect their leaders to:

- be concerned about their highest priority needs,
- appreciate them for the diverse individuals that they are,
- look upon them without judgment (Kouzes & Posner, 1993),
- operate with vision and a belief in the future, and
- cross social boundaries and respect differences (Gardner, 1986).

Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus view leadership as causative. “Leaders can, through deploying their talents, choose purposes and visions that are based on the key values of the workforce and create the social architecture that supports them” (1985, p.

218). They also believe that a fundamental responsibility of the leader is to “influence and organize meaning for the members of the organization” (1985, p. 39). “The new, transformative leader, is one who commits people to action, who converts followers into leaders, and who may convert leaders into agents of change” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 3).

Leaders set direction for their organizations and their followers. Stephen Covey postulates that leaders make certain that “the ladder is leaning against the right wall” (1991, p. 246). Kouzes and Posner (1993) also address leadership and direction:

We expect leaders to have a sense of direction and concern for the future of the organization; they must know where they are going; must have a destination in mind when asking others to join them on a journey into the unknown. ... If leaders are to be admired and respected, they must have the ability to see across the horizon of time and imagine what might be. ...

Constituents ask that a leader have a well-defined orientation toward the future (p. 16).

Leaders blend hopefulness and realism. While they have positive views of the future, believe in themselves and their followers, they acknowledge that the road may be littered with speed bumps. “Leaders must help us see failure and frustration not as reason to doubt ourselves but as reason to strengthen resolve” (Gardner, 1986, p. 13).

Leaders’ constituencies have diverse opinions, backgrounds, and cultures. They may be clients, peers, employees, vendors, or other leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). Leaders understand their constituents—their hopes, fears, and motives. “Effective leaders tap those motives that serve the purposes of collective action in pursuit of

significant shared goals. They accomplish the alignment of individual and group goals” (Gardner, 1986, pp. 9-10).

Leaders are renewers. All renewal is a blend of continuity and change. Leaders help bring about change that preserves the organization's deepest values, enhances the vitality of the system and ensures its future (Gardner, 1986, p. 22).

Not only does the leader understand the hopes, fears, and motives of his or her constituents, the leader appreciates their diversity of cultures and beliefs (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). “Ken Blanchard’s Situational Leadership II suggests that the leader must adapt his style to suit the ability and maturity (competence and commitment) of his people” (Covey, 1991, p. 284).

Leadership is about learning. Leaders approach their responsibilities with an open mind and belief that their followers have the ability to contribute to the organization. There is no room in leadership for preconceived notions and outdated assumptions (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). Leaders must also recognize the multitude of other systems operating externally to their own but which impact their organization’s existence (Gardner, 1986).

Robert Greenleaf wrote about trustee education and how servant-leadership applies to the roles of boards of directors and trustees within institutions. Greenleaf suggested that trustees ask themselves two questions: “Whom do I serve and for what purpose?” (Renesch, 1994, p. 161). Kouzes and Posner echo Greenleaf’s philosophy about leaders of all organizations. “Leadership is a service. Leaders serve a purpose for the people who have made it possible for them to lead—their constituents. They are servant leaders—not self-serving, but other-serving” (1993, pp. 54-55).

Board members are sponsors. They are ambassadors—interpreting the mission of the institution, defending it when it is under pressure, representing it in their constituencies and communities. Finally, they are consultants; almost every trustee will have some professional skill which would be expensive if you had to buy it. ... Governor, sponsor, ambassador, and consultant would be the four major roles (Drucker, 1990, p. 173).

The collaborative leader assumes a number of different roles. He/she acts as a facilitator to ensure that the operation functions effectively, coaches and supports others in the team/organization, holds others accountable to meet their goals and responsibilities, and serves as a catalyst or change agent to keep the organization moving forward. The collaborative leader also mediates disputes, functions as a team member, and is responsible for management and administration of processes and systems (Marshall, 1995).

“Whether your leadership is confined to your own 25 square feet or extends to the plant’s 250,000 square feet or to the corporation’s 2,500,000 square feet, success is leaving the area a better place than when you found it” (Kouzes & Posner, 1993, p. 261).

SUMMARY OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Correctional institutions are total institutions in which the inhabitants live and work in the same location, cut off from the rest of society, for a period of time for the express purpose of making outside society a safer place. The inhabitants are confined to the institution 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in a highly regimented, organized, yet

unpredictable existence. Once placed there, they become stigmatized, or labeled, as undesirable or deviant.

After a period of time, the inmate disassociates himself from the larger society and disculturation occurs; the inmate ceases to relate to life outside the institution. He accepts the institution's culture as his socially constructed reality. In other words, he becomes prisonized. The norms, values, beliefs, role expectations, and statuses inherent in the correctional environment become his way of life.

Fellow prisoners become his reference group. The group influences behavior and serves as his "looking glass self" (Babbie, 1988, p. 39). They shape the prisoner's view of himself. Once incarcerated, the inmate identifies with the status of prisoner or deviant. Labeling theory suggests that he will accept the status that society has given him; he will hereafter wear the criminal label.

The prisoner becomes stigmatized by his deviance and subsequent incarceration. This stigma casts him out of social acceptance and interaction with members of society at large—the normals. Erving Goffman says that society constructs a stigma-theory, or rationalization that the individual is inferior and dangerous (1963, p. 5). The stigmatized person may be self-conscious about the impression he creates on others and be concerned about acceptance in social or work settings.

The highest rate of recidivism occurs during the first year after release (20.3 percent), and approximately 40.8 percent are either rearrested or have their parole revoked during the first three years of release. The statistics are much better for those who participated in correctional educational programs or who had a commitment for employment upon release.

A number of studies indicate that correctional education increases the likelihood of successful assimilation into society for the released offender by giving him coping skills, critical thinking ability, conflict resolution tools, and empathy. An indirect benefit of correctional education involves increasing the inmate's self-esteem and/or self-realization of his own potential. This may represent the individual's first taste of success.

Some correctional education programs offer social or life skills training. Social skills training focuses on basic face-to-face communication; life skills training deals with problem solving, conflict resolution, the job search, money management, and other skills required in daily life that normals take for granted. Many professionals involved in the field of corrections believe that inmates are deficient in these coping skills and that deficiency contributes to their reversion to the behaviors that led to incarceration.

Leadership has become one of the buzz words of the 1990s and bookstore shelves bulge with countless volumes on leadership theory. While the theories themselves vary, a few leadership characteristics predominate across theoretical boundaries. The effective leader values the diversity and uniqueness of his or her followers, places importance on their highest priority needs, operates with vision and a belief and hope for the future, demonstrates mutual respect, and lives by his or her values and principles. Leaders accept responsibility and accountability for their actions and serve as role models in doing so. Setting direction for the organization is a primary role the leader plays. As Covey says, "they make certain the ladder is leaning against the right wall" (1991, p. 246).

While leaders communicate hope for the future to their constituents, they also convey a realistic view. They acknowledge that life will not be without challenges.

Leaders understand their constituent's hopes, fears, and motives; they tap into the followers motives to move the organization forward in accomplishing group goals.

Leaders approach their role with an open mind and belief that their followers will contribute to the good of the organization. They put aside any preconceived notions and assumptions. Leaders recognize that there are a multitude of systems operating outside their own and that those systems may affect their organizations.

ANALYSIS

The literature review convinced the author that life and/or social skills training is essential if the inmate workers are to overcome the effects of prisonization, stigma, and to break free of the norms and socially constructed reality of prison. They come into the institution with undeveloped critical thinking and problem solving skills and are often ineffective in dealing with interpersonal relationships. Unless they receive appropriate training and have access to role models, they leave the institution with a knowledge of how to survive in that setting but are poorly equipped to make a transition to the every day world.

When the author began this paper, she believed that the inmate workers receive comprehensive information technology training through Stillwater Systems and that critical skills and/or social or life skills training was accessible through the Lino Lakes Correctional Facility's training function. Unfortunately, that did not prove to be the case for critical thinking, problem-solving, or social and life skills training.

New inmate workers at SSI receive self-paced computer programming and flow-charting instruction. A module on structured software testing is also part of their

program. During the instruction phase, they prepare a class project that requires practical application of what they learned in the self-paced program. The student presents his project to the SSI president who assumes the role of a client and critiques the product. This exercise provides the inmate worker with practical programming experience as well as in receiving feedback and interacting with a client. When they complete the project to the satisfaction of the president, they are assigned to an on-going project team where they receive on-the-job (OJT) training. In addition to the technical OJT, they attain an understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of serving on a project team, receive regular feedback, and gain experience in scheduling work.

The Lino Lakes Correctional Facility Training organization offers basic education/literacy training for those inmates who have less than an eighth grade education. Another program available to inmates who come to the institution with more than an eighth grade education but less than a high school diploma or GED serves to prepare them for the GED examination. SSI workers do not generally fit either of these categories. The inmates who meet the criteria for admittance to SSI usually have a high school diploma, or are close to being ready to take the GED, or may even have completed a few years of college. Inmate candidates possess a strong math aptitude and the ability to think logically (in a computer programming context).

The inmate workers at SSI learn marketable skills in preparation for entry into a job market where the number of trained information technology workers fails to keep pace with the demand. All employment market indications suggest that the demand will continue to exceed the supply for the next few years and possibly beyond. However,

these men will compete for jobs in the labor market with college educated individuals who do not share their history of deviance and stigmatization.

Critical thinking and problem solving skills are often lacking in the inmate population. They fail to consider alternatives, do not accept or understand that consequences accompany their decisions, and unsuccessfully deal with interpersonal relationships and conflict. The ability to think critically and to identify problems (or root causes of problems) are essential skills in the programming field as well as in coping with the challenges of every day life. Critical thinking and problem solving is not offered as a stand-alone course by the Lino Lakes Correctional Facility training department but may be embedded in other curriculum. Since the SSI inmates cannot attend institution-sponsored courses during working hours and do not require basic education/literacy training, they are not exposed to skill building instruction in these areas.

There is little influence the SSI Board of Directors can exert over Department of Corrections training decisions. They do possess the power to require that this training be part of the SSI curriculum. At the time of this writing, they are considering a candidate for the Executive Director position who has extensive experience in this area and is a proponent of life skills training for inmates. If the Board hires this individual, they will create greater learning opportunities for the inmates and better prepare them for life outside the institution. The new Executive Director and Board of Directors may have to identify and establish alternative sources of funding if they are to make this significant a change.

CONCLUSION

The white-collar world of work represents a complete paradigm shift from life in the total institution for these men. They will encounter substantially different expectations than those found in the prison. While institutionalized, they are expected to be followers in the strictest sense. In prison, leadership cannot be rewarded nor can one inmate serve in a leadership role for other inmates. The behaviors that are rewarded in organizational life can result in punishment in the correctional setting. On the outside, they will be expected to take initiative, be assertive, responsible and accountable, have self-confidence, possess strong written and verbal communication skills, address conflicts, be team players, solve technical problems, and use critical thinking skills; they will be expected to lead projects and/or people.

Many experts, such as Lehigh University's Raymond Bell, believe that traditional attempts to educate prisoners—and reduce recidivism—have failed because prisons are not dealing with traditional students. Prison courses need to be tempered with a focus on self-image, decision-making, and other social skills (Morison, 1992, p.11).

Effective and visionary leadership in this highly complex, unique business setting is crucial to the survival of Stillwater Systems. Everyone associated with the leadership of SSI plays an important role in preparing the company for the challenges of the 21st century. The author evaluated individuals with leadership responsibility in the SSI organization and the theory or style of leadership they employ and concluded that one-size leadership does not fit all.

In traditional non-profit organizations, the leaders concern themselves with setting strategic direction, identifying funding sources, and developing a strong working relationship with the executive director. There is a clear distinction between the clients the non-profit organization serves and the employees who deliver the programs and services. At Stillwater Systems, the clients and the employees are one and the same (with the exception of the executive director and office manager). Those in leadership roles must always look at the consequences of their decisions from two different (and sometimes conflicting) viewpoints—how best to serve the clients and how best to manage the employee population while ensuring SSI's viability as a business entity. In addition to the employee clients, the survival of SSI depends on delivering high quality, competitively priced products and services to the external clients who purchase them.

The Board of Directors members of a nonprofit organization function as servant leaders by giving of themselves and their time for the benefit of their constituents; they are sponsors, ambassadors, consultants, and champions for the organization (Drucker, 1990). The SSI Board members hold demanding full-time positions in other organizations or operate their own firms, and donate time and sometimes other financial and non-financial resources to the company. Individual Board members promote SSI's services through their personal and professional contacts. One Board member has been instrumental in generating a significant amount of business with the corporation he works for and was instrumental in hiring a released SSI inmate employee. Board members reach beyond their comfort zone to the inmates' world and attempt to view life through his lens.

The Board of Directors was recently presented with a directive from the Minnesota Department of Corrections. In January, 2000, SSI is being required to deduct cost of confinement expenses from inmate employee's wages. The deduction (which will include taxes, contributions to a victim's fund, and cost of confinement) will total up to 80% of the inmate worker's minimum hourly wage. A Board subcommittee met with representatives from the Department of Corrections to discuss alternatives and to better understand the DOC's position. In addition, the Board discussed concerns about the directive with the State of Minnesota Assistant Commissioner of Corrections and proposed that some of the cost of confinement dollars be returned to SSI to fund additional training programs. The Board must comply with the DOC's directive, continue to be a high quality, cost effective supplier of products and services to customers while at the same time paying the inmate employees a reasonable wage. SSI's Board is pursuing every avenue possible to attempt to meet the needs of all constituents.

According to Robert Greenleaf, the best test to determine if one is a servant leader is to ask: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous? What is the effect on the least privileged in society?" (1977, pp. 13-14). SSI Board members believe we have a responsibility to provide growth opportunities to the inmate employees and a second chance at life—without judging the behaviors that precipitated their incarceration. Their number one priority is to serve others and to make society a better place to live.

There is nothing more crucial to the renewal of a social system than the effectiveness and capacity, the quality and vitality of the human beings flowing into the system. ... One can see the sheer self-interest for us of enabling each

person to grow to full stature, the sheer value to society of removing every impediment to individual development, wither ignorance or poverty or illness or disability. The release of human potential is and must always be a central value. ... Leaders who understand that and guide themselves by it have one of the most important qualifications for moral leadership in our society. They have faith in human possibilities, and that faith communicates itself to followers with powerful effect (Gardner, 1987, pp. 10-11).

Until a new SSI executive director is hired, the current president continues to fulfill those responsibilities while also serving as CEO of Stillwater Systems Partners. In her position as the SSI executive director, she practices situational leadership and as CEO of Stillwater Systems Partners, she demonstrates transformative leadership. She is transitioning from her role as the president of a non-profit company to the CEO of a for-profit entity; her success or failure in this endeavor will directly affect the health and wellbeing of both organizations. It will be her responsibility to motivate the SSP employees (former SSI inmate employees) to work together toward a single goal and create an environment in which they thrive and experience success. She faces the challenge of ensuring that SSP employees feed project work to SSI even though it would be faster and more efficient to complete the work themselves outside the confines of the penal institution. Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus describe transformative leaders as

leaders who can shape and elevate the motives and goals of followers.

Transformative leadership achieves significant change that reflects the community of interests of both leaders and followers; it frees up and pools the collective energies in pursuit of a common goal (1985, p. 217).

She mentors and coaches the employees at SSI and SSP and will be expected to do the same with her replacement (the executive director of SSI) until that individual becomes familiar with the organization, the institution, and the Department of Corrections.

The executive director of Stillwater Systems employs situational leadership to foster effective working relationships with his or her many and varied constituencies: the inmates, the Board of Directors, the SSP CEO, and Department of Corrections staff. Each constituency comes to the executive director with different motivations, requirements, expectations, and goals. In the executive director's position, one size or style of leadership does not lend itself to every situation. He/she considers each situation to be unique, assesses the readiness level of group members, and uses the leadership style most appropriate to influence the group's behavior (Hersey, 1984). The situational leader must be adaptive and flexible and be committed to planned change (Hersey, 1984).

The author, as chair of the executive director search and selection committee, leads by collaboration. "Leaders develop collaborative goals and cooperative relationships with colleagues" (Kouzes & Posner, 1987, p. 131). She formed an interview team composed of the SSI Board of Directors chair, the former Lino Lakes warden, and the current SSI president to undertake the search and hiring of an executive director. She facilitated the process with team members having varying degrees of hiring experience (and none in the nonprofit arena). Some members have appeared resistant to change and reluctant to adopt a structured process. The committee member's schedules have at times put the process in jeopardy when their unavailability delayed the applicant interviews and visits to the company site, members were often not accessible to discuss applicant qualifications, and the diversity of the team members brought many different

agendas to the interview table. The author has had to exercise patience, work with team members who felt discomfort with the process or the inevitable change a new executive director will bring to the organization. She coordinated schedules, maintained contact with candidates, cast a dissenting vote for a preferred candidate, and attempted to guide the process while at the same time serving as a collaborative team member. The author's goal is to hire a qualified executive director and to maintain positive working relationships with the interview team members after this work is done.

Those involved in leading Stillwater Systems have a vision for the future: growth of SSI through creation of a working relationship with Stillwater Systems Partners to aggressively market programming products and services. Increased sales (through SSP) will bring additional revenue to SSI and support the hiring of a greater number of inmate workers. Upon release and as business permits, SSI inmate workers may be considered for employment at SSP. As studies have shown, the commitment of employment upon release for inmates decreases the likelihood of recidivism. The SSI Board of Directors' vision includes obtaining additional funding through grant sources to sustain the organization during business fluctuations and as the partnership with SSP develops.

Education may be the only ticket these inmates have to freedom from prison. Perhaps with training, nurturing, encouragement, and enhancement of their self-image, it will be a one-way ticket out of institutionalization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Stillwater Systems, Inc. has remained in business despite the obstacles encountered by operating from inside a penal institution because of the consistent and committed leadership by the organization's President and Board of Directors.

Management of the organization is currently undergoing a major restructuring in order to provide an opportunity for growth of the business and to increase the number of inmate workers employed by SSI. The Board must evolve to a higher level of servant and collaborative leadership in order to accomplish growth and continued fulfillment of SSI's mission. The recommendations that follow are designed to assist the Board in achieving a greater understanding of their constituents, the inmate workers, as well as the obstacles faced by doing business in a total institution, move outside their comfort zone, and embrace a new paradigm of operation.

The inmate workers of Stillwater Systems are involved in highly complex, technical work. They, more than most new entrants into the workforce, will require well-developed critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Not only are these skills necessary for the technical work that they will be expected to perform, but the released inmate workers must also use critical reasoning ability to make appropriate behavior choices in their social domain if they are to avoid recidivism. The author recommends that the Board of Directors shift their thinking from SSI as a self-sustaining entity focused only on technical training to that of a learning organization that also does technical work to generate some income. Supplementing Stillwater Systems operating income with grant funds and earmarking some of those dollars for critical thinking or problem solving skills and life and/or social skills training would provide the inmates with a balanced learning experience and expose them to coping skills to call upon when released.

Knowledge and information are the new economy's strategic resources and that this change means that employers will expect their workers to be better

thinkers and problem solvers in the future. Peter F. Drucker suggests that the most routine and simple jobs will require higher order thinking skills. Workers will be expected to think abstractly, critically, and creatively; to organize information; and to work cooperatively with others (Price, 1996, p. 116).

The author has recommended to both the SSI Board of Directors and the executive director of the Osiris Organization that we develop a collaborative working relationship. It appears that the organizations may experience a mutual benefit by establishing an on-going association. The author invited Osiris' executive director to the second quarter, 1999 Board meeting, and Board leadership subsequently asked him to participate in SSI's October, 1999 strategic planning session. At this time, the author intends to invite the Osiris Organization's executive director to join the SSI Board of Directors to share best practices and work together to strengthen and further the missions of our organizations. In addition to serving our constituents, collaboration by the leadership of both organizations may result in mentoring the young (three year old) Osiris Organization and a revitalization of the mature SSI organization.

SSI is currently pursuing candidates for the executive director position. In the past, this role was filled by a technical expert who had little experience leading a nonprofit company in a penal institution setting. The candidates being considered have limited, if any, technical expertise but bring either substantial experience in the nonprofit sector, have a corrections background, or offer both. If this change of philosophy is to succeed, the Board members who have a technical background will have to move outside their comfort zone and accept SSI leadership by a nontechnical manager. They will have to put the needs of their constituents before their ease in working with an information

technology expert. The new Executive Director will need to come to the organization as an experienced leader who acknowledges that he has much to learn and look to the Board for instruction, technical competence, and guidance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

A recommendation for further study is mentoring of SSI inmate workers by former inmate workers or Board of Directors members. Department of Corrections policy prohibits correctional facility visitation by former inmates within their first two years of release. The SSI Board of Directors has requested a waiver to this policy for purposes of conducting business between SSI and SSP. If the Department of Corrections grants the waiver, the SSI Board of Directors could consider the Osiris Organization as a successful mentoring model. Again, the Board of Directors may move to a higher level of servant leadership and a more personal involvement in the organization by mentoring the inmate workers thereby gaining a better understanding of their constituents and providing positive role models to the employees.

The basic strategic and organizational elements of correctional programs that have in many cases proven effective in reducing recidivism include efforts to provide the offender with noncriminal role models that are within his reach (employed people who are making it) to enhance the offender's basic problem-solving skills, including the basic cognitive ability to relate actions to their consequences; to make use of whatever human and financial resources are available in the community to aid the program; to build interpersonal relationships that strengthen empathic

impulses; to establish respect for legitimate authority; and to put in place relevant postprogram support services (Dilulio, 1991, p. 108).

The current SSI president advocates inviting a released inmate worker to join the Board of Directors. The author supports her recommendation and suggests that a released inmate's perspective of the training required to make a leap from total institution to white collar world would be invaluable. Some Board of Directors members, particularly those employed by the Department of Corrections, have expressed reluctance to consider this recommendation. If Board members (outside the DOC representatives) had more face-to-face contact with their clients/employees, the resistance might not be as great.

The author will share her findings and recommendations with the Board of Directors, SSI president, and new executive director.

EPILOGUE

The desired outcome is for Stillwater Systems to train and financially support many more inmates—to release their human potential. The organization over the past twenty years has been small but mighty. Stillwater Systems, the Department of Corrections, and Stillwater Systems Partners will continue working to change the belief systems of those inmates whose lives they touch.

If I continue to believe as I have always believed,

I will continue to act as I have always acted.

If I continue to act as I have always acted,

I will continue to get what I have always gotten

(Marilyn Ferguson, [Speaker] 1984).

APPENDIX A

ADULT INMATE PROFILE
 STATE OF MINNESOTA
 DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
 AS OF JULY 1, 1998

	<u>Population</u>	
Males	5,234	95.0%
Females	<u>273</u>	5.0%
Total	5,507	

	<u>Population by Facility</u>	
Stillwater	1,283	23.3%
Lino Lakes	1,003	18.2%
Faribault	937	17.0%
St. Cloud	749	13.6%
Willow River/Moose Lake	768	13.9%
Oak Park Heights	399	7.2%
Shakopee	266	4.8%
Red Wing	32	.6%
Contract Facilities	<u>70</u>	1.3%
	5,507	

Commitments

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>Change</u>
January-June	1,322	1,626	23.0%
July-December	1,352	Not Available	

Releases (Fiscal Year 1998)

Supervised Release/Parole	2,821	79.8%
Intensive Community Super.	208	5.9%
Discharge	<u>506</u>	14.3%
	3,874	

Admissions (Fiscal Year 1998)

New Commitments	2,847	73.5%
Release Return without New		
Sentencing	893	23.1%
Release Return with New		
Sentencing	<u>134</u>	3.4%
	3,874	

Average Sentence Length

Sentenced in calendar year 1997 (includes jail credit but excludes lifers) = 39.9 months.

Per Diem Costs (State Funds Fiscal Year 1997)

Faribault	\$ 79.04	Shakopee	\$115.67
Lino Lakes	\$ 86.89	Stillwater	\$ 70.05
Oak Park Heights	\$123.26	St. Cloud	\$ 82.73

Educational Level

Grades 0-8	328	6.0%
Grades 9-11	1,755	31.9%
High School Graduate	1,363	24.8%
GED	1,071	19.4%
College and Up	829	12.9%
Other/Unknown	<u>161</u>	2.9%
	5,507	

State of Minnesota Department of Corrections Budget*

	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>
MCF Brainerd	\$ --	\$199,000
MCF Faribault	25,724	26,166
MCF Lino Lakes	29,194	29,805
MCF Oak Park Heights	17,148	17,514
MCF St. Cloud	24,172	24,567
MCF Shakopee	11,251	11,575
MCF Stillwater	33,249	33,983
Willow River Campus	3,069	3,118
Moose Lake Campus	19,533	19,890
Camp Ripley	700	1,500
Education	379	379
Health Care	9,328	9,658
Support Services	<u>5,628</u>	<u>10,673</u>
Total	\$179,374	\$189,027

*Fiscal Years 1998-99; Adult Facilities; General Fund Appropriation; Dollars shown in thousands.

MCF = Minnesota Correctional Facility

APPENDIX B

DEFINITIONS

1. Admissions: Includes new commitments to a state correctional facility and all release returns.
2. Adult: Any individual age 18 or older not classified as an Extended Jurisdiction Juvenile (EJJ) or Certified Adult (CA).
3. Commitments: Includes all new court commitments to a state correctional facility and release returns with a new sentence. Does not include offenders who are release returns without a new sentence.
4. Discharge: Release from a state correctional facility at expiration of sentence.
5. Intensive community supervision: A period of incarceration in prison, intended to shock the offender, followed by a highly restrictive community supervision plan. Program elements can include house arrest, random drug testing, frequent face-to-face contact with specially trained agents, mandatory work or school, curfews and mandatory restitution to victims.
6. Lifers: Adults/certified adults sentenced to serve a 30-year term of imprisonment with the possibility of parole after that time (prior to 1989, this category includes offenders sentenced to serve 17 years imprisonment with the possibility of parole after that time). Also includes adults/certified adults sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.
7. Per Diem: Average operating cost to house an offender in a state correctional facility for one day.
8. Release return with new sentence: When an offender commits a new offense while on supervised release/parole and is returned to a correctional facility.

9. Release return without new sentence: When an offender violates conditions of supervised release/parole and is returned to a correctional facility, but has not been convicted of a new offense.
10. Supervised release or parole: For adults/certified adults, “supervised release” is a process of surveillance and supervision of an offender in the community after completing a term of incarceration. The sentencing court indicates the period of supervised release to be served when pronouncing the offender’s sentence.
11. For an adult/certified adult serving a life sentence who is released, supervision in the community is called “parole” which is determined by the commissioner of corrections with the assistance of an advisory board.

Caveats

- Education level categories are not consistent throughout all years of adult profiles due to changes in collection methods.
- Population breakouts may not always add to the total listed due to rounding, missing or unknown data.
- Yearly commitment numbers may vary from one offender profile to another due to estimating at the time of publication.
- The number of new commitments and the number of offenders returning to prison after committing a new offense while on supervised release/parole for another offense should add to the total number of commitments; however, this is not always the case.

This discrepancy occurs due to data entry errors and changes in data recording

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