

Communication Is What It's All About

arrive at a common ground so that all are working together towards the same goal. Lack of communication and incorrect assumptions are the cause of many problems during the course of any production.

During a pre-production meeting the most useful thing you can do is to listen carefully to whoever is leading the discussion. In that way you can be sure that whatever decisions you make will be founded on the basis of a received communication and will serve the needs of the production.

Earlier in this column I stated that 1990 had been an interesting one both personally and professionally. I've already said why it was personally interesting, now I will relate why it was so interesting on a professional level.

"Some readers ... were left with the mistaken impression that I didn't think HD imaging would ever reach fruition."

For the bulk of the year this column has been dedicated to discussing the issues and ramifications about, and behind, High Definition, what some call it HDTV but I prefer to call HD imaging.)

In the last article I wrote on this topic I talked about a concept called theatre television which, I felt, could be successfully applied to HD imaging. Some readers, I found, were left with the mistaken impression that I didn't think HD imaging would ever reach fruition. I apologize for this lack of communication.

I believe in HD as a medium, but I believe that it has to find its own niche. Once that issue is resolved, the impediment of cost will be greatly diminished and the marketplace will then resolve how, where, where and why HD will be used as a medium. The users will ultimately shape what the new medium of HD will become.

Effective communication hinges on the sender giving out a clear message that the receiver can understand. Poor communication, I believe, was at the root of a phenomena that struck the production industry earlier this year.

This industry is cyclical in nature, but the rhythm in the past has been somewhat predictable — usually the winter is a slow, then production picks up in the spring and in the summer there are usually so many productions going on at the same time

that there aren't enough production personnel to service them all. In fall the work starts to slow down, moving back towards the slow winter season.

This year the boom in work in this area didn't occur until early August, and then was short-lived.

One of the key elements to working successfully as a freelancer is to have a large network of associates you can inform you of upcoming productions that you otherwise wouldn't hear about. This year the network was silent, there was a shortage of work in all facets of the production industry. The corporate/industrial market has been decimated by the lack of production, witness the demise of a number of corporate production companies; feature film production has declined considerably over the last three years; and in the commercial field several companies fell by the wayside.

No doubt a number of reasons for these failures are related to the downturn in the economy. But I believe there is one root cause that is common to all — a general malaise has swept over the country because people don't seem to have a clear view of where Canada is headed after Meech Lake and the events at Oka.

If the federal government has articulated a clear vision of where we are going, no one has heard it.

In some respects I think that the cross-Canada commission headed by Keith Spicer is intended to serve as a sounding board to develop an agenda. The ideas that will be communicated to the commission will likely be distilled into a few achievable goals which the government will communicate to the populace.

Hopefully Canada will head into the latter 90s and the decade beyond with a renewed sense of purpose and direction.

Historically it has always been easier for both trade and commerce to travel north-south across the border rather than east-west across our country. Most of our population lives within 200 miles of the U.S. border.

This has always been a cause for concern for Canadians, so we rose to the task and developed a means of defending our unique way of life. A vast communications network was developed to hold this country together, first by rail and then by other technologies as they came of age.

In fact a large part of the success of Canadian industries in the telecom-

munications field can be attributed to our need to overcome large tracts of relatively uninhabited land. We are world leaders in terrestrial- and satellite-based communications because we needed and continue to need these communications media to hold our country together.

CBC cutbacks: "it would be a mistake to underestimate the impact of a loss of this magnitude."

In many ways the fabric of our communications network has been damaged by the financial cutbacks at the CBC, which have left many areas of this country without the local representation and voice that they have become accustomed to.

I think that it would be a mistake to underestimate the impact of a loss of this magnitude to the affected areas. They have, in effect, lost their means of communicating their unique character, and as a result we have lost our vital communications link to their distinct regional voices.

A country is composed of more than land and people. It is a community of people who have like interests and goals and have gathered together to realize a common purpose. This is the essence of communication.

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