

**An Integrated Vision of Sustainable Business Performance
Media Practice And Public Mental Health**

**Our minds will do the heavy lifting for businesses which hope to
compete successfully in the global information economy²**

By

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A. **Information Economy of Mental Performance**

- Competitiveness depends on innovation. Innovation is a mental function.
- The underlying value-added of products/services today is ³thought content.²
- The business case for mental health must be made in the market place if ever it is to be successfully made in the work place.

B. **The Age of Disability**

- Mental Health disorders driving disability rates in world economy.
- Depression and heart disease emerging as leading sources of work days lost through disability and premature death.
- Detection and treatment rates very low. Need remedial action.
- Business operations bear two-thirds of the cost of mental illness.
- Depression costs North American and European economies tens of billions a year.
- The business case for mental health will open a new front in an old war.
- Need to know more about how mental health problems affect business cost structures, cash flows and revenue prospects.
- Need to know how business can halt the serious cash drain on operations caused by mental health disorders; what dollar investments can be made by business to create management standards which promote mental health.
- Need to form an alliance with global media.

C. **Business Information and Education - A Starting Point**

- Need to mobilize business leaders on this topic.
- Need to defeat stigma and discrimination once and for all.
- Roundtable aims to create a slate of ³mental health² management standards and business practices.
- The Global Initiative - A Network of Business and Economic Roundtables:
 - (1) Create a worldwide network of leaders in business, health and education.
 - (2) CEO desks² already created in Hong Kong and Brazil.
 - (3) Two-year plan for series of regional Roundtables (events) to develop strategies, messages, management and business practice standards, investment scenarios and CEO mobilization strategies.
 - (4) Propose Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health for New York and Roundtable event in New York City, fall 2001; Maastricht-Toronto twinning on mental health in 2002 and exploring opportunities to leverage the New York - Ontario summit for purposes of this initiative.
- **Business, Media and Mental Health**
 - (1) Initiating a dialogue for improving mental health reporting practice in the media.
 - (2) Engage media in combating discrimination and stigma and raising global awareness for mental health.
 - (3) Develop as a human resource a world mental health internet network.
 - (4) Develop public opinion surveys in mental health.

D. **Roundtable Postscript**

- RT concept aimed at avoiding large logistics and costs of stand-alone conference.
- RT concept is entrepreneurial and dynamic.
- RT concept aims to engage business in its terms.
- RT concept aimed, ultimately, at having a net effect.
- Media concept creates a direct line to public education.
- Media concept will survey public opinion.
- Media concept initiates a dialogue in improving mental health reporting.
- Media concept facilitates access to mental health information on the internet.
- Media concept seeks to improve mental health awareness in the entertainment Industry.
- Media concept aims to develop a Media Roundtable.

BUILDING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN THE GLOBAL INFORMATION ECONOMY

An Integrated Vision of Sustainable Business Performance Media Practice and Public Mental Health

A. THE INFORMATION ECONOMY OF MENTAL PERFORMANCE

Competitive success in the global information economy - among both old and new economy industries - depends fundamentally on service and product differentiation, quality and, ultimately, enduring customer loyalty and satisfaction. There isn't anything particularly new in this.

What is new is the source of that differentiation. For example, price makes a difference but not enough. Technology is replicable. Service times are compressed to the limit. Competitive advantage today comes, by and large, through innovation.

Innovation is the application of ideas by skilled and motivated people to opportunities and problems in business. Xerox calls itself the ³solutions company² not the ³the copier company² for a simple reason. That's what it sells - solutions to business problems irrespective of the hardware and software involved.

Innovation - for today's purposes - is delivered through digital technology and is aimed at the continuous improvement, refinement and competitive placement of products and services in the market place.

In turn, innovation is fundamentally a human function, not a technological one - and, in that context, a mental process not a physical one.

Innovation in business today is not invention, it is not done in the laboratory, it is not a sign on the door. It constitutes the work of every employee and manager throughout the business organization.

Innovation, though, depends on human motivation, knowledge, perspective, judgment, the ability to communicate and have relationships. Innovation is almost always a team effort.

Innovation Defines Mental Health

In a nutshell, if we look at a reasonable definition of mental health, we see a range of human factors needed for industrial innovation to have its desired effect in the global economy.

The revolution of micro-processing has turned the free market economy upside down, pairing two opposites (mass production and individualized choice) to produce a brand new dimension of doing business called mass customization.

This is both a cause and effect of the emphasis which business places on innovation as a source of competitive differentiation.

Both innovation and mass customization depend squarely on the mental functioning and less on the physical attributes and presence of people at every level of the business organization. Thus has dawned what we call the information economy of mental performance.

In this economy, the underlying value-added of new products and services is ³thought content² built into them by human beings who:

- Retain the capacity and time to conceive ideas, perceive and understand market opportunities, clearly communicate with each other and, beyond all that -
- Have the emotional resiliency to sustain their efforts at a time of profound societal and economic change - and uncertainty - in the world around them.

Making The Business Case For Mental Health In The Market Place Not Just The Work Place

In these terms, the connection between business competitive success and human mental functioning is being made not by the rhetoric of mental health advocates trying to engage business in mental health issues - which doesn't work - it is being drawn by the realities of a vastly changed market place and work place where time is compressed (a source of stress) and information is king.

This world is a different place to do business in. It accentuates human input even though, as a matter of policy or practice, many businesses have not changed their attitude toward ³human resources² one way or the other for ill or good.

For example, the world's industries today spend more money annually on the instruments of human ideas and interconnection - telecommunications - than they do on oil, the blood of machines.

In the automotive sector, on any side of any ocean, the competitive edge of individual manufacturers are the features they build into trucks and cars which embrace new and pleasing consumer standards of safety, efficiency and design arrived at through human innovation - product ³thought content² which has a dollar value in new cars equal to the value of the steel housing it.

It takes a lot less time to build a ton of steel today than it did a few years ago. The reason lies with human innovation facilitated by computer technology. The upside is hundreds of millions, maybe billions of dollars of newly-captured revenue a year.

The business case for mental health, therefore, is being made where it needs to be made - in the market place. In fact, until it is made in the market place where the authentic self-interest of business is found, it cannot be made effectively in the work place.

Business investments in human capital must be seen, in effect, as investments in customer success and channeled to employees that way. It must provably produce a competitive advantage and sustainable business performance.

It is there - in the market place - that the essence of human capital - and its underpinning, human health - are most apparent to financially-conscious business people.

When an investment in human capital means an investment in human health for good, competitive reasons, aside from anything else, then that investment assumes an inherent business logic.

In the economy of mental performance, competitive advantage through innovation helps make the business case for mental health in the market place and without making the business case there, making it in the work place is an unrelenting uphill struggle.

Public Mental Health In Business Terms

Also, for purposes of integrating questions of business performance and mental health, the concept of public mental health - per se - re-positions the matter close to the legitimate self-interest of business on three different levels - to wit:

Competitive Edge Through Innovation

1. This entails investing in ³mental health and work² issues as one important means to help satisfy the wants of customers and sharpen the organization's competitive edge through employee productivity and innovation.

Consumer Buying Power And Economic Outlook

2. This means investing in ³mental health and the community² issues as one important means to sustain the buying powers of consumers through their ability to retain and secure gainful employment, through their outlook on the prospects of the economy and through their capacity to enjoy life. (An emotionally-distressed population - mental illness afflicts one-in-five - can prolong a recession and express a pessimistic prognosis of the future through public opinion polls.)
The Human Capitalization of Business

3. This can take the form of investing in ³mental health and work² issues as a form of capitalizing the business with a motivated and skilled employee population as a basis for reinforcing its productive capacity for innovation and sustainable financial performance.

B. THE AGE OF DISABILITY

The stage is set, it seems, to make a powerful business case for mental health as a business issue on grounds that will make intuitive good sense to business people.

The business case for mental health deepens on another level, as well. A pandemic of mental health disorders is underway in the world today. But one that is largely unnoticed by nations, policymakers and populations at large.

The Harvard University School of Public Health calls it ³an unheralded crisis² and without documenting here the evidence which Harvard and others have assembled over the past few years, one prominent feature of this global health challenge has jarring relevance to business.

Mental health issues are the leading source of human disability in the world today. Stress and mental health-related problems are now driving disability insurance claims among employee groups - at least in Canada and that country is seldom atypical in such matters.

Work Days Lost Through Disability

According to a landmark study by Harvard School of Public Health, depression and ischemic heart disease will be the greatest single one-two punch as the leading source of work days lost through disability and premature death over the next 20 years.

Depression attacks people in their prime working years - and is getting younger as the average age of onset drops to 27 years (according to one study) and age 20 in 40 per cent of the cases.

At the same time, depression and anxiety disorders are detected and properly treated in a small fraction of the actual number of cases existing in the world today - probably less than 10 per cent.

These rates of disability will not recede until and unless steps are taken to improve education and knowledge about mental health disorders, early detection methods and access to appropriate treatment.

Business Operations Typically Bear Two-Thirds Of Mental Health Costs

The dollar cost of mental health disorders constitute a ³business crisis² in its own right, considering that:

- Two-thirds of all costs associated with mental health problems are borne by business in the form of lost productivity, absenteeism, disability, wage replacement costs and employee group health premiums, specifically the cost of prescription drugs.
- In societies where private health insurance delivers the lion's share of health care services - such as the United States - these formidable percentages are probably larger. But even so, the bulk of the costs of mental health problems will still not be found within the health care system but in the after-effect on business operations.
- In terms of direct business costs in the United States, depression's toll is in the neighbourhood of \$40 billion (US) a year. In North America that number exceeds \$60 billion and in the European Community it is high again.

The Business and Economic Roundtable this summer released an analysis showing that by increasing the earlier detection of depression among employees at work from less than 10 per cent to about one-third would save the free market system in Canada an estimated \$7.5 billion (CDN) over five years.

A Roundtable associate, Syncrude Corporation, an oil producer, estimates that undetected mental health problems within its employee population costs the company about 11 million barrels of lost oil production a year - or \$200 million in net revenue.

These figures tend to reflect the disabling effect and impairment powers of mental health problems which now dominate the list of the top ten sources of the world's burden of disease. In those terms, in fact, psychiatric disorders are growing faster than cardiovascular disease

Opening A New Front In An Old War

The business case for mental health sets the stage for the world - and for individual communities - to open a new front in an old war. The new front being the free market economy. The old war being the struggle to contain the growth and impact of mental health disorders and the social stigma which clings to it.

The allied forces to win this war - the business, media, health and education communities - has never been marshalled before. They can be marshalled now - around the legitimate self-interest of businesses and the public health interest. To do this, however, more information - much more is needed to quantify:

- How mental health issues damage business cost structures, cash flows, revenue generation and the gross income of business organizations;
- How can business stem these costs and halt the serious cash drain on operations which mental distress and mental illness afflict on business through its labour force while, at the same time, depleting the full value of its human capital in (currently) an uncontrolled way;
- What dollar investments can business strategically and profitably make to create management practice standards which will effectively promote public mental health in the market place and work place - and facilitate the earlier detection of mental health disorders in the work setting.

Media: The Essential Ally

- The principle ally on this front is global media, in its role as reporter of events, opinion maker and potential teacher. International media is key in adequately responding to the challenge of information dissemination, combating discrimination and stigma and ³packaging² mental health issues as a problematic but unavoidable part of the human condition. Media is an essential ingredient of the global public and professional education effort.
- One in five individuals worldwide are afflicted with mental health disorders, surfacing at any point in time. The problem is so immense that it will become impossible to marginalize these problems without incurring great risk to society. Every social network on the globe is affected. The chronicity, high impairment, early onset, and low treatment rates for mental health problems are becoming an unacceptable part of modern life. The media, public, private and entertainment sectors, should work to mainstream and de-stigmatize mental health issues. Only then can we effectively lower the threshold for early detection, treatment, and available self-help options that will release human capital and improve quality of life benefitting of both the work and market place.

- Media support will be sought specifically for improving reporting practices in mental health, public awareness raising programmes, and public education.
- Media leaders will be convened globally and regionally in order to be informed about mental health issues, utilizing key leaders and media personalities.
- The development of a Media Roundtable analogous to the Business Roundtable will be explored.

C. BUSINESS INFORMATION AND EDUCATION -- A STARTING POINT

It is not our intention in this paper to discuss these questions in detail, but rather to use the commentary presented in the previous pages as context for a proposal specific to development in public mental health, media and business roundtable development.

The Business Roundtable and Media case for public mental health presented above, builds on the visibility and current interest in mental health, demonstrated by the increasing interest in WFMH's World Mental Health Day and WHO's devoting its Health Day 2001 to mental health. These developments stemmed from the dual arguments of economic cost and health care need formulated in Harvard, World Bank, ILO and UN agency reports.

The corporate response to the global health need as been lead by the International Business Roundtable (described above). It is currently housed at GPC- International in Toronto, Canada, who provide space and logistical support for the project. The Honourable Michael Wilson has been a founder and active participant in this effort.

The Consortium Center for Public Mental Health (CCPMH) has responded to the challenge of the need for action in global mental health by assisting NGOs and Governmental Agencies alike in research development, information transfer and capacity building. CCPMH has grown out of previous influential work carried out by the IPSEER institute since 1985 on four continents and across a range of problems from drug abuses to refugees to the daily life analysis of specific disorders. The public mental health credentials for future efforts were earned in association with WHO, ILO and WFMH in field work and capacity building world-wide. These provide the grounding for formulating the next step.

CCPMH aims - by means of establishing an international collaborating network - to promote scientific research and information for mental health promotion and the implementation of services, training, and prevention programs world-wide.

The world mental health needs make it imperative that valid information as well as implementation know-how be distributed widely from those who have it to those who need to use it. Such information is normally produced by academic, scientific institutions, and grass roots or ³experts by experience², organizations. The dissemination of information to policymakers corporations and world media who have the means and power to implement, has proved problematic. CCPMH proposes that a central facilitating step is needed to insert between those who develop programs and governments and corporations that have the tax base and revenue to maintain them. Media and business partnerships are essential for producing the needed change.

The alliance between the Business Roundtable and the Consortium Center for Public Mental Health (CCPMH) unites over 30-years of business and health care management with clinical and public mental health experience in the context of UN and international non-governmental agencies. This extensive experience will be brought to bear in a three-year program designed to create partnerships between business, media and mental health.

This initiative will parallel the domestic expansion of the Roundtable in Canada where Roundtables for Atlantic Canada and Western Canada have been established with business leaders, the Alberta Mental Health Board and Dalhousie University taking the lead.

As Co-Chair of the Global Initiative, Dr. deVries will spearhead expansion of the Roundtable in Europe. CEO ³desks² have already been established in Hong Kong and Brazil.

Over the next two years, we propose to mobilize business leaders through a series of regional Roundtables - the second ³Geneva Club² - bringing together well-briefed business executives to do one or more of the following:

- To craft a basic strategy to mobilize business leaders and galvanize their organizations around mental health with a due sense of urgency.
- In this context, to design the message and recommend the medium to reach CEO's and their direct reports with actionable information on this matter. The objective being - to persuade them to act.
- To draft a series of management and business practices which will build toward a new gold standard for the promotion of mental health - as a business asset - in the 21st century.
- To draft a series of possible investment scenarios which specify the steps business can take to support the business case for mental health in the market place and in the work place.
- To prepare a draft plan for business to show leadership in the fight against stigma and the use of modern information technologies on a worldwide basis to achieve this end. We should aim to rid the world of the remaining vestiges of stigma by the end of this decade is not sooner.

We visualize each of these regional roundtables flowing into a climactic Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health late in 2002 or the spring of 2003 - in effect, an invitation-only CEO Summit - to consolidate the regional input, prepare a final statement on these matters for worldwide distribution to business, health and education leaders through distribution channels opened-up by the Chamber of Commerce movement and others.

New York Roundtable

Plans for a Business and Economic Roundtable in New York has begun with a meeting with New York City executives in July. A Roundtable event in October could be designed to bring business leaders of New York into a discourse on the topics as outlined here, perhaps focussing on the theme of the planned New York City Mental Health Day event. This could capitalize on the New York State

Toronto-Maastricht

In the spirit of joint venture and partnership, we are aiming to build-into the regional series a mental health and business ³twinning² between the City of Maastricht and the City of Toronto - building on the special friendship between The Netherlands and Canada. This global business and economic roundtable will consolidate activities and input from the first two years of the work and mental health theme and will be placed within the context of a larger interdisciplinary conference on Science, Technology and Mental Health to take place in Maastricht in late 2002 or the spring of 2003.

Business, Media and Mental Health

The Roundtable and Media plans are part of a sustained effort and follow on CCPMH's development of a series of activities in business media and mental health, below a chronology of events:-

The October 10th, 2000, WFMH's World Mental Health Day, the Work and Mental Health seminar took place at the International Labour Organization Office (ILO) in Geneva. World Strategic Partners hosted the Global Congress on Mental Health in the Workplace wherein the formation of the Club of Geneva, including members from business, NGOs and governments were organized. On March 7-9, 2001, the theme of Work and Mental Health was presented by CCPMH and the Business Roundtable at a well-attended Symposia on Work and Mental Health and Depression at the Mental Health Europe congress in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Recently at the UN event on May 15, 2001, sponsored by the Mental Health Association of New York City, discussions were held with veteran journalist Dan Rather, executive producer Susan Zirinsky and correspondents from the critically acclaimed CBS 48-Hours News magazine program. These talks focused on developing the ingredients of a mental health media dialogue toward an improving reporting practice and increasing journalistic awareness of these problems.

On May 23, 2001, a seminar was held with European media leaders in Hilversum, the Netherlands, initiating the process of formalizing the ³Media and Mental Health² dialogue. This meeting convened at the Dutch Media Training Center aimed at brainstorming about the development of a sustainable program for media awareness.

At the ³Media for the Disadvantaged² meeting, organized by Worldview Foundation in Colombo, Sri Lanka, May 30 - 31, 2001. A quarter of the program workshop is devoted to a workshop in Media and Mental Health. Representatives of all major global media networks will be present focusing on the expansion of socially relevant media in the third world. Previously CCPMH (IPSER) and Worldview Television had produced video training material of acclaimed high ethnographic and cinematic quality for use by WHO and WFMH. Media personnel present at the meeting also participated in this effort that focussed on Asia and Africa. One goal of this visit is to reactivate this network that represents over one billion viewers world-wide. ILO will also participate in the workshop as co-chair and remains committed to the media process described. The opportunity to negotiate the form that ILO commitment will be discussed at this meeting.

In July 2001, special seminars in Mental Health and Work as well as Media will be held at the Vancouver congress of the World Federation of Mental Health. These activities are envisioned to culminate in the larger event planned in Maastricht, (fall 2002 or spring 2003, tentatively named ³Science, Technology and Media). On-going seminars and awareness raising meetings with global media personnel aimed at evolving a Media Roundtable in Mental Health are also planned.

World Mental Health Internet Network

A large global virtual public mental health network is envisioned, that will provide training and information services to business, media, public mental health professionals, consumers and NGOs.

The goal is to create a human resource network and a computer network infrastructure that will support (mental) health reform in nations and regions and this will require the largest public mental health faculty in the world to inform business, media and lay public as well as coordinating certification for training through a network of affiliated and sponsoring Universities in different global regions. The long-term goals of such a business, media and internet partnership would be to provide each grass-root participating professional, consumer, and NGO association that need it, with computer hardware and software to interact with the global virtual public mental health network.

Countries and regions committed to mental health reform, with a human resources need in training will be identified. Support from the international community and donor countries to carry out their reform activities will be sought. Identified countries and regions will become the basic building blocks of a global virtual public mental health network.

In each of the identified countries a closed network will be developed that serves the mental health community. This network will be driven by a local server which acts as a liaison to the internet, faculty in other countries, participating universities and pertinent necessary information services such as email and reference materials. Individuals who would participate would be allocated a computer specifically designed for this purpose, this computer would be able to only dial into the network computer to either upload or download materials. Depended upon the services that are made available to participants, other support and services areas such as local content can be added as needed.

Surveying Public Opinion

In order to target and evaluate the impact of public mental health interventions, it is essential to understand the perceived concerns and needs of a population. It is equally essential to evaluate the impact of programs and policies on public opinion. Such surveys would assist in the evaluation and strategic development of future government and business investments. Information that is currently absent.

Public Opinion Surveys are an effective and under-utilized tools in mental health. We thus propose to seek ways of evaluating the impact and efficacy of projects and programs at local, nationally and internationally. The method of work would include subcontracting worldwide with public opinion firms who use, locally valid and sensitive techniques in carrying out public

opinion field work. Such data and reports will be vital to empirical underpinning of corporate and governmental investments and media, thereby helping maintain the partnership with media and business at the bottom line.

Surveys of corporate executive opinion, as well as television based interventions are currently planned. There is strong evidence that television programmes are an effective avenue to target mental health problems. Once such program on depression awareness piloted in San Francisco used television spots before and after nightly news broadcasts and was able to demonstrate a positive impact epidemiologically on a sub-segment of the population. This study is currently planned in a region of the Netherlands for evaluation and further dissemination.

D. POSTSCRIPT

Roundtable

The Roundtable(s) concept is aimed at avoiding the large logistics and costs of large conferences which stand alone without residual benefits to the participating communities.

The Roundtable(s) concept is entrepreneurial in the sense that it based on ideas and the catalyst of informed people coming together in dynamic discussion.

The Roundtable(s) concept attempts to engage business on its terms, make the case for mental health in the terms which business people understand and buy-into.

The Roundtable(s) concept is aimed, ultimately, at having a net effect. The idea is to engage business leaders and build on their determination - once arrived at - to take action appropriately and decisively.

Media

The media concept will create a direct line to increasing public awareness and providing educational opportunities in mental health to lay and professional audiences.

The media concept will survey public opinion and evaluate the effectiveness of programmes globally.

The media concept engages media personnel in a dialogue in improving mental health reporting globally.

The media concept will facilitate access to mental health information through the internet.

The media concept will increase awareness of mental health in the entertainment industry.

The media concept will explore the development of regional and global media roundtables.