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What Do Our Readers Want?

They Like Focus on Local News, Trends

A readership survey was recently completed of the *Seidman School Management Memo*. The survey was mailed with the Fall 1985 issue to Seidman School graduate alumni, Seidman School supporters and business school deans across the United States to determine their likes and dislikes, how closely the *Memo* is read, and specific changes that could be made to improve it. While the response rate was just over 15 percent, the results of the 316 responses were generally positive and encouraging.

Although only a quarter of those surveyed read the *Memo* closely (mostly alumni), over 70 percent at least scan it. Furthermore, over 40 percent of the respondents stated that others read their copies of the *Memo*, an average of almost four people per issue. And, 66 percent of these people are business and faculty associates. In light of this evidence, it can be said that the *Memo* is effectively helping to connect the Seidman School of Business to the business community, one of its primary goals.

The breakdown on which parts of the *Memo* are read showed that the articles dealing with the west Michigan area are read closely by over 42 percent of those surveyed. It was no surprise to note that the bulk of these readers are supporters and alumni of the Seidman School, most of whom live in the west Michigan area. The readers from the business schools tend only to scan these articles. Interestingly, this topic was the one mentioned most often as appropriate to receive more emphasis in future issues.

Overwhelmingly, all the sections of the *Management Memo* are at least scanned. Over 36 percent of the respondents read closely the Message from the Dean. Of these, the highest percentage (43) was in the business school deans group. Apparently business school deans have an interest in reading what their colleagues have to say about business education and business schools.

The majority of readers are generally satisfied with the amount of emphasis placed on the various sections of the *Memo*. Aside from more emphasis on the west Michigan area, the only other area for which more emphasis was suggested

was "other articles written by Grand Valley faculty." A small percentage made specific suggestions concerning topics for these articles, including more about GVSC alumni in business, governmental and Midwest economic news, small-business news, and local economic news. The overwhelming response of readers indicated they were not interested in supplying material for the *Memo*.

Most of the respondents were pleased with the format of the *Memo* as well as the frequency of publication. However, readers made a variety of suggestions for changes to improve the value of the *Memo*. The suggestions of more general interest articles on business, finance, and

general management and marketing issues simply reaffirm the desire of readers to have more emphasis placed on that part of the *Memo* that includes "other articles." The two suggestions listed most frequently were appealing to readers beyond west Michigan and giving the *Memo* a new format with more punch. Perhaps these changes can be accomplished by following the suggestions of *Memo* readers for other types of articles. By including a larger variety of articles on such topics as business, finance, general management and marketing issues, the *Management Memo* could provide more appeal to those readers both in and beyond the west Michigan area.

Graduate Alumni Update

The Seidman School of Business recently completed an informal survey of over 400 Graduate School program alumni to determine where they are located, what management levels they have reached, and what job titles they hold.

The survey results showed that many of the alumni are now at middle to senior management levels or have their own companies. This may reflect in part the fact that the Seidman School first began offering the M.B.A. degree back in 1973. Also, the average age of the Seidman School graduate student is 33, and many of these students have had prior work experience in the business world. Our graduate alumni are employed in many fields, including manufacturing, finance, services, sales, medical areas, education, and government. An interesting discovery from the survey was that more than 20 percent of the Seidman graduates are located out of state, in as many as 22 states. A few of these alumni have settled in places as far away as South Africa and France.

The majority of our graduate students have stayed in western Michigan, however. Forty-one percent live in the Grand Rapids area while 23 percent have taken

positions in the Muskegon, Holland, and Zeeland areas. This large percentage of local graduates has provided the opportunity to hold luncheons three or four times a year. These alumni gather at the Peninsular Club in Grand Rapids to hear a guest speaker. Prominent businessmen from the local community as well as other parts of the country are invited to come and speak. Last year, for example, the group was honored to hear L. William Seidman, formerly Chairman of the Board of Control of Grand Valley State College and Director of Economic Policy Development in President Ford's White House and now Chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

The final luncheon of this academic year featured Roger Porter, formerly of President Reagan's and President Ford's White House Policy Development Staffs and now with the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. Porter spoke on executive decision-making and delegation using specific examples from his experiences at the White House under two presidents.

We are interested in what our graduate alumni are doing and encourage you to send us a note giving information on recent promotions, awards, and other significant events affecting your lives.