JAMES HILL ASKS BUSINESS:

- Why are there so few management training programs open to students?
- What do you really do to encourage individual creativity?
- Does the employee become less meaningful as corporations get larger?

Dear Mr. Galvin:

There are several points in your replies to my first letter which I feel deserve further examination.

Writing about the attitude that business does not recognize the ability of young men, you said that, in any field of endeavor, a young man begins a career "by involving himself in a period of learning, exposure, training." You asked, "Why should such a 'learning' process be frowned on in business?" This is exactly my question to you. You say there are corporations which are both interested in attracting talented youth and alert to the abilities of their young executives. If this is so, why are there so few management training programs open to students contemplating entering business?

Let me expand upon your analogy of the "recently graduated lawyer or doctor." You stated that the young lawyer may spend the first few years after graduation doing research in the law firm's library. Today, however, many progressive firms recognize this practice as a waste of time and talent and have programs whereby law students act as clerks performing this basic library research during the summers between academic sessions. Through these summer programs, the law student acquires more readily the practical experience which he needs to become a valued and productive member of a law firm.

You mentioned the aspirant doctor who must undergo periods as an intern and resident before he can venture into private practice. I would like to point out, though, that this is comparable to the law student who clerks for a judge or a firm during the summer. In both instances, the student working toward his professional degree acquires the necessary practical experience prior to his formally entering the profession.

Business is becoming more professionalized; however, unlike other professions such as law or medicine, business seems to turn its back upon the student who will soon be graduated as a practitioner. Few corporations seem concerned about affording either undergraduates or graduate students with the opportunity of gaining the necessary practical experience prior to their graduating.

Business demands as much practical experience for success as does any profession, yet it apparently provides the least opportunity for obtaining this experience. The existence of training programs both before and after graduation is as much a manifestation of corporate interest in the ability and desirability of youth as are campus recruiting programs and corporate promotional practices. If business is truly interested in attracting bright young men and is capable of recognizing and rewarding their abilities, why then does it not provide programs which assist the student in obtaining both a general business orientation and an idea of where his specific business talents reside?

You say business demands a team effort. My point was not that business should consist of a group of highly autonomous individuals who would rationalize their disorganization on the grounds that "business is business." I was merely voicing a sentiment common among students who have reservations about business as a career or as a factor in society. The goal of a college education is to impart a sense of individuality and creativity. The student does not want to enter a career which seems to represent the antithesis of his acquired values. Consequently, even though you say that business does not stifle personal identity and originality, the more interesting question to the student is, "What does business actually do to encourage individual, creative action?"

I would like to bring up the issue which many students feel is one of the most outstanding questions of morality facing this generation. They look at today's largest corporations and note both their size and their diversity. A single corporation can be involved actively in such apparently heterogeneous activities as basic research, the manufacture and marketing of consumer products, and the development and production of defense armaments. Large firms are growing even larger through the acquisition of smaller, related firms. Students conclude that as a corporation grows larger and more diverse, the average employee of such an organization is involuntarily becoming a less meaningful individual.

This attitude is closely related to the view that business is generally regarded with disdain by the intellectually elite. Perhaps it is this question of morality which accounts for the apparent disenchanted voice by certain influential sectors of our society. Many students do not feel that they can choose an administrative career in a business community which tacitly coerces its employees to accept jobs which erode their individual importance or which require that they participate in activities - antithetical to their personal values and well being - (e.g. arms production, the creation of false consumer demand, planned obsolescence, etc.).

There were two attitudes noted in my previous letter to which you did not reply. First, many students hesitate to choose a career in business because of the apparent difficulty in predicting one's probable success. Secondly, business is viewed as having neither the employment security nor the latitude of occupational mobility inherent to other professions. These, then, are the issues I interpret them. Once again I look forward to your views on these attitudes.

—James T. Hill

JUST WHO IS JAMES HILL?

Mr. Hill is a Harvard senior who has been exchanging questions, answers, and opinions about business with Robert W. Galvin, Motorola Chairman, since last fall. Dialogues like this one appear in 28 other college newspapers. They will continue as long as there are points to be aired. Mr. Galvin will speak to the points raised today by Mr. Hill in subsequent issues of this paper.

If you have a viewpoint which has not yet been discussed in this dialogue about business as a career or as a factor in society, write about it to Mr. Galvin at Motorola Inc., 9461 West Grand Avenue, Franklin Park, Illinois 60131.